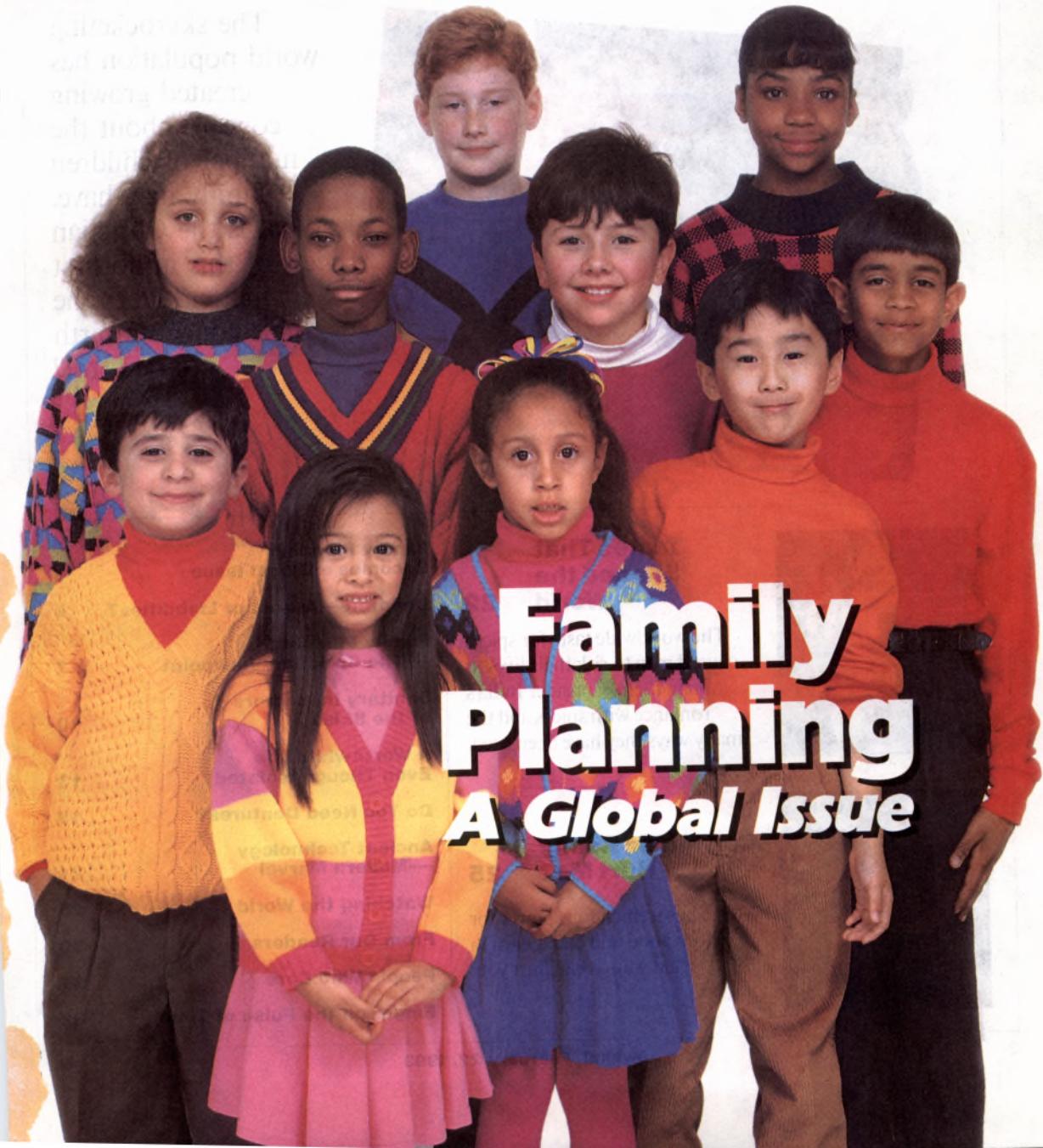


# Awake!

February 22, 1993



## Family Planning

*A Global Issue*

## **Family Planning —A Global Issue 3-9**



### **Tastes That Shaped the World 22**

The worldwide taste for spices caused men to risk their lives to obtain them. Consider India's romance with spices and the many ways they have been used.



### **Can Music Really Hurt Me? 25**

Music has tremendous power for both good and bad. Learn in what ways it can hurt you.

<b>Family Planning Becomes a Global Issue</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Children—Assets or Liabilities?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Family Planning —The Christian Viewpoint</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Sanitary Inspectors of the Skies</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>A Worthwhile Life Even Though Isolated</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Do You Need Dentures?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Ancient Technology —Modern Marvel</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Watching the World</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>From Our Readers</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>People Who Care</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Finger on the Pulse of Time</b>	<b>32</b>

# Family Planning Becomes a Global Issue

"Family planning could bring more benefits to more people at less cost than any other single 'technology' now available to the human race. . . . This would still be true even if there were no such thing as a population problem."

—*The State of the World's Children 1992.*

**I**N THE past it was considered desirable to have many children. Nearly four thousand years ago, when Rebecca was about to leave Mesopotamia to marry Isaac, her mother and her brother blessed her with the words: "O you, our sister, may you become thousands times ten thousand." (Genesis 24: 60) Times have changed. Today, more and more women are saying they want fewer children.

"I was the third of seven children," said Bu, a 22-year-old Indonesian mother of one daughter. "My father was a palm juice vendor in Klaten, Central Java, and my parents suffered great hardship trying to raise such a huge brood. . . . It's easier to raise a family if you have only a small number of children."

Bu's sentiments are similar to those of parents worldwide. Increasingly, couples

want to plan when to begin having children, how many to have, how far apart to have them, and when to stop. This is reflected in UN statistics indicating that the voluntary use of contraceptives in developing countries has risen dramatically, from 10 percent of couples in the 1960's to 51 percent today.

Governments too are keenly interested in promoting family planning. Over half of the developing nations are pursuing policies to reduce population growth. The UN Population Fund estimates that the total spending on population-control programs is now about \$4,500,000,000 a year. To meet future demands, authorities hope that this figure will double by the year 2000.

Why are nations and individuals so interested in controlling birthrates? And what is the Christian view of this important matter? The following two articles will consider these questions.

# Children Assets or Liabilities?

**T**HE issue of family planning is closely linked to what is often called the population explosion. Throughout much of mankind's history, population growth was relatively slow; the number dying was about the same as the number being born. Eventually, about the year 1830, the world's population reached one billion people.

Then came medical and scientific advances that resulted in fewer deaths from disease, especially childhood disease. By about 1930, world population stood at two billion people. By 1960, another billion had been added. By 1975, another billion. By 1987, world population reached five billion.

To look at it another way, the number of people on the planet is presently increasing by about 170 people *every minute*. That adds up to some 250,000 people every day, enough for a sizable city. This means, too, that each year yields a population increase of over 90 million people, the equivalent of three Canadas or another Mexico. Over 90 percent of this growth is occurring in developing countries, where 75 percent of the world's population already lives.

## Concerned Governments

But why are governments eager to limit population growth through family planning? Dr. Babs Sagoe, Nigeria's National Program Officer for the UN Population Fund, answers this question with a simple illustration that, he cautions, tends to oversimplify a complex and controversial situation. He explains:

'Suppose a farmer owns ten acres of land. If he has ten children and divides the land equally among them, each child will have an acre. If each of those children has ten children and divides the land similarly, each of their children will have only one tenth of an acre. Clearly, these children will not be as well off as their grandfather, who had ten acres of land.'

This illustration highlights the relationship between a growing number of people and a finite earth with limited resources. As the population grows, many developing countries are struggling to cope with present population levels. Consider some of the problems.

**Resources.** As the number of people increases, there are greater demands on forests,

**Awake!**

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topsoil, cropland, and fresh water. The result? *Populi* magazine laments: "Developing countries . . . are often compelled to over-exploit the national resources on which their development future depends."

**Infrastructure.** As the population grows, governments find it increasingly difficult to provide adequate housing, schools, sanitation facilities, roads, and health services. Saddled with the double burden of heavy debt and diminishing resources, the developing nations are hard-pressed to cope with the needs of present populations, let alone much larger ones.

**Employment.** The UN Population Fund publication *Population and the Environment: The Challenges Ahead* states that in many developing countries, 40 percent of the work force is already unemployed. Throughout the developing world, more than half a billion people are either unemployed or under-employed, a figure nearly equal to the entire work force in the industrialized world.

In order to prevent these rates from worsening, developing countries must create over 30 million new jobs every year. The people who will need these jobs are alive today—they are today's children. Experts speculate that massive unemployment may lead to civil strife, deepening poverty, and further destruction of natural resources.

Little wonder that more and more developing nations are striving to promote family

planning. Commenting on what lies ahead, an editorial in the British medical journal *Lancet* stated: "The pressure of increase in numbers [of people], mainly confined to the poorer countries of the world, compounds enormously the task they face. . . . Millions will spend their lives uneducated, unemployed, ill-housed and without access to elementary health, welfare and sanitary services, and unchecked population increase is a major causal factor."

### Concerned Families

Setting goals and instituting family planning programs on the national level is one thing; convincing the public is another. In many societies traditional views favoring large families are still strong. For example, a Nigerian mother responded to her government's encouragement to cut down birth-rates by saying: "I am the last of my father's 26 children. All my seniors, including males and females, have between eight and 12 children. So, shall I be the one to have few children?"

Nevertheless, such a viewpoint is not as common as it once was, even in Nigeria, where the average woman gives birth to six children. Faced with rising prices, millions of people are hard-pressed to feed and clothe their families. Many have learned through experience the truth of the Yoruba saying: "*Omọ bẹ́rẹ́, ḍò́si bẹ́rẹ́*" (an abundance of children, an abundance of poverty).

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Many couples understand the benefits of family planning, yet do not practice it. The result? *The State of the World's Children 1992*, published by the United Nations Children's Fund, said that approximately 1 pregnancy in 3 in the developing world during the year would be not only unplanned but unwanted.

### Family Planning Saves Lives

Apart from economic difficulties, a major reason to consider family planning is the health of the mother and her children. "Pregnancy is a gamble and giving birth is a life-and-death struggle," says a West African proverb. Every year in the developing world, half a million women die during pregnancy or childbirth, a million children are left motherless, and an additional five million to seven million women become handicapped or crippled because of childbirth-related health impairments.

Not all women in developing countries run the same risk. As the accompanying box shows, those most at risk are women who bear too many children too early, too frequently, or too late. UN sources estimate that family planning could prevent from a quarter to a third of these fatalities and could prevent millions of disabilities.

But would not the saving of millions of lives only serve to increase population growth? Surprisingly, many experts say no. "It might be thought," states the 1991 *Human Development Report*, "that, if more children survived, population problems would get worse. Quite the reverse. Fertility tends to drop when parents are more confident that their children will survive."

Nevertheless, millions of women, especially in poor societies, continue to give birth frequently. Why? Because their society expects it of them, because having many children increases the likelihood that some will survive, and because they may not know about or not have access to family planning services.

Yet, many women who have large families would not have it any other way. They consider each child a blessing from God.

### High-Risk Pregnancy in the Developing World

**Too Early:** The risk of death during pregnancy and childbirth among women from 15 to 19 years of age is up to three times higher than among women from 20 to 24 years of age. Babies born to teenage women are more likely to die, be born too early, or weigh too little at birth.

**Too Close:** The length of time between births greatly affects child survival. A child born less than two years after the mother's previous child stands a 66 percent greater chance of dying in infancy. If these children survive, their growth is more likely to be stunted and their intellectual development more likely to be impaired. About 1 in 5 in-

fant deaths could be prevented through proper birth spacing. Intervals of three or more years between births carry the least risk.

**Too Many:** Bearing more than four children increases the dangers of pregnancy and childbirth, especially if the previous children were not spaced by more than two years. After four pregnancies, mothers are more likely to suffer from anemia and are more prone to hemorrhaging, and their children run a higher risk of being born with disabilities.

**Too Late:** Women over the age of 35 are five times more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth than are women from 20 to 24 years of age. Children born to older women are also more likely to die.

Sources: World Health Organization, UN Children's Fund, and the UN Population Fund.

# Family Planning The Christian Viewpoint

**A**T THE first World Population Conference, in 1974, the 140 nations who met resolved that all couples "have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education, and means to do so."

Many consider that resolve to be a good one. True, God told Adam and Eve, and later Noah's family, to "be fruitful and become many and fill the earth," but no such command was given to Christians. (Genesis 1:28; 9:1) The Scriptures neither encourage Christian couples to have children nor tell them to refrain. Married couples may decide for themselves whether to have children or not and, if they do plan for children, how many they will have and when they will have them.

## **A God-Given Responsibility**

Did you notice, though, that the World Population Conference statement said that couples should decide "*responsibly* the number and spacing of their children"? This principle of responsibility is also in harmony with the Bible. Christian parents recognize that while children are a precious gift from God, along with the gift comes considerable responsibility.

First of all, there is the responsibility to care for children materially. The Bible says: "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."—1 Timothy 5:8.

Providing for one's family involves more than just putting food on the table and pay-

ing the bills, though this is often a big job in itself. Responsible Christian couples, in planning the size of their families, take into consideration the mother's physical well-being as well as her emotional, mental, and spiritual welfare. Taking care of a child occupies a lot of time, and when baby follows baby after baby, mothers often sacrifice not only their rest, recreation, personal development, and involvement in Christian activities but also their physical and spiritual health.

Responsible Christian parents also consider the needs of their children. *The State of the World's Population 1991* says: "Children born into large, closely-spaced families have to compete with brothers and sisters for food, clothing and parental affection. They are also more susceptible to infections. If these children survive their vulnerable childhood years, their growth is more likely to be stunted and their intellectual development impaired. The prospects of these children in adult life are greatly diminished." This, of course, is not the case in all large families, but it is something that Christian couples should consider when planning the number of children they will have.

Christian parents have an obligation to care for their children spiritually, as the Bible commands: "You, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."—Ephesians 6:4.

Emeka, a Christian who teaches law in Nigeria, has been married one year and is in no hurry to father a large family. "My wife and I have discussed how many children we will

have. We considered having five but decided on three. Later we concluded that two would be better. It is hard to bring up children according to Bible principles. It is a big responsibility."

Some Christian couples have decided to have no children in order to devote all their time to serving God. Stated a missionary in Africa who agreed with her husband to remain childless: "I don't feel that I've missed out by not bearing children. Although my husband and I haven't experienced the joys of parenthood, our lives have been full of other joys. By being involved in helping others

learn Bible truth, we have spiritual children in many parts of the world. We love them, and they love us. There is a special bond between us. With good reason, the apostle Paul likened himself to a nursing mother because of his tender affection for those whom he helped spiritually."—1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8.

### **Birth Control**

Does the Bible condemn birth control? No, it does not. The choice is left with the couple. If a married couple decides to practice birth control, their choice of contraceptives is a personal matter. However, the method of birth

## **Popular Birth-Control Methods**

### **Sterilization**

*In men:* A simple surgical procedure whereby a small incision is made in the scrotum and the tubes that carry sperm are cut.

*In women:* A surgical procedure in which the Fallopian tubes are tied or cut in order to prevent the egg from passing into the uterus.

*Advantages:* Of all birth-control methods, sterilization is the most effective.

*Disadvantages:* Can be permanent. In both men and women, operations have restored fertility, but this cannot be guaranteed.\*

### **Birth-Control Pills**

These include the progestin-only minipill. They work to interfere with a woman's normal hormone levels in order to prevent the egg from maturing and being released.<sup>#</sup>

*Advantages:* Highly effective in preventing pregnancy.

*Disadvantages:* Some physical side effects, but these are less for healthy nonsmokers under the age of 40.

### **Diaphragm and Spermicide**

The diaphragm is a dome-shaped rubber cup

\* A discussion of whether sterilization is compatible with Christian principles is found in *The Watchtower* of May 1, 1985, page 31.

<sup>#</sup> A discussion of how birth-control pills prevent birth is found in *The Watchtower* of June 15, 1989, page 29.

stretched over a flexible rim. After spreading the sperm-killing jelly or cream (the spermicide) in the cup, the cup is inserted into the vagina to fit around the cervix.

*Advantages:* A safe, quite reliable form of birth control when used properly.

*Disadvantages:* Must be used every time a couple has intercourse. Skill is required to insert the device properly, and it should be inserted prior to intercourse and left in six to eight hours afterward.

### **Cervical Cap**

A plastic or rubber cuplike device that is smaller than the diaphragm. Like the diaphragm, it is inserted over the cervix but fits more snugly and requires less spermicidal cream or jelly.

*Advantages:* The cap is comparable to the diaphragm in effectiveness, and it can remain in place for 48 hours. Spermicide need not be applied upon repeated intercourse.

*Disadvantages:* It is more difficult to insert than the diaphragm, and placement over the cervix should be checked before and after each act of intercourse. Uterine or cervical infections are possible risks. The cap should be worn only by women with normal Pap tests.

### **Sponge**

A spermicide-containing polyurethane sponge that is inserted into the vagina to cover the cervix, thus forming a physical and chemical barrier to sperm. It is discarded after use.

*Advantages:* The sponge can be left in place up to

control a Christian couple chooses should be governed by a respect for the sanctity of life. Since the Bible indicates that a person's life begins at conception, Christians would avoid contraceptive methods that abort, or end the life of, the developing child.—Psalm 139:16; compare Exodus 21:22, 23; Jeremiah 1:5.

So couples may properly make different choices when it comes to family planning. Some may desire to limit the number of children they will have. Others, using some method of contraception, may decide not to have any children at all. Many birth-control meth-

ods are available, each with its advantages and disadvantages. In deciding which method is best for them, couples should remember that some methods are far more efficient than others. They should also inquire about possible side effects. Doctors and family-planning clinics are equipped to offer advice about birth-control methods and to help couples choose the one that best meets their needs.

The decision a couple makes to have many, few, or no children is a personal one. It is also an important decision with far-reaching consequences. Married couples would be wise to weigh the matter carefully and prayerfully.

24 hours and is effective if intercourse is repeated during that time.

**Disadvantages:** Some allergic reactions and a few cases of toxic shock syndrome reported.

#### **The Intrauterine Device**

Also called IUD, loop, or coil, this metal or plastic device is placed in the uterus. While there is uncertainty as to how it actually works, doctors believe that it prevents fertility in several ways. One of these ways probably is to prevent the fertilized egg from attaching itself to the wall of the womb.

**Advantages:** A reliable means of birth control.

**Disadvantages:** Sometimes results in bleeding or pain, and may sometimes be abortive in its mode of operation.\*

#### **Condoms**

A sheath that fits over the penis to prevent semen from entering the vagina.

**Advantages:** A safe, effective means of birth control. Reduces the chances of transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS.

**Disadvantages:** Disliked by some because application requires interruption of sexual act.

#### **Withdrawal**

Withdrawal of the penis from the vagina just before ejaculation.

\* A discussion of whether the IUD is compatible with Christian principles is found in *The Watchtower* of May 15, 1979, pages 30-1.

**Advantages:** Requires no expense, preparation, or external apparatus.

**Disadvantages:** Not sexually satisfying, requires great self-control, and is highly unreliable.

#### **Rhythm Method**

Couples refrain from intercourse during the days in the woman's menstrual cycle when she is most fertile.

**Advantages:** Safe, no harmful side effects, requires no action at time of intercourse.

**Disadvantages:** Not a very successful method of preventing pregnancy unless the couple are highly motivated and adhere strictly to instructions for practice.

#### **Hormonal Implant**

The newest contraceptive on the birth-control scene, a series of tiny silicon cylinders are implanted under the skin of a woman's arm. For up to five years, these continuously release a minute amount of a hormone into the bloodstream. During this time she is protected from pregnancy.

**Advantages:** Highly effective. Fertility can be restored by removing implant.

**Disadvantages:** Minimal. Similar to the progestin-only birth-control pill (minipill). When progestin-only inserts are used, pregnancy possibly is prevented by abortive means.\*

\* A discussion of how birth-control pills prevent birth is found in *The Watchtower* of June 15, 1989, page 29.

the vulture's scientific name, *Aegypius monachus*, means "monk eagle." The bird's name is derived from its long, dark, hooked beak, which resembles that of a monk.

# Sanitary Inspectors of the Skies



Photo: Courtesy of Madrid Zoo, Madrid, Spain

If asked to name the bird they would least like to meet, many would say the vulture.



Few birds have been so vilified as the vulture. It is the accursed bird whose sinister silhouette wheels over the dead and the dying. Its appearance is said to herald carnage, desolation, and despair. But such is the stuff of fiction.

As for the facts: Many have been enthralled by the vulture's grace in flight and the tender way it cares for its young. They have also discerned its important ecological role. To such ones the vulture is both magnificent and indispensable.

Admittedly, vultures have a few things against them, apart from their unsavory feeding habits. They would certainly not win any beauty contests, and their calls have been variously described as squeals, cackles, grunts, croaks, and hisses. They do, however, have some endearing qualities.

The vulture is a bird that takes parenthood very seriously. Every year an "only child" receives the undivided attention of both parents until it can fend for itself. A young vulture chick perched helplessly for several months on an inaccessible ledge certainly needs the compassionate care of both parents. In fact, a young Andean condor has to be fed for six months before it can leave the nest, by which time the "chick" is nearly full-grown.

And vultures have the virtue of being eminently useful. Although many birds benefit mankind in one way or another, vultures perform a unique service. They are sanitary inspectors of the skies.

### **Sanitary Inspection**

Cleaning up carcasses is not everybody's idea of a favorite daily chore, but it is an important job. Proper sanitation requires the prompt removal of dead bodies, which can be dangerous sources of infectious diseases for both man and beast.

Here the vultures come into their own.

Even meat contaminated with anthrax or botulin is gobbled up with impunity, until nothing remains but the bones.

Some vultures even specialize in eating bones. The lammergeier vulture of Eurasia and Africa drops bones from a height onto a rocky surface. When the bones split open, the lammergeier eats the marrow and the smaller pieces of bone.

Fortunately, unlike their human counterparts, these sanitary inspectors have never gone on strike. If the vultures' work was left undone, tropical plains littered with disease-ridden carcasses would be a familiar sight.

But let us follow a team of vultures on a typical workday.

### **Skyway Patrol**

Soon after sunrise, they take to the skies, each one to cover a certain area. Throughout the day our squadron of vultures tirelessly patrols the skies in search of dead animals. When a carcass is finally spotted by one of their number, he goes into a steep dive. This attracts the attention of the other birds, who also hasten to the spoil. Within minutes, dozens of birds arrive at the scene.

Before eating, the birds hop around the carcass hesitantly. Despite their reputation, they are extremely shy creatures. Finally, one of them starts tearing at the carcass, and this is the signal for the whole group to attack the meal. There is a lot of squabbling and hissing, pushing and pulling, which looks uncannily like a rugby football scrum. The hungriest, who protest the most energetically, usually get fed first. If it is a large carcass, there will be enough food for all.

In a matter of minutes, the meal is over, and leaving only the bones, the flock takes to the sky to continue the search. A vulture's life is not an easy one. It may be two or three days before they have another meal.

## Eyesight and Teamwork

Vultures are admirably equipped for aerial surveillance. Their massive wings are perfectly designed for gliding and soaring, enabling them to fly for hours with barely a wing beat. They are adept at taking advantage of thermals, or rising hot-air currents, which serve to keep them aloft with minimal effort. Dean Amadon, prominent American ornithologist, described them as one of "nature's most eloquent expressions of flight."

A question that intrigued ornithologists for many years was, How do vultures find carcasses so quickly?

The answer turned out to be a combination of sharp eyesight and teamwork. It has been calculated that a vulture circling overhead at a height of about 2,500 feet can spot an object on the ground that is less than five inches long. But even with such penetrating vision, a lone vulture would be hard-pressed to find food.

## Vultures on Record

VULTURES are counted among the rarest and largest birds of the world. And they hold the avian altitude record as well.

The California condor is one of the most endangered species in the world. To save this vulture from extinction, strenuous efforts are being made through a breeding program among the two dozen birds in captivity. In 1986 only three California condors were left in the wild.

The Andean condor, along with the marabou stork of Africa, has the greatest wingspan of all land birds, over ten feet. It is also the heaviest bird of prey, sometimes weighing in at over 30 pounds.

Vultures are high fliers as well. In 1973 an African vulture (*Gyps rueppellii*) collided with an aircraft that was flying over Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, at an altitude of 37,000 feet.

Hence, teamwork is essential. It has been observed that vultures divide up to patrol different areas. If one vulture descends toward a carcass, his distinctive swoop is the signal to nearby birds that food is in the offing, and they immediately fly in that direction. Their change of course is likewise spotted by more distant birds, who also hasten to the scene. This aerial telegraph system is surprisingly efficient, so much so that it may appear to an observer that all the birds arrive almost simultaneously.

Sadly, such efficiency and undeniable usefulness have not sufficed to guarantee the vultures' protection and survival.

## The Return of the Condor

Despite being counted among the largest and most impressive birds of prey, vultures are facing extinction in many parts of the world. Their traditional food has disappeared from the plains, and not infrequently the carcasses they do find have been poisoned. Their slow breeding rate also makes it difficult for their decimated populations to recover.

Nevertheless, there are some heartening success stories. A program for the artificial breeding of California condors seems to be proving successful, and it is hoped that more birds can soon be returned to the wild. Thanks to the efforts of French conservationists, the griffon vulture has reestablished itself in the Massif Central, France, after an absence of many years.

Thus, the bird that people once loved to hate has become a symbol of man's efforts to save those species that he has endangered. Undoubtedly, the majestic flight of the condor over the sierras of North and South America is a sight too precious to squander.

Meanwhile, in Africa and Asia, the vultures still unassumingly perform their thankless task, that of sanitary inspectors of the skies.

# A Worthwhile Life Even Though Isolated

I WAS born in January 1927, in Málaga, Spain, the sixth child in a poor Catholic family of seven children. From 1936 to 1939, the Spanish Civil War devastated our country, and we dodged bombs and lived on rationed food. Yet, I was a happy child who loved to sing and be around people.

One thing, though, scared me—the prospect of burning in hellfire. To dampen that fear, I moved into a convent at age 12. There, for nearly three years, I cleaned the marble staircase, prayed, and cleaned again, but I still felt that something was missing. In 1941, I was glad to be able to leave.

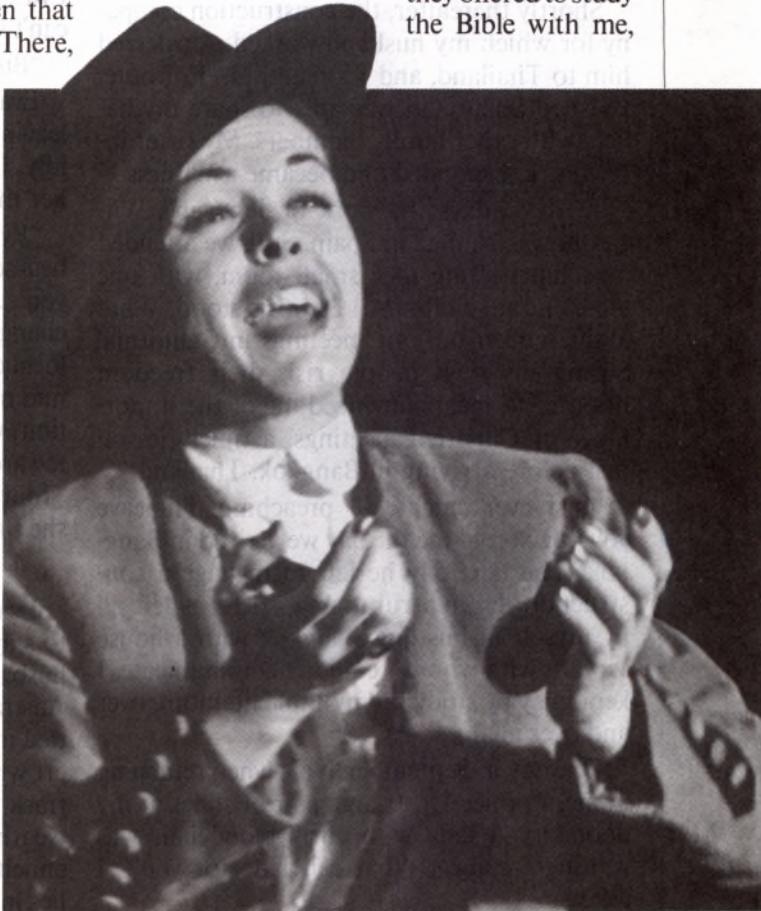
After some years I befriended a singer who thought my voice could make money, and she encouraged me to take singing and piano lessons. When World War II ended in 1945, I went to Morocco, where I began performing in nightclubs in Casablanca and Tangier. That was an exciting life for a teenager. But after each show, I went to church to beg the Virgin Mary to forgive me, hoping that I might escape a fiery hell.

After working in nightclubs for nine years, I met an American named Jack Abernathy. He was at the time working in Morocco for an American construction company. We were married that year, and I stopped performing. Soon afterward we moved to Seville, Spain,

where we lived until 1960. Then we moved to Lodi, California, U.S.A.—a move that led to another change in my life.

## Learning About Jehovah

In 1961 two of Jehovah's Witnesses visited our home and left the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. Later they offered to study the Bible with me,



and I accepted the offer. Thus, I learned about the true God, Jehovah, who is our loving heavenly Father. (Psalm 83:18) What a relief also to learn that there is no burning hell but that we have the prospect instead of living forever in a paradise on earth!—Psalm 37:9-11, 29; Revelation 21:3, 4.

My sister Paquita, who lived near us, also began to study. Before, I smoked and liked to party. And what a temper I had! But I made changes, and on October 17, 1962, Paquita and I were baptized in Sacramento, California, thus symbolizing our dedication to serve Jehovah.

### To Thailand by Way of Spain

Shortly thereafter, the construction company for which my husband worked transferred him to Thailand, and I joined him. En route, I visited Spain and was able to share my beliefs with other family members. My sister-in-law Pura responded and became a Witness.

In those days the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in Spain. Still, we attended a secret meeting in a small room, with one table and no chairs. All 20 of us stood. What a difference from our meetings in California! Seeing my own people risk their freedom in order to meet convinced me of the importance of Christian meetings, a timely lesson just before arriving in Bangkok, Thailand.

"If I ever catch you preaching, I'll leave you," Jack told me the day we arrived in Bangkok. The next day he left to manage a construction job in a rural area, so I was left all by myself in bustling Bangkok with a house servant with whom I couldn't communicate. I kept busy by studying my Bible literature over and over again.

One day in September 1963, when returning home, I noticed a strange pair of shoes at my doorstep. A lady with curly blond hair was waiting for me. "What can I do for you?" I asked.

"I am representing the Watch Tower Society," she said.

I jumped with excitement, hugging and kissing her. Eva Hiebert was a missionary from Canada. From that day on, Eva came regularly, making two or three bus transfers to reach me. I was afraid to ride the buses in which people were packed together like sardines in a can, but there was no other way I could travel. Eva said: "You'll never serve Jehovah if you don't go on those buses." So we rehearsed how to catch the buses to go to meetings.

I was hesitant about preaching, since I didn't know the language. I would hang on to Eva's hand, her basket, and her dress. "You can't serve Jehovah *this* way," she said.

"But I don't know the language," I whined.

Eva gave me ten magazines and went off, leaving me in the middle of the market. Timidly, I approached a Chinese woman, showed her the magazines, and she accepted!

"Eva, I placed all ten magazines," I later beamed. She said, "Jehovah likes people like you. Just continue." I did, learning to exchange greetings in Thai and, in accord with local custom, sit on the floor. I also learned to find my way around. And my husband's reaction? One day, when Jack, who had mellowed toward my beliefs, had visitors, he told them: "Tour with Pepita. She gets around because she preaches."

### On to Australia

Eva's loving but firm training prepared me to stay active in Jehovah's service during my husband's next job assignment, in northwest Australia. We arrived in mid-1965, and I settled in a work camp in the middle of the desert where Jack's company was laying railroad track. Food was flown in by plane, and the weather was hot—over 110 degrees Fahrenheit. There were 21 North American families in the camp, so I began approaching them



**Singing with my Spanish Bible students in Melbourne**

with the Kingdom message. Later, as work progressed on the railroad track, we moved farther into the desert, where the isolation was even greater.

Earlier I had written the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Australia, and how pleased I was to receive a letter that said: "Warm love and greetings . . . Our thoughts and prayers will be with you in the future months"! During the years that I traveled with my husband on his work assignments to remote areas of the earth, I was encouraged by such letters from Jehovah's organization. Reading them pulled me through bouts of loneliness and encouraged me to get out in the preaching work even though I was often isolated from other Witnesses.

The branch office in Australia arranged for a Witness couple to visit me for a week at the camp. In our ministry we contacted an interested woman who lived far away, so twice a week I walked through territory that was infested with snakes and lizards to visit her. As I walked, I would burst into a Kingdom song: "Take sides with Jehovah/ Make him your delight/ He'll never forsake you/ Walk e'er in his light." For 11 months we studied.

Then, after about a year's stay in Melbourne, I moved with my husband to a camp

near the mining town of Port Hedland, also in northwestern Australia. After five days, there were visitors. The branch had informed the Witnesses about my whereabouts. After they left, I continued the meetings on my own, conducting the Congregation Book Study, the Theocratic Ministry School, the Service Meeting, and the *Watchtower* Study. After singing a song and opening with prayer, I answered the questions and concluded with song and prayer. Counting attendance was never a problem—always one. Yet, this weekly meeting schedule sustained me during those many years I served Jehovah in isolation.

### To Bougainville

In 1969, after we had perspired for four years in Australia, my husband was assigned to serve as foreman on a road-construction project to a copper mine in the humid mountains of the island of Bougainville. One evening somebody knocked on the door. Jack opened it. "It is a Witness with his wife and four children," he said. They lived along the coast. Once a week I visited them and attended the *Watchtower* Study held in the community school.

On another occasion three Witnesses from Papua New Guinea visited me. My husband proudly told his colleagues: "Wherever my wife goes, her Witness friends are waiting."

### To Africa

In 1972 we arrived in the desert in Algeria, North Africa, where Jack's company was building an irrigation system. This was to be a four-year project. I wrote to the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in France about the preaching work, and they wrote back: 'Be cautious. Our work is banned there.' The Society helped me to contact two inactive Witnesses, and we formed a study group.

Then, one of my neighbors in the work camp, Cecilia, became ill. I visited her every day in the hospital, brought her soup, and

fixed her bed. When she came home, I continued to run errands for her, and I also shared with her the Kingdom hope. That led to a Bible study, and after eight months Cecilia said: "I want to be baptized." But where and by whom?

We received a letter from the branch office in France that a Witness by the name of François was coming to Algeria for a short vacation. If we could get him to our desert village and back to the airport in time, he would perform the baptism. But he could stay no longer than 24 hours.

As soon as François arrived, he was whisked off by car and taken into the desert. That evening, at Cecilia's home, he pulled a tiny piece of notepaper from his shirt pocket and gave a fine talk. In the early morning of May 18, 1974, he baptized Cecilia in my bathtub and took off again.

War broke out in Algeria at the end of 1975, and Jack and I had to leave abruptly. I visited my relatives in Spain. In 1976, I began packing for Jack's next assignment—a work camp in the rain forest of Suriname, South America.

### In South America

The camp in southwestern Suriname was surrounded by lush vegetation. Noisy parrots and curious monkeys looked down from the trees at the 15 newly arrived families, most of whom I knew from former jobs. Six months later, more worker families arrived, including Cecilia who had been baptized in Algeria—a partner!

As March 23, 1978, approached, we wondered how to celebrate the Memorial of Christ's death. Lacking transportation to the capital, Paramaribo, we planned to observe it in my house. The camp manager permitted us to make photocopies of the last page of a *Watchtower* announcing the Memorial, and we distributed them from house to house in the camp. Twenty-one attended! Cecilia gave the



**I assisted many in Papua New Guinea to come to know Jehovah**

talk, and I read the scriptures. That evening, though isolated, we felt united with Jehovah's worldwide organization.

Meanwhile, the Suriname branch of Jehovah's Witnesses sent support—a young missionary couple in an old Land-Rover. Before they arrived, I had begun to feel a bit useless in that camp, but the missionaries assured me: "Pepita, you're here for a purpose." At



**Teaching God's Word in Suriname**

that time I was not convinced, but soon I understood.

One day during the missionaries' visit, we explored a newly opened dirt road and were thrilled to find some Amerindian villages about 30 miles from our camp. A few days of preaching among those friendly Arawak Indians resulted in scores of Bible studies. So when the missionaries left, Cecilia and I began visiting those villagers twice a week.

We got up at four o'clock in the morning, and by seven we began our first Bible study. About five in the afternoon, we were home again. For two years we conducted 30 studies each week. Before long the children in the village were calling me Auntie Bible! Many were eventually baptized, and years later 182 attended a circuit assembly in that village. Indeed, as my dear missionary friends had said, we were in the jungle for a purpose!

### To Papua New Guinea

We left Suriname in 1980, and the following year we were sent to Papua New Guinea. After six pleasant months with the Witnesses in the capital, Port Moresby, a helicopter dropped me off at my next home—a camp high in the mountains where Jack's company was developing a gold mine. There were no roads. People, equipment, and food arrived by air. This was the most isolated place I had ever lived in. Again I wondered, Where can I find people to talk to?

The people in our camp knew me from before, and no one wanted to listen. However, about that time, the company opened

a grocery shop. Women from faraway places shopped there. Soon I became one of the shop's most frequent customers. Did it work?

One day I began a conversation with a Papuan woman. She told me that she was a teacher. "Oh, I'm a teacher too," I said.

"You are?" she asked.

"Yes, I teach the Bible." She immediately accepted my offer to study the Bible with her. Later, more grocery shoppers agreed to do the same. That settlement near the gold mine yielded seven Bible studies—a spiritual gold mine indeed!

After we had spent three years on this Pacific island, a new job sent us to the Caribbean island of Grenada. But after a year

and a half, my husband had to return to the United States for health reasons, so in 1986 we settled down in Boise, Idaho.

### Working With a Congregation

After living all those years in isolation from my Christian brothers and sisters, I now had to learn to work along with others. However, the Christian elders and others have patiently helped me. Today, I enjoy attending meetings and conducting Bible studies in this part of the world.

At times, though, when I sit back in a quiet corner and again see myself running behind Eva in bustling Bangkok or blurting out the Kingdom song while walking on that desert road in Australia or preaching among those humble Amerindians in the rain forest of Suriname, I smile, and my eyes fill with tears of gratitude for the care I received during the many years I served Jehovah in isolation.—*As told by Josefa 'Pepita' Abernathy.*



**I now serve with a congregation in Idaho**

# Do You Need Dentures?



**F**ALSE teeth, often the target of jokes, are not funny to many wearers. If you have all your natural teeth in good condition, the question of dentures may not seem important to you. But even if you never need to face that issue, what is said in this article may help you to appreciate the blessing of sound, healthy teeth and make you de-

termined to keep them that way—at least as far as it depends on you.

But why do many people who thought they were conscientious in their dental care one day discover that their teeth are loosening? Ask any dentist. Once people pass the age of 30, the greatest cause of loss of teeth is diseased gums (periodontal disease). However, a

person may also lose teeth because of accident or tooth decay.

But do you really *need* dentures if you have lost some or all your teeth?\* Why do some people seem to get along without them? Are dentures simply another commercial product foisted on the public?

### Why Dentures?

To answer these questions, let's look at the functions of our teeth. They do more than affect our appearance. When we chew our food, it is shredded so that digestive juices can mix with the fine pieces, allowing the body to absorb the nutrients. But if we have few or no teeth, our food will not be sufficiently broken down. Even the bony ridges of very firm gums will not adequately do this. That is why people without teeth who try to wash down food with coffee, tea, or some other beverage may have digestive problems. When even a few teeth are missing, diet is restricted because hard or fibrous foods that require extra chewing are usually avoided.

Teeth also help us talk, a benefit we seldom think of until some are missing. They assist the tongue and lips to form speech sounds essential to understanding. For example, speech sounds such as consonant stops cannot be properly made without the presence of teeth. You have likely noticed this if you have ever heard a toothless person speak. Thus, a person with artificial teeth has to get his tongue adapted to them to get the sounds right again. Although this may take some time, the results are usually better than when there are no teeth.

What about singing or playing certain musical instruments when one has dentures?

\* In this article, the word "dentures" refers to custom-made appliances that replace lost teeth. If all natural teeth are missing, then a complete denture is indicated. However, if some teeth remain, a partial denture may be used. This article focuses on complete dentures and on removable partial dentures.

These activities can usually be done effectively by modifying the dentures in various ways. Singers, some actors, wind-instrument players, ministers, and some photographer's models would find their jobs very difficult, if not impossible, to perform without teeth.

Personal appearance is also affected by the absence of teeth. There is a bunching up of the soft tissues around the mouth and the drawing together of the nose and chin, making a person look older than he actually is. This can affect one's self-confidence and may even cause a psychological disturbance for some.

The loss of a tooth may lead to collapse of

### Taking a Bite Out Of Your Dental Bill

A VISIT to a dentist or an orthodontist often results in quite a hefty bill. You may be encouraged, however, by some findings that may help with your children.

"The high incidence of displaced teeth and misshapen jaws among Americans," reports *The New York Times*, "may be the consequence of our highly refined diet." The theory is that a diet requiring vigorous chewing "stimulates jaw growth (resulting in a space large enough to house the teeth without crowding), guides proper eruption of permanent teeth and coordinates the growth of the face and oral cavity."

Scientists endeavored to confirm this theory by feeding hard and soft diets to monkeys. The results? Those on the hard diet had far fewer "orthodontic abnormalities." So it may very well be that a diet that requires your child to chew vigorously will prove to be one way to take a bite out of your dental bill. Another way to do so is to help your children form the habit of regularly brushing and flossing their teeth.

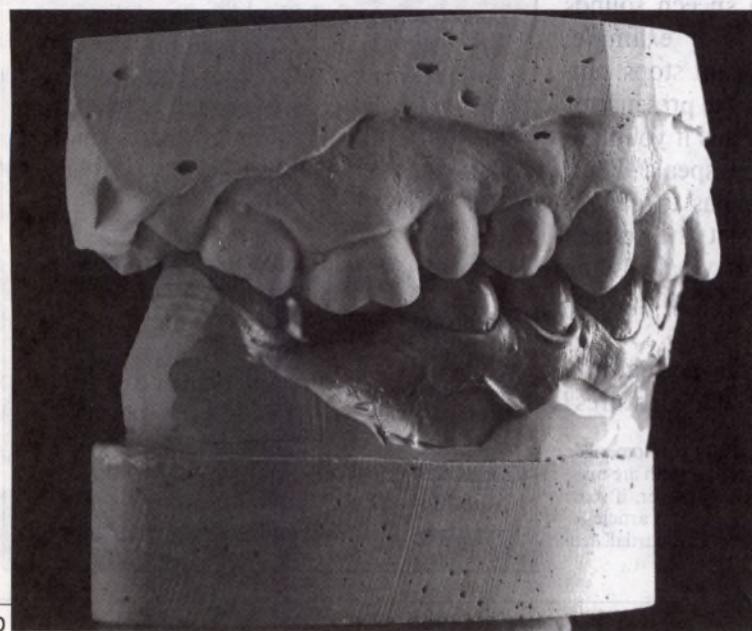
the dental arch. Our teeth are interdependent, like stones in a Roman arch. Thus, loss of a "neighbor" will allow the other teeth to drift. This movement causes spaces to form between the remaining teeth and may allow food particles to pack into the gum areas, and this often leads to gum inflammation. Tooth movement may also spoil the alignment of the teeth, causing chewing problems.

### How They Compare

The essential difference between natural and artificial teeth is that the natural ones are firmly rooted in the bone of the jaws. This makes it possible for them more effectively to incise, tear, and grind our food into very fine pieces. The lower teeth move across the upper teeth with a strong grinding and shearing action.

Complete dentures, on the other hand, merely rest on the gums or ridges thereof. They are held in place only by weak forces

***Our teeth are interdependent. Without "neighbors" to help keep them in place, teeth soon drift and adversely affect other teeth***



produced by the tongue, the cheeks, and adhesion. Since dentures are not anchored like natural teeth, they can easily be dislodged.

So the effectiveness of dentures varies from person to person. No dentures have the efficiency of natural teeth. Shape and size of jaws, types of tissue, and even the mental attitude of the wearer, along with the ability to learn to use them, are all determining factors as to how effective dentures are. Their main limitation is their lack of stability. However, when it comes to appearance, artificial teeth can be made indistinguishable from natural teeth.

Sometimes, unfortunately, it takes the wearing of dentures to impress a person with the wisdom, design, and practicality of natural teeth. Humans can weakly copy the original but never attain the same degree of marvelous efficiency.

Your situation may make it necessary for you to give serious thought to whether you need dentures, either full or partial ones. The decision, of course, is your own, but it does

seem wise to consider their advantages. They may help you prevent possible digestive problems, help you get adequate nutrition, and improve your speaking ability. And they really can improve personal appearance.

Indeed, although denture wearers usually lament the loss of their real teeth, the development of artificial teeth has contributed to a measure of personal contentment and a sense of well-being to millions of persons worldwide.

# Ancient Technology—Modern Marvel

"THE town [Turfan], in one of the hottest, most inhospitable places on earth, remains a verdant oasis, thanks to technology that is 2,000 years old," reported *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, Canada.

Turfan has the reputation of being not only the hottest city in China but also one of the hottest and driest spots on earth. Its population of about 180,000 live on the northern edge of the Turfan Depression, an extension of the Takla Makan Desert. Rainfall is practically unknown, and because of the intense heat, the little rain that does fall evaporates before it touches the ground. During the summer months, the temperature commonly reaches 130 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade.

Yet, trees and shrubs surround Turfan, covering an area of some 8,000 acres. These serve to protect the inhabitants against the blustering sandstorms that regularly swirl around its perimeter. The storms originate in the Takla Makan Desert and carry huge quantities of sand that could completely bury buildings and smother fertile fields. The trees and shrubs thus guard the city oasis from the destructive forces of the desert.

Despite this hostile environment of turbulent sandstorms and sizzling temperatures, Turfan is thriving as an agricultural center. The place is a veritable supermarket of exotic foods, producing desert dates, grapes, melons, pomegranates, peaches, apricots, apples, eggplants, onions, and wheat and other grains, not to speak of the finest long-fiber cotton grown in China. As long as can be remembered, Turfan has been known for the quality and variety of its agricultural produce. For thousands of years, it has been a thriving community in a fertile oasis.

What is the 2,000-year-old technology that maintains such a marvelous success story? *The Globe and Mail* claims that the city owes its success to "an ancient irrigation system that is one of mankind's most ingenious and lasting engineering works." The newspaper adds: "The secret of [Turfan's] survival is an incredible labyrinth of ir-

rigation tunnels and wells—known in the local Uighur dialect as *karez*—that collect the water running off the snow-capped Tian Shan mountains, 80 kilometres [50 miles] to the northwest." The water would likely evaporate before reaching the city canals if it was not supplied underground by means of the hundreds of tunnels that make up the elaborate irrigation system.

Long before the Uighurs developed their irrigation system, the ancient Persians used a similar network of irrigation tunnels. Says the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: "The Persians developed underground sources of water by digging tunnels, or *kanats*, into the hills, often several hundred feet below the surface and as much as 12 miles (19 kilometres) long." Indeed, this ancient irrigation technology is a marvel even in modern times, as it maintains an oasis in one of the hottest, driest places on earth.

While old and new technology convert deserts into beautiful gardens, in the not-too-distant future, by means of his Kingdom government, Jehovah will make all the deserts of the earth blossom, to the delight of the human family. Says the prophet of Jehovah: "The wilderness and the waterless region will exult, and the desert plain will be joyful and blossom as the saffron. Without fail it will blossom, and it will really be joyful with joyousness and with glad crying out. The glory of Lebanon itself must be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and of Sharon. There will be those who will see the glory of Jehovah, the splendor of our God."—Isaiah 35:1, 2.

## In Our Next Issue

**Rape—A Woman's Nightmare**

**Raising Sheep Is Our Business**

**Surrogate Motherhood  
—Is It for Christians?**

# Tastes That Shaped the World

By Awake! correspondent in India

**I**N THE 13th century, Marco Polo saw them in abundance. Christopher Columbus set sail to find them but instead discovered the New World. In the 15th century, Vasco da Gama finally reached India by sea and brought them back to eager buyers in Europe. Indeed, spices were then so valued that men risked their lives to obtain them!

When political changes blocked overland caravan routes, Vasco da Gama spent two years on a 24,000-mile round-trip voyage that took him from Portugal around the tip of Africa to India and back. Two of his ships survived the journey, returning with a cargo of spices and other goods worth 60 times the cost of the trip! But the success of his voyage plunged European nations into conflict. For the next three centuries, Portugal, Spain, France, Holland, and Great Britain competed for control of spice sources.

The history of spices, one writer summarized, is "a story of adventure, exploration, conquest and fierce naval rivalry." Frederic Rosengarten, Jr., said in *The Book of Spices*: "So useful, indeed indispensable, were spices, both politically and economically, that kings sent expeditions in search of them, merchants risked life and fortune to trade in them, wars were fought over them, whole populations were enslaved, the globe was explored, and such far-reaching changes as the renaissance were brought about by the restless, ruthless competition."

When the Dutch controlled the spice trade,

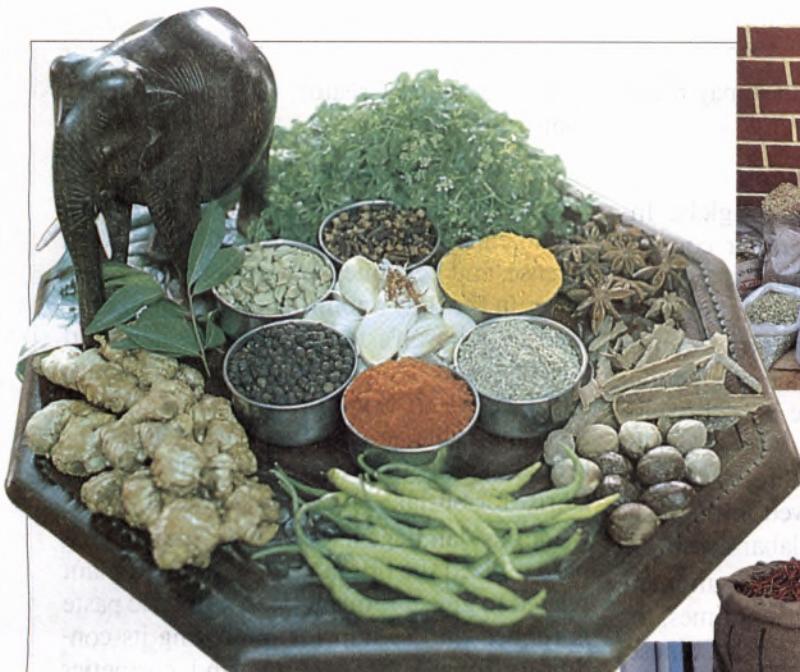
they raised the price of pepper by five shillings a pound when they sold it to Britain. Incensed at this, a group of London merchants gathered in 1599 to found their own trading firm, which later became known as the East India Company. The influence of this company eventually led to more than 300 years of British rule over India.

Fierce competition has disappeared, but the worldwide taste for spices continues. And perhaps nowhere are spices enjoyed more than here in India.

## A Romance With Spices

Spices and Indian cuisine are so inseparable that one might say that the country has a romance with spices. Who, in fact, hasn't heard of Indian curry—a stewlike dish of vegetables, eggs, red meat, fish, or chicken seasoned with an array of delicious spices? Some of these flavors appear in desserts too, confirming that "spicy" is not synonymous with "hot." Even the milky sweet tea so popular here is often enhanced by a bit of cardamom, cloves, ginger, or a combination of flavors. With an appetite for such seasonings, is it any wonder that in per capita consumption of spices, India is number one?

Just visit the kitchen of an Indian cook, and the eye will catch dozens of seasonings in varied colors and shapes. Among them are tiny black mustard seeds; sticks of fragrant, brown cinnamon; green pods of cardamom; brilliant, golden turmeric; pale, gnarled gingerroot; and scarlet-red chilies. Contrast this



**A small sample of the many spices popular around the world**

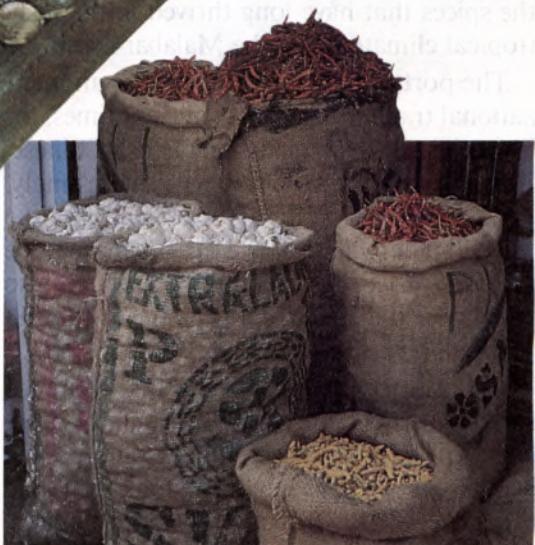
assortment with the single bottle of curry powder found in grocery stores in many countries. Curry powder does, of course, contain a mixture of various spices, and it serves a purpose. But it is a poor substitute for the combinations of spices—called *masalas*—used in India.

Special, ready-made *masalas* are blended for different foods, including vegetables, fish, chicken, and red meat. But more often, individual spices are combined right at cooking time, their type and quantity depending on the particular dish. The expert Indian housewife knows the precise order and the exact moment when each spice should be added in the cooking process. She can even extract different flavors from the same spice by roasting it, grinding it, dropping it whole into hot oil, or combining it with other seasonings.

Visitors to India are often surprised at the great diversity in food preparation. Besides



**Street vendor weighing out spices for customer**



**Spices awaiting buyers in a Cochin shop**

the major division of North Indian and South Indian cuisine, the country's regional cultures, such as Bengali, Goan, Gujarati, and Punjabi, have their own unique preparations. Religious beliefs also affect the taste of the food. Thus, in the state of Gujarat, a person might have a traditional Hindu vegetarian meal, but in the northern part of India he might enjoy a meaty Mogul meal, a reminder of the days of Muslim conquest. So dining on different nights with Hindu, Muslim, Sikh,

Jain, Parsi, and Christian families may result in no duplication of meals.

### Well Suited to Spices

Although spices grow around the globe, India produces more than any other country—over 60 different kinds. And it exports spices and spice products whole and in powder form to more than 160 countries. South India leads in the country's spice production. Often called the "Venice of the East" because of its beauty and plentiful waterways, Cochin, on the Arabian Sea, provides direct access to the spices that have long thrived in the lush, tropical climate along the Malabar coast.

The port of Cochin has served as an international trade market since ancient times, for Phoenicians, Egyptians, Persians, Chinese, Romans, Greeks, and Arabians. Interestingly, the Bible book of Revelation mentions "the traveling merchants of the earth" whose trade included "every sort of ivory object . . . also cinnamon and Indian spice."—Revelation 18:11-13.

Black pepper, prominent as "king of spices," was the initial prize sought by traders. Not only was it a food seasoning but it was also a vital preservative for meats and other perishable foods. By adding spices, foods that would otherwise spoil and be useless could be preserved for a year or more without refrigeration. In addition to pepper, later traders desired other spices—cardamom, coriander, fennel, and fenugreek, to name a few.

However, not all spices grown in India originated here. Red chili, for example, was introduced from South America. Dr. C. V. Raman, Indian Nobel laureate for physics, once said that 'all foods are insipid and uneatable without chilies.' Many raised on a different diet may well disagree. But, thankfully, the earth's larder was well stocked with great va-

riety by a loving Creator, satisfying strongly contrasting preferences.

### Not Just Food Flavorings

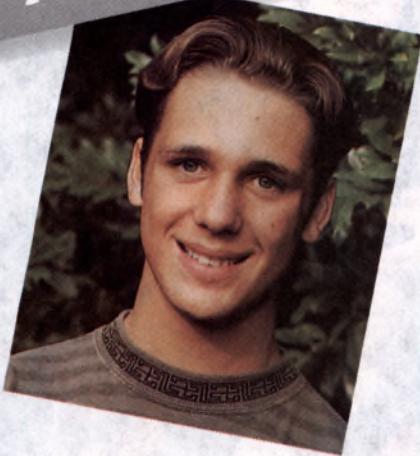
Spices have a fascinating history. The Bible documents the role of spices in anointing oils, incense, and perfumes. It mentions the use of spices in the holy anointing oil and in incense used at Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem and tells of spices being added to wines. (Exodus 30:23-25, 34-37; Song of Solomon 8:2) Further, the Bible reveals that early Christians brought spices to prepare the body of Jesus Christ for burial.—John 19:39, 40.

In this land, generations of Indian girls have utilized the bright golden root of a plant related to ginger—turmeric. A turmeric paste is rubbed on the skin for improving its condition. Today, the perfume and cosmetics industries use oils from allspice, caraway, cinnamon, cassia, cloves, nutmeg, mace, rosemary, and cardamom in the blending of volatile and fixed oils to make dozens of alluring perfumes. These ingredients are also added to soaps, talcum powders, after-shave lotions, colognes, mouth fresheners, and countless other items.

In addition, spices have long been used for medicinal purposes. Ginger, turmeric, garlic, cardamom, chili, cloves, and saffron are among the spices recommended by Ayurveda, the science of medicine propounded in the Hindu Sanskrit writings, the Vedas. A visitor to an Indian pharmacy today will still find a turmeric salve for cuts and burns, a toothpaste with 13 spices, and scores of other spice products for varying ailments.

Thus, a review of the history of spices indicates that without them, food preferences would have been different, medicine would not have been the same, and history would have been written differently. The taste for spices truly shaped our world—in more ways than one.

**Young  
People  
Ask...**



## Can Music Really Hurt Me?

**T**OM was a normal 14-year-old—a top-notch student who liked to do favors for his neighbors. But after purchasing an expensive stereo system, he began listening to heavy-metal music.

Tom became a virtual recluse in his room. Recalls his father: "I would say, 'You can't stay up there all the time and listen to your stereo.'" But Tom kept on listening. Then, one winter day, he stabbed his mother to death and committed suicide. "Tell parents to watch what music their children listen to," warns Tom's anguished father. Days before the killings, Tom had repeatedly sung a song about "blood and killing your mother."

An extreme case? Certainly. And while other factors no doubt played a part in this tragedy, it does give evidence of something that many youths tend to minimize: *Music can influence you!* You may not be a heavy-metal fan, nor are you likely to go on a violent rampage. Still, music can affect you in ways you may not even realize.

### The Power of Music

Music has power. Indeed, it can play on the gamut of human emotions—from sadness and pathos to love and joy. Music can lull one into calmness and incite one to rage. It can inspire devotion and promote decadence. Little wonder, then, that from ancient times, music has been a potent tool of "the god of this system of things," Satan the Devil.—2 Corinthians 4:4.

To illustrate: Shortly after the Israelites were rescued from slavery in Egypt, they abandoned the worship of Jehovah for that of a golden calf. What accompanied their disgraceful behavior? Wild and depraved music! (Exodus 32:1-6, 17, 18) And when egotistical King Nebuchadnezzar ordered his subjects to worship a pagan image, how did he seek to arouse his people's patriotic and religious fervor? By using stirring music!—Daniel 3:1-7.

We should, therefore, expect Satan to use music to mislead people today. He is "the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit that now operates in the sons of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2) Much of today's music reflects Satan's spirit of rebellion. And no wonder, since it is for the most part written by those whom the Bible says are 'walking in the unprofitableness of their minds, and who are in darkness mentally, and alienated from the life that belongs to God.' Indeed, judging by their life-styles, many popular singers, musicians, and composers have "come to be past all moral sense."—Ephesians 4:17-19.

Listening to their music can thus pose some real dangers for Christian youths. Not that all

popular music is bad or that rock music is the only music you need to be cautious about.\* Unwholesome music can be found among classical compositions and operas as well. But whereas in times past some music hinted at or suggested immorality, much of today's music promotes depravity with unprecedented boldness.

### Unfit for Ears and Eyes

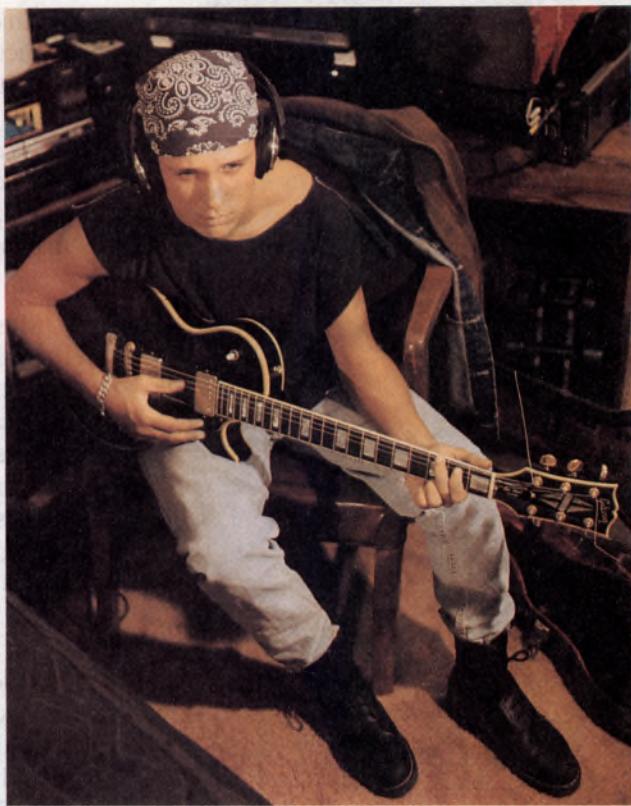
Take heavy-metal music—a particularly noxious form of hard rock that is usually played at ear-splitting volume. Heavy-metal bands typically sport names like Poison, Skid Row, Guns N' Roses, and Slayer. *Time* magazine said: "The band names alone conjure up images of mayhem, torture and death." The same can be said of the horrifying artwork that adorns the album covers and that often depicts satanic symbols.

But what about the music itself? It features such titles as "Flesh and Blood" and "Appetite for Destruction" and has lyrics that glorify sadomasochism, rape, and murder. So it is not surprising that the heavy-metal music guide *Stairway to Hell* calls heavy metal "a triumph of vulgarity, velocity, verbal directness, violent apathy." Heavy-metal music has also repeatedly been linked to drug abuse, Satanism, and suicide among its listeners. Yet, according to media reports, heavy metal is winning a growing mainstream audience.

Much of rap music (or, hip-hop) likewise goes to wild extremes.\* Says *Time* magazine: "Rap poets . . . call for the fire of war against police or the brimstone of explicit . . . sex."

\* The term "rock music" is used herein for any of the various styles of music popular among young people.

\*\* See "Young People Ask . . . What's Wrong With My Music?" in the February 8, 1993, issue.



### Will filling your head with messages of death, destruction, and sexual degradation help you or hurt you?

Frankly, the lyrics of many popular rap songs are too obscene to quote here. Referring to one such song, a teenage girl said: "The first word came on—and I was shocked!"

However, much of even mainstream rock is unfit for a Christian's ears. While most Top 40 songs are seldom as brazen as rap or heavy metal, many still subtly—or openly—promote sexual immorality and other unchristian practices. Music videos, enormously popular among youths, increase the impact of the music by adding powerful visual images. In one study of music videos, 57 percent were found to contain violence, and 75 percent contained scenes of sexual intimacy. Provocative dress

and sensual dancing were also found to be common fare in music videos.

### Can It Harm You?

Rather than being uplifting and wholesome, much of the music being promoted today is clearly "earthly, animal, demonic." (James 3:15) Curiously, though, not all Christian youths see any problem with listening to such songs or watching the videos. "You don't have to worry about the lyrics in rap music," argues one young girl. "You can't understand them anyway!" Anyone who has tried to decipher rap lyrics may agree that there is some truth to this.

Youths do not always catch the hidden meanings of popular songs. In one study, teenagers were told to describe the contents of some popular songs. Most youths simply did not discern the subtle themes of sex, violence, drugs, and Satanism that permeated their music. *The Journal of the American Medical Association* thus concluded: "There is no evidence that this music has any [harmful] effect on the behavior of adolescents."

The Bible indicates otherwise, though. For one thing, it tells us that "bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Corinthians 15:33) Now, would you spend hours associating with or listening to someone who used grossly obscene speech, who urged you to use drugs, who advocated the worship of Satan, or who described perverted sex in graphic terms? Of course not! Then why is such speech any less harmful simply because it is set to music or spoken to a beat? When such degrading themes are played over and over again, they cannot help but affect you! "Can a man rake together fire into his bosom and yet his very garments not be burned?" asks Proverbs 6:27.

For this reason the Bible exhorts us not even to mention immoral things, let alone repeat them over and over again. (Ephesians 5:3-5; Philippians 4:8) One who ignores this principle is sure to "reap corruption." (Galatians

6:8) "The songs get you thinking," admits a youth named Jodie. "When wrong desires come up, they give your mind fuel for the fire." After listening to a rap song that graphically described perverted sex, one youth confessed: "I just couldn't get it out of my mind."

And what about listening to heavy-metal songs that preach death, drugs, or Satanism? One Christian youth began listening to heavy metal and soon became obsessed with death. Only with the determined efforts of his parents and a mature Christian friend was he able to escape spiritual and physical ruin.

At times, thoughts turn into action. (James 1:14, 15) And much of today's music is carefully crafted to fill your mind with wicked thoughts. True, if you have been raised according to Bible standards, you are not likely to commit murder or sexual immorality simply because you heard about it in a song. But there are other ways you can be wrongfully influenced. Some Christian youths have taken to wearing the outlandish clothes and haircuts flaunted by rock and rap artists. The speech, gestures, and attitude of such youths clearly show that they *are* being influenced by what they hear.

"Youths say music doesn't affect them," says one South African boy. "But it gives Satan a way into your life—to control it." He knows this from personal experience, as he explains: "The music I listened to was about spiritism, drugs, and sex." How did he break free from the harmful effects of debasing music?

"I threw away all my music. It was a drastic change to sit in a quiet room. But it has made me a much better person." Do you need to take similar steps—not necessarily throwing out all your music, but at least ridding yourself of records that are clearly degrading?—Compare Acts 19:19.

This means, not swearing off music, but learning to be *selective!* How to do so will be the subject of a future article.

## Watching the World

### Voodoo Centers in Public Cemeteries

The city council and the mayor of São Paulo, Brazil, recently approved the free use of space at municipal cemeteries to serve as "voodoo centers," according to *Jornal da Tarde*. Opponents mounted protests against these centers, claiming that Afro-Brazilian sects will use the cemeteries to perform ghastly animal sacrifices. Examples of animals found abused, mutilated, or killed included small dogs buried alive inside larger animals and cats and dogs with eyes gouged out. One government official noted that the sects did not come to Brazil voluntarily but that slaves who practiced these rites were brought by force from Africa. For this reason, he implied, voodoo sects should be respected.

### The Killing Continues

According to *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)*, it is estimated that during World War I, no more than 19 percent of the people killed by warfare were civilians. By World War II, almost 50 percent of those killed in warfare were civilians. Since then, some 150 wars have been waged around the world. "It is estimated," says *JAMA*, "that more than 80 percent of the 20 million killed and 60 million wounded have been civilians, many of them children. In the last decade alone, an estimated 1.5 million children have been killed and more than 4 million disabled by war."

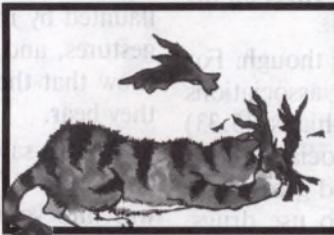
### Disease and Death

Worldwide, some 50 million people die each year. Of these deaths, 46.5 million are directly associated with disease, according to WHO (World Health Organization). In-

fectious and parasitic diseases kill 17.5 million people annually. Cardiovascular diseases kill about 12 million. Cancer kills over five million. Hiroshi Nakajima, director-general of WHO, stated: "The tragedy is that there are at least 20 million deaths each year that could be prevented with improved health systems, access to essential drugs and vaccines, a healthier lifestyle and education."

### Cats and Birds

Researchers estimate that in Wisconsin, U.S.A., alone, house cats may kill more than 19 million birds in a year. A study in Britain shows that 5 million house cats kill about 20 million birds annually. In Australia, town officials in Sherbrooke Shire ordered residents to keep pets indoors at night, with a violation bringing a fine of \$100, in



an effort to stem the killing of rare birds. In the United States, some 35,000 cats are born every day. But as *National Wildlife* magazine reports, the "Wisconsin study found that 94 percent of cat owners wanted songbirds on their property and 83 percent wanted game birds, yet only 42 percent were willing to reduce the number of cats to benefit these wild species."

### Sports and Health

Experts warn that forcing the body to an unaccustomed high level of performance could make you

sick. *The European* reported: "Research by medical scientists has revealed that top athletes are far more susceptible than others to viral infections like colds, sore throats and sores." Klaus Braumann, a medical adviser to the German Olympic team, interviewed 481 top German athletes. According to the daily *Studdeutsche Zeitung*, he found that they "suffer from cold sores on the lips [herpes simplex] four times as often as the average population." Although it is estimated that in Germany about 10 percent of the population develop these blisters once in a while, there is about a 50 percent incidence among top athletes. "Each physical effort that exceeds a certain limit can weaken the immune system," noted Heinz Liesen, an expert in sports medicine.

### "The Paradox of Abundance"

At a recent meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, two UN agencies announced that they will unite their efforts in "one of the largest offensives ever undertaken against worldwide malnutrition." The Paris daily *Le Monde* reports that the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization said that they would take action to overcome what they call "the paradox of abundance." Although the earth produces enough food to satisfy the nutritional needs of the whole human family, the supply is not distributed in a way that harmonizes with these needs. In Africa, famine daily threatens the lives of 40 million persons. Malnutrition affects 192 million children, and 40,000 of them die each day.

### Involuntary Indoctrination

"When parents smoke, their children will likely follow their exam-

ple," says the Paris newspaper *Le Figaro*. A recent study involving over 10,000 French youths from 11 to 18 years of age revealed that almost one fourth of them are regular tobacco users—meaning they smoke at least once every day. The study revealed that among tobacco-smoking youths, more than 50 percent have fathers who smoke. It also showed that almost 72 percent of the youths who are regular smokers wish they could quit.

### Less Respect for the Aged

The population of old people in Asia is growing significantly. In Japan some expect the number of people aged 65 and older to grow from the present 15.5 million to 32 million within the next 30 years. According to *Asiaweek*, 1 in every 4 Japanese will be elderly by the year 2020. "More than 9% of Singaporeans have reached their 60th birthday. And by the turn of the century, roughly 1.5 million Malaysians will qualify as senior citizens," added *Asiaweek*. This increase comes at a time when the old traditions of care and respect for the elderly have eroded. Henry Lim, an advocate for senior citizens in Singapore, stated: "There's a trend of weakening respect towards older people." He added that younger people often "have more time for the poodle than their parents."

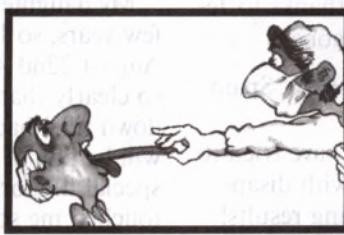
### A Good Business

In Argentina, reports of animal and human sacrifices have people concerned. According to *Clarín*, there are 5,000 sects in Argentina, many of which delve into spiritism, Satanism, and other forms of occultism. The use of images is prominent among many of these sects. In Buenos Aires it is not unusual to find shops that display images of Jesus Christ and Catholic "saints" on the same shelves as statues of demons. One popular image is known as "Lucifer, the Great Cap-

tain and the most terrible among all the gods of evil." *Clarín* notes that the suppliers of these satanic images distribute Catholic images as well. One shop owner admitted that the selling of Catholic images and satanic images is a "good business."

### Fear of Patients

The fear of contracting diseases from their patients may be seriously affecting the behavior of health-care workers, according to *The New York Times*. Many doctors are afraid of contracting AIDS or hepatitis by accidentally puncturing or cutting their skin with medical instruments while treating patients. Evidently this fear is not unfounded. A study conducted in a New



York City hospital revealed that about 60 percent of the doctors who regularly treat tuberculosis patients have been infected with that disease themselves. Also, every year about 12,000 health-care workers contract hepatitis from their patients. Since the AIDS epidemic began, about 47 health-care workers in the United States have been infected with the disease by their patients.

### Betel Nut and Cancer

"To chew or not to chew . . . that is the question." The question, having to do with the chewing of betel nut, was raised in the *Post-Courier*, a newspaper in Papua New Guinea. Dr. Barrie Milroy, a specialist surgeon with experience in treating betel-nut chewers, noted that it "seems that two major problems in

Papua New Guinea are endemic malaria and intra-oral cancer, the latter directly related to chewing of betelnut." Even young children are among the many habitual betel-nut chewers. If one chews betelnut it is a question not of whether, but of when, that one will get cancer," stated Dr. Milroy. He added that unless such ones quit, "there is not much help medically for them."

### Crafty Counterfeitors

"It's one thing for counterfeit money to slip by an unsuspecting shopkeeper or even a bank teller. It's quite another for it to fool sophisticated currency-handling equipment at the Federal Reserve," notes *The Wall Street Journal*. Yet, someone has been producing \$100 bills in U.S. currency that are doing just that. Called "exceptionally good," the fake currency has been popping up all over the globe. The difficult style of printing using a raised impression, the cloth-based paper with its telltale red and blue fibers, and the distinctive magnetic ink have all been masterfully replicated. The fakes are so good that instead of following the usual procedure of charging the banks for the counterfeit notes they pass, the U.S. government is accepting the loss. Some officials fear that the bogus bills are the work of a terrorist group or an unfriendly foreign government.

### Asthma Deaths Increase

"The number of persons who die of asthma attacks [in Germany] has increased dramatically," stated the daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. According to the German Respiratory Tract League organization, in 1991 more than 5,000 persons died as a result of respiratory illnesses in that country. In the mid-1970's, the corresponding figure was about 2,000 per year. Some 20 million inhabitants of Germany suffer from allergies, 1 in 3 from respiratory allergies.

## From Our Readers

**Chronic Fatigue Syndrome** We cried with appreciation in our family when we received our *Awake!* on CFS. (August 22, 1992) Jehovah's organization is so caring in trying to give understanding to those who have not been stricken with this terrible and weird disease! Thank you, too, for the appreciation expressed for our care givers, who carry such a heavy burden.

K. C., Australia

I looked like the woman on the cover. The articles gave me the strength to go to a doctor and to realize that I am really ill. I had blamed it all on depression. But thanks to Jehovah, the anguish I have felt is gone.

M. A., Spain

Finally, a magazine on CFS! I have tried to explain to others how I feel but with disappointing or occasionally mortifying results! These articles are examples of how your publications meet the urgent needs of individuals.

F. C., Italy

I still cannot believe that I finally have answers to my questions about my health. I have had CFS for 14 years without finding out what it was. I have been to many doctors who maintained that I had depression or an emotional problem. I have sent copies of this magazine to 25 of these doctors.

J. A. G., Brazil

I already had a goodly amount of knowledge about CFS. What I needed most was what you provided in the paragraph on page 14 that talked about what Jehovah God thinks. *Thank you so much!* I cry every time I

read that paragraph, which by now is close to 50 times!

S. D., United States

Between the tears and the chills, I made it through this article. I suffer from CFS. My diagnosis was very long in coming. But the physical pain I have had hasn't seemed as great as the pain I have felt because my Christian brothers did not understand. It seems Jehovah always knows when to supply us information.

K. J., United States

My daughter has suffered from CFS for a few years, so I was very glad to receive the August 22nd *Awake!* It set out the problems so clearly that I could not put the magazine down till I had finished. Then I reread it. It will be one of the magazines I keep in my special file for quick reference. This magazine touched me so greatly that I just had to say thank you.

M. E., England

**Alcoholic Parents** Thank you for the article "Young People Ask . . . An Alcoholic Parent—How Can I Cope?" (August 8, 1992). My father is a recovering alcoholic. He was very abusive, both physically and mentally. I started drinking at an early age and was well on my way to becoming an alcoholic myself at the time when my mother began studying with Jehovah's Witnesses. I'm happy to say that in August 1991, I was baptized! I am now applying to be a pioneer [full-time] evangelizer. I appreciate how understanding the article was of the feelings young people have toward alcoholic parents. We may love them, but that doesn't mean we condone what they do.

L. W., United States



## People Who Care

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES are an international organization of over four million Bible students who are organized into over 69,000 congregations worldwide. Not only are the Witnesses devoted to helping people learn more about God's purposes but they also love one another as Jesus Christ commanded. (John 13:34, 35) This love is manifested in practical ways.

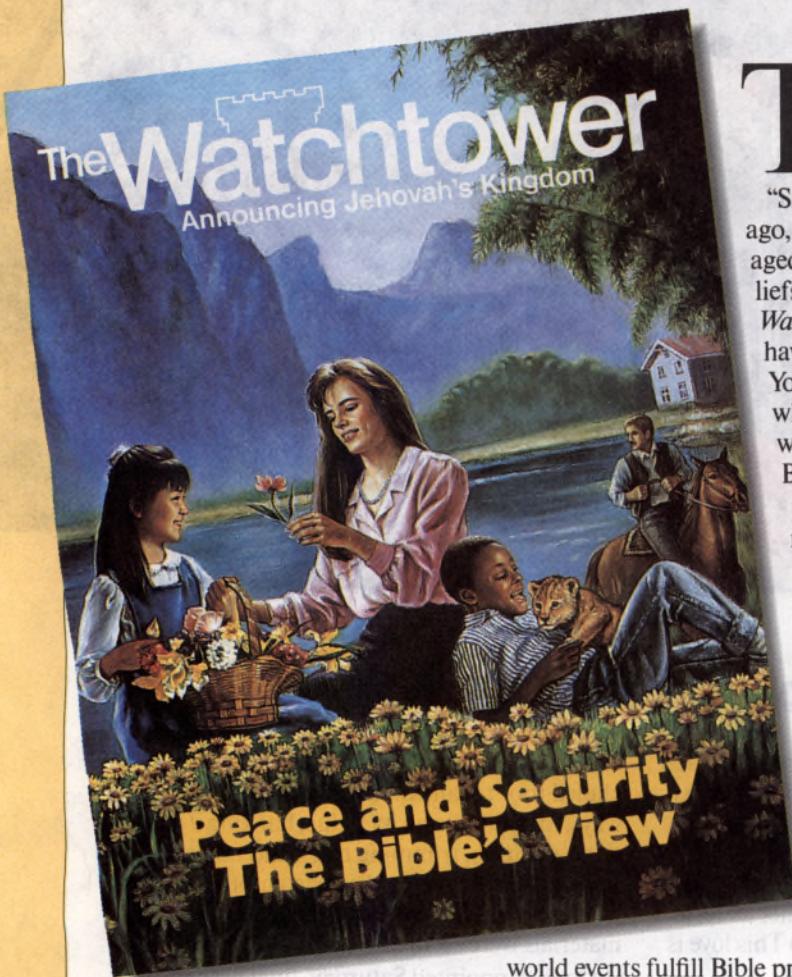
For example, some time ago nearly 30 Witnesses from the East San Marcos, California, Congregation gathered for breakfast at six o'clock one Saturday morning. They had a special project in mind—helping those in the congregation who needed assistance in caring for their homes.

Some of those in need were single parents, wid-

ows, and older couples. The needs of these included roof repairs on their houses, sealing driveways, installing security lights, hanging a garage door, painting, trimming trees, and other jobs. Preparation for the work started more than a month before when needs were identified and materials were secured.

On the appointed Saturday, final preparations were made during breakfast. Work teams were organized, and each received specific assignments. The women arranged refreshments, including a noon meal. The day's activity had a wonderful effect not only on those whose homes were repaired but on everyone in the congregation.

# Finger on the Pulse of Time



The Germany branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses received a letter from a 77-year-old Catholic monk. He explained:

"Since my monastery closed 25 years ago, I have been living in a home for the aged. I do not agree with all your beliefs, but what I read today in *The Watchtower* makes me admit that you have your finger on the pulse of time. You are truly a watchtower, doing what page two promises, 'keeping watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy.'

"You courageously and legitimately explain Paul's words at 1 Thessalonians 5:3: 'Whenever it is that they are saying: "Peace and security!" then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them.' Nowhere in our church do I find such explanations. A person cannot dispute the workings of holy spirit upon Jehovah's Witnesses.

... I will be happy to read your magazines regularly."

By following the example of this Catholic monk, you too can learn more about how

world events fulfill Bible prophecy and how God's Kingdom will soon destroy wickedness and create a global paradise.

... a book "Glorious Prophecy" by J. W. Draper contains an analysis of the book "Glorious Prophecy" by J. W. Draper, which is available online at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org).