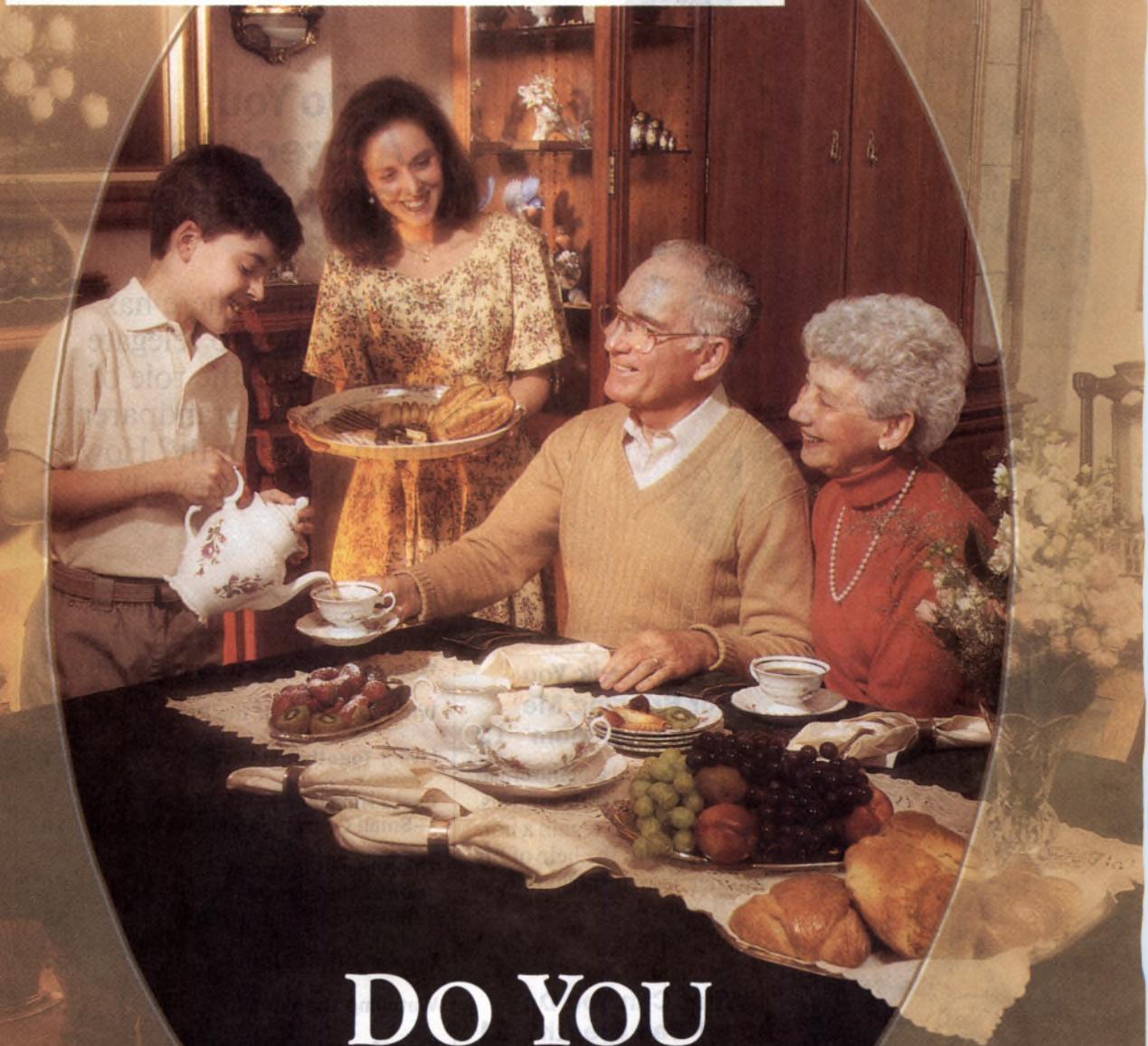


Awake!

July 8, 1995



DO YOU
APPRECIATE
GRANDPARENTS?

Do You Appreciate Grandparents?

3-11

In recent times there has been a tendency to relegate grandparents to the role of outsiders. How are grandparents treated in your family? How should they be viewed?



'Thank You for Bringing Me Home, Mom' 12

Todd survived a plane crash but with terrible injuries.

His fight to regain a normal life, with the help of his mother, is an inspiring story.



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Bad breath affects everybody. Find out why, and learn what you can do about it.

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WHAT IS HAPPENING TO GRANDPARENTS?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN ITALY

"I did not believe that as a grandfather I could be the object of such tenderness on the part of my grandchildren. They are a gift—sweet, innocent ambassadors for the strengthening of the bonds of affection."—Ettore, the grandfather.

IN SPITE of the above wholesome relationship, grandparents, parents, and grandchildren do not always get along these days. Rather than cooperating, the three generations often clash. With what results? Increasing solitude and unhappiness among the elderly, the grandparents—those members of the family who are often the most vulnerable and isolated, those to whom family members may turn when they have economic difficulties. What is the situation in your family? Are the grandparents truly appreciated?

In the last few decades, notable worldwide

social changes have affected the family and the relationships within it, resulting in the almost complete disappearance of the patriarchal family. In Europe, only 2 percent of elderly people live with their children. Even so, in industrialized nations, as a result of the current increase in average life expectancy and the decrease in births, the proportion of grandparents to the general population is ever larger. Grandmothers and grandfathers constitute 26 percent of the population of Europe, and according to a survey published by the European Union, the figure is "destined to



increase." Japan, says the *Asahi Evening News*, "is proud of its tradition of taking care of its senior citizens." Yet, there is an increasingly widespread habit, especially in the cities, of leaving grandparents in hospitals and specialized clinics even when there is no real need for hospitalization. In South Africa too, where the elderly have traditionally been treated with dignity, there is now the deplorable tendency to reject the aged, according to Cape Town newspaper *The Cape Times*. The report points out that families want to get "as much out of life as possible" and are "deluding themselves that once they have put granny safely in a home, they have done all that's expected of them."

The same newspaper speaks of a specific case in which an elderly grandmother is placed in an efficient rest home for the aged by her three children, "with promises of support and regular visits." But what becomes of her? "At first the visits are daily. After some weeks they drop to three times a week. Then it becomes once a week. After a year twice or three times a month, eventually five or six a year and finally hardly any at all." How did this grandmother pass her interminable days? The heart-rending description relates: "Her room had a window with a view of a tree, and her only living companions were the doves and the starlings that perched in it. She waits for their arrival as anxiously as if they were close relatives."

As a result of the Westernization of South African life-styles, which induces many to seek work in the cities, the same thing is happening in tribal families. Besides changing social conditions, other reasons for the abandonment of grandparents are the disappearance of those humanitarian qualities that promote happy social and family living—goodness, respect for one's neighbor, family affection—and the prevalence of the spirit of selfishness, hedonism, pride, and rebellion. According to the Scriptures, such moral degradation is a sign that we are living in "the last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Thus, rather than esteem their grandparents as a source of enrichment and stability, children and grandchildren often consider them to be a cumbersome hindrance, out of step with rapid social change.*

The generation gap is becoming increasingly accentuated, and it causes considerable tension, even more so when the elderly live with their families. Yet, the grandparents' contribution can be of such great benefit! What, then, are some of the principal problems between generations that impede affectionate relationships between grandparents, children, and grandchildren? And how can grandparents reestablish their valuable role within the family circle?

* It must be recognized that in some cases of senility and extreme health problems, a nursing home with professional staff may be the most loving and practical provision for some elderly parents.

Awake!®

Why Awake! Is Published *Awake!* is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

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

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WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS?

Grandparents, parents, and grandchildren—three generations separated by just a few decades, yet often in spirit by an abyss.

MANY grandparents lived through the frightful experience of the second world war, with all its devastating consequences. Their children were probably young during the time of the protests and the economic boom of the '60's. Their grandchildren today live in a world devoid of values. With today's rapid change in public role models, it is not easy for one generation to impart to the next an appreciation for its own experience. Something is lacking, something to persuade people of different generations to cooperate and respect one another. But what could it be?

Often, well-intentioned grandparents interfere in the family affairs of their married children, complaining that the parents seem either too strict or too lax with the grandchildren. On the other hand, a Spanish proverb says: "Punishment from grandpar-

ents does not make for good grandchildren"—since grandparents tend to be indulgent. Perhaps they intervene because they would like their children to avoid certain errors that, thanks to their own experience, they can see clearly. However, they may be unable to reappraise and interpret the changing relationships with their married children in a balanced way. The children, who with marriage have obtained long-yearned-for independence, are not prepared to tolerate interference. Now that they work to support the family, they cannot accept infringements on their right to make their own decisions. The grandchildren, who may think they already know it all, resent rules and regulations and perhaps consider their grandparents to be out of touch. In modern society, grandparents seem to have lost their appeal. Their experience is very often ignored.

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When Conversation Ceases

At times an impenetrable wall of lack of mutual understanding isolates the grandparents from the rest of the family even when they live with their children. Unfortunately, this occurs at precisely the time when, because the years begin to weigh heavily, the grandparents have even greater need for affection. A person does not have to be alone to feel alone. When conversation ceases, when respect and affection are replaced by condescension or irritation, the results are complete alienation and deep disappointment on the part of the grandparents. They hurt in their innermost feelings. Educator Giacomo Dacquino writes: "Love in the family, which someone recently likened to an old, superseded model, is still the best geriatric medicine. An understanding facial expression, a kind smile, a good word, or a caress helps more than many medicines."—*Libertà di invecchiare* (Freedom to Grow Old).

Your Example Can Make a Difference

The tension that results from deteriorating family relations also causes continual complaints of one generation against the other. One member of the family may feel that whatever another does is wrong. But the ill effects are felt by all. The children observe how their parents treat the grandparents and, in turn, how their grandparents react. Though the older ones, for the most part, may suffer in silence, the grandchildren hear, see, and remember. Thus their own future patterns of behavior are influenced. As adults, they may well treat their parents much as these treated the grandparents. There is no getting away from the Bible principle: "Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap."—Galatians 6:7.

If grandchildren see the parents treating the grandparents in a condescending way—making fun of them, rudely silencing

them, or even exploiting them—this is the way they, in turn, may act toward their parents when they get older. It is not enough to keep the grandparents' framed photo on the sideboard—they have to be respected and loved as persons. In due course, the same treatment may be meted out by the grandchildren. It is said that the phenomenon of mistreated grandparents is becoming more and more widespread. In some European countries, telephone distress lines have been set up for intervention in behalf of mistreated elderly people, similar to those already operational for the protection of children.

Selfishness, pride, and lack of love feed and aggravate lack of understanding. Thus,

"The awful thing about getting old is not being listened to."

—Albert Camus, French novelist

the number of those who try to rid themselves of grandparents by placing them in rest homes is on the increase. Some spare no expense to free themselves of the problem of caring for the elderly, entrusting them either to specialized centers equipped with all the latest technology or to retirement villages like those in Florida or California, U.S.A., served by an abundance of supermarkets and entertainments but still lacking the smile and caress of loved ones and the embrace of grandchildren. Particularly during vacation times, many look for a place to "park" grandma and grandpa. In India the situation can sometimes be even worse when some grandparents are just abandoned and left to fend for themselves.

Difficulties in keeping close family relationships are aggravated by divorce.

Only 1 British family out of 4 has both parents still living in the household. Divorce is on the increase worldwide. In the United States, there are over a million divorces each year. Grandparents thus unexpectedly find themselves face-to-face with their children's marriage crises and consequent drastic changes in relationships with their grandchildren. To the embarrassment of dealing with an ex-son-in-law or an ex-daughter-in-law is added the problem "of the sudden arrival of 'acquired' grandchildren" if, as reported by Italian newspaper *Corriere Salute*, "their son or daughter's new partner should have children from a previous marriage."

"A Spark to Our Lives"

Yet, a warm, affectionate relationship with one's grandparents, whether they are living

with the rest of the family or not, is of great benefit to all. "Doing something for our children and grandchildren," says Ryoko, a grandmother from Fukui, Japan, "is enough to give a spark to our lives." According to the results of research published by *Corriere Salute*, a group of U.S. experts is reported to have said: "When grandparents and grandchildren have the good fortune to enjoy an intense and affectionate relationship, the benefit is great not only to the children but also to the whole family."

What can be done, then, to overcome personal differences, generation gaps, and innate tendencies toward selfishness that exert such a negative influence on family relationships? This subject will be considered in the next article.

LIVING TOGETHER IN LOVE

Dear Grandma and Grandpa,

Are you well? I think I'm catching a cold.

Thank you for playing with me the other day. You took me to the park and to the public bath. I enjoyed it very much.

Next year on February 11, we have our school concert. If you can come again, please come.

We are very happy when you come, Grandma and Grandpa.

Please take care of yourselves, and always stay well. It's going to get cold, so take care not to catch colds.

I am looking forward to the next time you come and play with me. Please say hello to Yumi and Masaki for me.

Mika (Japanese)

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DID your grandchild ever write you a letter like this one? If so, when you received it, it undoubtedly gave you a lot of joy. Such letters are evidence of a beautiful and affectionate kinship between grandparents and grandchildren. But what is needed to establish, maintain, and strengthen this kind of relationship? And how may it prove beneficial to all three generations?

**Love
—“A Perfect Bond of Union”**

Roy and Jean, two British grandparents, say: "The main

principles, we feel, are recognizing headship and getting along with one another in love." These two Witnesses of Jehovah specifically cited the scripture at Colossians 3:14, which describes Christian love as "a perfect bond of union." Love generates respect, thoughtful attention, affection, and family unity. When dad comes home from work, the whole family runs to meet him to give him a warm welcome. If there is love in the family, the same thing happens when the grandparents arrive. "Grandma and Grandpa are here!" cries an excited child. That evening, the extended family sits down to dinner, and granddad, following the local tradition, takes the place reserved for him at the head of the table. Can you picture yourself and your family in this loving scene? Do you enjoy this blessing?

"Gray-Headedness Is a Crown of Beauty"

Obviously, love and respect for grandparents must be manifest continually, not just on special occasions. For this reason it is necessary to educate children constantly. Within the family children learn to love relatives and others, following the model set by their parents. Their example is fundamental, as pointed out by many who were interviewed on this subject. Macaiah, a father from Benin City, Nigeria, says: "I think my example of respecting my parents-in-law has also helped my children to be humble and respectful. I address my parents-in-law as 'Daddy' and 'Mummy.' My children hear and see that I respect them like my own parents."

If grandchildren fail to respect their grandparents, these may get upset, not so much for the shortcoming itself but for

the fact that the parents do not correct them. Demetrio, a grandfather from Rome, Italy, says: "I can see the love my daughter and son-in-law have for us by the way they educate our grandchildren to honor and respect us." On occasion, grandchildren may treat grandparents in an overly familiar way, as though they were mere playmates of the same age, or else with an air of superiority. It is the parents' responsibility to correct any such tendency. Paul, a Nigerian Witness, says: "About a year ago, the children started looking down on my mother. When



A family reunion can contribute to family unity

Your grandparents are encouraged when you write to them

I noticed this, I read them Proverbs 16:31: 'Gray-headedness is a crown of beauty,' and I also reminded them that Granny is my mother. Just as they respect me, they should respect her too. I also studied with them chapter 10 of the book *Your Youth—Getting the Best Out Of It*,* entitled 'How Do You View Your Parents?' Now, they do not have any problems in respecting their grandmother."

The Benefits of Cultivating Family Relations

Mutual affection can be cultivated even when family members live far away from one another. Stephen, a Nigerian grandfather, says: "We write to each of our grandchildren individually. This task is demanding, but the reward in building up and maintaining close kinship with the grandchildren has been very great." Parents' efforts are essential in this regard. Others, according to their circumstances, keep in touch by phone.

Giuseppe, a grandfather from Bari, Italy, who has 11 grandchildren, explains how he cultivates a warm friendship with his closest family members: "At the moment, three of the six families that compose my 'tribe' live far away. But that is no obstacle to pleasant dealings and gatherings among us. We have the custom of meeting together at least once a year, all 24 of us."

When grandparents live alone, if the exchange of visits, phone calls, or letters with family members is not regular, relations



can become impersonal. Affection has to be manifested constantly. Some grandparents who are middle-aged or in good health want to be on their own while they are still energetic and self-sufficient. However, if they totally isolate themselves from family members, they may also find that when their need for affection is greater, it could be slow in coming.

Another useful suggestion comes from Michael, a Nigerian grandfather: "I apply Jesus' Golden Rule—to do to others as you would have them do to you. For that reason my children love me greatly. We enjoy good communication." He adds: "If any of my grandchildren do something that upsets me, I speak to them if necessary. But if it is something I can overlook, I usually just forget about it."

Small gifts and small gestures on the part of grandparents produce a positive reaction. Kind, encouraging words, rather than constant complaints, make family life pleasant. Dedicating time to the grandchildren, teaching them amusing games and useful little jobs, telling them Bible stories or family anecdotes, create warm and lasting memories.

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

Such small but important things make life more enjoyable.

The Benefits of Mutual Respect

"Grandparents," says physician Gaspare Vella, "need to be careful not to oppose or compete with the child-raising authority of the parents." "Otherwise," he adds, "they exceed their field of action as grandparents and become grandparent-parents." This suggestion is in harmony with what the Scriptures say, that the parents have the primary responsibility of training their children.—Proverbs 6:20; Colossians 3:20.

Because of their experience in life, it is easy for grandparents to give advice. However, they must exercise caution in not giving unwanted and sometimes unwelcome counsel. Roy and Jean say: "It is important to appreciate that parents have the prime responsibility to train and discipline their children. At times one may feel that they are a little too strict and in other instances not strict enough. Hence the need to fight the real temptation to interfere." Michael and Sheena, two other British grandparents,

confirm the same point: "If the children ask our advice, we will give it, but we do not necessarily expect them to accept it, nor do we get upset if they do not." It is good for elderly parents to have confidence in their married sons and daughters. Such confidence improves relations among the three generations.

Vivian and Jane, who live in the south of England, make an effort to uphold at all times the discipline imparted to their grandchildren by their son and daughter-in-law, with whom they live: "We don't try to impose our own ideas where perhaps we feel different. Realizing that we back up their mum and dad, the children don't ever try to 'play one off against the other.'" Even when parents are absent, grandparents must be cautious about disciplining grandchildren. Harold, from Britain, says: "Any discipline seen by the grandparent to be needed in the absence of the parents should have been discussed *beforehand* with the parents." Harold adds that a kind, yet firm, word to the grandchildren or simply a reminder of "what the parent would require" is often sufficient.

When Christopher, a Nigerian grandfather, notes some shortcoming on the part of his own children, he avoids speaking about it in the presence of his grandchildren: "I give any necessary counsel when alone with the parents." The parents, in turn, need to do their part in ensuring that the role of grandparents is respected. "It is fun-



Leafing through a family album with your grandchildren can be an enriching experience

damental," says Carlo, a father who lives in Rome, Italy, "never to complain about the failings of the grandparents or other family members in front of the children." Hiroko, a Japanese mother, says: "When a problem arises with my in-laws, I discuss it first with my husband."

The Educational Role of Grandparents

Each family has its own history, customs, and experiences that distinguish it from all others. Generally, grandparents are the historic memory link of the family. According to one African saying, "every old man that dies is a library that burns." Grandparents transmit the memories of relatives and important family events, as well as family values that often unite the family at its roots. Not counting the moral guidance the Bible gives, one expert said that if "young people have no historic memory, they grow without the foundation of experience that has preceded them, devoid of values, uncertain and insecure."—Gaetano Barletta, *Nonni e nipoti* (Grandparents and Grandchildren).

Grandchildren like to hear the story of when mom and dad and other relatives were young. Looking at a photograph album can be very instructive and entertaining. What tenderness and warmth can be generated as grandparents tell the story of past events as depicted in the photographs.

Reg and Molly, two British grandparents who are Jehovah's Witnesses, say: "Happiness has come for us in being able to be with the grandchildren and do things with them, without intruding on their close bond with Mum and Dad, answering their many questions, playing together, reading together, showing them how to write, hearing them read, following their schooling with loving interest."

A grave error that many grandparents and parents commit is worrying only about the physical well-being of children and grand-

children. Reg and Molly, mentioned above, say: "The greatest inheritance we can give our children and grandchildren is to see them reared in the true knowledge of the Word of God."—Deuteronomy 4:9; 32:7; Psalm 48:13; 78:3, 4, 6.

Acting in Harmony With Divine Teaching

The Holy Bible, the Word of God, "exerts power" on people. It has the ability to help them control or eliminate divisive characteristics, such as selfishness and pride. (Hebrews 4:12) Those who put its teachings into practice, therefore, enjoy peace and unity in the family. One of the numerous scriptures that help the three generations to eliminate any gap that may exist between them is Philippians 2:2-4, which encourages all to manifest love and lowliness of mind, to maintain unity, 'keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just their own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others.'

Acting in harmony with divine teaching, parents and grandchildren alike take very seriously the exhortation to "keep paying a due compensation to their parents and grandparents," materially, emotionally, and spiritually. (1 Timothy 5:4) With a healthy fear of Jehovah, they manifest deep respect for grandparents, bearing in mind his words: "Before gray hair you should rise up, and you must show consideration for the person of an old man, and you must be in fear of your God." (Leviticus 19:32) Grandparents manifest goodness by working for the well-being of their descendants: "One who is good will leave an inheritance to sons of sons."—Proverbs 13:22.

Grandparents, parents, and grandchildren, whether they live together or not, can find mutual benefit in affectionate relations based on love and respect, just as Proverbs 17:6 says: "The crown of old men is the grandsons, and the beauty of sons is their fathers."

'Thank You for Bringing Me Home, Mom'

I WAS always nervous when Glen, my husband, went out flying, and I couldn't wait till he came home. He usually flew for pleasure. This time he had been hired to take some aerial photographs. Our younger son, Todd, accompanied him. Glen was always a careful pilot and never took unnecessary risks.

When the phone rang that Sunday afternoon, April 25, 1982, I answered it with a sense of foreboding. It was my brother-in-law. "Glen and Todd have been in a plane accident," he said. "We'll meet you at the hospital."

My 13-year-old son, Scott, and I said a prayer and rushed to the hospital. Upon arriving, we learned that Glen's plane had crashed some 60 miles north of New York City. (The exact cause of the crash was never determined.) Glen and Todd were alive but in critical condition.

I signed the legal forms giving the hospital permission to administer necessary treatment. But as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I would not agree to the use of a blood transfusion. To do so would have violated the Bible's command to 'keep abstaining from blood.' (Acts 15:28, 29) Glen carried a medical document that clearly stated his convictions in this regard. We did give the doctors permission to use nonblood volume expanders, however.*

* For information on the Biblical view of blood transfusions and the use of nonblood products, see the brochure "*How Can Blood Save Your Life?*" published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Glen had massive head and chest injuries. He died within a few hours. The hardest thing I ever had to do in my life was to walk into the waiting room and tell my son Scott that his father had died. He just clung to me and said: "What am I going to do now? I've just lost my best friend!" Yes, Glen had been a best friend to both of his sons, spending time with them in recreation and in worship. He was also my best friend and my husband. His death was a terrible loss.

Holding To Our Convictions

Todd had a broken leg and finger, crushed cheekbones, and severe brain trauma. He lapsed into a coma. How hard it was to look upon my nine-year-old son, who just hours ago had been full of life! Todd had always been a delightfully active little boy. He was talkative and loved to sing and play. Now he was not even aware of our presence.

Fearing that Todd might need surgery, the doctors demanded that I agree to a blood transfusion. I refused. They responded by obtaining a court order allowing them to use blood. It turned out, though, that surgery was not necessary, and Todd had suffered no internal bleeding. A few days later, however, I was told by the doctors that they were going to give him blood anyway. We were stunned! "We just need to do it!" was the only explanation his doctor gave us. They cast our religious beliefs aside and gave Todd three units of blood. I felt utterly helpless.

For several days following the accident, we were front-page news. The local paper led readers to believe that Glen had died because he had refused blood and even quoted a local physician to that effect! This was *not* true. The medical examiner later confirmed that Glen simply could not have survived his massive head and chest injuries. Fortunately, several Witness ministers were invited by the local radio station to explain our Bible-based stand. This resulted in some fine publicity, and the stand of Jehovah's Witnesses on blood became a common topic for discussion in our door-to-door ministry.

Efforts to Revive Todd

Todd remained in a coma. Then on May 13, a nurse rolled him over, and he finally opened his eyes! I hugged him and tried to talk to him, but there was no response. He couldn't even blink or squeeze my hand. But from then on he began to make steady progress. When we walked into the room, his head would turn toward the door. When we spoke to him, he would look at us. Did Todd really know we were there? We didn't know. So we started working to keep him mentally and physically stimulated. From day one we spoke to him, read to him, and played musical and Bible-related tapes for him. I even played my guitar for him; it was therapy for both of us.

We received much help from the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. My older son, Scott, recently recalled: "Two families virtually took me in as their own son, taking me on vacations with their family." Furthermore, some mowed our lawn, did our laundry, and made us meals. Friends and family members also took turns staying all night with Todd at the hospital.

For weeks, though, Todd could not respond to such attention—not even with a smile. Then he developed pneumonia. The

The hardest thing was to tell my son Scott that his father had died

doctor asked my permission to put Todd back on a respirator. The risk was his becoming permanently dependent on it. Just imagine: This life-and-death decision was placed in my hands! Yet, when it came to a blood transfusion, my wishes had been totally ignored! At any rate, we opted for the respirator and hoped for the best.

That afternoon I went home to freshen up. Standing on my front lawn was a government official. He informed us that we must sell our home to make way for road expansion. Now we had one more major crisis to contend with. I had always told others that Jehovah would never let us bear more than we were able to handle. I would quote the words of 1 Peter 5:6, 7: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; while you throw all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you." Now my faith and trust in God were being put to the test as they had never been before.

Weeks came and went, with Todd developing one infection after another. Days were filled with blood tests, spinal taps, bone scans, brain scans, lung taps, and endless X rays. By August, Todd's temperature finally returned to normal. August saw the removal of Todd's feeding and tracheal tubes! Now we faced the biggest challenge of all.

Homecoming

Doctors had told us that an institution would be best for Todd. One doctor reminded us that Scott and I had our own lives to live. Even well-meaning friends reasoned similarly. What they failed to realize,

though, was that Todd was very much a part of our lives! And if we could manage to care for him at home, he would be surrounded by those who loved him and shared his faith.

We purchased a wheelchair and a hospital bed. With the help of some friends, we knocked out the wall in my bedroom, installed some sliding glass doors, and built an outdoor deck and ramp that would allow Todd to be wheeled directly to his bedroom.

On the morning of August 19, it was time to bring my still semicomatose son home. Todd could open his eyes and slightly move his right leg and arm, but his doctor predicted that he would improve no further. A few weeks later, we took Todd to a highly recommended neurologist, only to hear those words repeated. Still, what a wonderful feeling it was to bring him home! My mom and a few close friends were there waiting for us. That evening, we even went to the Kingdom Hall together. This gave us our first taste of the enormous effort that would be involved in caring for Todd.

Caring for Todd at Home

Caring for a disabled person proved to be unimaginably time-consuming. It took Todd over an hour to eat a meal. It still takes me almost an hour to give him a sponge bath, dress him, and wash his hair. A whirlpool bath can take him a good two hours. Traveling is a major production, requiring considerable physical effort. Though recently he has improved greatly, Todd has had much difficulty sitting upright, even with the help of an adjustable wheelchair; he usually has had to stretch out on the floor. For years I sat with him on the floor in the back of the Kingdom Hall. Nevertheless, we did not let this stop us from attending Christian meetings, and we generally made it on time.

Our patient efforts have paid off. For a while the doctors thought the accident had

rendered Todd deaf and blind. However, before the accident I had begun teaching my boys sign language. During that first week home, Todd started to sign yes or no to questions we would ask. Later he developed the ability to point. We would show him pictures of friends and ask him to point to identify certain ones, and he did so accurately. He could also correctly identify numbers and letters. Later we moved on to words. His cognitive skills were intact! In November, just seven months after the accident, a long-awaited event occurred.

Todd smiled. By January his smile was accompanied by laughter.

As you'll recall, we were forced to sell our home. But it was a blessing in disguise, since our two-story home was small and greatly limited Todd's mobility. With little cash, it was going to be difficult to find a home that met our needs. A kind real-estate agent, though, found one. The house was owned by a widower whose wife had been confined to a wheelchair; it had been laid out with her needs in mind. Just perfect for Todd!

Of course, the house needed cleaning and painting. But when we were ready to paint, over 25 friends from our congregation arrived, rollers and paintbrushes in hand.

Coping With Day-to-Day Life

Glen had always taken care of the family business, the bills, and so forth. I was able to take over this aspect of life with little trouble. However, Glen had not felt it was important to have a will or proper insurance. We would have been spared much financial hardship—problems that persist to this day—if he had taken the time to care for these matters. After our experience, many of our friends began putting their affairs in order.

Another challenge was dealing with our emotional and spiritual needs. After Todd came home from the hospital, some acted as

if the crisis were over. Scott, though, continued to need help and encouragement. The cards, letters, and phone calls we received will always be cherished memories. I remember a letter from one person who gave us financial assistance. The letter said: "I will not sign this letter, since I do not want you to thank me but to thank Jehovah, since he is the one that moves us to extend love to one another."

Still, we have learned not to be totally dependent upon others for encouragement but to take positive steps in our own behalf. When I feel low, I often try to think of others. I enjoy baking and cooking, and from time to time, I will entertain friends or just bake a few things and give them away. When I'm really stressed out or need a break, there always seems to be an invitation to dinner, to lunch, or for a weekend away with friends. At times, someone will even offer to stay with Todd for a while so I can go on errands or shop.

My older son, Scott, has also been a wonderful blessing. Whenever possible, Scott took Todd with him to social gatherings. He was always there to help in one way or another with Todd's care, and he *never* complained about having too much responsibility. Scott once said: "If I sometimes found myself wishing I had a more 'normal' life, I quickly recalled how my experience had drawn me closer to God." I daily thank Jehovah for allowing me to have such a loving, spiritually-minded son. He serves in his congregation as a ministerial servant and enjoys being a full-time evangelizer with his wife.

And Todd? He has continued to make steady gains. Within a couple of years, he began speaking again. First it was little words, then sentences. Now he can even express himself at Christian meetings. He is working hard on speaking more fluently, and speech



With my sons

therapy has helped. He still loves to sing—especially at the Kingdom Hall. He also continues to be ever optimistic. He can now stand with a walker. Some time back, we had opportunity to tell some of our story at a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. When asked what he would like to say to all the friends in attendance, Todd said: "Don't worry. I will get better."

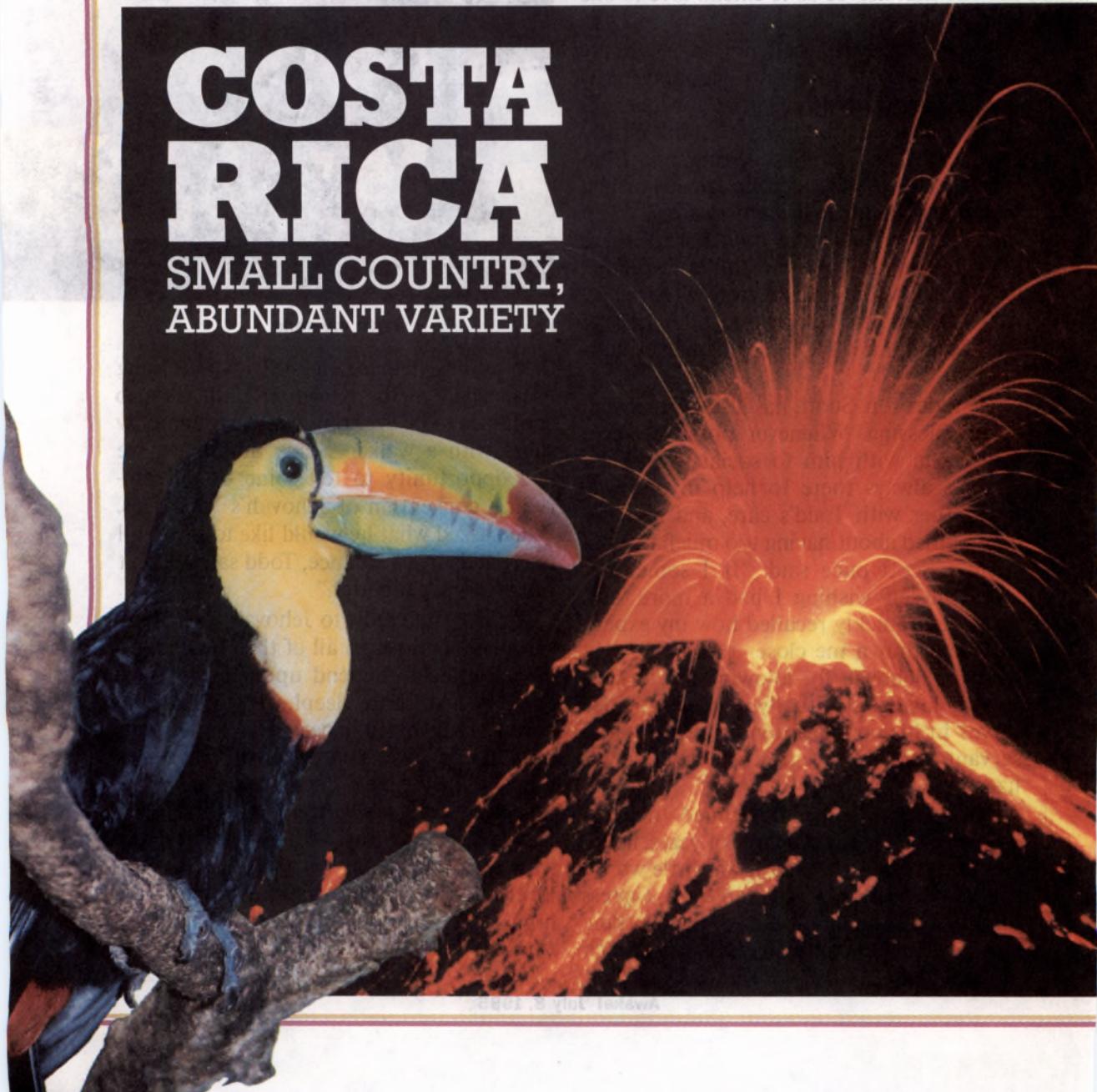
We give full credit to Jehovah for having sustained us through all of this. Indeed, we have learned to depend upon him as never before. All those sleepless nights, all the hard work involved in caring for Todd's personal needs and comforts, all the sacrifices we have made have been worth it. Some time ago, when we were enjoying breakfast, I looked up and found Todd staring at me with a big smile on his face. He said: "I love you, Mom. Thank you for bringing me home from the hospital."—*As told by Rose Marie Boddy.*

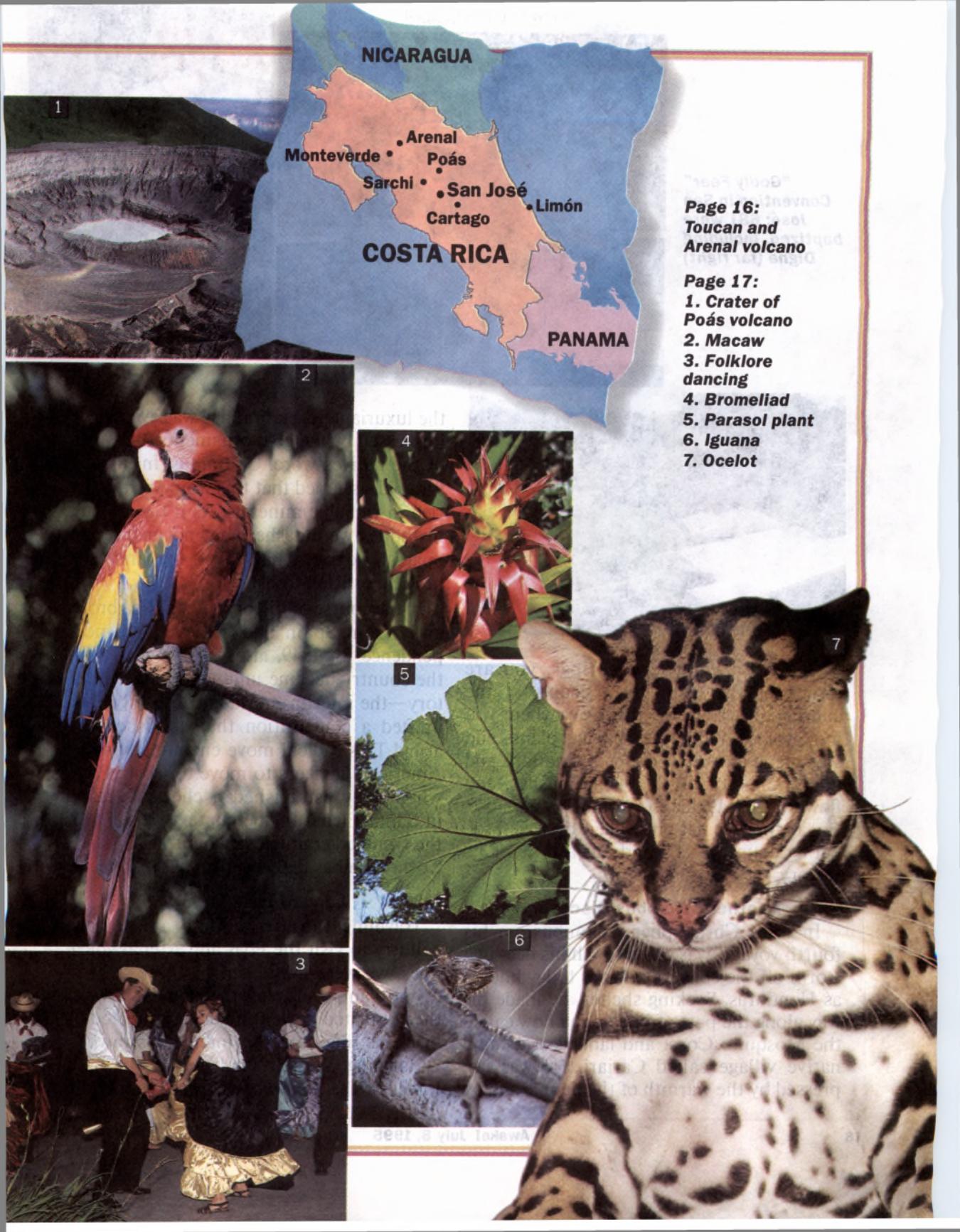
THAT Costa Rica is a small country is soon evident when you fly in to the San José Airport, a few miles outside the capital. One minute you are over the Caribbean Sea, and minutes later you are swooping over the Pacific, preparing to land. Costa Rica, a country of some three million inhabitants, is a narrow strip of mountainous and volcanic terrain separating Nicaragua from Panama. It is one of the seven nations that form Central America, including the Isthmus of Panama, the land link between Mexico in North America and Colombia in South America.—See map, page 17.

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN COSTA RICA

COSTA RICA

SMALL COUNTRY, ABUNDANT VARIETY





Page 16:
*Toucan and
Arenal volcano*

- Page 17:
1. Crater of Poás volcano
 2. Macaw
 3. Folklore dancing
 4. Bromeliad
 5. Parasol plant
 6. Iguana
 7. Ocelot

"Godly Fear"
Convention in San
José; 681 were
baptized, including
Digna (far right)



Once you get your bearings, you are struck by the lush, green beauty of the countryside. It seems that everywhere you look, you see palm trees, banana plants, and sugarcane as well as coffee plantations and many kinds of exotic plants, bushes, and flowers. Costa Rica is a botanist's paradise. But before we get enthralled by this fascinating country, let's find out a little of its history.

Another Columbus Discovery

In 1502, Christopher Columbus, on his fourth voyage, was caught with his fleet in a storm off the coast of what is today known as Honduras. Seeking shelter, he made his way along the part of Nicaragua now called the Mosquito Coast and landed at a small native village called Cariari. He was impressed by the warmth of the people and by

the luxuriant vegetation. He was even more impressed by the gold ornaments that some of the natives wore. Columbus, in his lust for gold, assumed that this would be a coast rich in valuable minerals. As it turned out, his hopes were dashed, but not before the Spanish explorers had called the land Costa Rica, or Rich Coast.

In the course of history, Costa Rica broke away from Spain and achieved its independence. In 1949, after a brief civil war, the country became unique in modern history—the interim president, José Figueres, drafted a constitution that abolished the army! This radical move encouraged some American Quakers to move to Costa Rica, where they established a cheese factory, in Santa Elena. In the context of some of the troubled countries of Central America, Costa Rica has truly been an oasis of peace.

Land of Lush Variety

Traveling through a small area of the country to visit the Poás and Arenal volcanoes, we were impressed by the lush variety of plants and trees, the tropical flowers, the cultivated flower nurseries protected by black netting, and the intensive strawberry farming. We felt small beside the huge leaves of the *sombrilla del pobre* (poor per-

son's parasol) plant. The hillsides were covered with dark green coffee bushes loaded with their reddish berries.

In Costa Rica, butterflies are everywhere. Within easy reach of San José, there are a couple of butterfly farms where you can see and photograph butterflies in a natural setting. One guidebook says that "there are more butterflies in this tiny country than in the entire United States." It also states that "scientists now know that Costa Rica is one of the most biologically diverse areas in the world." Little wonder that botanists and biologists flock to study the variety of life in compact Costa Rica.—See accompanying box.

Another example of variety in the wild is the birdlife of Costa Rica. You have to be alert to see some of the birds and even faster to photograph them! Flocks of green parakeets make noisy entries and exits wherever they go. Soaring above were the *zopilotes*, or black vultures, searching keen-eyed for their next meal. In the forest canopy, you might get a glimpse of the ungainly toucans, with their huge beaks. We saw the yellow thigh finch and the yellow-breasted kiskadee flycatcher flitting through the trees. We also caught a fleeting glimpse of a hummingbird hovering over nearby flowers for its next taste of nectar. At the ZooAve (Bird Zoo), we feasted our eyes on every kind of Costa Rican bird. There were the multi-colored, raucous macaws making their presence known. Alas, too many other birds had to be kept in cages, including a family of four owls, sitting side by side, looking so sage.

Costa Rica is famous for its wide variety of national and private parks, Indian reserves, and wildlife refuges. In fact, almost 27 percent of the land is protected, the largest proportion of any country in the world. So if you are willing to travel, you can take your choice of terrain and ecological setting.

If you do go to Costa Rica, there is at least one small warning worth noting. If you drive a vehicle there, you might be excused for thinking that many drivers in front

Costa Rica's Rich Diversity

The book *Costa Rica—A Natural Destination* states: "Costa Rica is species rich. This small country that covers less than three ten-thousandths [0.03%] of the earth's surface is home to 5 percent of all the plant and animal species known to exist." There are, for example:

A minimum of 830 bird species, including toucans and quetzals

A minimum of 35,000 insect species

A minimum of 9,000 vascular plant species

A minimum of 208 mammalian species, including ocelots

A minimum of 220 reptile species, including large iguanas

A minimum of 160 amphibian species, including poison arrow frogs

A minimum of 130 freshwater-fish species

Some scientists speculate that there could be one million species in Costa Rica.

Volcanoes

There are known to be 112 craters that range from extinct to active. Impressive Arenal volcano, which rises to over 5,000 feet is one of the most active in the world. If you want to see it, you had better check the weather forecast before you make the arduous journey over potholed roads. Arenal is often covered with clouds.

Irazú volcano rises to over 11,200 feet. It was active from 1963 to 1965.

Poás volcano, rising to over 8,800 feet, is a mountain with two eyes—one white and boiling in the active crater and the other, a blue lake surrounded by luxuriant jungle.

of you are inebriated. Why? Because they will often wind and twist without warning. What are they doing? They are avoiding the large potholes that plague the road system of the country. Thus, one tourist brochure stated regarding the famous Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve: "[It] can only be reached by suffering through several hours of dreadful road conditions; a visit of several days is recommended rather than a quick trip in and out." Of course, if you travel in a vehicle with good suspension and tough tires, you may be less affected by these cavities.

Really, there is so much to see and absorb in Costa Rica that a two-week vacation will allow you to scratch only the surface of the beauty and variety of that fascinating land. One hotel had a few exhibits in a minizoo. The guard kindly allowed us into the cages to photograph a toucan and a lithe ocelot. Variety also applies to Costa Rica's hospitable people.

A Unique Gathering of *Ticos*

What are *ticos*? That is the familiar name given to the people of Costa Rica. It comes from the custom of using the diminutive suffix *-ico* in the Spanish language. For example, *chiquitico* for small, *bonitico* for cute or pretty, and *joyencitico* for young. Out in the country town of Sarchi, the *tico* artisans are famous for their original hand-painted *carretas*, or ox carts. Each one is a distinctive work of art. Tourists buy the small replicas by the hundreds.

At the end of 1994, the *ticos* had the opportunity to see something very special in their Catholic land. December 30 to January 1, 1995, were the dates for a religious convention of Jehovah's Witnesses that took place in the national soccer stadium in Sabana Park, San José. It was held under the Biblical theme of *Temor Piadoso* (Godly

Fear), and Witnesses came from all over the land, while small delegations arrived from other Central and South American countries. Costa Rica has over 15,000 active Witnesses. What would be the attendance on this special occasion? On Friday 21,726 people came—young, old, parents, children, all were neatly and modestly dressed. Saturday the crowd grew to 25,539, and 681 were baptized in three large pools set up at one end of the field. On Sunday the attendance figure grew to 27,149! What a thrill for the missionaries, the pioneers (full-time evangelizers), and the humble men, women, and children who work so hard to cover Costa Rica's territory from house to house. And how encouraging to see so many families in the open-air stadium, sheltered from the sun under their multicolored umbrellas!

When the program ended, thousands took out their handkerchiefs and waved good-bye to one another. It was a touching moment.

Costa Rica Needs God's New World

Even though there is much in this land to remind one of a paradise—its varied flora and fauna and its pleasant climate—the *ticos*, just like the people of any other country, need the 'new heavens and the new earth' that Jehovah has promised through Christ Jesus. (Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-4) Even as seen worldwide, there are signs of poverty, with families living in inadequate housing. Then too there are sickness and death, which afflict all humankind. Therefore, Jehovah's Witnesses are zealously preaching the good news of God's Kingdom rulership, the Kingdom that all sincere Christians request in the famous Our Father, or Lord's Prayer. Under that promised righteous rulership, Costa Rica's abundant variety will shine even more brightly, to God's everlasting praise.

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT BAD BREATH?

It is said to be one of the world's most common complaints, afflicting more than 80 percent of the adult population at one time or another.

It can cause embarrassment, frustration, and anguish.

IN THE professional fields, it is widely known as halitosis, from the Latin word *halitus*, meaning "breath," and the suffix *-osis*, which refers to an abnormal condition. Some also call it oral malodor. But most people know it as plain old bad breath!

Do you have bad breath? While you may not have any difficulty identifying bad breath in other people, it may be impossible for you to detect your own. A journal for the American Dental Association, *JADA*, explains that we tend to get used to our own bad breath and that even people "with extremely bad breath may not be personally aware of the problem." Hence, most of us become aware of our own bad breath only when someone else brings it to our attention. How embarrassing!



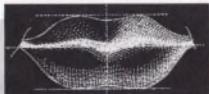
Life

The fact that it is a common problem is no consolation. Bad breath is generally considered offensive and unacceptable. In some cases, it can even cause serious emotional trauma. Dr. Mel Rosenberg, head of the Laboratory of Oral Microbiology at Tel Aviv University in Israel explains: "Oral malodor, whether real or perceived, can lead to social isolation, divorce proceedings, and even contemplation of suicide."

What Is Known About Bad Breath?

Health professionals have long recognized bad breath as a potential indicator of bad health. For that reason, since ancient times doctors have studied the odors of the human mouth.

About two hundred years ago, renowned



What Causes Bad Breath?

The following are among the many conditions, illnesses, and habits that can cause bad breath:

- Bronchitis
- Chronic gastritis
- Diabetes
- Drinking alcoholic beverages
- Dryness of the mouth
- Empyema
- Eructations (belches)
- Gum disease
- Hiatal hernias
- Kidney failure
- Liver disease
- Menstruation
- Mouth sores
- Ovulation
- Poor oral hygiene
- Sinusitis
- Smoking tobacco
- Some types of cancer
- Some types of medication
- Tooth decay
- Tuberculosis
- Wounds from dental surgery

French chemist Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier invented a breath tester to study the components of human breath. Since then, scientists have developed improved models. Today, laboratories in Canada, Israel, Japan, and the Netherlands are using the halimeter, which measures the level of offensive odors in the mouth. In New Zealand, scientists have developed plaque-growth stations, also known as artificial mouths. These duplicate the environment in the typical human mouth, with saliva, plaque, bacteria, and even bad breath.*

* Plaque is a sticky material that develops on the surface of teeth. It is composed largely of bacteria that can harm your teeth and gums.

With the help of modern technology, scientists have learned much about our breath. For example, according to the magazine *Scientific American*, "researchers have now isolated nearly 400 volatile organic compounds in normal human breath." Not all these compounds produce offensive odors, though. The main culprits in bad breath are hydrogen sulfide and methyl mercaptan. It has been said that these gases give our breath an odor very similar to the odor of a skunk.

The human mouth is home to more than 300 species of bacteria. The *Tufts University Diet & Nutrition Letter* says: "Dark, warm, and moist, the mouth reigns as the perfect environment for odor-causing bacteria to thrive." But only four species are primarily responsible for bad breath. They live in your mouth, but most likely you do not yet know them by name. They are *Veillonella alcalescens*, *Fusobacterium nucleatum*, *Bacteroides melaninogenicus*, and *Klebsiella pneumoniae*. They feed on particles of food, dead cells, and other matter in the mouth. This bacterial activity in turn produces foul-smelling gases. The process is similar to what happens when garbage rots. Appropriately, the dental journal *J Periodontol* explains: "In the great majority of cases, halitosis originates in the mouth itself, as the result of microbial putrefaction [decomposition of organic matter]." Left unchecked, this process can lead to tooth decay and gum disease.

"Good Morning! How Is Your Breath?"

This process of putrefaction in the mouth accelerates during sleep. Why? During the day, the mouth is constantly rinsed with oxygen-rich and slightly acidic saliva, washing bacteria away. However, the hourly production of saliva is reduced to about 1/50 the normal rate during sleep. As one magazine puts it, a dry mouth "becomes a

stagnant pond of more than 1,600 billion bacteria," creating the well-known "morning breath" with its accompanying bad taste.

Reduced salivary flow can also be triggered by stress while you are awake. For example, a nervous public speaker may get a dry mouth while speaking and finish up with a bad case of halitosis. Oral dryness is also a side effect or symptom of a number of diseases.

But bad breath is not always a result of bacterial activity in the mouth. In fact, oral malodor is often a symptom of a variety of conditions and illnesses. (See box on page 22.) For this reason, in cases of unexplained persistent bad breath, it is best to seek medical attention.

Bad breath may also originate in the stomach. However, contrary to popular belief, this happens rarely. More often, some unpleasant odors reach your mouth from the lungs. How? After some foods, such as garlic or onions, are digested, they enter the bloodstream and are transported to the lungs. The associated odors are then exhaled through the respiratory tract into and out of your mouth and nose. According to the magazine *Health*, "studies have shown that people get garlic breath even when the cloves are simply rubbed on the soles of their feet or swallowed without chewing."

Drinking alcoholic beverages will also charge your blood and lungs with the odor of alcohol. When this happens, there is virtually nothing you can do to correct the situation other than wait. Some food smells will linger in your body for up to 72 hours.

How to Prevent Bad Breath

Bad breath cannot be corrected by simply chewing on a candylike breath freshener. Remember that bad breath is often a result of bacterial activity in the mouth.



**Good oral hygiene includes
flossing as well as brushing the
teeth and the tongue**

One must always keep in mind that tiny pieces of food that remain in the mouth provide a banquet for millions of bacteria. Therefore, one important way to fight bad



Your Tongue Needs Attention Too

Go to the closest mirror, and take a good look at your tongue. Is it covered with countless little crevices? This is normal. But those crevices on your tongue's surface can provide a haven for millions of bacteria. When left undisturbed, the bacteria can create a persistent bad-breath problem and other unhealthy conditions. However, people often overlook the tongue when practicing oral hygiene.

Dentists recommend regular brushing of the tongue's upper surface with a soft-bristled toothbrush as a remedy for halitosis. Some experts recommend using a tongue scraper. In India, people have used tongue scrapers for generations as a way to get rid of bad breath. Years ago they were made of metal, but today plastic scrapers are more common. In some places, you may have to consult your dentist in order to obtain a scraper.

breath is to keep your mouth clean, hence reducing its population of bacteria. This is done by regularly removing food particles and plaque from your teeth. How? Brushing your teeth after meals and at bedtime is important. But brushing is only one of the steps.

There are tooth surfaces unreachable with a brush. So flossing at least once a day is vital. Experts also recommend gently brushing your tongue, which is a favorite hiding place and breeding ground for bacteria. Periodic examinations and teeth scaling by a dentist and a dental hygienist are also necessary. Bypassing any of these steps can result in bad breath and, in time, in serious tooth and gum diseases.

There are some temporary measures that

can also be taken to freshen your breath. Take a drink of water, chew sugarless gum —do something that will increase your salivary flow. Remember that saliva acts as a natural mouthwash that rinses away bacteria and creates an inhospitable environment for them.

Commercial mouthwashes can help, but recent studies show that you should not rely entirely on them when combating bad breath. In fact, frequent gargling with alcohol-containing mouthwashes can cause oral dryness. Some of the most effective mouth-rinsing products available to the consumer reduce plaque by only 28 percent. So after a good rinse with your favorite mouthwash, you may still have in your mouth more than 70 percent of the original bacteria population. The magazine *Consumer Reports* explains that in a series of experiments, "bad breath typically returned sometime between 10 minutes and an hour after rinsing" with a mouthwash. Even the more powerful mouthwashes, available in many countries by prescription only, reduce plaque by only 55 percent. In a matter of hours, the bacteria grow back to their former numbers.

Clearly, when it comes to preventing bad breath, a casual attitude must be avoided. Rather, you should treat your mouth and teeth as precious tools that need constant maintenance. Responsible carpenters and mechanics protect their tools against rust, corrosion, and other damage by following specific maintenance procedures after the completion of each job. Your teeth and mouth are more precious than any man-made tools. So give them the maintenance and care that they deserve. By doing this, you will diminish bad breath, with its accompanying frustration and embarrassment. More important, your mouth will be cleaner and healthier.

Does It Matter What You Believe?

"MAN PREFERS TO BELIEVE WHAT HE PREFERS TO BE TRUE."

—FRANCIS BACON, 1561-1626, ENGLISH ESSAYIST AND STATESMAN.

WHEN it comes to religious doctrines, many people feel that as long as one sincerely believes that 'there's Someone up there' and loves his fellowman, it does not really matter what else one believes. Some may look at the conflicting notions that religious groups advocate regarding God, his purpose, and how to worship him and conclude that the differences are merely superficial, like different styles of clothing worn by the same man. They may even feel that those who make a big issue of such differences have entirely missed the spirit of true Christianity.

The Scriptures acknowledge that not all discussions of religious teachings are worthwhile. For example, in his inspired letters to Timothy, the apostle Paul referred to men who fomented "violent disputes about trifles." Paul described them as "mentally diseased over questionings and debates about words." (1 Timothy 6:4, 5) He instructed Timothy to

"turn down foolish and ignorant questionings, knowing they produce fights," and to instruct the congregations "not to fight about words, a thing of no usefulness at all." (2 Timothy 2:14, 23) Much religious debate in our time has fit this description and has proved to be a pointless waste of time.

Does that mean, though, that *all* discussions of religious beliefs are pointless? Well, we would not give up wearing clothing altogether simply because *some* clothes are unfit to be worn, would we? So why give up as unimportant the entire subject of religious beliefs just because *some* doctrinal questions are unworthy of consideration? The context of Paul's words quoted above shows that he considered the matter of doctrines to be one of vital concern. He repeatedly warned that false teachings could result in one's being led away from the faith, and he instructed Timothy to "command certain ones not

The Pharisee's self-righteousness reflected his beliefs



to teach different doctrine." (1 Timothy 1:3-7; 4:1; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:14-18, 23-26; 4:3, 4) Certainly, he would not have made such emphatic statements unless it was important what those first-century Christians believed.

Why, then, the counsel to turn down questions on doctrine? It was because in Paul's day certain men—described by him as "corrupted in mind and despoiled of the truth"—were raising doctrinal issues solely with the intent of subverting the faith of others. (1 Timothy 6:5) It was only with respect to the questions raised by those corrupt men that Paul advised Timothy to avoid discussions about religious beliefs.

Do Beliefs Affect Conduct?

Some might question, though, whether our religious beliefs have much effect on the kind of people we become—our personal qualities and conduct. They may view beliefs and conduct as two separate and unrelated items, like a jacket and slacks that can be mixed or matched according to the wearer's preference. In the Bible, however, beliefs and conduct are more like a suit that comes only as a matched set.

The Bible reveals a direct connection between what we believe and what kind of persons we become. The self-righteous Pharisees of Jesus' day were an example of misguided beliefs affecting conduct. (Mat-

thew 23:1-33; Luke 18:9-14) On the other hand, Colossians 3:10 admonishes: "Clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through *accurate knowledge* is being made new according to the image of the One who created it." Notice that the power to lead a godly life is linked to having an *accurate knowledge* of God.

The Greek term translated "accurate knowledge," which appears 20 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures, refers to exact, accurate, or full knowledge. Greek scholar Nathanael Culverwell describes it as becoming "better acquainted with a thing I knew before; a more exact viewing of an object that I saw before afar off." Thus in the way a jeweler examines a precious gem in order to appraise its qualities and value, a Christian must examine God's Word in order to come to an exact, accurate, and full knowledge of the God he serves. This includes coming to know God's personality, his purposes, his standards, and all the teachings that make up "the pattern of healthful words"—a far cry from merely believing that 'there's Someone up there.'—2 Timothy 1:13.

An example of the kind of fruitage that results when one knows God only from afar is recorded in the first chapter of the inspired letter to the Romans. There, reference is made to certain men who, "although they knew God, . . . did not approve of holding God in *accurate knowledge*." The consequences of their erroneous beliefs are related by the apostle Paul: "God gave them up to a disapproved mental state, to do the things not fitting, filled as they were with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, badness, being full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malicious disposition, being whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, insolent, haughty, self-assuming, inventors of injuri-

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**Will Man Ever Cope
With Disaster?**

**Women of India
—Moving Into the 21st Century**

The Family That Truly Loved Me

ous things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, false to agreements, having no natural affection, merciless.”—Romans 1:21, 28-31.

Unquestionably, the beliefs held by those men directly affected their ability to lead Christian lives. Likewise today, beliefs and conduct can be compared to a seamless

garment, inseparably woven together. It is, therefore, essential that all desiring to gain God’s favor make sure their religious beliefs are genuinely true, soundly based on God’s Word. For “[God’s] will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an *accurate knowledge* of truth.”—1 Timothy 2:4.



Drowsy-Driver Alert

IT CAUSES an estimated 600,000 accidents and 12,000 highway deaths each year in the United States. It is blamed for 40 percent of the fatal crashes in recent years on the New York State Thruway. All this wreckage was caused by driving under the influence, not of drugs or alcohol, but of drowsiness. Some experts believe that the problem is rooted, not in sleep disorders, such as apnea or insomnia, but simply in the 1990’s life-style. “Americans are more sleep-deprived than a few years ago,” says Dr. William Dement of the Stanford University Sleep Research Center. Dave Willis, executive director of the American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety, says: “People are just burning the candle at both ends.”

Especially disturbing is the fact that many drowsy drivers drift in and out of sleep without knowing it. A “microsleep,” as experts

term it, may last just a few seconds, but the cumulative effects can be frightening. “I’d remember passing exit 17, then seeing signs for exit 21,” relates one driver. “I’d think, where was I for the exits in between? You realize it’s a miracle you even got where you were going.”

The best way to combat driving fatigue is to stop and rest. A 10- to 20-minute nap in a safe place may be all that is needed. Better yet, be realistic when planning a trip. Don’t try to cover more distance than you can handle. Also, respect your body’s inner clock by avoiding extensive night driving and by getting plenty of rest before starting a trip. Most of all, never underestimate the danger of driving while drowsy. Says Mark Hammer of New York’s Institute for Traffic Safety Management and Research: “[It] is just as bad as having five drinks and getting in the car.”

WATCHING THE WORLD

'The Last Absolutist System'

"Discontent in the German Catholic Church toward the conservative orientation of the Vatican is rising," reports the Rome daily *La Repubblica* after the recent appointment by John Paul II of 30 new cardinals. The well-known dissident theologian Hans Küng maintains that to elect the next pope, there is "urgent need for a body of electors that is truly representative of the whole Catholic Church." Küng believes that "the pope has simply lost the confidence of a large part of the faithful." Continues Küng: "It cannot be ignored that, after the collapse of Stalinism, the Roman system is the last remaining absolutist system in the Western world."

Prevent Early Aging

"People adapt houses for children. Why not adapt them for older persons?" asks gerontologist Wilson Jacob Filho of São Paulo University, Brazil. Besides safer homes for the elderly, he suggests that they exercise to strengthen the muscular system in order to reduce the risk of falling. What are the greatest enemies of longevity? According to plastic surgeon Rogério Izar Neves, also of São Paulo University, the enemies are "a sedentary way of life, unbalanced nutrition (especially diets rich in fat), smoking, excessive use of alcoholic beverages, stress, lack of sleep." *Jornal da Tarde* explains that extreme stress weakens the immune system, "which is intimately related to the onset of various diseases and consequently also of old age."

Dr. Neves further claims: "Disinterest in life is the major cause of early aging."

Body-Piercing Health Risk

"People are having parts of their body pierced that weren't pierced years ago," says John Pelton, director of environmental health for Calgary Health Services in Canada. This includes eyebrows, lips, tongues, and navels, according to a report in *The Vancouver Sun*. Fears that this growing fad could pass



on AIDS and hepatitis B and C have prompted Environmental Health Services at Alberta Health to introduce guidelines to control body piercing. "New standards will eventually cover a whole range of unregulated personal services, such as branding, waxing, tattooing, electrolysis and sensory deprivation," and a draft of these regulations will be reviewed by public health officials and the industry, adds the report. As for the use of ear-piercing equipment to do body piercing, one who does the procedure admits: "We have seen people go to hospital with infections. It's really scary actually."

Church in Demise

Canada's largest Protestant denomination, the United

Church of Canada, "has a rapidly aging and shrinking membership, and its leaders and parishioners are at odds over what its priorities should be," says *The Toronto Star*. While over 3,000,000 identify with the church, only 750,000 are on the church register. The majority of its best supporters are over 55, whereas children and grandchildren of members are not attracted to it. The church was warned that it must take immediate action to correct its approach or die. Members want priority given to worship and spirituality, while the leaders of the church want to give more attention to social and global issues. If the church collapses, "it will also mean that what has been important to the United Church has not been important to Canadians," warns Alberta sociologist Reginald Bibby. "It has not been worth their time, money or attention."

The Legacy of War

Seven thousand veterans of the Allied invasion of Europe, 51 years ago, returned to the Normandy beaches in June 1994. But the memories were too much for hundreds of them who had to be given psychiatric help to cope with anxiety brought on by the celebration. "Some veterans became extremely distressed after D-Day," explained Dr. Graham Lucas, speaking on behalf of Combat Stress, a charity that assists ex-servicemen. "They had feelings of guilt, that they didn't deserve to be spared when others had died, and were suffering from nightmares and

impaired sleep." Such feelings suppressed over the years have led to ulcers, asthma, and skin complaints, reports *The Sunday Times* of London. One old soldier, whose memories still give him nightmares, put it this way: "You can overdo these things. People who weren't there can't understand what it was like."

Parasitic Fish

The candiru is a parasitic fish that breeds in the rivers of the Amazon basin. This translucent eellike creature, measuring about an inch in length, is usually found in the gills of larger fishes, where it feeds on their blood. It can also enter human orifices and cause inflammation, hemorrhage, and sometimes death to the victim. Recently a smaller and more voracious version of this fish, barely half as long, has been discovered in Brazil. It has two hook-shaped teeth at the back of its mouth that give it a powerful grip, making it impossible to shake off. For "riverside communities, with little or no medical facilities, it can lead to serious infections," reports *New Scientist*.

Universities in Trouble

"Africa's neglected universities are on the verge of collapse," reports the *Weekend Star* of Johannesburg. Because of lack of funds, there are few computers, and in some cases telephones have been disconnected. One university has 35,000 registered students, but it was originally designed for just 5,000. Only half the lecturing posts are filled at one formerly prestigious university in Uganda. A lecturer's salary on this campus is evidently about

\$19 a month. Some universities have been closed for months as a result of striking lecturers or students. A Kenyan professor observed: "Academic self-destruction in Africa is going from bad to worse."

Who Does the Housework?

"It would seem that equality [between men and women] has still not entered the family environment," says *Cronaca della Sera*, reporting on a Central Statistics Institute survey of Italian families' use of time. Whether she has an outside job or not, it is still the woman who has to "take on



the weight of family organization," dedicating—if she has children—an average of 7 hours and 18 minutes to housework, compared with the 1 hour and 48 minutes of her partner. Paradoxically, single mothers seem to do better, managing to dedicate two hours less to housework each day. "From tender years, mothers 'destine' their little girls to household chores," adds *La Repubblica*.

Losing the Tuberculosis Battle

In the war against disease, the battle with tuberculosis has been a "complete failure on a worldwide scale," according to Professor Jacques Grosset, head of the bacteriology-virology department of La

Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris. If patients are untreated, the mortality rate for tuberculosis is about 50 percent. While diagnosis and treatment are unavailable for about half the world's TB sufferers, Professor Grosset pointed out, the real disaster is that in technologically developed countries, where antibiotics are freely available, only half of those who have the disease continue their treatment until they are fully cured. "The other half do not take their treatment, or take it very irregularly, which causes a much higher mortality rate (25 percent of those treated) and also produces a strain of tubercle bacillus that is resistant to antibiotics."

Venezuela and AIDS

Venezuela has the third greatest incidence of AIDS in Latin America, after Brazil and Mexico, says *El Universal* of Caracas, Venezuela. Dr. Arellano Médici estimates that there are 350,000 people in the country infected with the deadly virus, although the Ministry of Health will only admit to 3,000. The fact that for every infected person, there are probably a hundred more who are infected but not aware of it is attributed, according to Médici, to the "marked promiscuity in our society." Médici points out that infected persons should live a morally clean life, not just because of the risk of infecting others but because of the existence of various AIDS viruses. They can easily become infected with a different virus, worsening their existing health problem. One source calculates that by the year 2000, every family in the world will have a member with AIDS.

FROM OUR READERS

Difficult Children It was with heartfelt thanks that I read the November 22, 1994, articles "Understanding Difficult Children." My son has ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). For years I wondered what I was doing so wrong to have such a very difficult boy. I studied the Bible with him and cared for all his needs, but each day I dreaded waking him up in the morning and later picking him up from school. Hopefully the information will help all those in contact with children who have ADHD.

E. W., United States

I have a very difficult ten-year-old son. I have at times felt helpless, depressed, alone, and misunderstood. Thank you so much for giving me hope—and many practical suggestions.

H. S., South Africa

I cried and cried reading the articles. My son has ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder). Life is so very hard for these children. Still, they are worthy and deserving of dignity and, most of all, love.

B. W., United States

We discovered six months ago that our son suffers from ADHD. At two years of age, he is a real tornado, cannot sit still at Christian meetings, pushes others, runs around, and is always hurting himself. Some have kept their distance from us, and even good friends cannot help but give hurtful comments at times. Thanks for describing the problems in such an understanding way.

R. F., Germany

I am 15 years old and have ADHD. It is very comforting to know that Jehovah understands us and can help us. I am on medication, and it helps a lot. I can concentrate better on my schoolwork, housework, and Bible study. I appreciated the articles be-

cause you showed others that this disorder is real and not some fad.

S. K., United States

These articles have helped both of us to put to rest our feelings of inadequacy as parents. Well-meaning friends have suggested that my son, who suffers from ADHD, is spoiled or "just needs to be spanked." The articles may help such ones to understand the fix that so many parents are in.

T. G., United States

Creating Jobs Thank you for the article "Creating Jobs in Developing Countries." (October 22, 1994) Right now I am attending school and plan to become a pioneer (full-time evangelizer) when I graduate. The biggest problem will be finding work. Up till now I had wanted a sedentary job where I wouldn't have to exert myself physically, but I felt ashamed of myself when I learned of how my Christian brothers in developing lands do any work they can. Now I will work at any job that allows me to pioneer.

Y. T., Japan

1914 I have just read your articles "1914—Gunshots That Still Shake Our World." (November 8, 1994) I would like to say that I have never read information that was so clear and simple on such a controversial topic. The schools in my country do not go deeply into the history of the world wars, but gaining an understanding of this subject is of great benefit in understanding world events.

W. S., Venezuela

Crossword Puzzles I want to mention how much I enjoy your crossword puzzles, particularly the one in the December 8, 1994, issue. They incite me to do extra Bible research. The clues are written in such a way as to prompt me to look up the cited scripture—even though I might already know the answer. Thank you for those wholesome and enjoyable puzzles!

D. S., United States

Toad or Frog

What Is the Difference?

FOR centuries toads and frogs have had a bad reputation. "They cause warts." "Witches can turn people into toads and frogs." Who has not heard the fairy tale of the ugly frog that turns into a handsome prince when kissed by a princess? However, since the popularity of Kermit the Frog in the children's TV program "Sesame Street" and in "The Muppet Show," frogs have been getting a more favorable press. What is the truth about frogs and toads? How do they differ?

Let us set the record straight—viruses, not toads, cause warts. And fairy tales are just that—fairy tales, fiction and myth. And although witches do exist, they cannot change a person into a frog or a toad.

Frogs and toads are found in most parts of the world, but there are no frogs in Antarctica, nor are there toads in the Arctic. There are about 3,800 species of frogs and toads, of which over 300 are toads. So how can you distinguish a toad from a frog? *The World Book Encyclopedia* answers:

Right: Toad. Below: Frog

"Most true toads have a broader, flatter body and darker, drier skin than do most true frogs. True toads are commonly covered with warts, but true frogs have smooth skin. Unlike most true frogs, the majority of true toads live on land. The adults go to water only to breed." Frogs are usually found near water, ready to jump in when they hear you coming. Most frogs have teeth only on their upper jaw. Toads are toothless. Thus, both swallow their prey whole.

Many frogs and toads produce powerful poisons. The reddish-colored Costa Rican poison arrow frog (*Dendrobates pumilio*) is one example. Some frog poisons can easily kill a person. The book *Biology* states: "Native tribes in the tropics often poison their arrow tips by rubbing them on these frogs." In the Bible book of Revelation, "unclean inspired expressions" are likened to frogs. Why would that be? Because in the Mosaic Law, frogs were unclean for food. Toads are not mentioned in the Bible.—Revelation 16:13; Leviticus 11:12.



The Teacher Enjoyed It

FOR centuries people have been trying to find the answer to the question, "What is God?" Many have tried to do so by reading the great religious books of the world. Some have even tried to find it in their own personal experiences. Few, however, have ever found the answer to this question.



"LAST year in my tenth-grade English class, we spent a few days studying the wide diversity of religions in the world," wrote a youth from Michigan, U.S.A. The boy brought a copy of the book *Mankind's Search for God* to school. He explained:

"I mainly thought my teacher would find it interesting for himself. I was happy to see him reading the book while the students were working. You can imagine, though, how surprised I was when, before the hour was over, my teacher stopped the class from what they were doing and read the whole first

chapter out loud to us. He even had us take notes on it.

"A few days later, he used the book again in classroom instruction, assigning students to do another report, telling them they could use the book *Mankind's Search for God* as a basis. The book was put to use for the entire hour."

