

Awake!

March 8, 1995



Is Your Food
Really Nutritious?



Is Your Food Really Nutritious? 3-7

Millions worldwide seldom enjoy a truly nutritious meal. Poor nutrition can kill. Are there any solutions?



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Many people sincerely believe that God is pleased to see believers suffer. Is that reasonable? Is it Biblical?



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Photo courtesy of NASA/Finley-Holiday Film Corporation

HOW NUTRITIOUS IS YOUR FOOD?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN BRAZIL

*H*ow do you choose your food?

When you buy food, what factors influence you?

Is it fancy packaging? Price? Ease of preparation?

Persuasive claims in advertisements? Or just the way

the food looks and tastes? Making the right choices

may determine whether you eat nutritious food or junk

food, whether your health is improved or damaged.



POVERTY is a major cause of malnutrition. While many take food for granted, millions of others rarely enjoy a nutritious meal. "Here at home we eat anything we can get hold of," said a Brazilian bricklayer, father of six children. That usually means stale bread and weak coffee or rice and beans. In fact, according to a report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 20 percent of the world's population suffer from hunger. While there is widespread famine in some African countries, there is a larger number of hungry people in Asia. Even in the United States, 12 percent of the population, or 30 million people reportedly do not have enough to eat.

Not only is poor nutrition detrimental

but it can kill. "Malnutrition caused by poor child feeding practices claims over 10 times as many lives as actual famine," notes researcher William Chandler. "Coupled with diarrheal dehydration, malnutrition is the leading killer in the world." Reports UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund): "No epidemic, no flood, nor any earthquake or war has ever robbed the lives of 250,000 children in just a week." But that is the number of children throughout the world who die because of malnutrition and resulting illnesses, according to that UN agency. In fact, the damage caused by malnutrition is incalculable: Learning ability decreases, the labor force weakens, work production and quality decline.

Yet, adequate intake of the proper foods

can overcome poor nutrition and such side effects as anemia and other ailments. Governmental aid such as school lunches and soup kitchens may alleviate malnutrition in some areas, but according to UNICEF officials, \$25 billion is needed annually to reduce the deaths of children caused by diarrhea, pneumonia, and measles. 'A lot of money,' some might say. But that is reportedly what Americans spend on sports footwear and Europeans on wine in one year. Another challenge is to reduce waste. Though an estimated 32 million Brazilians go hungry, Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture reports "that harvest waste [worth \$1.5 billion] in transportation or storage causes a loss of 18 to 20 percent of the nation's agricultural output." There are major problems in agriculture, irrigation, food storage, and transportation in many nations; yet, the earth can still provide abundantly for all. So how can you face the challenge of feeding your family?

Money Is Not Enough

In developing countries people often manage to feed their family by having two or three jobs. In Brazil 1.5 million annually leave family or friends to migrate to large cities in search of work and food. Although health depends to a certain extent on what people eat, a large part of their budget goes for clothing, housing, and transportation.

Happily, common foods, such as rice, beans, corn, potatoes, cassava, and banana-

as, supplemented by some meat and fish, are the main sources of nutrition for families all over the world. Brazilian nutritionist José Eduardo de Oliveira Dutra stated: "Beans and rice are a combination with very high nutritional value. With such a simple and low-priced diet, it is possible to end famine in [the country]." Yes, inexpensive and nutritious food may be available where you live. Or you may even grow some of your food.

Although you may have sufficient money, do you spend it on nutritious food for your family? Or are you influenced by clever and persistent advertising to prefer sweets or junk food and thus neglect the need for proteins, minerals, and vitamins? Is taste more attractive than wholesomeness? *The World Book Encyclopedia* notes: "To achieve and maintain good health, people must have basic knowledge about the human body and how it functions. Only then can they determine what will or what will not help or hurt their health. Learning about health should be a part of every person's education."

True, we do not live merely for eating, but food is a vital part of our lives. The Bible speaks of eating well as a reward for diligent work, saying: "Every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work. It is the gift of God." (Ecclesiastes 3:13) Do you view wholesome food as valuable and necessary? If so, please examine the following article on how proper nutrition can benefit you and your family.



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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HOW WHOLESOME FOOD CAN IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

WHAT a joy it is to behold a well-nourished child! Yet, a child is not healthy by accident. "Simple but nourishing food was always a high priority in our family not only in terms of our financial budget but also in the time invested in preparing and enjoying it together," recalls Kate, a Canadian living in Brazil. "Because my mother did not work outside the home, we would arrive from school each day to be greeted with the delicious aromas of dinner being prepared and perhaps of a pie or cake that she had baked."

Rather than being sustained by wholesome food, however, "roughly 780 [million] people in poor countries, one in five of their population, do not get enough to eat," according to *The Economist*. "As many as 2 billion people who get enough to fill their bellies nevertheless lack the vitamins and minerals they need." It is not simply that the undernourished one is weakened but also that he is less able to benefit others. Hence, regarding undernourished children, economist Eduardo Giannetti da Fonseca of São Paulo University, Brazil, is quoted

as saying: "This [waste of human resources] is worse than anything else. . . . I believe that among these children there are talents and abilities that end up hidden away because of poverty. Among them, under different circumstances, there could arise an Albert Einstein." The magazine *Veja* states: "The country is losing muscles that are wasting away because of poor nutrition and is throwing away a potential reserve of intelligence, creativity, and energy." Hence, despite the high cost of living, wise parents give their children a solid foundation by investing in nutritious food.

A Wise Investment

"Invest" means "to make use of for future benefits or advantages." How can you invest in nutrition? If needed, would you forgo luxuries or status items and use your limited budget to purchase wholesome food?

"The senses do not lie dormant until they are suddenly switched on at birth; evidence suggests that the sensory systems function well before birth," says *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*. Thus, the ideal way to start nourishing a child is to have a

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well-nourished mother. The next step—after birth—is for the infant to breast-feed, since human milk provides complete nutrition and even immunizes against common diseases. States *Facts for Life*, a United Nations publication: "For the first few months of a baby's life, breastmilk alone is the best possible food and drink. Infants need other foods, in addition to breastmilk, when they are four-to-six months old."

While remarkably resilient, the human body should not be taken for granted. It is vital to build it up with wholesome food early in life. *The World Book Encyclopedia* says: "By the time a person is 6 years old, the brain has reached its full weight of about 3 pounds (1.4 kilograms). Most of the brain cells are present at birth, and so the increase in weight comes mainly from growth of the cells. During this six-year period, a person learns and acquires new behavior patterns at the fastest rate in life." Therefore, even if the child enjoys a good diet after its sixth year, relatively few additional brain cells will be developed. Observes Kate: "Wholesome, nutritious food is one of the greatest gifts that parents can give their children. Even if many of the so-called necessities of life, which are often only luxuries, cannot be provided, parents who invest in the mental and physical health of their children give them a start in life from infancy that can never be replaced."

Why Have a Varied Diet?

A child needs protein-rich food to grow physically and mentally. Poor nutrition slows a child's mental development in school, and the child may become apathetic and weary, unable to pay much attention or remember what is taught. At least 25 different deficiency diseases result from lack of one of the basic nutrients—protein, vitamins, essential fats, or nutrient elements.

Consider the case of Joaquim. "Our family was poor," he says. "But we had land and cultivated almost everything we ate. At every meal we had corn and rye bread made from whole grains, and that contributed to good nutrition. Almost every day my mother made soup that included a variety of vegetables, including beans, and this supplied many of our nutritional needs. We did not have much meat, but we did have fish, mostly sardines, cod, and herring." He adds: "My mother had five children, and I do not remember any of us getting sick other than with colds and flu. I think that our well-balanced meals contributed to that." A mother of seven children explains: "We needed to provide nourishing food at a low cost. So we planted a vegetable garden, which, although it was small, produced enough for our needs." She adds: "Our children never had a serious illness and were always very successful in their schoolwork."

Your body requires as nutrients 22 of the 103 officially recognized chemical elements. Although it is impossible to fix the exact amount of vitamins, minerals, and proteins you need individually, a well-balanced diet will provide your needs. One authority stated: "The key to good nutrition is a varied diet that includes every kind of nutrient."

What if your children dislike certain foods, such as vegetables with a bitter taste? According to an experienced cook, parents should serve "the whole range of vegetables available in their region. Many grown-ups do not eat vegetables because they were not exposed to them when they were kids. Since vegetables provide fiber and many of our vitamin needs and are inexpensive, parents should always have them available for their children." So why not learn new recipes that make good use of fresh vegetables and fruits, perhaps served in a delicious soufflé or stew? Regarding so-called emp-

SUGGESTIONS TO HELP YOUR CHILD HAVE GOOD EATING HABITS

- Set a good example.
- Do not allow children to eat only what they want.
- Avoid having junk food or sweets in the home.
- Train children to appreciate different kinds of food.
- Have a fixed hour for meals, including breakfast.
- Do not permit TV advertising to influence what you eat.
- Do not let children help themselves from the refrigerator.
- Train children to help prepare the food.
- Cultivate gratefulness for the daily provisions.



ty calories, he suggests: "Parents should not have sweets in the house other than on special occasions. If [the children] do not have them, they won't eat them."

Although eating adequate amounts of proper food minimizes the danger of malnutrition, some people create problems for themselves by overeating. Excessive consumption of calories that exceeds the body's needs may lead to obesity, which is associated with diabetes and heart trouble.* Since neither medicine nor physical activity can take the place of proper eating habits, a good suggestion is to reduce the intake of fat, sweets, salt, and alcohol. Also, says an encyclopedia, "steps should be taken to minimize hunger, loneliness, depression, boredom, anger, and fatigue, each of which can set off a bout of overeating."

A Balanced View of Food and Health

The Bible is not a manual on nutrition;

* "Some experts feel that you are obese if you exceed the 'desirable' weight . . . for your height, build and age by more than 20 per cent."—*The American Medical Association Family Medical Guide*, page 501. See also *Awake!* of May 8, 1994, "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Lose Weight?" and May 22, 1989, "Is Losing Weight a Losing Battle?"

however, it helps us to be balanced in health matters. The apostle Paul warned against those who command others to "abstain from foods which God created to be partaken of with thanksgiving by those who have faith and accurately know the truth." (1 Timothy 4:3) God wants us to be content and to make good use of what is available. "Better is a little in the fear of Jehovah than an abundant supply and confusion along with it."—Proverbs 15:16.

No one today enjoys perfect health. So why not be reasonable, neither heedless nor overly anxious? An inordinate or fanatical interest in nutrition or health matters can cause us to lose our balance.

Despite endeavors to care for our health, as things stand at present, we eventually get old and die. Happily, though, the Bible assures us that God's Kingdom will end malnutrition and disease. Although human schemes to eliminate famine have failed, we can look forward to a world with plenty of nourishing food for all.—Psalm 72:16; 85:12.

Walking on Sand Steps to better health

BY "AWAKE!" CORRESPONDENT IN HAWAII

BRISK walking has been called one of the finest forms of exercise. It is said that, among other benefits, brisk walking increases cardiac output, decreases blood pressure, improves circulation and skin tone, and strengthens bones and muscles.

As anyone who has tried it knows, however, brisk walking also exacts a heavy toll on the feet—calluses, corns, blisters, and even more serious foot injuries. These are often the result of wearing ill-fitting exercise shoes. If you have ever had sore feet, you know how uncomfortable, even agonizing, that can be. In fact, the condition of your feet can affect the health of your entire skeletal system.

Best of Both Worlds

You may not have to suffer. "Studies of nonshoe-wearing populations in Africa and Asia conclude that people who do not wear shoes have healthier feet, fewer deformities, and have greater mobility than people in shoe-wearing societies," reports an orthopedist. So it seems that you could have the best of both worlds if you could

somewhere exercise briskly while walking barefoot. Actually, that option is available to many people—walking on the dry sand of a clean beach or on sand dunes.

"A good exercise with a massaging effect is walking barefoot on a sandy beach," says *The Arthritis Exercise Book*, "especially when the sand is warm. Walking in loose, dry sand exercises every single muscle of the foot, as the foot adjusts to the uneven surface." Besides that, walking on sand expends almost twice the energy as walking on grass or pavement. In fact, try running on dry sand, and you will soon notice the effort it requires! "Certainly, a brisk walk along a beach would provide an excellent exercise stress in programs designed to 'burn up' calories or improve physiologic fitness," concludes the book *Exercise Physiology—Energy, Nutrition, and Human Performance*.

Thus, walking barefoot on sand not only provides the benefits of a healthful exercise routine but also lessens wear and tear on foot and leg joints. For those with mild arthritis, it reduces the pain caused by exercise.



A Word of Caution

Before you rush out to the nearest beach or sand dune, however, bear in mind these notes of caution. Make sure that the sand you walk on with your bare feet is quite clean and free of sharp objects. If you have any serious health problems, such as diabetes or heart trouble, you should consult your physician before taking up any new form of exercise. And as with any exercise program, start your sand walking at a slow or moderate pace, and gradually increase

your speed over a period of weeks. This will likely lead to a safer and more enjoyable exercise routine for you.

A barefoot walk in the sand is more than fun; it might just be the beginning of steps to better health for you and your feet.



And who knows what else you might even discover on the beach or in the shallow water—shells, small fish, little hermit crabs, all kinds of birds and insects. So keep your senses alert, and enjoy your walk!

Is God Pleased to See Us Suffer?

STUGGLING under the weight of a large wooden cross, a man stumbles through the crowds as blood trickles from a crown of thorns on his head. Once at the “execution” site, he is stretched out on the cross; large nails are pounded into his hands. He wrenches with pain as the nails pierce flesh. When the cross is swung upright, the pain becomes excruciating. According to *Panorama*, a Philippine magazine, such painful rituals are regularly featured during Holy Week celebrations in the Philippines.

What was just described is a modern-day interpretation of Jesus’ sufferings. But this man is not just acting out a scene from a play. The nails, the blood, the pain—they are all very real.

Elsewhere, Roman Catholic devotees can be seen publicly flogging themselves in their desire to experience the sufferings of Christ. Why? Some do this in the belief that their sufferings will produce miracles, such as the healing of their sick loved ones. Others do it to atone for sins for which, they fear, there is no forgiveness unless their own blood is shed. The book *The Filipinos* explains: “Pain is a good cleanser of the mind and soul. . . . The sinner is supposed to emerge from the pain cleansed of sins and eased of burdens.”

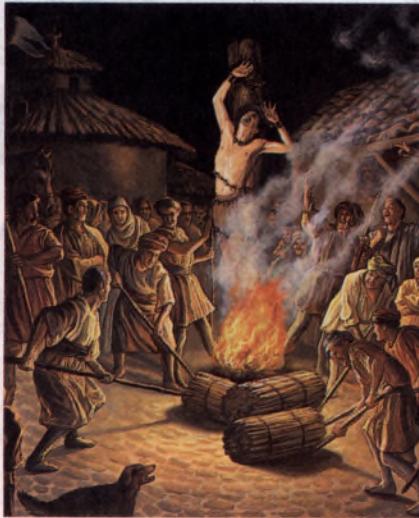
Self-inflicted pain,

however, is by no means confined to the Catholics of the Philippines. People from various religions and in different lands believe that self-imposed sufferings hold some merit with God.

For instance, in his search for truth, the Buddha, Siddhārtha Gautama, left his wife and son and fled to the desert, where for six years he lived the life of an ascetic. He assumed awkward and painful positions for hours and later claimed to have lived for long spells on a grain of rice a day, growing so thin that he said: “The skin of my belly came to be cleaving to my back-bone.” But no amount of self-inflicted torture was able to bring the enlightenment he sought.

Likewise, the Hindu fakirs of India underwent various penances that were sometimes severe in the extreme—lying between fires, staring at the sun until they went blind, standing on one leg or in other awkward postures for great lengths of time. The virtue of certain ascetics was thought to be so great that it could protect a city from enemy attack.

Similarly, the Bible speaks of the worshippers of Baal who cut themselves “according to their custom with daggers and with lances, until they caused blood to flow out upon them” in a vain attempt to get the attention of their god.
—1 Kings 18:28.



"You Must Afflict Your Souls"

While it is true that Jehovah commanded his chosen nation: "you must afflict your souls," this is generally understood to mean fasting. (Leviticus 16:31) Such fasting was an expression of sorrow and repentance for sins or was done when under distressing conditions. Thus, fasting was not a self-inflicted form of punishment but represented a humbling of oneself before God.—Ezra 8:21.

There were some Jews, however, who mistakenly thought that the very discomfort involved in afflicting the soul had merit and that it put God under obligation to give them something in return. When no such reward was forthcoming, they presumptuously asked God about the payment they thought they deserved: "For what reason did we fast and you did not see, and did we afflict our soul and you would take no note?"—Isaiah 58:3.

But they were wrong. Proper religious fasting did not involve asceticism, afflicting the body with hunger as though bodily pain or discomfort in itself had any merit. Strong emotion could have diminished their hunger. If the mind is gripped by pressing problems, the body may not crave food. This indicates to God the intense feelings of the one fasting.

Is God Pleased With Self-Inflicted Pain?

Does the loving Creator derive any happiness from watching people torture themselves? While it is true that at times Christians may be forced to become "sharers in the sufferings of the Christ," this does not mean that they go looking for trouble or for a martyr's crown.—1 Peter 4:13.

Certainly, Jesus was far from being an ascetic. The religious leaders complained because his disciples did not fast, and they even accused him of being "a man gluttonous and given to drinking wine." (Matthew 9:14; 11:19) Jesus exhibited moderation in everything and did not demand of himself or of oth-

ers more than what was reasonable.—Mark 6:31; John 4:6.

Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find any basis for asceticism, as though denying ourselves the necessities or even the comforts of life would bring favor with God. Note the apostle Paul's words concerning such painful practices: "Those very things are, indeed, possessed of an appearance of wisdom in a self-imposed form of worship and mock humility, a severe treatment of the body; but they are of no value in combating the satisfying of the flesh."—Colossians 2:23.

Martin Luther, when a monk, literally tortured himself. Later, though, he turned against such practices, saying that they encouraged the idea of two roads to God, a higher and a lower, whereas the Scriptures taught only one way to salvation—through the exercise of faith in Jesus Christ and his Father, Jehovah. (John 17:3) Painful rituals, on the other hand, were viewed by some as a form of self-salvation.

The book *Church History in Plain Language* comments on asceticism: "Supporting the whole endeavor was an erroneous view of man. The soul, said the monk, is chained to the flesh as a prisoner to a corpse. That is not the biblical view of human life." Yes, the very idea that self-inflicted pain can please God is foreign to the Scriptures. It finds its basis in the Gnostic fallacy that everything connected with the flesh is evil and should be abused as much as possible in order for one to gain salvation.

Since Jehovah wants us to be happy, serving such a delightful God is not a matter of becoming an ascetic. (Ecclesiastes 7:16) Thus, nowhere in the Scriptures are we told that such self-imposed sufferings are the way to salvation. On the contrary, God's Word makes it clear that it is the blood of Christ, together with our faith in it, that cleanses us from all sins.—Romans 5:1; 1 John 1:7.

A SOLAR ECLIPSE

*and the
Fascination of
Astronomy*



Photo courtesy of NASA/Finley-Holiday Film Corporation

MAY 10, 1994, was a unique day for some people in North America. It was the occasion of the annular eclipse of the sun by the moon.* For a few brief hours, millions were made aware of the fascinating science of astronomy. But what exactly is an eclipse?

An eclipse occurs when there is a "partial or complete obscuring, relative to a designated observer, of one celestial body by another." (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*) A solar or a lunar eclipse can occur only when earth, sun, and moon are in a nearly straight line. Whether there is a solar or a lunar eclipse depends on which celestial body is obscured. At times the earth casts its shadow on the moon, causing a lunar eclipse. In May of last year, on the other hand, the moon cast its shadow on the earth, in a narrow band varying from 140 to 190 miles wide. As the moon gradually passed between the earth and the sun, it almost completely obscured the sun. The path of the shadow went across the Pacific Ocean and then North America from southwest to northeast. The moon seemed to cut slowly in front of the sun. In fact, the shadow traveled across the earth at some 2,000 miles per hour.

All kinds of methods were used to observe the eclipse without damaging the eyes. Some looked through a welder's eyepiece. Others used a strong filter. Yet others cast the image on paper through a pinhole. One photographer had someone hold up a colander, and as the light passed through the holes, it created multiple images of the

* The word "eclipse" is from the Greek *ekleipsis*, which derives from *ekeleipso*, which means "fail to appear."—*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*.



eclipse on the ground. Similar effects were noted as the light passed through the leaves of trees. Another method was to pass the light through binoculars to get a double image on a dark surface.

As many as five solar eclipses and up to three lunar eclipses can take place in one year. "At least two solar eclipses of some kind must occur every year," says *The International Encyclopedia of Astronomy*.

However, each one is visible from varying locations. Therefore anybody in the contiguous United States who missed the 1994 eclipse will have to wait until the year 2012 for another opportunity or travel to Peru, Brazil, or Siberia for an earlier eclipse.*

The Mystery of a Total Eclipse

The total solar eclipse, when the moon completely obscures the sun, caused fear and panic in past centuries. Why is that? *The International Encyclopedia of Astronomy* notes: "The mystery of a total eclipse is enhanced because the uninitiated have no warning of the impending spectacle as the Moon cannot be seen approaching the Sun." That spectacle includes these features: "The sky becomes darker, often with an eerie greenish tinge which is quite indescribable and quite unlike the darkening caused by clouds. . . . During the last few seconds of the partial phase light fails rapidly, it becomes noticeably cooler, birds settle down to roost, some flower petals close, and the wind tends to drop. . . . Darkness descends on the countryside."

In his book *The Story of Eclipses*, George Chambers reports on "one of the most celebrated eclipses of mediæval times . . . ,

* There was a total eclipse of the sun November 3, 1994, that was visible across parts of South America.

visible as a total eclipse in Scotland," that took place August 2, 1133. William of Malmesbury wrote: "The Sun on that day at the 6th hour shrouded his glorious face, . . . in hideous darkness, agitating the hearts of men by an eclipse." The ancient *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* said that "men were greatly wonder-stricken and affrighted."

Chambers also recorded the graphic account of an eclipse of the moon that occurred on September 2, 1830, reported by two travelers in Africa: "When the Moon became gradually obscured, fear overcame every one. As the eclipse increased they became more terrified. All ran in great distress to inform their sovereign of the circumstance, for there was not a single cloud to cause so deep a shadow, and they could not comprehend the nature or meaning of an eclipse."

In more recent times, the study of astronomy has allayed mankind's fears about a solar eclipse—we know that the sun will reappear.

How the Jesuits Used a Solar Eclipse

Back in 1629, Jesuit missionaries in China were able to gain favor with the emperor by means of a solar eclipse. How did they do it?

The Jesuits had noticed that "the Chinese lunar calendar was in error, as it had been for centuries. The Imperial Astronomers had repeatedly erred in predicting the eclipse of the sun . . . The great opportunity for the Jesuits came when an eclipse was expected on the morning of June 21, 1629. The Imperial Astronomers predicted that the eclipse would occur at 10:30 and would last for two hours. The Jesuits forecast that the eclipse would not come until 11:30 and would last only two minutes." What happened?

"On the crucial day, as 10:30 came and went the sun shone in full brilliance. The Imperial Astronomers were wrong,

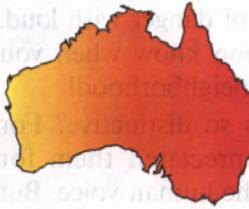
but were the Jesuits right? Then, just at 11:30, the eclipse began and lasted for a brief two minutes, as the Jesuits had predicted. Their place in the Emperor's confidence was now secure."—*The Discoverers*, by Daniel J. Boorstin.

Astronomy in the Bible

Astronomical information is even provided in the Bible. Several constellations are mentioned in the book of Job. Furthermore, Jehovah invited his servants to examine the heavens, not for the study of astrology or other false worship, but to appreciate the grandeur of his creations. Isaiah was inspired to write: "Raise your eyes high up and see. Who has created these things? It is the One who is bringing forth the army of them even by number, all of whom he calls even by name. Due to the abundance of dynamic energy, he also being vigorous in power, not one of them is missing."—Isaiah 40:26.

Job acknowledged the supremacy of the Creator when he said of him: "He is . . . making the Ash constellation [possibly Ursa Major, or Great Bear], the Kesil constellation [possibly Orion, or celestial hunter], and the Kimah constellation [possibly the Pleiades cluster in the Taurus, or Bull, constellation] and the interior rooms of the South [understood to mean the constellations of the Southern Hemisphere]."—Job 9:7-9.

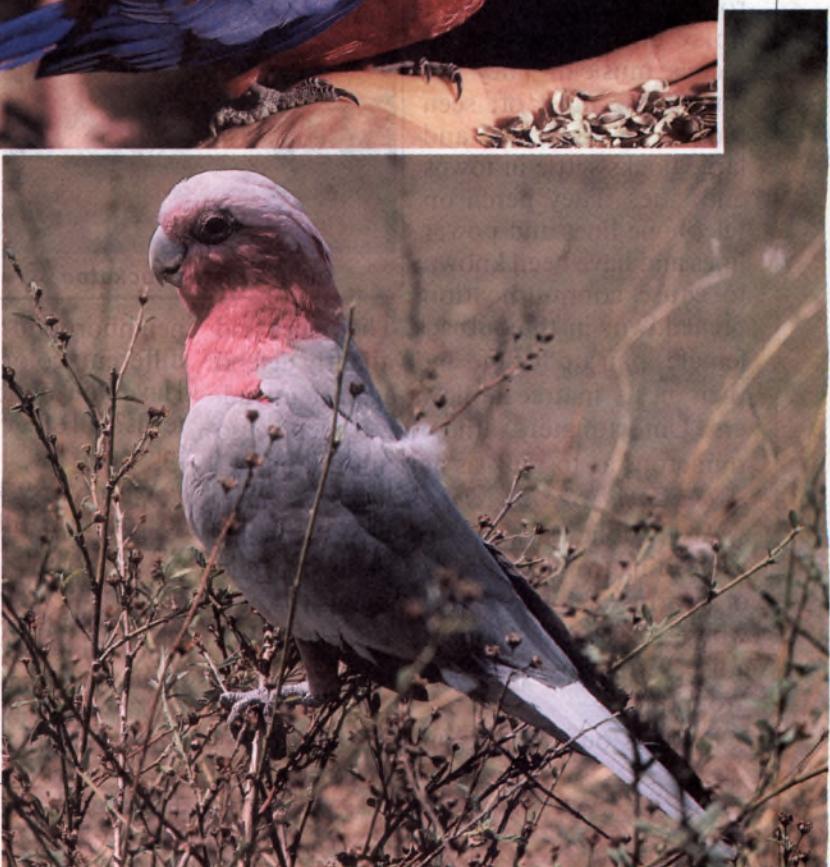
How fascinating the study of astronomy is going to be when Jehovah grants everlasting life to obedient mankind! Then the enigmas of the universe will be revealed progressively as we come to understand God's purposes in relation to the vast universe. Thus, we will be able to echo David's words with even more feeling: "When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind, and the son of earthling man that you take care of him?"—Psalm 8:3, 4.



AUSTRALIA'S PERKY, PESKY PARROTS

ACASUAL visitor to Australia could be excused for thinking that a flock of exotic tropical birds had escaped from the local zoo or aviary. Creatures that in other countries would be found only in cages are flying around the garden. Especially is this true of the Australian parrot—and that means a varied family of multicolored, noisy birds.

Galah and (above) rosella



By courtesy of
Australian International Public Affairs

There are about 330 species of parrots, and they are found on all major landmasses except Antarctica, south of 20 degrees north latitude. Although not all species are found in Australia, there are enough in that land to make their presence known! The parrot family includes budgerigars (known by some as parakeets), cockatoos, and the nectar specialists, the lorries. In Australia it sometimes seems that these colorful birds are everywhere.

That was certainly our impression on a visit to New South Wales. At times there were dozens of budgerigars feeding on the lawns, especially early morning and late afternoon. On busy streets, we saw the pink and gray galahs, also known as the roseate cockatoo. Their noisy chirping is by no means musical. They are one of the most oft seen parrots in Australia, and large flocks settle in towns and cities. They perch on telephone lines and power lines and have been known to cause communication breakdowns in the outback. The males and females pair up for life and valiantly defend their nests in tree hollows against intruders. Unfortunately, "they have become so numerous as to rank as agricultural pests."

—*The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Ornithology*.

At a public park, we had crimson rosellas feeding from our hands. Totally unafraid of swarms of tourists, they obviously knew where to get a handout. It was like a paradise setting to have such tame birds all around us.

Perhaps our biggest surprise was to see

large sulfur crested cockatoos swooping over us. Their distinctive yellow crest justifies their name. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Birds* explains: "While the flock is feeding on the ground, a few birds stand sentinel in nearby trees and warn of danger with loud, raucous cries." You soon know when you have a cockatoo in the neighborhood!

What makes parrots so distinctive? For centuries man has appreciated them for their ability to mimic the human voice. But do they also mimic other birds? The above-quoted Cambridge encyclopedia states:

"Although flocks of wild parrots are noisy, they are not known to mimic other species and so it is not clear why parrots have the ability to 'talk.'" When it comes to bird mimics, the North American mockingbird is still the champion.

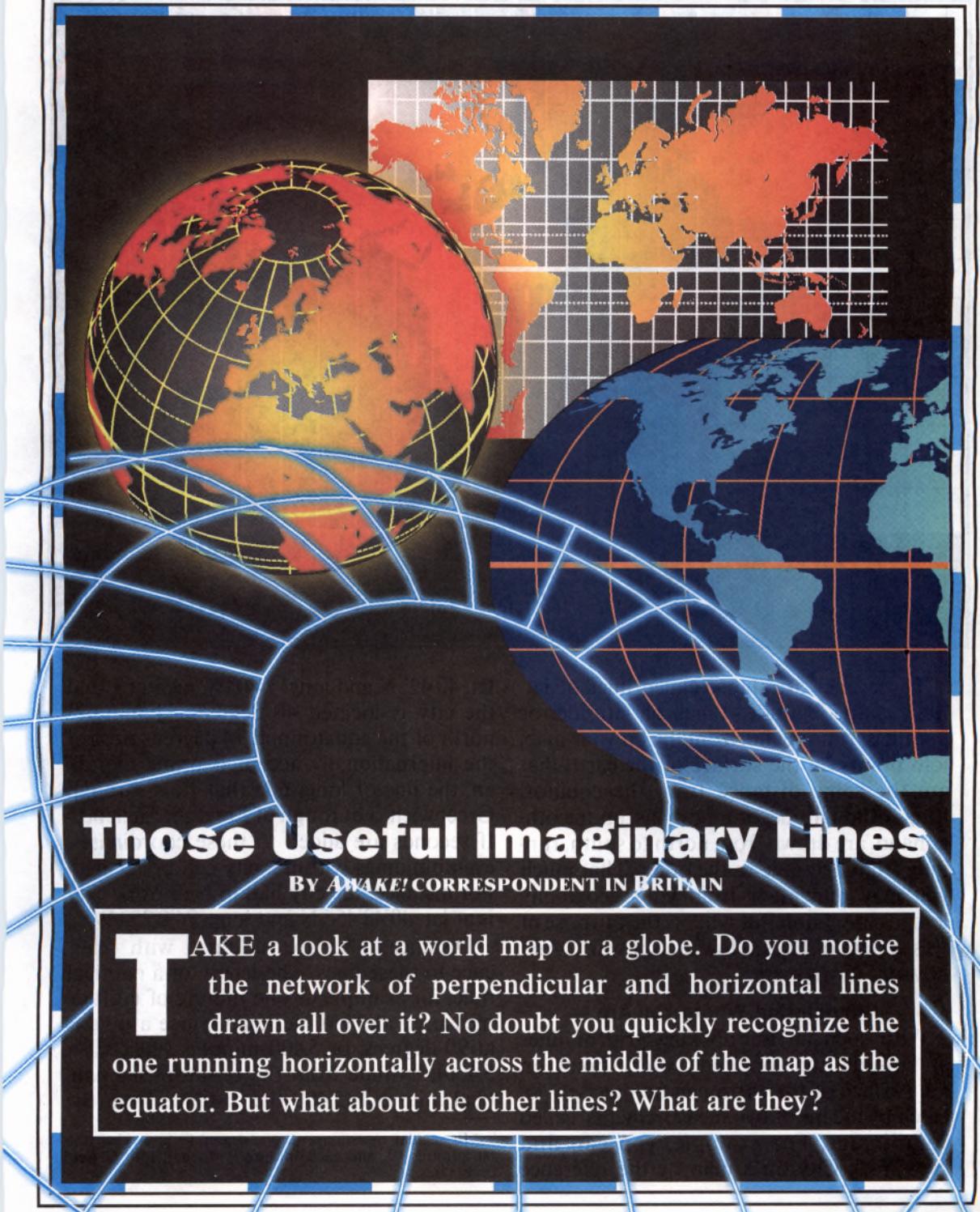
Birds are found nearly everywhere throughout the world—but do you notice them? Do you observe them? Do you know the birds that frequent your

neighborhood? Can you distinguish their different color designs, calls, and songs? Have you noticed their varying flight patterns? All of it certainly makes for a fascinating study.

With over 9,300 bird species to study, not to speak of all the other marvels around us, who can rightly claim that everlasting life will be boring? So much to learn, so many reasons for praising the Creator! How thankful we can be that God saw good to include the "winged flying creature" in his creative works.—Genesis 1:20-23; Job 39:26, 27; Revelation 4:11.



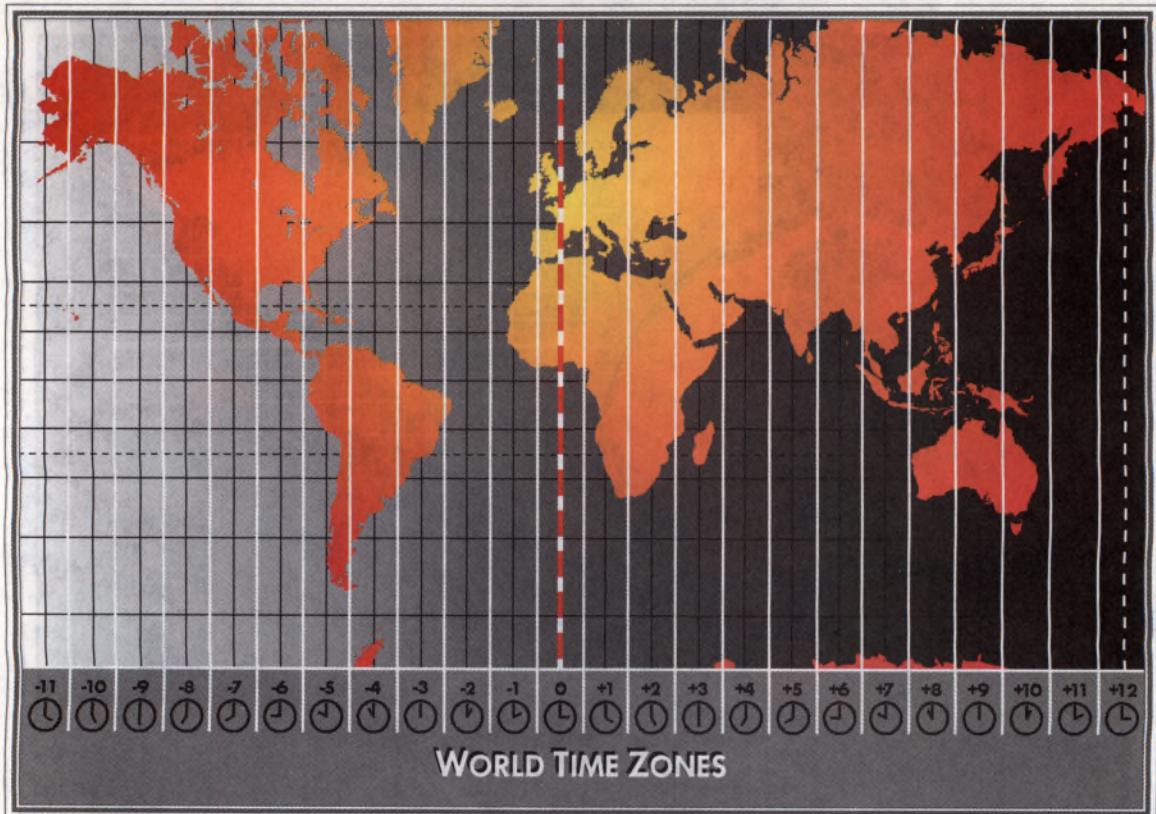
Sulfur-crested cockatoo



Those Useful Imaginary Lines

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN BRITAIN

TAKE a look at a world map or a globe. Do you notice the network of perpendicular and horizontal lines drawn all over it? No doubt you quickly recognize the one running horizontally across the middle of the map as the equator. But what about the other lines? What are they?



These lines are the so-called lines of latitude and longitude. Lines of latitude, or parallels, running horizontally on your map, join points on the surface of the earth that are the same distance from the equator. Lines of longitude, or meridians, on the other hand, are drawn from north to south, running from one pole to the other. That much you may remember from your geography lessons in school. But what is the purpose of this system of lines? How does it work? And how did it originate?

Pinpointing Where You Are

With such an interlocking grid of lines of latitude and longitude, every point on the surface of the earth can be precisely located by means of two measurements, called coordinates. For example, you can find New York City on a map by the reference

lat. $40^{\circ}42'$ N and long. $74^{\circ}0'$ W, meaning that the city is located 40 degrees 42 minutes north of the equator and 74 degrees west of the internationally accepted prime meridian, the line of longitude that runs through Greenwich, a borough of London, England.* If seconds are added to these coordinates, even buildings within a city can be located. For instance, the city hall in New York City is at lat. $40^{\circ}42'45''$ N and long. $74^{\circ}0'23''$ W.

Distances also are reckoned with reference to these lines. The length of a nautical mile, for example, is one minute of latitude measured along a meridian. Since a pole is at 90 degrees, or 5,400 minutes ($90 \times 60 = 5,400$), latitude from the equator, one nautical mile is $1/5,400$ the distance from the

* In angular measurement, one degree ($^{\circ}$) is divided into 60 minutes ($'$), and each minute is divided into 60 seconds ($''$).

pole to the equator. Thus, the average nautical mile is 6,080 feet.

The ability to pinpoint any location accurately is certainly a tremendous boon, especially for navigators. For such a system to work, though, it must have certain reference points. The equator is a logical choice as the baseline from which measurements of latitude are made. But why was Greenwich chosen as the location of the prime meridian, the reference point for east-west longitudinal measurements? In fact, how did this whole idea of these imaginary lines imposed by man on his maps come about?

Lines With a History

As early as the second century B.C.E., the Greek astronomer Hipparchus used the concept of the imaginary lines to locate places on the surface of the earth. He chose a line through the Greek island of Rhodes as the reference from which to calculate positions to the east and to the west. The Greek astronomer Claudius Ptolemy of the second century C.E. is generally credited as the first one to come up with a system similar to the one that is in use today. His latitude lines were traced parallel to the equator. For longitude his starting point was a line through the western extremity of the world of his day, the Fortunate Isles, as the Canary Islands were then called.

It was not until 1884 that worldwide agreement was reached on the choice of a prime longitude line from which to measure positions to the east and to the west. In that year the International Meridian Conference at Washington, D.C., brought together 41 delegates from 25 countries. For the necessary astronomical observations to be made at the prime meridian, the delegates favored a line passing through a well-equipped observatory. By an overwhelming majority, they selected the line passing through Greenwich, England.

Travel and Time Zones

The choice of Greenwich as the location of the prime meridian was no accident. Since the 18th century, sea captains embarking from the busy port of London had been noting that as they sailed westward across the Atlantic, the sun reached its zenith later each day. They knew that because the earth rotates through 360 degrees every 24 hours, a time difference of one hour represented 15 degrees of longitude from Greenwich. Thus, using chronometers set by the master clock at the Greenwich observatory, they could fix their position on open sea simply by noting the difference between Greenwich time and their local time. For example, if they were at a spot where the sun reached its zenith (12:00 noon local time) at 3:30 p.m. Greenwich time, then by a simple calculation, they could fix their position as 52.5 degrees (15×3.5) west of Greenwich, that is, off the east coast of Newfoundland, provided they had stayed on the same latitude.

Staying on the same latitude, or parallel sailing, was a simple task. For centuries sailors in the Northern Hemisphere observed that the polestar, or Polaris, appeared virtually stationary when compared with the nightly movement of most other stars. They began to estimate how far north and south they were by measuring the height of that star above the horizon. Out on the open sea, they knew they were sailing due east or west as long as that star kept the same height.

The choice of Greenwich as a reference had other benefits for England. With the advent of railway travel there, a system of standardizing time within the country was needed. Too bad for the traveler who on arriving at Exeter railway station to catch the 11:33 found that it had departed some 14 minutes earlier! The problem? He used Exeter time; the rail system used London time. Acceptance of Greenwich Mean Time

GREENWICH MEAN TIME

In 1675, King Charles II of England commissioned that "a small observatory" be constructed in what is now the London borough of Greenwich "in order to the finding out of the longitude of places for perfecting navigation and astrono-



Above: Greenwich Royal Observatory. Right: Prime meridian line on cobblestone courtyard



throughout the land put an end to those difficulties.

Even greater problems existed in the United States. Different railroads kept to different times. This situation led to a General Time Convention of the railroads, held in 1883. Four time zones, each spanning some 15 degrees of longitude, or one hour in time, and covering the continental United States, were adopted. All the towns within a zone were to keep the same time.

Eventually this zoning arrangement won worldwide acceptance. The world was divided into 24 time zones. The center of the system was Zone 0, extending 7 1/2 degrees each side of the Greenwich meridian. As someone traveled east, he would set his watch one hour later as he moved through each zone. To the west he would set his watch one hour earlier.

Halfway around the world from Green-

wich, an interesting situation arises. Here, at the 180-degree meridian, there is a 24-hour difference in time from one side of the line to the other. Consequently, the 180-degree meridian, with minor variations to accommodate national boundaries, became the international date line. In crossing this line in a westerly direction, a traveler loses one day. Conversely, going eastward across the line, the traveler gains one day.

Scientists at the Royal Observatory soon discovered that the rotation of the earth is not isochronal, or at a constant speed. This is because the earth's orbit around the sun is not a perfect circle and the earth's axis is tilted. Thus, the solar day—the interval from noon to noon—varies in length throughout the year. With the Greenwich clocks in motion, calculations were possible that established a mean, or average, length for the day.

Noon Greenwich Mean Time is the moment when the sun reaches its zenith over any point on the Greenwich longitude line, or meridian (Latin, *meridianus*, of midday). Based on this Latin word, time before noon became known as *ante meridiem* (a.m.), or before midday; time after noon came to be *post meridiem* (p.m.).

My." Two newly invented timepieces, with pendulums 13 feet long, were installed to make accurate calculations of the earth's rotation.

The days of chronometers checked at Greenwich and taken out to sea for calculating longitude have passed. Modern technology has replaced all of that. Radio beacons, radar, and international telecommunications provide more accurate information. Yet, pinpointing your location on a chart or map still depends on those imaginary lines of latitude and longitude. We can be grateful for those very useful imaginary lines.

Still Indispensable

F A S H I O N A N C I E N T G R E E K S T Y L E

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN GREECE

WHY did the Christian writers Paul and Peter need to give specific advice about female dress in the first century? For example, Paul wrote: "I desire the women to adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with modesty and soundness of mind, not with styles of hair braiding and gold or pearls or very expensive garb." (1 Timothy 2:9) Similarly, Peter found it necessary to speak about "the external braiding of the hair," "the putting on of gold ornaments," and "the wearing of outer garments."—1 Peter 3:3.

They were writing to Christians living under the influence of the Hellenistic culture, which derived directly from ancient classical Greek civilization. Was there such a thing as fashion in ancient Greece? When many think of a typical ancient Greek, they may likely imagine him or her wearing the ubiquitous *khi-ton'*, or tunic—the gownlike garment—regardless of the time period being considered or the wearer's sex or place of origin.* Is that image right? No!

How the Inner Garment Was Made and Worn

A close inspection of statues, ceramic paintings, and classical writings reveals that

* The *khi-ton'* is mentioned 11 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures and is translated "inner garment" and "undergarment" in the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*. See W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Volume 1, page 198, under "Clothing."

ancient Greek dress was more than just a matter of long white robes. Styles, fabrics, colors, and patterns, as well as accessories, were varied and diverse. Women especially employed a great variety of ingenious devices to enhance their appearance.

Readers of the ancient Greek poet Homer's epic poem the *Odyssey*, which described the ten years' wanderings of the mythical hero Odysseus, may recall that while waiting for his return home, Penelope, the hero's wife, continued to weave and unweave the same piece of cloth during all those years. Homer makes a few more references to clothing, implying that the production of cloth was one of a woman's major domestic responsibilities from earliest times.

After cloth had been woven, it was cut to make the *khi-ton'*—a linen, and later sometimes woolen, shirtlike article of apparel—which formed the basis of both men's and women's clothing. In Archaic times (about 630 to 480 B.C.E.), the woman's *khi-ton'* (then called the *e-sthes*) consisted of a plain piece of cloth about the height of the woman and measuring twice the span of her arms. (Compare John 19:23; Acts 10:30, *The Kingdom Interlinear*.) The *khi-ton'* was fastened with brooches, which originally were made from the leg bones of small animals and later from metal. It was open at both sides, held together by a girdle at the waist.

and thus had the appearance of two separate garments.

Later, in the early sixth century B.C.E., the Ionian *khī-ton'* appeared more like a dress than a tunic, being sewn up at the sides and not folded over the top, and consequently, it was more economical in its use of material. Far from being uniformly white, the fabric was sometimes striped with long narrow bands of different colors, or fringes were added. Saffron and red were among the favorite colors used. In the Hellenistic period, Asian influence brought new brilliant colors, such as pink, blue, violet, and yellow. Other materials, decorated with gold thread or embroidered with flowers, were initially reserved for statues of the gods or for actors portraying them.

What Else Would an Athenian Lady Wear?

No self-respecting Athenian lady would leave her house without putting on her *hi-ma'ti-on*, or mantle. This rectangular piece of cloth could be worn in various ways—thrown over the shoulders like a shawl, draped over the right shoulder and under the left arm, or pulled up over the head as protection from the sun. Mantles came in varying sizes too, larger ones for cold weather being more like a cloak. The *hi-ma'ti-on* often had decorative borders, and the folding and hanging of it in such a way that the folds appeared like pleats must have required great skill.

The *ky'pas-sis*, a kind of short jacket that buttoned at the front, was sometimes worn instead of the *hi-ma'ti-on*. No hats, as we know them today, were worn by women, though on a particularly hot day, a *ski-a'dei-on*, or sunshade, might be carried. Wealthy Greek ladies often wore a *pe'plos*, or woolen garment. The Greek Scriptures also contain a reference to a "headdress" (Greek, *pe-ri-bo'lai-on*) in Paul's writings.—1 Corinthians 11:15.



Acropolis, Athens, Greece

Indoors, shoes were not normally worn by the ancient Greeks, and sometimes not outdoors either. According to the poet Hesiod, country folk wore ox-hide sandals lined with felt. Short women sometimes wore shoes with cork platform soles in order to appear taller.

The Putting On of Gold Ornaments

Ornaments made of sheets of gold decorated with relief representations, chiefly of animals and plants, were very common. Other popular ornaments were the scarab and the scaraboid, regularly set in swivel rings. Bracelets—sometimes called *ophis* (serpent) or *dra'kon* (dragon)—were favorite pieces of jewelry.

Excavations have brought to light diadems, medallions, necklaces, pendants, rings, and other ornaments. Such articles for personal decoration were usually made from gold, iron, and copper and less frequently from silver, whereas beads were of glass or semiprecious stones.

Earrings were also popular. Sometimes they were external insignia of dignity, marks of power, or a showy display of material prosperity. Girls normally had their ears pierced at an early age.

Styles of Hair Braiding

Hairstyles were many and varied in ancient Greece. One of the most popular had

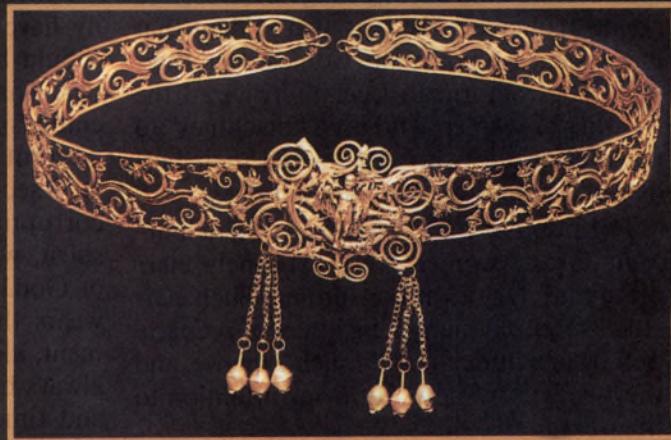
Left: The Parthenon, a temple dedicated to the goddess Athena



Above: Gold medallion with bust of Artemis

Right: A girl dressed in a "hi-ma'ti-on"

Below right: Gold diadem



*Far left: A goddess clad in a "khi-ton" and a "hi-ma'ti-on"
Left: Gold bracelets terminating in snakes' heads*

Upper right: Acropolis Museum, Greece

All other photos: National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Ornaments and Religion

Very often the representations found on ancient Greek ornaments are of a religious nature. Some were medallions depicting various gods and goddesses, such as Artemis, and demigods, such as Hercules. Very common gifts devoted to shrines throughout Greece were ornaments with religious ritualistic scenes. Reflecting the pagan belief that the human soul survives the death of the body, many decorative ornaments were placed in the burial places along with the dead person.

a center parting with the hair tied back with a colored ribbon. Some women wore their hair gathered into a coiled bun on the top of their head. Others wore a short, straight fringe of hair across the forehead. Sometimes ribbons were tied around the forehead and decorated with a small metal button in front. Iron curling tongs were used to create artificial curls. It is also evident that in classical Athens many women dyed their hair. The rhetorician Lucian criticized the frivolity of women who used "machines" to make curls and who squandered their husbands' fortunes on Arabian hair dyes.

The popular hair styles worn by rich ancient Greek women were extremely elaborate and very time-consuming. Such hair styles required many long hours of preparation by a beautician and much expense, and they were very showy, drawing attention to the wearer.

Women Who Adorn Themselves

The use of makeup was another Eastern habit brought to Greece by tradesmen and travelers. In the fifth century B.C.E., Athenian women used lead to whiten their faces. Lips were reddened, and rouge, made either from seaweed or from the roots of plants,

was used. Eyebrows were emphasized with soot, and eyelids were darkened with kohl (such as powdered antimony sulfide), while mascara was made from the dung of cows or from a mixture of egg white and gum.

Archaeological research in ancient Greek palaces, cemeteries, and settlements has brought to light a multitude of objects related to the beautification of women. The wide variety of instruments and utensils includes mirrors, combs, hook-shaped pins, elegant small knives, hairpins, razors, and miniature vases for perfumes, creams, and pigments.

The True Beauty

Generally speaking, despite the gibes of the ancient Greek satirists, stylishness was a much admired quality in a woman and one to which the ancient Greek lady devoted a great deal of time, effort, care, and attention.

For the Christian woman, this could easily have overshadowed the emphasis that should have been given to spiritual qualities. That is why the apostle Peter rightly emphasizes that the most beautiful and important clothing a woman can wear is "the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God." (1 Peter 3:3, 4) Any woman who wears that style of personal inner adornment, along with clean, modest attire, will always be beautifully dressed, in a flawless and timeless fashion. Paul wrote to Timothy: "I desire the women to adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with modesty and soundness of mind, not with styles of hair braiding and gold or pearls or very expensive garb, but in the way that benefits women professing to reverence God, namely, through good works."—1 Timothy 2:9, 10.

Young People Ask...



Abortion—Is It the Answer?

"When my pregnancy-test results came out positive," recalls Judy, "my boyfriend immediately demanded that I get an abortion. He even gave me the money for it."

Judy was 17 years old.*

WHEN 15-year-old Marta discovered that she was pregnant, she spoke with a counselor at the abortion clinic. "She explained it all to me," says Marta. "She told me that I could have an abortion, or she'd help me find an adoption agency or a maternity home, if that was what I wanted."

More than a million adolescent girls be-

* Some of the names have been changed.

come pregnant each year in the United States alone. Included among them are a number of youths who, in spite of Christian training, have disobeyed God's command to "abstain from fornication," or premarital sex. (1 Thessalonians 4:3) This immorality results in much needless suffering. Many of these youths, though, come to regret their course of conduct and want to straighten out their lives. But faced with the frightening prospect of having a baby out of wedlock, some may wonder if an abortion might be an easy solution to their problems. After all, each year nearly half-a-million pregnant girls in the United States opt for abortion. Could this really be the best answer to an unwanted pregnancy?

Why Some Have Abortions

Understandably, some powerful, even conflicting, emotions may come into play. A young woman is bound to have some natural feelings for the child growing within her, but she may also have legitimate fears and anxieties.

Eighteen-year-old Vicky, for example, "wanted to go to college, maybe even get a master's degree." In her mind, having a baby would interfere with her plans. (*Teen* magazine, March 1992) Marta likewise concluded: "If you're a mother, you stay home with your child and you're done with school. I wasn't ready for that." According to one study, 87 percent of teenagers who have abortions fear that having a baby would dramatically change their lives in a way they are not prepared to accept.

The fear of financial difficulties and the concern that one may not be capable of handling the responsibilities of single parenthood are also common reasons many choose abortion. Vicky put it this way: "I came from a family where my parents divorced, and my mother raised her three children by herself. I watched her struggle . . . I

could just see myself ending up a single parent like my mother."

Pressure from others, particularly a boyfriend, can also push one toward terminating a pregnancy. Judy's boyfriend gave her the ultimatum: "If you don't get an abortion, I don't want to see you ever again." For Nancy pressure to have an abortion came from her mother as well as other relatives.

The popular view that abortion doesn't really involve killing an infant also exerts a potent influence. Vicky says: "I wouldn't let myself think of it as a baby.... I read that through the fifth week of pregnancy, the fetus is smaller than your pinkie fingernail. I latched onto that idea like you wouldn't believe. I told myself that if it was only the size of a pinkie nail, it wasn't really a baby. I tried to make it not real in my mind so that I could go through with the abortion."

Some also claim that, at least in technically advanced nations, abortion is safe—supposedly safer than childbearing for a pregnant adolescent. All things considered, then, abortion may seem desirable. Nevertheless, the facts show that many who choose abortion have regrets later. Says one woman: "I had an abortion at the age of 20. Now I'm 34, and it's hard for me to deal with what I did. I wanted my baby, but my boyfriend didn't. I'm still experiencing emotional trauma; the pain is with you for the rest of your life."

Emotional Scars

Rather than being the easy way out, abortion can compound one's difficulties. At the very least, it goes against the grain of our inward sense of right and wrong—the conscience that God implanted in humankind. (Romans 2:15) Furthermore, abortion requires a young woman to shut the door of her tender compassions upon the tiny life developing within her. (Compare 1 John 3:17.) How demoralizing!

Marta says: "It wasn't until a couple of weeks had gone by [after the abortion] that I began to feel guilty and kind of ashamed of what I'd done." Things got even tougher when February rolled around—the month in which the baby would have been born. Eliasa reflects: "Fifteen years ago I had an abortion. Following that, I suffered serious depression and had to be treated in a clinic a number of times. I even wanted to commit suicide."

True, not all young women react in this way. Many sincerely believe that a fetus is not a human life. But what does the Creator—"the source of life"—say in this regard? (Psalm 36:9) The Bible makes it clear that to Jehovah God the unborn child developing inside the womb is far more than mere fetal tissue. He inspired King David to write: "Your eyes saw even the embryo of me, and in your book all its parts were down in writing." (Psalm 139:16) The Creator thus views even an embryo as a distinct person, a living human. For this reason, he stated that

Boyfriends often try to pressure girls into having an abortion



a person would be called to account for injuring an unborn child. (Exodus 21:22, 23) Yes, as far as God is concerned, killing an unborn child is the taking of a human life. A girl who wants to please God, therefore, cannot consider abortion to be an acceptable option—regardless of pressure placed upon her.*

Getting Support

Judy, mentioned at the outset, chose not to abort her baby. She says: "My older sister found out, and right from the start, she was supportive, particularly emotionally. She even said she would continue to support me after I had the baby. That's all I needed to hear to do what I felt was right deep down in my heart. I went ahead and had the baby." That was nine years ago. Looking at her eight-year-old son, Judy says: "Going through with the abortion would have been the biggest mistake of my life."

A young woman named Natisa similarly relates: "Five years ago I was sitting in an abortion clinic, waiting my turn. Instead of taking my turn, I thought twice and walked out of the clinic. I now have a wonderful four-year-old son, another baby on the way, and am married to a loving father."

Anyone faced with a pregnancy out of wedlock should not make a rash decision. As bad as things might look, it is not the end of the world. But such ones certainly do need support and mature guidance. Giving one's heart to one's parents is a good start, especially if they are Christians. (Proverbs 23:26) True, they will no doubt be hurt and angry at first. In the long run, though, they will likely be moved to help out. They

* Anyone who erred in the past and aborted an unborn life need not conclude that all is lost. Such ones can be confident that Jehovah supports repentant wrongdoers and 'forgives in a large way.' (Isaiah 55:7) While the emotional scars may linger, the psalmist assures: "As far off as the sunrise is from the sunset, so far off from us he has put our transgressions."—Psalm 103:12.

may, for example, arrange for prenatal care. They can also help in taking advantage of any government programs available to those who may qualify. Most important, they can encourage the erring one to receive needed spiritual help from the congregation elders.

—James 5:14, 15.

Some unwed mothers have chosen to give up their babies for adoption, feeling that they couldn't give the best to the baby. While adoption is certainly better than ending the child's life, God does hold a parent responsible to 'provide for his or her own.' (1 Timothy 5:8) A single parent may not be able to give her child the best materially, but she can give something far more important—love. (Proverbs 15:17) So under most circumstances, it would be better for an unwed mother to raise the child herself.

What about the task of raising an infant—and the drastic changes in life-style that will no doubt have to be made? All of this may seem overwhelming. Nevertheless, the Bible provides practical counsel that can help people deal with these challenges. Repentant unwed mothers can also benefit from spiritual help based solidly on God's Word. Yes, with loving support and proper guidance, these can make the most of the situation.* Abortion is simply *not* the answer!

* See *The Watchtower* of September 15, 1980, "Single Parents Coping in Today's World." Also, see "Young People Ask . . . How Can Unwed Mothers Make the Most of Their Situation?" in the October 8, 1994, issue of *Awake!*

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Deciphering Human Genetics

Captain James Cook —Intrepid Explorer of the Pacific

Seminars to Improve Relations Between Doctors and Jehovah's Witnesses

WATCHING THE WORLD

No Female Priests

Although a Gallup poll revealed that over two thirds of the Catholic Church members interviewed thought that women should be allowed to become priests, Pope John Paul II has firmly told Catholics to abandon that idea. In a letter to bishops, the pope stated: "I declare that the church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the church's faithful." The papal letter entitled "On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone" was accompanied by an official statement that added: "Since it does not belong to matters freely open to dispute, it always requires the full and unconditional assent of the faithful, and to teach the contrary is equivalent to leading consciences into error." Two months earlier, 32 women were ordained as priests in the Church of England, the first women priests in the history of that church. Thereupon, some 700 members of the Anglican clergy declared their intention to convert to Roman Catholicism, though only 35 resigned. Some Vatican officials believe that the pope's letter is partly intended to tell the dissenting Anglican priests that they would be welcome in the Roman Catholic Church.

Death in a Drawer

"In the big cities, the temptation to have a weapon in the house is increasing," says *Veja* under the headline "Death in a Drawer." But a Brazilian sharp-

shooter claims: "No one is exempt from accidents with firearms, and the only way to avoid them is not to buy a gun." Since criminals may be more familiar with guns and use the element of surprise, "the chances of a happy ending for him who intends to defend himself in a confrontation are very small." A police officer notes: "When unarmed, an individual will try to win a confrontation with intelligence and not with aggressiveness."

Animals Dwindling

Zimbabwe once boasted the largest number of black rhino in the world. But the number has dropped from about 3,000 in 1980 to approximately 300 now, reports the Johannesburg newspaper *The Star*. Poachers continue to hunt the animals



for their precious horns. In recent years the government introduced tough legislation that gave parks department officials the authority to kill poachers. The problem is that the government is not able to supply enough funds to the Department of National Parks and Wildlife to patrol the rhino areas effectively. *The Star* reports that because of poaching, "Zimbabwe's elephant population [has decreased] from 80 000

to around 60 000 in the past decade."

AIDS Spread by Truckers

In India truck drivers are considered a high-risk group for contracting the AIDS virus (HIV). Spending long periods away from their families, thousands of drivers frequent the brothels of Bombay, where estimates indicate that from 50 to 60 percent of the 80,000 prostitutes who work there may be HIV positive. From Bombay the truckers cover the entire country. Some villages near the highways provide rows of huts where village girls earn money by having sex with truck drivers. These same areas are also frequented by wealthy young men from nearby cities, and as stated in *The Times of India*, this "establishes an intricate and unmappable chain for the virus." Compounding the problem, many truck drivers superstitiously believe that sex is essential to keep their bodies cool when driving for long hours in high temperatures.

What Peace Dividends?

"What has happened to the anticipated 'peace dividends'?" asked the French magazine *Valeurs Actuelles*. With the easing of Cold War tensions and the corresponding reductions in the military budgets of many governments, hopes were raised that at least part of the enormous financial resources formerly spent on armaments would be rechanneled into humanitarian programs to help fight poverty and disease. Referring to the latest UN *Human*

Development Report, the magazine notes that the cuts in military spending over the last seven years represent a cumulative "savings" of some 935 billion dollars, yet there has been no accompanying increase in spending for humanitarian programs. The report also observed that many countries still continue to spend from three to four times more on armaments than on their education and health programs combined.

Interest in Religion Waning

The Japanese are becoming increasingly apathetic toward religion, declares a survey conducted by the newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun*. According to its "Survey of National Awareness on Religion," taken every five years since 1979, the ratio of those who believe in a particular religion has recently hit a record low of 1 in 4. Why the waning interest in religion? Amazingly, 47 percent of those polled complained that religions are "too zealous about making money." Others accused religions of "aggressive preaching," "too much involvement in politics," and "not having religious leaders who are worthy of respect." However, "44 percent thought God or Buddha 'exists.'"

Blessings for Sale

Facing an acute shortage of funds, many priests of the Russian Orthodox Church have turned to selling blessings, although not all priests agree with the openness of this business. *The Moscow Times* quotes one Russian Orthodox priest as saying: "Many churches are in great need of money for renovation." So priests charge

for blessing stores, apartments, bars, and casinos. Cars also come in line for a blessing. Depending on the make of the car, a priest, working near a used-car market, charges from 30,000 to 50,000 rubles (\$15 to \$25) for blessings, which include prayers, incense, and the sprinkling of "holy water."

Handling Hostile Drivers

A driver speeds past and aggressively cuts in front of you, or he flashes his lights for you to get out of his way and makes obnoxious gestures as he passes. If you react the wrong way, say the experts, it could cost you your life. They recommend



the following, according to the South African Edition of *Reader's Digest*: Adopt a calm, non-competitive attitude. Focus on your own driving, and avoid eye contact with the other driver. Check your mirrors every three to ten seconds. Recognize the hazard before it arrives, and make room for it. Slow down to allow a driver to cut in front of you, or put on your indicator and move into an open lane. "The way you react to the next hostile driver," concludes the article, "may be the key to your safety, and even to your survival."

The World Cup and God

"In the struggle to win [Brazil's] fourth [soccer] World Cup,

all kinds of religious manifestation are valid," reports *Jornal da Tarde*. "Rituals are observed before, during, and after the games." Claimed Brazil's Bebe-to: "I am sure that [God] will be Brazilian in this World Cup." After the match, noting that the players attributed the victory to God, cardinal Dom Lucas Moreira Neves wrote: "To many, the conquest of the World Cup may have personal, family, or social value . . . : resurrection of self-esteem and self-confidence; consolation amid many pains; and even *catharsis* [purification] for a desolated country." Interestingly, though, soccer star Mauro Silva stated: "Different from some players of Brazil's team, I do not believe that God helped us to win the World Championship. God is not partial, and he is even less concerned with soccer."

Obstacle Course for Short People

Individuals in Germany who are no taller than 5 feet are eligible for membership in the Association of Short People, reports the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Sabine Popp, one such member, dislikes being called a midget or a Lilliputian. "We are real people, not fairy-tale figures," she says. Everyday life can become an obstacle course for people of short stature, since objects such as elevator buttons, light switches, ticket machines, and door handles are often placed so high that they are out of reach. Furthermore, the problems that short people face are not simply physical. Harald Berndt, chairman of the association, laments that society in general does not recognize their abilities. "Short people can perform good work despite their size," he explains.

FROM OUR READERS

Bad Manners For as long as I could remember, I had shown bad manners. There were even times when I felt proud of failing to voice expressions of courtesy and consideration, such as "Thank you," "Please forgive me," and "I'm sorry." Then I read the article "The Decay of Manners" and the portions of the Bible quoted therein. (July 22, 1994) I learned that God is always mannerly when dealing with those below him, often adding "please" to his requests. I was very surprised to see this in the Bible. It has motivated me to try to imitate God. A million thanks go to you.

M. E. J., Nigeria

I really appreciated the article. Closely related to manners is respect for others' rights and property. Sometimes when you invite friends over, their children feel they have free rein to do as they wish—going into different rooms, rummaging through drawers and refrigerators, and so forth.

G. W., United States

Every sentence in the article was important. It was just what I needed for instructing my two teenage boys. I learned that there were many details about manners that I have not taught my children. Now I know these lovely details and how to apply them.

P. H., United States

Moscow's Subways Recently I read "Moscow's Dazzling Underground Palaces." (June 22, 1994) I have always wanted to travel abroad, and I find that reading such articles puts me right there.

J. H., New Zealand

I visited Moscow while attending a recent convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. I spent a lot of time riding the Metro. I didn't realize then that I was seeing one of the most beautiful and important subways in the world. So I really enjoyed the article.

P. M., Finland

Snipers? In the article "My Reflections as a Military Historian," the writer describes entering Paris following its liberation at the end of World War II. (April 22, 1993) He claims to have been shot at by German snipers and to have left his jeep a number of times to seek cover—and that on the most famous street in Paris! Paris was never "liberated" but was surrendered without a fight by German commander Dietrich von Choltitz, who acted against orders.

A. W., Italy

The author was relating his own personal experience, a recollection that is confirmed by other eyewitnesses and historians. For example, the book "Liberation," by military historian Martin Blumenson, acknowledges that although von Choltitz defied Hitler's orders to burn Paris to the ground, severe fighting did take place between the German soldiers and the French and U.S. troops in the days before his surrender. As for fighting on the Champs Élysées—"the most famous street in Paris"—this too is confirmed by other historians. See "Six Armies in Normandy—From D-Day to the Liberation of Paris," by John Keegan.
—ED.

Medical Controversy I am 12 years old. I read the article "Neither Magicians nor Gods." (May 8, 1994) I was pleased to see a Christian who is really young like me stand up to the hospital doctors and surgeons and 'abstain from blood.'—Acts 15:20.

P. M. H., United States

I am 19 years old. How my faith has been strengthened by reading Mercy Uwasi's experience! It made me aware of the fact that loyalty to Jehovah does not depend on one's age but on one's deep love for him. This has made me more determined than ever to maintain my loyalty to Jehovah.

S. M., South Africa

Do you have a FRITILLARY in your garden?



IF YOU do, you will be fascinated by its beauty. What is a fritillary? It is one of the thousands of different kinds of butterflies that beautify our world and one of the over 750 species that can be found in the United States and Canada. The one shown here, a great spangled, was photographed in a garden in the lush countryside of the state of Virginia. The great spangled shows silver spangles on the underside of the hind wing. The gardener had deliberately sown a patch of garden with wild-flowers that grow high and attract butterflies—there were yellow rudbeckias and mauve phlox.

The fritillary family displays wide variety, with such evocative names as alberta alpine, arctic, gulf, lavender, polar, purple bog, silver meadow, and zerene.

If you would like to attract butterflies to your garden, try growing a wildflower patch. Perhaps you can buy a packet of wildflower seeds that will grow into a painter's palette of colors to draw these delicate creatures to you. If you live in the appropriate region of the world, the buddleia bush will bring in butterflies like a magnet. Then get a camera and binoculars, and have fun!



"It has been so difficult to grow up without him"

I AM writing after having read our latest convention release, *When Someone You Love Dies*, in order to express my deep and heartfelt gratitude for such a sensitively written and faith-strengthening brochure.

"I am 18 years old. My father was killed in a car accident when I was eight, and even though this was ten years ago, I still have such a loneliness inside. It has been so difficult to grow up without him. There are so many things I've wanted to tell him, share with him, find out about him. How incredibly comforting to be reminded of Jehovah's loving resurrection hope! It brings tears to my eyes. Thank you once again for renewing my hope."—A young Witness in Austria.