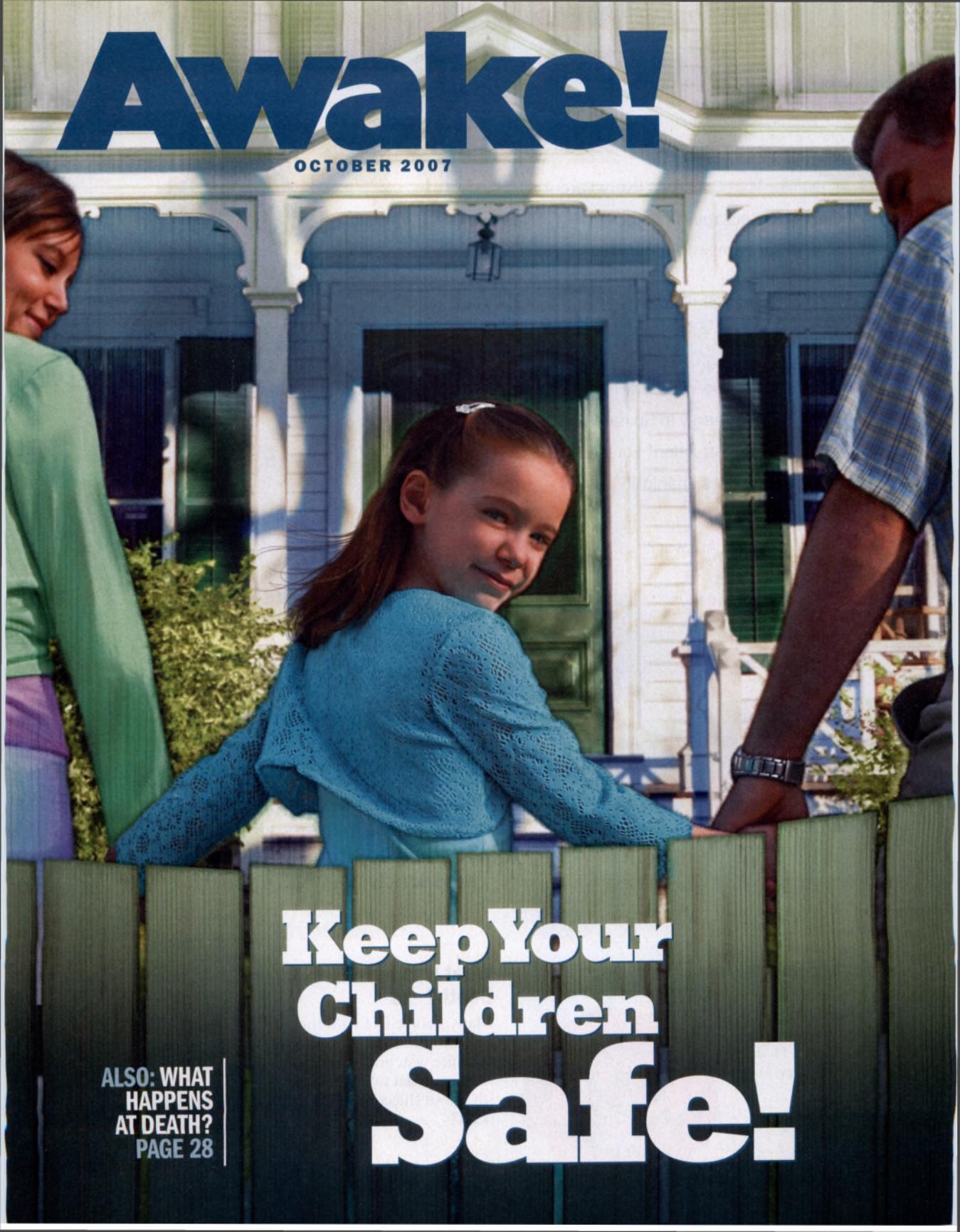


Awake!

OCTOBER 2007



Keep Your
Children
Safe!

ALSO: WHAT
HAPPENS
AT DEATH?
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It may surprise many people to know that millions of roses are exported from Kenya. How are they cultivated?



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Many people live with the illusion that their dead loved ones are watching them from heaven. What does the Bible say about the condition of the dead?



A Danger That Concerns Every Parent

HEATHER and Scott are a vivacious, happy couple, the parents of a bright, healthy three-year-old boy.* They take good care of their son. In today's world, that is no easy job. It involves a wide array of worries and responsibilities. There are so many things that children need to be taught! Heather and Scott feel strongly about one responsibility in particular: They want to protect their child from the dangers of sexual abuse. Why?

"My father was a cold, angry drunk," Heather says. "He beat me terribly, and he molested me and my sisters."[#] It is widely agreed that such abuse can inflict deep emotional scars. No wonder Heather is determined to protect her son! Scott feels the same about protecting him.

Many parents are concerned about child abuse. Perhaps you are as well.

* Names in this series of articles have been changed.

[#] Sexual abuse of a child occurs when an adult uses a child to gratify his or her own sexual desires. It often involves what the Bible calls fornication, or *por-ne'i'a*, which could include fondling of genitalia, sexual intercourse, and oral or anal sex. Some abusive acts—such as the fondling of breasts, explicitly immoral proposals, showing pornography to a child, voyeurism, and indecent exposure—may amount to what the Bible condemns as "loose conduct" or "uncleanness . . . with greediness."—*Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:19*.

Unlike Scott and Heather, you may not have come face-to-face with abuse and its effects, but you have no doubt heard shocking reports about the prevalence of this disgusting practice. Around the world good parents are horrified to learn what is happening to children in their area.

Not surprisingly, one researcher in the field of sexual abuse called the rates of child abuse "one of the most discouraging discoveries of our era." That is certainly sad news, but are such developments surprising? Not to students of the Bible. God's Word explains that we are living in a troubled period of time called "the last days," a time marked by a prevalence of "fierce" behavior, when people would be "lovers of themselves" and would have "no natural affection." —2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Sexual abuse is a daunting issue. Indeed, some parents feel overwhelmed when they contemplate the sheer wickedness of the people who seek out children to abuse them sexually. However, is this problem too much for parents to handle? Or are there some practical steps that parents can take to keep their children safe? The following articles will address these questions.

How to Protect Your Children

FEW of us want to dwell on the subject of sexual abuse of children. Parents shudder at the very thought of it! Such abuse, however, is a frightening and unpleasant reality in today's world, and its effects on children can be devastating. Is the matter worth considering? Well, what would you be willing to give for the sake of your child's safety? Learning about the unpleasant realities of abuse is surely a small price to pay. Such knowledge can really make a difference.

SEXUAL ABUSE —A GLOBAL PROBLEM

In 2006 the secretary-general of the United Nations transmitted to the UN General Assembly a world report on violence against children that had been compiled by an independent expert for the UN. During a recent year, according to the report, an estimated 150 million girls and 73 million boys under 18 years of age experienced "forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence." Those numbers are staggering, but the report notes: "This is certainly an underestimate." A review of studies from 21 countries suggested that in some places as many as 36 percent of women and 29 percent of men had been subjected to some form of sexual victimization in childhood. The majority of the perpetrators were relatives!

Do not let the plague of abuse rob you of your courage. At the very least, you have power that your child does not have—strengths that it will take years, even decades, for your child to gain. The passing years have brought you a fund of knowledge, experience, and wisdom. The key is to enhance those strengths and put them to use in protecting your child. We will discuss three basic steps that every parent can take. They are as follows: (1) Become your child's first line of defense against abuse, (2) give your child some needed background education, and (3) equip your child with some basic protective tools.

Are You the First Line of Defense?

The primary responsibility for protecting children against abuse belongs to parents, not to children. So educating parents comes before educating children. If you are a parent, there are a few things you need to know about child abuse. You need to know who abuse children and how they go about it. Parents often think of molesters as strangers who lurk in the shadows, seeking ways to kidnap and rape children. Such monsters certainly do exist. The news media bring them to our

Awake!®

THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

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Be your child's first line of defense

attention very often. However, they are relatively rare. In about 90 percent of the cases of sexual abuse of a child, the perpetrator is someone the child already knows and trusts.

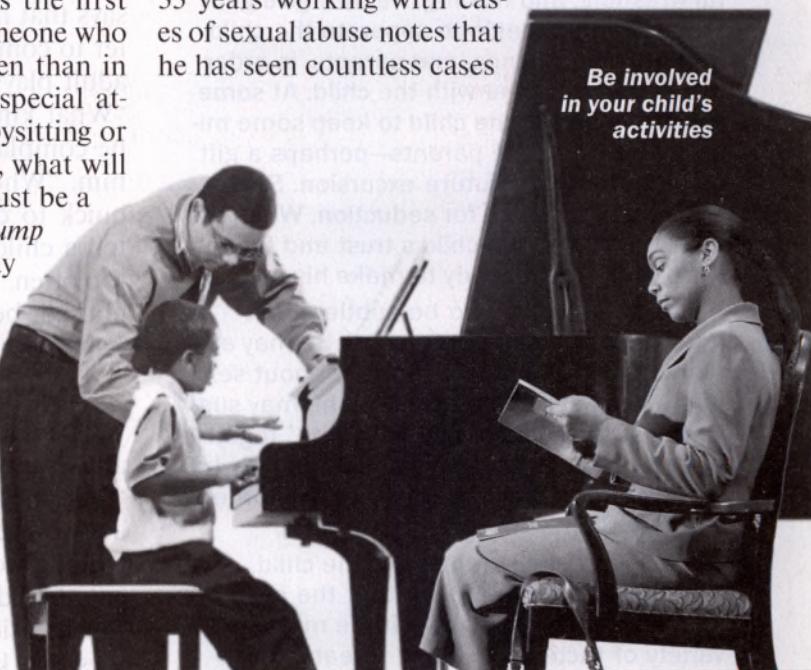
Naturally, you do not want to believe that an affable neighbor, teacher, health-care worker, coach, or relative could lust after your child. In truth, most people are not like that. There is no need to become suspicious of everybody around you. Still, you can protect your child by learning how the typical abuser operates.—See the box on page 6.

Knowing such tactics can make you, the parent, better prepared to act as the first line of defense. For instance, if someone who appears more interested in children than in adults singles out your child for special attention and gifts or offers free babysitting or private excursions with your child, what will you do? Decide that the person must be a molester? No. *Do not be quick to jump to conclusions.* Such behavior may be quite innocent. Nonetheless, it can put you on the alert. The Bible says: “Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one considers his steps.” —Proverbs 14:15.

Remember, any offer that sounds too good to be true may be just that. Carefully screen anyone who volunteers to spend time alone with your child. Let such an

individual know that you are likely to check on your child at any time. Melissa and Brad, young parents of three boys, are cautious about leaving a child alone with an adult. When one son had music lessons at home, Melissa told the instructor: “I’ll be in and out of the room while you’re here.” Such vigilance may sound extreme, but these parents would rather be safe than sorry.

Be actively involved in your child’s activities, friendships, and schoolwork. Learn all the details about any planned excursion. One mental-health professional who spent 33 years working with cases of sexual abuse notes that he has seen countless cases



**Be involved
in your child's
activities**

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

^{*} Audiocassettes also available.

⁺ CD also available.

^o MP3 CD-ROM also available.

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

A PATTERN OF SEDUCTION

An abuser is likely to be too clever to use force on his victims. Rather, he may prefer to seduce children gradually. He begins by selecting a target, often a child who seems vulnerable and trusting, thus relatively easy to control. Next, he singles out that child for special attention. He may also try to win the trust of the child's parents. Molesters are often expert at pretending to be sincerely interested in the child and the family.

In time, the molester will begin grooming the child for abuse. He gradually becomes more physical with the child through innocent-looking displays of affection, playful wrestling, and tickling. He may give generous gifts and begin to separate the child from friends, siblings, and parents, in order to spend time alone with the child. At some point he may ask the child to keep some minor secret from the parents—perhaps a gift or plans for some future excursion. Such tactics set the stage for seduction. When the abuser has won the child's trust and that of the parents, he is ready to make his move.

Again, he is likely to be subtle about it rather than violent or forceful. He may exploit the child's natural curiosity about sex, offering to act as a "teacher," or he may suggest that they play a "special game" together that only they will know about. He may try exposing the child to pornography in order to make such behavior seem normal.

If he succeeds in molesting the child, he is now eager to ensure that the child does not tell anyone about it. He may use a variety of tactics, including threats, blackmail, and blame, or perhaps a combination of these. For example, he may say: "It's your fault. You didn't tell me to stop." He may add: "If you tell your parents, they'll call the police and send me to jail forever." Or he may say: "It's our secret. If you tell, no one will believe you. If your parents ever do find out, I will hurt them." There is no end to the devious and malicious tactics such individuals will try.

that could have been prevented by simple vigilance on the parents' part. He quotes one convicted molester as saying: "Parents literally give us their children. . . . They sure made it easy for me." Remember, most molesters prefer easy targets. Parents who are actively involved in their children's lives make their children difficult targets.

Another way to act as your child's first line of defense is to be a good listener. Children will rarely disclose abuse directly; they are too ashamed and worried about the reaction. So listen carefully, even for subtle clues.* If your child says something that concerns you, calmly use questions to draw him out.[#] If he says that he does not want a certain babysitter to come back, ask why. If he says that an adult plays funny games with him, ask him: "What kind of game? What does he do?" If he complains that someone tickled him, ask him, "Where did he tickle you?" Do not be quick to dismiss a child's answers. Abusers tell a child that no one will believe him; all too often, that is true. And if a child has been abused, being believed and supported by a parent is a big step toward recovery.

Give Your Child Background Education

One reference work on the subject of child abuse quotes a convicted molester as saying: "Give me a kid who knows nothing about sex, and you've given me my next victim." Those chilling words are a useful reminder to parents. Children who are ignorant about sex are much easier for molesters to fool. The Bible says that knowledge and wisdom can deliver us "from the man speaking perverse things."

* Experts note that many abused children give nonverbal clues that something is wrong. For example, if a child suddenly regresses to behavior he had outgrown some time earlier, such as bed-wetting, clinginess, or fear of being alone, he may be sending a signal that something serious is upsetting him. Such symptoms should not be taken as definite proof of abuse. Calmly draw out your child to learn the cause of the distress so that you can offer comfort, reassurance, and protection.

[#] For the sake of simplicity, both the abuser and the victim are referred to here as males. Regardless of gender, though, the same principles apply.

Give your child background education ■

(Proverbs 2:10-12) Is that not what you want for your child? Then, as your second basic step in protecting him, do not hold back from teaching him about this important subject.

How, though, do you go about it? More than a few parents find the subject of sex a bit awkward to discuss with children. Your child may find the subject even more awkward, and he is not likely to bring it up with you. So take the initiative. Melissa says: "We started early, with naming the body parts. We used real words, not baby words, to show them that there is nothing funny or shameful about any part of their body." Instruction about abuse follows naturally. Many parents simply tell their children that the parts of their body that a bathing suit covers are private and special.

Says Heather, mentioned in the preceding article: "Scott and I told our son that his penis is private, personal, and not a toy. It's not for anyone to play with—not for Mommy, not for Daddy, not even for a doctor. When we take him to the doctor, I explain that he's only going to make sure everything is OK, and that's why he may touch there." Both parents take part in these little talks from time to time, and they assure the child that he can always come to them and tell them if anyone touches him in a way that's wrong or makes him feel uncomfortable. Experts in child care and abuse prevention recommend that all parents have similar talks with their children.

Many have found the book *Learn From the Great Teacher** to be a real help in teaching this subject. Chapter 32, "How Jesus Was Protected," has a direct yet comforting message for children on the dangers of abuse and the importance of staying safe. "The book has given us a perfect way to reinforce what we

have told our children personally," says Melissa.

In today's world children need to know that there are some people who want to touch children or get children to touch them in ways that are wrong. These warnings need not fill children with fear or make them distrust all adults. "It's just a safety message," says Heather. "And it's one message among many others, most of them having nothing to do with abuse. It hasn't made my son fearful at all."

Your child's education should include a balanced view of obedience. Teaching a child to obey is an important and difficult lesson. (Colossians 3:20) However, such lessons can go too far. If a child is taught that he must *always* obey *any* adult, regardless of the circumstances, he is vulnerable to abuse. Molesters are quick to notice when children are overly compliant. Wise parents teach their children that obedience is relative. For Christians, that is not as complicated as it may sound. It simply means saying to them: "If anybody tells you to do something that Jehovah God says is wrong, you don't have to do it. Even Mommy or Daddy should never tell you to do something that Jehovah says is wrong. And you can

**Do not
hold back
from teaching
your child
about sex**



* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

■ Equip your child with basic protective tools

always tell either Mommy or Daddy if someone tries to get you to do something wrong."

Finally, let your child know that no one should ask him to keep a secret from you. Tell him that if anyone asks him to keep any kind of secret from you, he should always come and let you know. No matter what he is told—even if scary threats are made or he has done something wrong himself—it is *always* OK to come to Mommy or Daddy and tell them all about it. Such instruction need not scare your child. You can reassure him that most people would never do such things—touch him where they shouldn't, ask him to disobey God, or ask him to keep a secret. Like a planned escape route in case of fire, these are just-in-case messages and will probably never be needed.

Equip Your Child With Some Basic Protective Tools

The third step we will discuss is to give your child some simple actions to take in case someone tries to take advantage of him when you are not there. One method that is often recommended is like a game. Parents

ask "What if . . . ?" and the child answers. You might say, "What if we were at the store together and we got separated? How would you find me?" The child's answer may not be exactly what you would hope for, but you can guide him along with further questions, such as "Can you think of anything you could do that would be safer?"

You can use similar questions to ask a child what the safest response would be if someone tried to touch him in a wrong way. If the child is easily alarmed by such questions, you might try telling a story about another child. For example: "A little girl is with a relative she likes, but then he tries to touch her where he shouldn't. What do you think she should do to stay safe?"

What should you teach your child to do in situations like the one above? Notes one author: "A firm 'No!' or 'Don't do that!' or 'Leave me alone!' does wonders to frighten the seductive offender into retreat and into rethinking his or her choice of victim." Help your child act out brief scenarios so that he

feels confident to refuse loudly, get away quickly, and report to you whatever has happened. A child who seems to understand the training thoroughly may easily forget it within a few weeks or months. So repeat this training regularly.

All the child's direct caregivers, including the males—whether father, step-father, or other male relatives—should be part of these discussions. Why? Because all involved in such teaching are, in effect, promising the child that they will never commit such acts of abuse. Sadly, much sexual abuse occurs right within the confines of the family. The following article will discuss how you can make your family a safe haven in an abusive world.

Teach your child to be firm and resolute if he or she is ever faced with a molester





Make Your Family a Safe Haven

HAVING no natural affection." With those sad words, the Bible describes many people of our time, a period called "the last days." (2 Timothy 3:1, 3, 4) The epidemic of child abuse in the family furnishes vivid proof of the truth of that prophecy. In fact, the original Greek word *a'stor·gos*, rendered in English "having no natural affection," suggested a lack of the love that should exist among family members, especially between parents and children.* And all too often that is the setting in which child abuse occurs.

Some researchers say that the most common perpetrator of sexual abuse is the male parent figure. Other male relatives also commonly molest. While most victims are girls, many boys are abused as well. Female perpetrators are not as rare as you might assume. Perhaps the most underreported form of abuse is sibling incest, where an older or more powerful child bullies or seduces a younger

* This ancient Greek word has been defined: "Hard-hearted towards kindred." One Bible translation thus renders this verse: "They will . . . lack normal affection for their families."

or weaker brother or sister into sexual acts. As a parent, you surely find all such acts repugnant.

How can you keep these problems from arising in your family? Clearly, every member of every family needs to learn and to value some principles that rule out abusive conduct. The best place to find that kind of guidance is in God's Word, the Bible.

God's Word and Physical Relations

To be safe, every family needs to embrace the Bible's standard of morality. The Bible is not prudish when it comes to discussing sex. It is dignified, yet frank and to the point. It shows that God designed sexual intimacy to be a real blessing to husband and wife. (Proverbs 5:15-20) However, it condemns sexual conduct outside that arrangement. For instance, the Bible speaks openly against incest. In Leviticus chapter 18, a wide variety of incestuous relationships are forbidden. Note these words in particular: "You people must not come near, any man of you, to *any close fleshly relative of his* to lay bare nakedness [to



TIPS FOR A SAFE HOME

Internet: If your children have access to the Internet, they need instructions on how to use it safely. There are countless pornographic sites as well as chat rooms and other social networks where pedophiles seek out and seduce children. It is wise to keep the computer in an open area where parents can more easily monitor its use. Without parental supervision children should never give out personal information or arrange to see anyone they have met over the Internet.—Psalm 26:4.

Alcoholic Beverages: In many cases of sexual abuse of a child, alcohol has played a role. Experience shows that adults who overindulge tend to lower their inhibitions; some give in to desires they might otherwise have suppressed. At any rate, this danger adds another reason to heed the Bible's counsel to avoid drunkenness and overdrinking.—Proverbs 20:1; 23:20, 31-33; 1 Peter 4:3.

Privacy: One woman recalls: "After Mom died, my father was the only one in the house who had curtains on his windows or a door into his bedroom. He gave us no privacy—even in the bathroom." This man molested all his daughters. Every family member needs to understand the importance of privacy. As parents need privacy from their children at certain times, so they need to give children an appropriate measure of privacy as they mature. Wise parents treat others as they themselves want to be treated.
—Matthew 7:12.

have sexual intercourse]. I am Jehovah.”—Leviticus 18:6.

Jehovah listed acts of incest among the “detestable things” punishable by death. (Leviticus 18:26, 29) Clearly, the Creator has very high standards on this matter. Today, many governments take a similar view, outlawing the sexual abuse of children within the family. Often, the law holds that a child who is subjected to sexual relations by an adult has been raped. Why use that strong word if physical force was not involved?

Many authorities have come to recognize

what the Bible has said all along about children—that they tend to be unable to reason in the way that adults do. For example, Proverbs 22:15 says: “Foolishness is tied up with the heart of a boy.” And the apostle Paul was inspired to write: “When I was a babe, I used to . . . think as a babe, to reason as a babe; but now that I have become a man, I have done away with the traits of a babe.”—1 Corinthians 13:11.

A child cannot understand the full meaning of sexual acts, nor can a child imagine the consequences that will follow over the years.

Hence, it is widely agreed that children cannot give any meaningful consent to engage in sexual relations. In other words, if an adult (or significantly older youth) has relations with a child, the older person cannot excuse the act by saying that the child did not object or that the child asked for it. The adult is guilty of rape. This is a crime, often punishable by a prison sentence. The responsibility for the rape belongs with the rapist, not the unwilling victim.

Sadly, though, most of such crimes go unpunished by authorities today. In Australia, for example, it has been estimated that only 10 percent of offenders are prosecuted, and few are convicted. Other lands have had a similar record. While governments may be able to do little to protect the Christian family, the application of Bible principles can do far more.

True Christians realize that the God who had those principles recorded in his Word has not changed. He sees every deed we carry out, even those that are hidden to most humans. The Bible says: "All things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting."—Hebrews 4:13.

God holds us accountable if we violate his commands and hurt others. On the other hand, he blesses us for adhering to his positive commands regarding family life. What are some of these?

A Family United by Love

"Love," the Bible tells us, "is a perfect bond of union." (Colossians 3:14) As described in the Bible, love is not simply a feeling. It is defined by the way it motivates—by the conduct it prompts and the deeds it forbids. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8) In the family, showing love means treating each member with dignity, respect, and kindness. It means living in harmony with God's view of each family member. God gives each one an honorable and important role.

As the family head, the father is to take the

lead in showing love. He understands that a Christian father is not given license to be a tyrant, abusing his power over his wife or children. Rather, he looks to Christ as his example in headship. (Ephesians 5:23, 25) So he is tender and loving with his wife and patient and gentle with his children. He loyally protects them and gives his all to prevent anything from happening that might rob them of their peace, their innocence, or their sense of trust and safety.

Likewise, the wife and mother has a role of vital importance and dignity. The Bible uses the protective instincts of mothers in the animal kingdom to illustrate how protective Jehovah and Jesus can be. (Matthew 23:37) A human mother should likewise be staunchly protective of her children. Lovingly, she is quick to put their safety and well-being ahead of her own. The parents do not allow abuse of power, bullying, or intimidation to enter into their dealings with each other or with their children; nor do they allow their children to use such tactics on one another.

As each family member treats the others with respect and dignity, good communication thrives. Notes author William Prendergast: "All parents should have daily, constant, close communication with their children or adolescents." He adds: "This appears to be the best solution to the problem of sexual abuse." Indeed, the Bible recommends just such constant and loving communication. (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) When that direction is applied, the home is a place where each member can freely and safely speak from the heart.

Granted, we live in a wicked world and not all abuse can be prevented. Even so, a safe home can make a world of difference. If some member of the family is hurt outside the home, he or she knows just where to run for comfort and sympathy. Such a home is truly a refuge, a safe haven in a troubled world. May God bless your efforts to make your family just like that!

Brazil's Indians THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION?

THE Xingu National Park is located in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso. It covers some 10,500 square miles—an area almost the size of Belgium. Home to some 3,600 Indians belonging to 14 ethnic groups, the park is a verdant island in the midst of what in satellite photos looks like "a gigantic billiard table." Surrounding forests have either been burned down to provide loggers with access to commercially viable trees or transformed into pasture for huge herds of cattle.

In the 1960's, the Brazilian government began to establish reservations for the Indians. Mainly located in the Amazon region, at present the reservations cover about 12 percent of Brazil's territory. The formation of reservations has contributed to a surprising turnaround: The Indian population in Brazil is growing—for the first time in the past 500 years! It is thought to number some three hundred thousand. That, however, represents only a tiny fraction of the Indian population in 1500, which is estimated to have been anywhere between two million and six million.

In the past 500 years, as one writer put it, "an appalling demographic tragedy of great magnitude has occurred." What led to such a drastic reduction in the Indian population? Does growth in recent years mean that Brazil's Indians are finally safe from extinction?

How Colonization Began

During the first 30 years after Portugal laid claim to Brazil in 1500, colonial interests cen-

tered on brazilwood—a hardwood that produces a red dye. Brazil got its name from this tree. The wood was highly valued in Europe, and Europeans bartered trinkets for it.

However, it was soon discovered that sugarcane flourished in the Brazilian climate. But there was a drawback. Sugar cultivation was labor-intensive. Demand for slave labor began to increase. And the settlers did not have to look far! An abundant supply of native labor was available.

How Did Slavery Come About?

Indians were accustomed to practicing a type of subsistence agriculture. Men were basically hunters and fishers. They undertook the heavy labor of clearing forest land. The women did the planting, harvesting, and preparing of food. In European intellectual circles, the Indians' seeming indifference to wealth and their lack of greed were eulogized. On the other hand, many settlers viewed the Indians as just plain lazy.

Friendly Indians were encouraged to move close to Portuguese settlements to provide labor and protection for the settlers. The Jesuits and other religious orders were often instrumental in this process. Little did they realize how detrimental this contact would be to the Indians. Although the Indians' land and freedom were guaranteed by law, in practice, Indians were virtually forced to work as slaves for the settlers. Rarely were they paid or allowed to cultivate their own land.

Attempts by the Portuguese Crown to ban

slavery met with limited success. Settlers usually managed to circumvent antislavery laws. Generally speaking, it was considered morally acceptable to enslave or sell as slaves Indians, supposedly enemies, captured in "just wars." Indians held captive by other tribes could also be purchased, or "ransomed," and kept as slaves.

In the final analysis, it was the sugar industry that made the colony a viable venture. And the sugar industry back then depended on slave labor. Hence, the Portuguese Crown was often forced to reconcile its conscience with its treasury receipts.

Colonial Rivalry—Portugal Versus France and Holland

The Indians were the principal victims of conflicts between the colonial powers. The French and the Dutch sought to take Brazil from Portugal. They competed with the Portuguese for Indian support. The Indians did not perceive that the real intent of the foreign powers was to take over their land. Rather, they saw these conflicts as an opportunity to avenge themselves on their own enemies—other Indian tribes—and thus willingly got embroiled in foreign-power disputes.

For example, on November 10, 1555, Nicholas de Villegaignon, a French nobleman, landed at Guanabara Bay (modern Rio de Janeiro) and built a fort. He allied himself with the local Tamoio Indians. The Portuguese brought Tupinamba Indians from Bahia and, in March 1560, finally attacked what had seemed to be an impregnable fort. The French fled but continued to trade with the Tamoio and to incite them to attack the Portuguese. After a number of battles, the Tamoio were finally crushed. Reportedly, in just one battle, 10,000 were killed and 20,000 enslaved.

Loathsome Diseases From Europe

The natives first contacted by the Portuguese seemed remarkably healthy. Early ex-

plorers believed that many of the older Indians were centenarians. But the Indians had no immunity to European and African diseases. Probably this factor more than any other led them to the brink of extinction.

Portuguese records are filled with terrible reports of epidemics that drastically reduced the Indian population. In 1561, a smallpox plague struck Portugal and spread across the Atlantic. The effect was devastating. Jesuit Leonardo do Vale wrote a letter on May 12, 1563, that described the horrors of the epidemic in Brazil: "This was a form of smallpox or pox so loathsome and evil-smelling that none could stand the great stench that emerged from [the victims]. For this reason many died untended, consumed by the worms that grew in the wounds of the pox and were engendered in their bodies in such abundance and of such great size that they caused horror and shock to any who saw them."

Interracial Unions Shock Jesuits

Mixed racial unions also led to the disappearance of many tribes. "Neither the Portuguese nor the native Brazilians were repelled by interracial unions," states the book *Red Gold—The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians*. The Indians considered it an act of hospitality to offer women, often their own daughters, to strangers. When the first Jesuits arrived in Brazil in 1549, they were scandalized by what they saw. "They [the clergy] publicly tell the men that it is lawful for them to live in sin with their coloured

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

SPECIAL ISSUE!

- **Can You Trust the Bible?**
- **How the Bible Came to Us**
- **What Is the Bible About?**

women," complained Jesuit Manoel da Nóbrega, adding: "The settlers use all their Indian women [slaves] as concubines." The king of Portugal was informed that one Portuguese settler 'had so many children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and descendants that [the speaker said] I would not dare to tell Your Majesty how many.'

By the mid-17th century, the Indians of the once populous coastal plains of Brazil had either been killed off, reduced to slavery, or assimilated by interracial unions. The same could soon be said of tribes of the Amazon region.

The arrival of the Portuguese in the Amazon was followed by an almost unrestrained "open season" on the inhabitants of the lower Amazon. According to the vicar-general of Maranhão, Manoel Teixeira, in a matter of decades, the Portuguese killed almost two million Indians in Maranhão and Pará! This figure was probably exaggerated, but the destruction and suffering were real enough. The upper Amazon later suffered similar devastation. By the mid-18th century, the Amazon region, with the exception of remote areas, had lost almost its entire native Indian population.

The development of many of the remote areas in the Amazon region during the late 19th and the 20th centuries gradually brought the white man into contact with surviving isolated Indian tribes. Charles Goodyear's discovery of the process of rubber vulcanization in 1839 and the subsequent invention of rubber tires led to a "rubber rush." Traders swarmed to the Amazon region, which was the sole supplier of crude rubber. The period is noted for the violent exploitation of the native population, which resulted in a further serious decrease in their numbers.

How Has the 20th Century Affected Indians?

In 1970 the Brazilian government decided on a plan of integration that involved the con-

struction of highways to link remote parts of the Amazon. Many of these cut through Indian land and exposed the Indians not only to attacks from prospectors but also to the onslaught of fatal diseases.

For example, consider what happened to the Panarás people. This tribe was decimated by war and slavery during the 18th and 19th centuries. A small remnant fled in a northwesterly direction, deep into the forest of northern Mato Grosso. Then the Cuiabá-Santarém highway was built right through their land.

Contact with the white man proved to be fatal for many. In 1975, only 80 members of the once populous tribe remained. The Panarás were relocated to the Xingu National Park. They tried unsuccessfully to find an environment within the park that was similar to their native forest. Then the Panarás decided to return to their homeland. On November 1, 1996, the Brazilian minister of justice declared an area of 1,900 square miles to be a "permanent indigenous possession." The Panarás have apparently been saved from extinction.

Will Their Future Be Any Better?

Can reservations save the remaining Indian tribes from extinction? At present, the physical extinction of Brazil's Indians seems remote. However, their lands often contain valuable natural resources. It is calculated that minerals worth about a trillion dollars—including gold, platinum, diamonds, iron, and lead—lie hidden in the subsoil of what is known as Legal Amazonia, which covers nine states in the north and central western regions of Brazil. About 98 percent of the Indian lands lie within this region. Illegal

1. John—1 John 5:21. 2. Adam—Genesis 2:23.
3. Peter—1 Peter 5:8. 4. Moses—Psalm 90:2.
5. Daniel—Daniel 5:1, 5, 6. 6. Jonah—844 B.C.E.
7. Paul—Philippians 10:16.
8. Belshazzar—Daniel 5:1, 5, 6. 9. Onesimus—
61 C.E.



© Jacques Jangoux/Peter Arnold, Inc.

prospecting is already a reality in some Indian lands.

History shows that the Indians have consistently lost out in their dealings with white men. They bartered gold for mirrors and brazilwood logs for trinkets, and they had to flee to remote areas of the forests to avoid becoming slaves. Will history repeat itself?

Many Indians have learned to use the tools of our technological age—airplanes, motorized boats, and cell phones. But only time will tell whether they will be equal to the other challenges of the 21st century.



THE PLIGHT OF THE Shark

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN MEXICO

FEW animals are more fear-inspiring than sharks. Worldwide, there are, on average, an estimated 75 unprovoked shark attacks on humans each year, about 10 of which are fatal. Those widely publicized attacks, plus the negative image projected in movies, portray the shark as a man-eater. Of course, sharks must be treated with respect. Putting the matter in perspective, however, many more deaths are caused by bee stings and crocodiles than by shark attacks.

Conversely, the shark is under attack by man. "Each year 100 million sharks are being caught—so many that if we put them together, nose to tail, they would encircle the globe five times," reports a researcher for the Argus Mariner Consulting Scientists organization in the magazine *Premier*. Add to this depredation their naturally low birth rates, slowness in maturing, and long gestation periods coupled with the pollution of their nursery grounds, and the result is a rapidly declining shark population. Once depleted, it would take years to replace itself.

The majority of sharks are captured for their fins, which are highly prized by some Asians for their supposed medicinal and aphrodisiac properties.* Shark-fin soup is an expensive delicacy that can cost up to \$150 a bowl! Supplying the lucrative Asian market has led to the cruel and wasteful practice of "finning"—slicing off the fins of a live shark and throwing it back into the ocean to die of starvation or drowning.

Action Is Essential for Survival

Should the plight of the shark concern us? It may be

* Ironically, shark fins have been found to contain a high concentration of mercury, which can cause sterility in men.

▲ © Mark Strickland/SeaPics.com

■ Of the more than 300 shark species, 62 are now threatened with extinction

difficult to feel the same sympathy for sharks as we might for elephants or whales. However, we must recognize their vital role in maintaining the ecological balance of the oceans. For example, their feeding habits currently serve as a check on other fish populations.

Shark fishing is unregulated in many countries. After a ten-year debate, Mexico, a major shark-fishing nation, where over 30,000 tons a year are harvested, recently passed a law prohibiting shark finning. Further highlighting the difficulties involved, demand for shark fins has led to the proliferation of illegal fishing in marine reserves in different parts of the world. For example, the director of the Galápagos National Park Service laments: "The illegal fishing for shark fins in

the Galapagos has increased dramatically in the past few years. It's very profitable and has created a mafia here."

A positive step has been taken toward saving the shark—the practice of finning was banned by some countries. However, Charlotte Mogen- sen, a policy officer for the World Wildlife Fund, warns that much more is needed. She states: "Sharks remain in peril all over the world. We urge all fishery management organizations to adopt not only finning bans, but requirements for shark data collection, bycatch reduction and sustainable catches."

Happily, wildlife's Creator will not allow the wanton abuse of his majestic creation much longer. This includes the fearsome but indispensable shark.—Revelation 11:18.

■ Just one pound of shark fins can sell for \$200 or more. A set of jaws from the great white shark can bring up to \$10,000



SHARK FACTS

Size: The largest species, the whale shark (above), reaches 60 feet in length and weighs several tons. But it is a harmless creature that feeds on plankton and small fish.

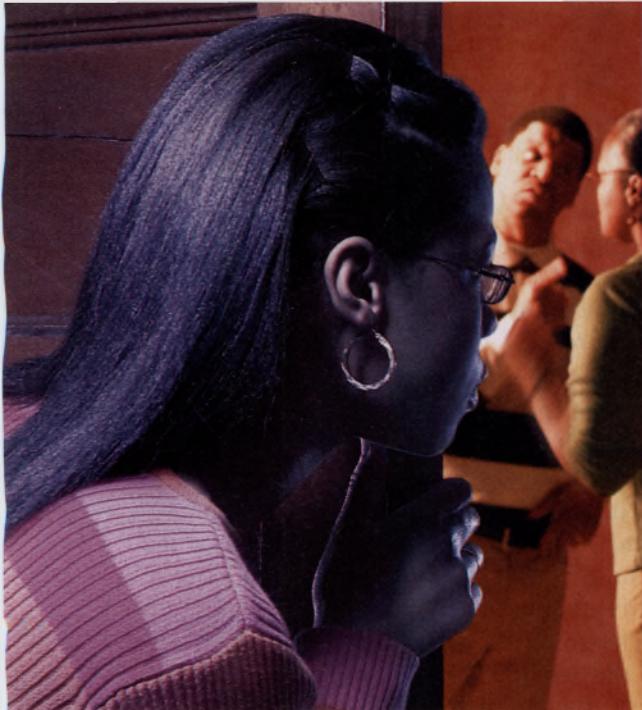
Gestation period: Birth takes place after as much as 22 months of gestation.

Rate of reproduction: The shark gives birth to anywhere from two to ten pups per litter on the average. Most species are born alive.

Rate of growth: Most take between 12 and 15 years to reach sexual maturity.

Longevity: It is difficult to determine the longevity of most shark species, but the aggressive great white (below) is estimated to live to the age of 60.





YOUNG PEOPLE ASK...

What should I do when my parents argue?



YOU can't help but be affected by your parents' disputes. After all, you love them and you rely on them for support. So when they just can't seem to get along, a number of anxieties may arise. Why does it sometimes seem as if your parents are on different wavelengths?

Different Views

Jesus said that when a man and a woman marry, they become "one flesh." (Matthew 19:5) But does this mean that your dad and mom will always view things the same way? Not at all. Really, *any* two people—even a husband and wife who are truly united—will disagree at times.

If your parents have differences of opinion, it doesn't mean that their marriage is falling apart. In all likelihood your parents still love each other—even though they get on each other's nerves sometimes. So why do they argue? Perhaps they have different ways of focusing on certain matters. That's not always wrong, nor does it spell doom for their relationship.

To illustrate: Have you ever watched a movie with close friends and found out that your opinion of what you saw differed from theirs? It can happen. Even people who are close to one another will see things differently.

It could be similar with your parents. Perhaps both are concerned about the family finances, but each has a different view of budgeting; both want to plan a family vacation, but each has a different notion of what constitutes relaxation; or both are anxious for you to succeed in school, but each has a different idea of how best to motivate you. The point is, unity does not require uniformity. Even two people who are united in a one-flesh bond can see things differently.

But why do your parents sometimes let their differences get the better of them? Why does something as innocent as another's viewpoint cause a discussion to turn into a full-blown argument?

The Role of Imperfection

Many parental disputes can be chalked up to imperfection. The Bible states: "We all

stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man." (James 3:2) Your parents aren't perfect, and neither are you. At times, *all* of us say things that we don't really mean, and sometimes our words can hurt like "the stabs of a sword."—Proverbs 12:18.

You've probably observed something similar with yourself. For example, can you think of a time when you had a sharp disagreement with someone you felt close to? Likely, you can. "Everyone has disagreements," admits a youth named Marie.* "In fact, the people I love the most can also *irritate* me the most—probably because I expect so much from them!" Christian husbands and wives expect a lot from each other, since the Bible sets a high standard for them. (Ephesians 5:24, 25) Because they are imperfect, it's only a matter of time before one or both of them will err. The Bible says: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."—Romans 3:23; 5:12.

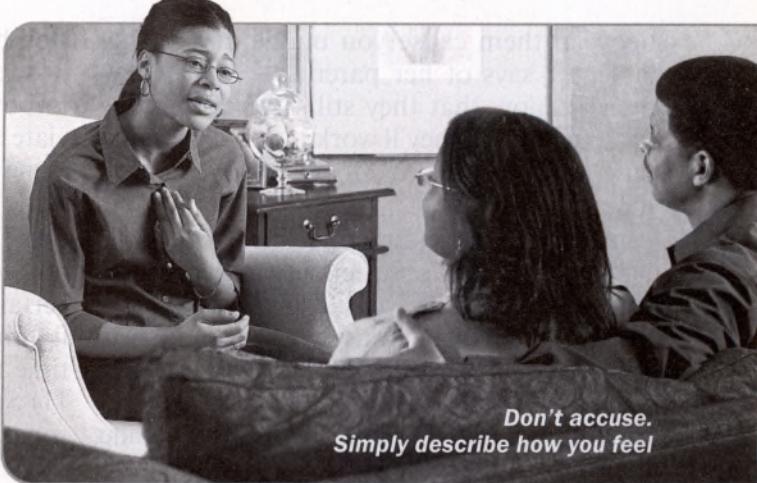
Therefore, at least *some* strain between your parents is to be expected. In fact, the apostle Paul wrote that married people would experience "tribulation in their flesh" or, as *The New English Bible* renders that phrase, "pain and grief." (1 Corinthians 7:28) A demanding boss, a traffic jam, an unexpected bill—these are just some of the stresses that can cause pressure to build up at home.

Knowing that your parents are imperfect and that, at times, they may be under great pressure can help you to put their squabbles in perspective. That's what Marie found to be the case. "My parents seem to bicker more

* Names in this article have been changed.

TO THINK ABOUT

- Why do parents at times find it difficult to get along?
- What would you tell a younger sibling who was being adversely affected by parental fighting?



**Don't accuse.
Simply describe how you feel**

now than they used to," she says, "and sometimes I wonder if they're just getting tired of each other. But then I think to myself, 'Face it—25 years of marriage and five kids is a lot to handle!'" Perhaps you too can show "fellow feeling" by realizing that your parents have many demands to meet.—1 Peter 3:8.

How to Cope

You might acknowledge that your parents are imperfect, and you know they have everyday pressures to face. But the question still remains, What can you do about it when they argue? Try the following suggestions:

■ **Don't intervene.** (Proverbs 26:17) It isn't your job to play marriage counselor or to patch up your parents' disputes. Likely any attempts to get involved will backfire anyway. "I've tried to referee before, and I usually get told to stay out of it," says 18-year-old Charlene. Let your parents work out the problem.

■ **Keep things in perspective.** (Colossians 3:13) As noted earlier, the fact that your parents argue now and then does not automatically mean that they're on the verge of a breakup. So don't let an occasional spat

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

between them cause you undue alarm. Melanie, 20, says of her parents: "Even if they fight, I know that they still love each other and the family. They'll work it out." The same may well be true of your parents when they have a disagreement.

■ **Pray about your concerns.** You don't have to keep anxious feelings bottled up inside you. The Bible says: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you." (Psalm 55:22) Prayer can make a difference. The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians: "Let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:6, 7.

■ **Take care of yourself.** It's unwise to become stressed over something you cannot control. Doing so could even affect your

well-being. The Bible says: "Anxious care in the heart of a man is what will cause it to bow down." (Proverbs 12:25) Try to alleviate anxiety by spending time with encouraging friends and getting involved in wholesome activities.

■ **Talk to your parents.** While you need not get involved in your parents' disputes, certainly you can let them know how their fighting affects you. Choose an appropriate time to approach one of them. (Proverbs 25:11) Speak with "a mild temper and deep respect." (1 Peter 3:15) Don't accuse. Simply describe how you are being affected.

Why not try the above suggestions? Your parents just may respond to your efforts. Even if they don't, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that although you cannot control your parents, you *can* do something about how you react when they argue.

A NOTE TO PARENTS

In marriage, disagreements are inevitable. How you handle them, though, is a matter of choice. Youths are profoundly affected by their parents' arguments. This is a matter of concern, since your marriage is, in effect, a model that your children are likely to follow if they marry. (Proverbs 22:6) Why not use disagreements as an opportunity to demonstrate effective ways to resolve conflict?

Try the following:

Listen. The Bible tells us to be "swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath." (James 1:19) Do not add fuel to the fire by 'returning evil for evil.' (Romans 12:17) Even if your spouse seems unwilling to listen, you can choose to do so.

Strive to explain rather than criticize. In a calm manner, tell your spouse how his or her conduct has affected you. ("I feel hurt when you . . .") Resist the urge to accuse and criticize. ("You don't care about me." "You never listen.")

Take a time-out. Sometimes it is best to drop the matter and resume the discussion

when tempers have calmed. The Bible says: "The beginning of contention is as one letting out waters; so before the quarrel has burst forth, take your leave."—Proverbs 17:14.

Apologize to each other—and, if appropriate, to your children. Brianne, 14, says: "Sometimes after they've argued, my parents will apologize to me and my older brother because they know how it affects us." One of the most valuable lessons you can teach your children is how to say humbly, "I'm sorry."

For more information, see Awake! issues of January 8, 2001, pages 8-14, and January 22, 1994, pages 3-12.

From Electric Energy to Spiritual Light

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN ITALY



■ In the early 1900's, industries began springing up in the mountains of Pistoia, Italy. In order to transport both raw and finished materials, an electric railway was built. Inaugurated on June 21, 1926, the narrow-gauge railway wound over the hills and mountains for about ten miles.

Electric energy was supplied to the train by way of a substation (top left). In time, however, a drop in commercial traffic led to the railway's demise, and it was shut down in 1965. But what happened to the buildings that had been built along the railway? Some fell into disrepair; others were eventually converted into bars and bus depots.

The electric substation was restored. In 1997 it was purchased by the San Marcello Pistoiese Association of Jehovah's Witnesses and was transformed into one of the most distinctive Kingdom Halls in Tuscany (bottom left). The members of the congregation that meets in this former substation are busy "shining as illuminators" in these mountain areas, preaching the good news of God's Kingdom. (Philippians 2:15; Matthew 24:14) Yes, a building that was originally used to distribute energy in a literal sense is now used to radiate spiritual light.—Matthew 5:14-16; 28:19, 20.

"ENGINES OF DESTRUCTION" FORESEEN

"The wicked wit of man always studies to apply the results of his talents to enslaving, destroying or cheating his fellow creatures."—Horace Walpole, 18th-century English writer.

AVIATION has brought a multitude of benefits to mankind. Nevertheless, how true the above words of Horace Walpole have proved to be! Even before human flight ever became a reality, men were contemplating the many ways in which flying machines could be used as instruments of war.

In 1670, more than 100 years before the first manned balloon flight, Italian Jesuit Francesco Lana pointed out the possibility that "God will never permit such a machine [airship] to be constructed, in order to preclude the numerous consequences which might disturb the civil and political government among men." With some foresight, however, he added: "For who [does not see] that no city would be secure from surprise attacks, as the airship might appear at any hour directly over its market-square and would land there its crew? The same would happen to the courtyards of private houses and to ships crossing the sea . . . Even without descending, it could hurl iron pieces which would capsize the vessels and kill men, and the ships might be burnt with artificial fire, balls, and bombs."

When hot-air and hydrogen balloons finally appeared at the end of the 18th century, Walpole feared that the vessels would quickly be-

come "engines of destruction to the human race." As it turned out, by the end of 1794, hydrogen balloons were being put to use by French army generals to spy over enemy lines and to direct troop maneuvers. Balloons were also employed in the American Civil War as well as the Franco-Prussian conflicts of the 1870's. And during the two world wars of the last century, balloons were used extensively by American, British, French, and German troops on reconnaissance missions.

The balloon did become an instrument of death in World War II when the Japanese army sent aloft toward the United States 9,000 unmanned balloons armed with bombs. More than 280 of the explosive-laden balloons reached North America.

Aerial Battleships Expected

From its inception the airplane too was seized upon as a potential war machine. Said Alexander Graham Bell in 1907: "Only very few know how near America is right now to solving a question which will revolutionize warfare throughout the world—I mean the construction of a practical aerial battleship." In that same year, *The New York Times* quot-



- 1. Unmanned bomb-carrying balloon**
- 2. Barrage balloon**
- 3. B-29 Superfortress**
- 4. Strike Fighter F/A-18C Hornet**
- 5. F-117A Nighthawk Stealth Fighter**

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ed balloonist Captain Thomas T. Lovelace as saying: "In from two to five years every big nation will have war airships and airship destroyers just as they now have torpedo boats and torpedo boat destroyers."

Just three months later, the Wright brothers were contracted by the U.S. Signal Corps to build the first army plane. A *New York Times* article of September 13, 1908, explained the

army's interest in the airplane: "A shell could be dropped into the funnel of a warship, causing terrible damage to the machinery and completing its work of destruction by bursting the boilers."

True to Bell's words, the airplane went on to "revolutionize warfare throughout the world." By 1915, aircraft manufacturers had developed a forward-facing machine gun synchronized to fire through the arc of the propeller blades. Fighter planes were soon joined by bombers, which grew bigger and more powerful by World War II. On August 6, 1945, a B-29 Superfortress dropped the first atomic bomb used in warfare, flattening the Japanese city of Hiroshima and eventually snuffing out 100,000 lives.

Just two years earlier, in 1943, Orville Wright had said in private that he was sorry the airplane had been invented. In the course of the two world wars, he observed, it had indeed become a terrible weapon. Since then, with the production of laser-guided missiles and so-called smart bombs, its deadly potential has increased, as 'nation has risen against nation.'—Matthew 24:7.

U.S. Department
of Defense

Alluring Roses

FROM AFRICA

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN KENYA

"The most gorgeous flowers I have ever seen!"

"The best present to give a dear friend."

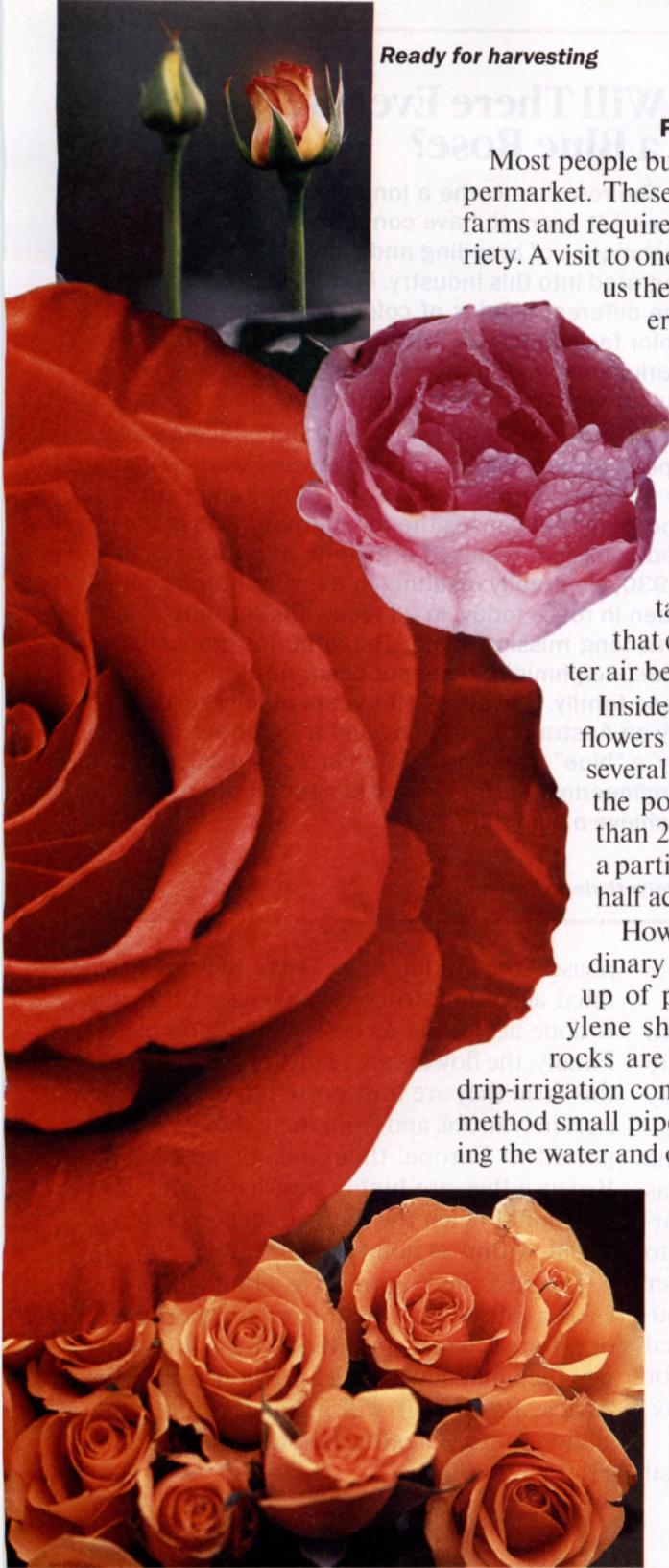
"A way of saying, 'Somebody cares.'"

PERHAPS you have sentiments similar to those expressed by the residents of Nairobi, Kenya, quoted above. Of all the flowering plants, including both those that grow wild and those cultivated by man, perhaps none has acquired more international acclaim than the rose. It has captured man's imagination for centuries. Poets have written about it, while artists have often depicted it. Shakespeare extolled it with the famous line from *Romeo and Juliet*: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Thanks to the rose, new friendships have been established and cemented, strained relationships have been restored, and many a sick person has been encouraged.

In addition to all of that, the rose has great economic value. In many countries where climatic conditions favor flower farming, the rose is a major earner of foreign exchange. In Kenya, for example, out of the millions of flowers exported during one recent year, over 70 percent were roses, making the country one of the leading producers in the world.

In times past, before man discovered the flower's alluring qualities, the rosebush grew freely in the wild. Today, through the use of carefully controlled methods of crossbreeding, some of the more than 100 species of wild roses have been bred to produce the thousands of varieties of roses known today. As a result, the flower has become known worldwide and is found in almost every country on earth. The most popular and widely cultivated is the hybrid tea rose.





Ready for harvesting

From the Farm to Your Vase

Most people buy their roses either from a florist or at a supermarket. These flowers are grown commercially on large farms and require much more attention than the backyard variety. A visit to one such farm located near Nairobi revealed to us the extra care that goes into preparing the flowers for market.

Here, as elsewhere in Kenya, elaborate polyethylene greenhouses readily identify the commercial rose farm. (See photo on page 26.) These structures serve several purposes. The newly grafted roses are delicate and require protection from harsh weather. Heavy rain, wind, or direct sunlight can wreak havoc on them. To maintain a constant temperature, it is necessary that cool air enter the greenhouse easily and hotter air be expelled.

Inside the greenhouses there are rows of young flowers in different stages of growth. At this farm several types of roses are cultivated, ranging from the popular *hybrid tea rose*, cut at a little longer than 27 inches, to the 14-inch-long *sweetheart rose*, a particular type of hybrid tea rose. The two and a half acres here may contain up to 70,000 plants.

How do the plants receive their nutrients? Ordinary soil is not used. The flower bed is made up of pumice (volcanic rocks) laid on polyethylene sheets. This is a preferred method, as the rocks are free from many soilborne diseases. The drip-irrigation concept is employed to water the plants. In this method small pipes are directed to the flower bed, discharging the water and other nutrients in well-regulated quantities.

Being porous, the volcanic material allows water to drain from the plastic bed. Then it is collected and reused.

Despite the specialized care provided, roses can become infected by a number of diseases, mainly caused by funguses. These include botrytis and powdery mildew, which attack the leaves and stems of the plants. Left unchecked, these diseases can adversely affect the flower quality.



Will There Ever Be a Blue Rose?

The rose has come a long way, and its journey does not seem to have come to an end. Many new techniques of breeding and cultivation are being integrated into this industry. Few flowers can produce the different shades of color that roses do. Which color fascinates you the most? White, yellow, pink, dark crimson, or maroon? Most of these are the result of various methods of crossbreeding.

As an example, did you know that while people speak of "red" roses, true red flowers were originally absent from the rose family? The family lacks the gene that causes the red pigment. The bright-red color is a result of a genetic mutation about 1930, eventually resulting in the vibrant-red colors seen in roses today. In all rose varieties, one color was long missing—blue. The gene for producing blue, delphinidin, does not occur naturally in the rose family. However, after years of joint research by an Australian company and a Japanese company, a "blue" rose was created in 2004 using genetic engineering. Further effort is needed, though, to achieve a bluer hue.

Polyethylene greenhouse

Applying fungicides helps control the problem.

As time passes, some bright colors begin to show up, a clear indication that the roses are ready for harvesting. The flowers are carefully cut at the tight-bud stage. At this point the petals have yet to unfold. Harvesting at this time enhances the life span of the cut flowers as well as their color retention. However, the harvesting stage may vary slightly from variety to variety. It is vital to cut the flowers in either the morning or the late afternoon, when humidity is high and wilting is slower. Harvested flowers are then taken to the cold room for precooling. This too ensures that the roses remain fresh for a longer period of time.

The flowers will pass through another vital

phase—the grading stage. Here they are separated according to color and size. Packaging is done according to customer requirements. Finally, the flowers are ready for market. From this farm they are transported to the main airport in Nairobi, and from there they will be exported to Europe, thousands of miles away. Because they are highly perishable, the flowers should reach the market, local or international, within 24 hours of harvesting.

The next time you receive a bouquet of roses as a gift or buy them from a supermarket or a florist, pause and think of the long journey they may have made, possibly even from Africa. Possibly it will enhance your appreciation for the Creator, Jehovah God.—Psalm 115:15.



“Show yourselves thankful”

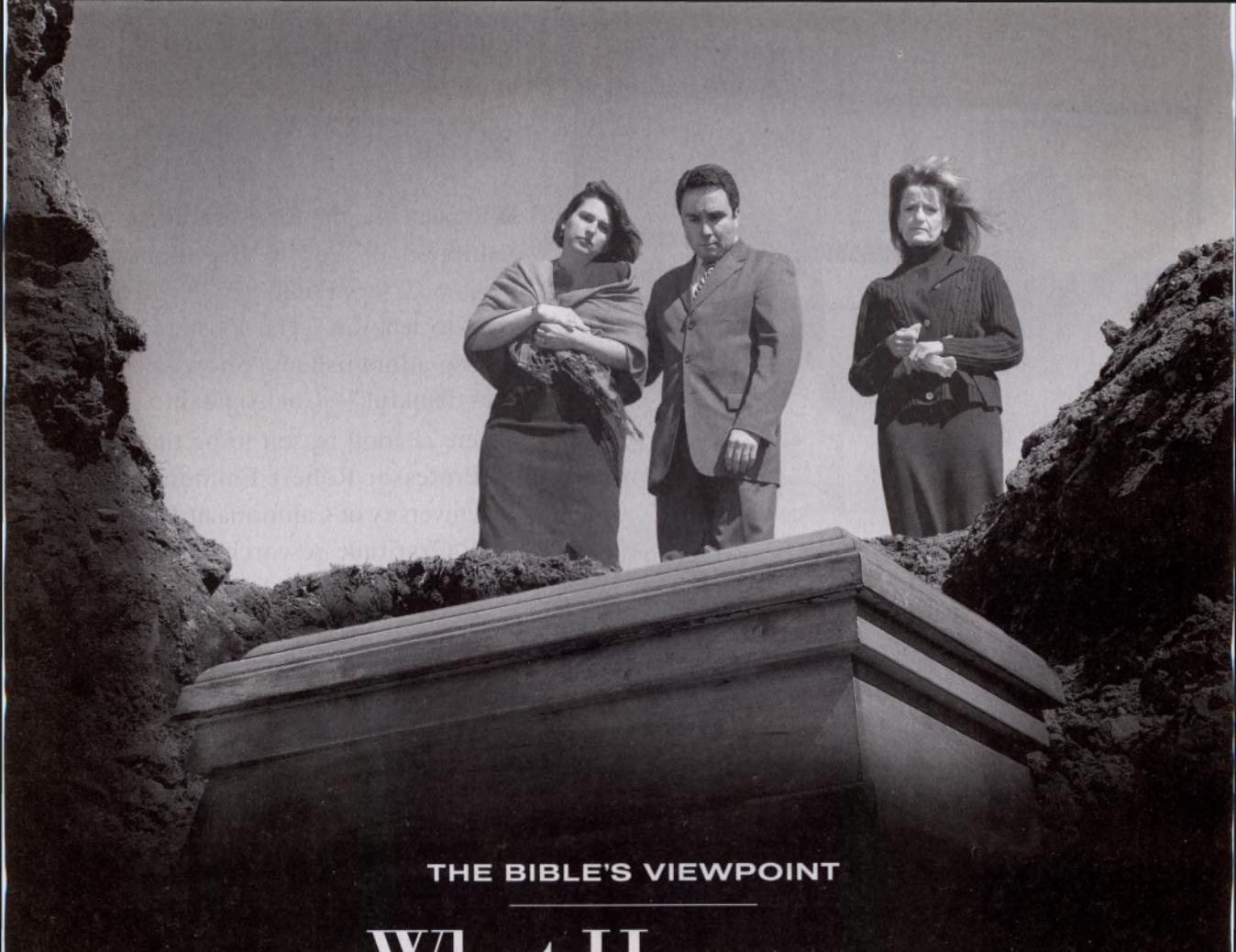
■ Repeatedly, the Bible encourages worshippers of God to give thanks. “It is good,” says Psalm 92:1, “to give thanks to Jehovah.” The apostle Paul likewise admonished: “Show yourselves thankful.”—Colossians 3:15.

There is good reason to be thankful. Professor Robert Emmons, of the University of California at Davis, says: “Gratitude research is beginning to suggest that feelings of thankfulness have tremendous positive value in helping people cope with daily problems, especially stress, and to achieve a positive sense of self.”

Time magazine points out something else: “People who describe themselves as feeling grateful . . . tend to have higher vitality and more optimism, suffer less stress, and experience fewer episodes of clinical depression than the population as a whole.”

Sadly, however, the Bible foretold that “in the last days,” many people would show themselves to be “lovers of themselves” and

“unthankful.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5) How can true Christians avoid being caught up in this spirit? Says the Bible’s Author: “I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk.” (Isaiah 48:17) By heeding God’s laws, we are spared much of the misery that comes to those who are caught up in selfish pursuits. In addition, we have the assurance that Jehovah sees our efforts and will reward us accordingly. (Hebrews 6:10) Such benefits move us to “give thanks to Jehovah.”—Psalm 107:8.



THE BIBLE'S VIEWPOINT

What Happens at Death?

GOD'S human sons were not meant to die. (Romans 8:20, 21) In fact, when Jehovah first spoke of death to Adam, it was mentioned, not as the outcome that man should normally expect, but as the punishment for disobedience to God. (Genesis 2:17) Adam understood what death meant, since he would have seen animals die.

Adam sinned, and he paid the price for it

by dying at the age of 930 years. (Genesis 5:5; Romans 6:23) Having been expelled from God's family for disobedience, he was no longer considered a son of God. (Deuteronomy 32:5) The Bible says this about the sad consequences for mankind: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men."—Romans 5:12.

**"He breathes his last breath, he returns
to the dust; and in that same hour all his thinking ends."**
—Psalm 146:4, "The New English Bible"

What Happens to Our Thinking?

The Bible also says: "There is an eventuality as respects the sons of mankind and an eventuality as respects the beast, and they have the same eventuality. As the one dies, so the other dies; and they all have but one spirit, so that there is no superiority of the man over the beast, for everything is vanity. All are going to one place. They have all come to be from the dust, and they are all returning to the dust." (Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20) What does returning to the dust mean?

The expression "returning to the dust" reminds us of God's statement to the first human: "Dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:19) This means that humans, like animals, are physical creatures. We are not spirits that merely inhabit a body of flesh. Our thinking faculties cannot survive the destruction of our body. Of a man who dies, the Bible says: "He breathes his last breath, he returns to the dust; and in that same hour all his thinking ends."—Psalm 146:4, *The New English Bible*.

If that is what happens, in what condition does that leave the dead? God's Word gives a clear answer: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." (Ecclesiastes 9:5) Rather than being like a friend welcoming us to a better life, death is called "the last enemy," according to the Bible, for it halts all of our activity. (1 Corinthians 15:26; Eccle-

siates 9:10) Does this mean that death is a hopeless condition?

Good News About Death

For millions of humans, death is like a sleep from which they will awaken. Jesus once said to his disciples about their friend who had died: "Lazarus our friend has gone to rest, but I am journeying there to awaken him from sleep." When Jesus was on his way to the memorial tomb, he met a crowd of mourners. On arrival at the tomb, he gave orders for it to be opened and called out: "Lazarus, come on out!" The man who had been dead for four days came out. (John 11:11-14, 39, 43, 44) Since Lazarus' body was already decomposing, Jesus thus demonstrated that God can remember everything about the dead—their personality, their memory, and their appearance. He can make them live again. On another occasion Jesus said: "The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his [that is, Jesus'] voice and come out."—John 5:28, 29.

Providing us with further good news, the Bible states: "As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing." (1 Corinthians 15:26) Never again will grief-stricken people have to go to a cemetery to bury a loved one. The Bible says: "Death will be no more." (Revelation 21:4) Do you not agree that the Bible's viewpoint on what happens at death is a comforting one?

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

■ Are the dead conscious?—Ecclesiastes 9:5.

■ Is human death a hopeless condition?—John 5:28, 29.

The Body Is Made to Heal Itself

"The human organism is able to heal 60 to 70 percent of all ailments on its own," says Professor Gustav Dobos, senior consultant at the Miners' Hospital in Essen, Germany. To that end, the body is said to produce some 30 to 40 medicines, such as cortisone and substances to prevent kidney stones. Researchers understand some processes involved in such natural healing, but much remains to be discovered. Scientists discern that "a complicated interaction of hormones, immune messengers, and killer cells is at work," says the magazine *Vital*, and "emotions and moods also play a role." However, it further states that stress and personal problems can "weaken the immune system for months on end."

Global Wealth Distribution

"The richest 1% of adults in the world own 40% of the planet's wealth," reports London's *Guardian*. "Those in financial services and the internet sectors predominate among the super rich," states the newspaper. A UN study finds that 37 percent of the richest live in the United States, 27 percent in Japan, and 6 percent in the United Kingdom. The poorest half of the world's adult population own barely 1 percent of its wealth. According to Duncan Green, head of research at Britain's charity Oxfam, "these levels of inequality are grotesque. . . . It is impossible to justify such vast wealth when 800 million people go to bed hungry every night."

China's Imbalanced Gender Ratio

In 2005, the gender ratio for newborn babies in China was 118 boys for every 100 girls. In some regions of the country, "the figure has reached 130 boys for every 100 girls," reports *China Daily*. The reason for the disparity is selective abortion following fetus-gender testing. Officials concede that the phenomenon is related to China's family-planning policy, which limits most city-dwelling couples to just one child. "By 2020, there will be some 30 million more men of marriage age than women," says the newspaper, and this imbalance will "affect social stability."

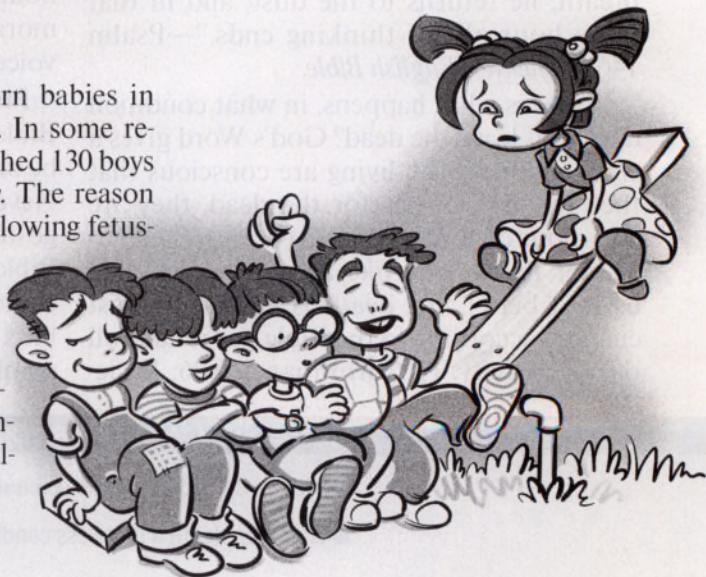
■ The warming of earth's climate system is "unequivocal," and it is "very likely" that human activities are to blame.

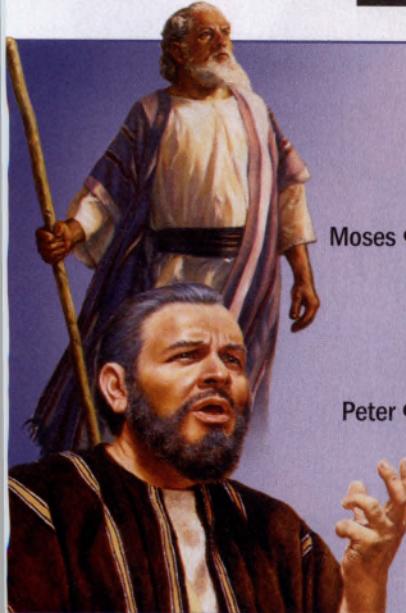
—INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC), SWITZERLAND.

■ In Germany, between 1.4 million and 1.9 million people are "addicted to medicine." The scale of the problem is comparable to that of alcohol dependency.—TAGESSCHAU, GERMANY.

■ In Britain, babies under one year of age make up the segment of the population most likely to be murdered.—THE TIMES, BRITAIN.

■ Parts of the border between the United States and Canada are so overgrown that officials "have trouble finding it." "If you can't find it, then you can't secure it," says Dennis Schornack of the International Boundary Commission.—ASSOCIATED PRESS, UNITED STATES.





Moses •

Peter •

WHO SAID IT?

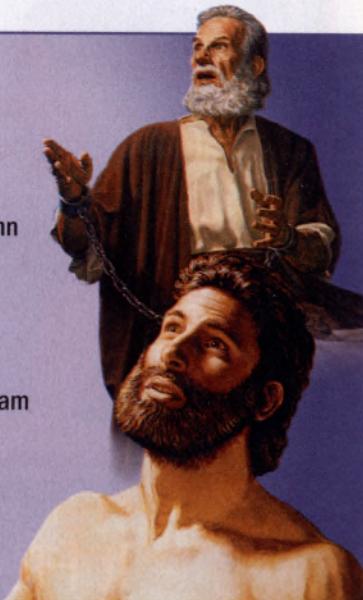
Draw a line connecting the statement to the person who made it.

1. "Little children, guard yourselves from idols."
2. "This is at last bone of my bones."
3. "Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion."
4. "From time indefinite to time indefinite you are God."

• John

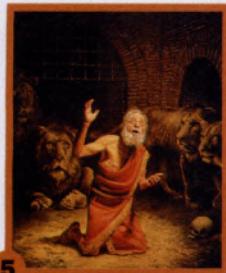
• Adam

■ For Discussion:
What is one additional fact that you know about each of these Bible characters?



WHEN IN HISTORY?

Name the writer(s) of the Bible books below, and draw a line connecting the book to the approximate date it was completed.



5

Daniel



6

Jonah



7

Hebrews

1450 B.C.E.

844 B.C.E.

536 B.C.E.

56 C.E. / 61 C.E.

WHO AM I?

8. A miracle made my knees knock together.

WHO AM I?

9. I deserted my master but returned to him when I became a Christian.

(Answers on page 14)

Children's Picture Search

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.

FROM THIS ISSUE

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

Page 5 What does anyone inexperienced do?
(Proverbs 14:____)

Page 11 What quality is a perfect bond of union?
(Colossians 3:____)

Page 19 What do we all do many times? (James 3:____)

Page 28 How did death spread to all men?
(Romans 5:____)



It Helped With a School Report

A vocational school in Germany has a large number of foreign students. They are from France, Georgia, India, Lebanon, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Ukraine, Vietnam, and the former Yugoslavia.

One of the students writes: "When the opportunity arose to give a school report, I volunteered to do so. The subject I chose was 'Practical Answers to Questions Young People Ask,' basing it on the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*. The students were impressed by the subjects included in the book and the good suggestions it provided."

"When I finished, the students showed appreciation by loud applause. Since all of them are studying languages and understand English well, I was able to leave 30 English cop-

ies of the *Young People Ask* book with them, and I also provided the teacher with a copy in German."

In the days that followed, this student continued her discussions with some of her fellow students, and they responded with interest. She left them additional Bible-based literature in Arabic, Bengali, Georgian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

