

Awake!

January 22, 1997

TOLERANCE has the world gone too far?



Tolerance —Has the World Gone Too Far? 3-9



Tolerance requires balance, and maintaining proper balance is not easy. We are like the pendulum of a clock, swinging from one side to the other. At times, we show too little tolerance; at times, too much.



Florida's Everglades —A Frantic Call From the Wild 13

Concerned environmentalists are sounding the alarm that the Everglades are dying. Can this amazing "river of grass" be saved?



"When I Am Weak, Then I Am Powerful" 23

When people who are disabled exert themselves vigorously in Jehovah's service, they draw on "power beyond what is normal."—2 Corinthians 4:7.

Tolerance —From One Extreme to the Other	3
Proper Balance Can Sweeten Your Life	5
Flexible, yet Committed to Divine Standards	7
Young People Ask . . . Should I Confess My Sin?	10
Why the Grass Is Green —A Closer Look at Photosynthesis	18
Watching the World	28
From Our Readers	30
Emmy Zehden Way —The Story Behind the Name	31
A Book That Is Loved Best	32

TOLERANCE

From One Extreme to the Other

THE scenic beauty of the Vale of Kashmir moved a 16th-century philosopher to exclaim: "If there is paradise anywhere, it is here!" Clearly, he had no idea of what would later happen in that part of the world. Within the last five years, at least 20,000 people have been killed there in fighting between separatists and the Indian Army. The German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* now describes the region as a "valley of tears." The Vale of Kashmir offers a simple yet valuable lesson: Intolerance can ruin a potential paradise.

What does it mean to be tolerant? According to the *Collins Cobuild English Language*

Dictionary, "if you are tolerant, you allow other people to have their own attitudes or beliefs, or to behave in a particular way, even if you do not agree or approve." What a fine quality to display! Surely we feel at ease with people who respect our beliefs and attitudes, even when these differ from their own.

From Tolerance to Bigotry

The opposite of tolerance is intolerance, which has several shades of intensity. Intolerance may start with narrow-minded disapproval of someone else's behavior or way of doing things. Narrow-mindedness chokes the enjoyment out of life and closes one's mind to new ideas.

For instance, a straitlaced person may recoil from the bouncing enthusiasm of a child. A young person may yawn at the meditative ways of someone older than himself. Ask a cautious person to work side by side with someone who is adventurous, and they could both get irritable. Why the recoil, the yawn, and the irritation? Because, in each case, the one finds it hard to tolerate the attitudes or behavior of the other.

Where intolerance breeds, narrow-mindedness can escalate into prejudice, which is an aversion to a group, race, or religion. More intense than prejudice is bigotry, which can manifest itself in violent hatred. The result is misery and bloodshed. Think of what intolerance led to during

Overreacting to the mistakes of children can be damaging to them



the Crusades! Even today, intolerance is a factor in the conflicts in Bosnia, Rwanda, and the Middle East.

Tolerance requires balance, and maintaining proper balance is not easy. We are like the pendulum of a clock, swinging from one side to the other. At times, we show too little tolerance; at times, too much.

From Tolerance to Immorality

Is it possible to be overly tolerant? U.S. Senator Dan Coats, speaking in 1993, described "a battle over the meaning and practice of tolerance." What did he mean? The senator lamented that in the name of tolerance, some "abandon a belief in moral truth—in good and evil, in right and wrong." Such people feel that society has no right to judge what is good behavior and what is bad.

In 1990, British politician Lord Hailsham wrote that "the most deadly enemy of morality is not atheism, agnosticism, materialism, greed nor any other of the accepted causes. The true enemy of morality is nihilism, belief in, quite literally, nothing." Obviously, if we believe in nothing, we have no standards of proper behavior and everything can be tolerated. But is it proper to tolerate every form of conduct?

Tolerating everything that children do will not prepare them for the responsibilities of life

A Danish high school principal thought not. He wrote a newspaper article in the early 1970's, complaining about advertisements in the press for pornographic shows portraying sexual intercourse between animals and humans. These advertisements were allowed because of Denmark's "tolerance."

Clearly, problems arise from showing too little tolerance but also from showing too much. Why is it hard to avoid extremes and stay in proper balance? Kindly read the next article.



Awake!

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

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.

Unless otherwise indicated, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References* is used.

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, c/o Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589. Printed in U.S.A. Vol. 78, No. 2

Proper Balance Can Sweeten Your Life

TOLERANCE is like sugar in a cup of coffee. The right measure can add a touch of sweetness to life. But while we may be generous with sugar, we are often miserly with tolerance. Why?

"Human beings do not want to be tolerant," wrote Arthur M. Melzer, an associate professor at Michigan State University. "What comes naturally is . . . prejudice." So intolerance is not simply a character flaw that affects only a minority; being narrow-minded comes naturally to all of us because all mankind are imperfect.—Compare Romans 5:12.

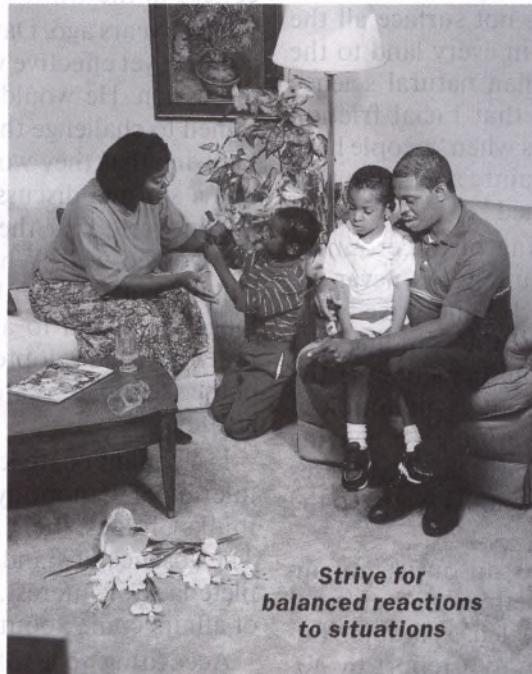
Potential Busybodies

In 1991, *Time* magazine reported on the growing narrow-

mindedness in the United States. The article described "life-style busybodies," people who try to impose their own standards of conduct on everyone. Nonconformists have been victimized. For instance, a woman in Boston was removed from her job because she refused to wear makeup. A man in Los Angeles was fired because he was overweight. Why the zeal to make others conform?

Narrow-minded people are unreasonable, selfish, stubborn, and dogmatic. But are not most people unreasonable, selfish, stubborn, or dogmatic to a degree? If these traits find a firm foothold in our personality, we will be narrow-minded.

What about you? Do you shake your head at someone else's taste in food?



Strive for
balanced reactions
to situations

Semimonthly Languages Available by Mail:

Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English,^{*} Finnish,^{*} French, German,^{*} Greek, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,^{*} Japanese, Korean, Malayalam, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish,^{*} Tagalog, Tamil, Ukrainian, Yoruba, Zulu

Monthly Languages Available by Mail:

Chichewa, Cibemba, Estonian, Ewe, Gujarati, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Igbo, Kannada, Macedonian, Malagasy, Marathi, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Papiamento, Sepedi, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Tahitian, Telugu, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Xhosa

* Audiocassettes also available.

© 1997 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

Offices of the Watch Tower Society in selected countries

America, United States of,
Wallkill, NY 12589
Australia, Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565
Canada, Box 4100, Halton Hills
(Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4
England, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN
Ghana, Box 760, Accra
Jamaica, Vidal Terrace, Marlie Mount,
Old Harbour

New Zealand, P.O. Box 142,
Manurewa
Nigeria, P.M.B. 1090, Benin City,
Edo State
South Africa, Private Bag X2067,
Krugersdorp, 1740
Zambia, Box 33459, Lusaka 10101
Zimbabwe, P. Bag A-6113, Avondale

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

In conversation, do you normally want the last word? When working with a group, do you expect them to follow your way of thinking? If so, it might do some good to add a little sugar to your coffee!

But, as was mentioned in the preceding article, intolerance can come in the form of hostile prejudice. One factor that can make intolerance escalate is severe anxiety.

"A Deep Feeling of Uncertainty"

Ethnologists have looked into mankind's past to discover when and where racial prejudice has been evident. They found that this sort of intolerance does not surface all the time, nor is it manifest in every land to the same degree. The German natural science magazine *GEO* reports that racial friction surfaces in times of crisis when "people have a deep feeling of uncertainty and sense that their identity is threatened."

Is such "a deep feeling of uncertainty" widespread today? Definitely. As never before, mankind is beset by one crisis after another. Unemployment, the spiraling cost of living, overpopulation, depletion of the ozone layer, crime in the cities, pollution of drinking water, global warming—a nagging fear of any of these increases anxiety. Crises breed anxiety, and undue anxiety opens the door to intolerance.

Such intolerance finds an outlet, for instance, where different ethnic and cultural groups become intermingled, as in some European lands. According to a report by *National Geographic* in 1993, Western European countries were then host to more than 22 million immigrants. Many Europeans "felt overwhelmed by the influx of newcomers" of a different language, culture, or religion. There has been a rise in antiforeign sentiment in Austria, Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Sweden.

What about world leaders? During the 1930's and 1940's, Hitler made intolerance

a government policy. Sadly, some political and religious leaders today use intolerance to gain their own ends. This has been the case in such places as Austria, France, Ireland, Russia, Rwanda, and the United States.

Avoid the Trap of Apathy

Too little sugar in our coffee and we sense that something is missing; too much sugar and we have a sickeningly sweet taste in our mouth. It is the same with tolerance. Consider the experience of a man who teaches in a college in the United States.

Some years ago, David R. Carlin, Jr., found a simple yet effective way of stimulating class discussion. He would make a statement designed to challenge the views of his students, knowing that they would protest. The result was a spirited discussion. In 1989, however, Carlin wrote that the same method no longer worked well. Why not? While students still did not agree with what he said, they no longer bothered to argue. Carlin explained that they had adopted the "easy tolerance of the skeptic"—a carefree, couldn't-care-less attitude.

Is a couldn't-care-less attitude the same as tolerance? If nobody cares what anybody thinks or does, there are no standards at all. The absence of standards is apathy—a complete lack of interest. How can such a state of affairs come about?

According to Professor Melzer, apathy can spread in a society that accepts many different standards of behavior. People come to believe that all manner of conduct is acceptable and that everything is simply a matter of personal choice. Instead of learning to think and to question what is acceptable and what is not, people "often learn not to think at all." They lack the moral backbone that moves a person to stand up to the intolerance of others.

What about you? Do you occasionally catch yourself adopting a couldn't-care-less attitude? Do you laugh at jokes that are lewd or racist? Do you allow your teenage son or daughter to view videos that advocate greed or immorality? Do you feel it is OK for your children to play violent computer games?

Tolerate too much, and a family or society will reap anguish, since no one knows—or

cares—what is right or wrong. U.S. Senator Dan Coats warned about “the trap of tolerance as apathy.” Tolerance can lead to being open-minded; too much tolerance—apathy—to being empty-headed.

So, what should we tolerate and what should we reject? What is the secret to achieving the proper balance? This will be the subject of the following article.

Flexible, yet Committed to Divine Standards

“TOLERANT men are never stupid, and stupid men are never tolerant,” says a Chinese proverb. There is more than a whisper of truth in the proverb, since being tolerant is a challenge, requiring a commitment to proper standards of behavior. But to which standards should we commit ourselves? Would it not be logical to follow standards set by the Maker of mankind, as explained in his Word, the Holy Bible? God himself sets the best example of keeping to his standards.

The Creator—Our Greatest Exemplar

Almighty God, Jehovah, is perfectly balanced in tolerance, showing neither too much nor too little. For thousands of years, he has tolerated those who reproach his name, corrupt mankind, and misuse the earth. The apostle Paul wrote, as recorded at Romans 9:22, that God “tolerated with much long-suffering vessels of wrath made fit for destruction.” Why has God been tolerant for so long? Because his tolerance has a purpose.

God is patient with mankind “because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9) The Creator has given mankind the Bible and has commissioned his servants to make his standards of behavior known everywhere. True Christians are committed to these standards. But does this mean that God’s servants have to be rigid in all circumstances?

Firm, yet Flexible

Jesus Christ encouraged those seeking eternal life to “go in through the narrow gate.” But going through the narrow gate does not mean being narrow-minded. If we are inclined to be domineering or dogmatic when around others, surely it would make life more pleasant for everyone if we curbed this tendency. But how?—Matthew 7:13; 1 Peter 4:15.

Theofano, a Greek student who explained that time spent with people of different backgrounds led to understanding them better, said: “It is vital that we try to approach



The apostle Paul showed proper balance because he had a relationship with God

their way of thinking rather than force them to come over to ours." Hence, by getting to know someone better, we may discover that his taste in food and even his accent are not as strange as we thought. Instead of always having the most to say or insisting on having the last word, we learn many useful things by listening to his point of view. In

indeed, open-minded people get more out of life.

Whenever personal taste is involved, we should be flexible and allow others to enjoy their own choice. But when behavior is a matter of obedience to our Creator, we ought to be firm. Almighty God does not condone all kinds of behavior. He showed

this by his dealings with his servants in the past.

The Trap of Being Too Tolerant

Eli, a high priest of the ancient nation of Israel, was a servant of God who got caught in the trap of being overly tolerant. The Israelites had entered into a covenant relationship with God, agreeing to obey his laws. But Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were greedy and immoral and were grossly disrespectful toward the Almighty. Eli, though well-versed in the Law of God, offered only mild rebukes and was lax in his discipline. He made the mistake of thinking that God would tolerate wickedness. The Creator makes a distinction between weakness and wickedness. For their willful violation of God's Law, Eli's wicked sons were severely punished—and properly so.—1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25; 3:11-14; 4:17.

What a tragedy it would be for us to be overly tolerant in our family by turning a blind eye to repeated wrongdoing on the part of our children! How much better it is to rear them "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah"! This means we must stick to divine standards of conduct ourselves and inculcate them in our children.—Ephesians 6:4.

Similarly, the Christian congregation cannot tolerate wickedness. If a member practices gross wrongdoing and refuses to repent, he must be removed. (1 Corinthians 5:9-13) However, outside the family circle and the congregation, true Christians do not try to change society as a whole.

A Strong Relationship With Jehovah

Intolerance breeds in an atmosphere of anxiety. If, however, we have a close personal relationship with God, we enjoy a sense of security that helps us maintain proper balance. "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower. Into it the righteous runs and is given protection," we read at Proverbs 18:10. Cer-

tainly there is no harm that can come to us or to our loved ones that the Creator will not take care of in his due time.

Someone who benefited greatly from a close relationship with God was the apostle Paul. As a Jew known as Saul, he persecuted followers of Jesus Christ and was guilty of bloodshed. But Saul himself became a Christian and, as the apostle Paul, later engaged in full-time evangelizing. Paul displayed an open-minded attitude in preaching to all people, "to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to wise and to senseless ones."—Romans 1:14, 15; Acts 8:1-3.

How did he manage to change? By gaining an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures and by growing in love for the Creator, who is impartial. Paul learned that God is fair in that He judges each individual, not according to culture or race, but according to what he or she is and does. Yes, to God, deeds are important. Peter noted that "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) Almighty God is not prejudiced. This is unlike some of the world's leaders, who may deliberately use intolerance for their own purposes.

Times Are Changing

According to John Gray, of Oxford University in England, tolerance is "a virtue that has lately fallen on hard times." But this will change. Tolerance balanced by divine wisdom will prevail.

In God's imminent new world, intolerance will be gone. Extreme forms of intolerance, such as prejudice and bigotry, will be gone. Narrow-mindedness will no longer choke the enjoyment out of life. Then, there will be a paradise far grander than has ever been possible in the Vale of Kashmir.—Isaiah 65:17, 21-25.

Are you looking forward to living in that new world? What a privilege and how thrilling that will be!

Young People Ask...



Should I Confess My Sin?

"I'm so ashamed, I don't know what to do. I want to go to my parents, but I'm too ashamed."—Lisa.*

SO WROTE one distraught young woman. She had been romantically involved with an unbeliever for a period of a few years when one day, under the influence of alcohol, she had sexual relations with him.

Sad to say, such things happen from time to time, even among Christian youths. The younger and more inexperienced we are, the more mistakes we are likely to make. But while it is one thing to make a minor mistake,

* Some of the names have been changed.

it is quite another thing to get involved in serious wrongdoing, such as sexual immorality. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) When that happens, a youth needs to get help. The problem is that it is not easy to confess one's errors.

One Christian girl engaged in premarital sex. She decided to confess to her congregation elders, even setting a date on which she would do so. But she pushed the date forward. Later, she pushed the date forward again. Soon, a whole year had passed by!

"Nothing Hidden"

If you have fallen into serious sin, you need to realize that keeping silent is a very bad idea. For one thing, the truth usually comes out anyway. As a small child, Mark broke a ceramic wall decoration. "I tried to glue it carefully back together," he recalls, "but it wasn't long before my parents spotted the cracks." True, you are no longer a child. But most parents can usually sense when something is amiss with their children.

"I tried to cover up my problems with lies," admits 15-year-old Ann, "but I ended up making things worse." More often than not, lies are exposed. And when your parents find out that you lied, they are likely to be upset—more upset than they might have been had you come clean to begin with.

Even more important, the Bible says: "There is nothing hidden that will not become manifest, neither anything carefully concealed that will never become known and never come into the open." (Luke 8:17) Jehovah knows what we have done and what we are doing. You cannot hide from him any more than could Adam. (Genesis 3:8-11) In time, your sins may also be exposed to others.—1 Timothy 5:24.

Keeping silent can harm you in other ways too. The psalmist David wrote: "When I kept silent my bones wore out through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me." (Psalm 32:3, 4) Yes, the strain of maintaining secrecy can exact a

Confessing to your parents can lead to spiritual recovery

heavy toll emotionally. Anxiety and guilt, as well as the fear of exposure, can make you feel sick at heart. You may begin distancing yourself from friends and family. You may even feel that you have been cut off from God himself! "I had been dealing with a guilty conscience for having saddened Jehovah," wrote a youth named Andrew. "It was eating at me."

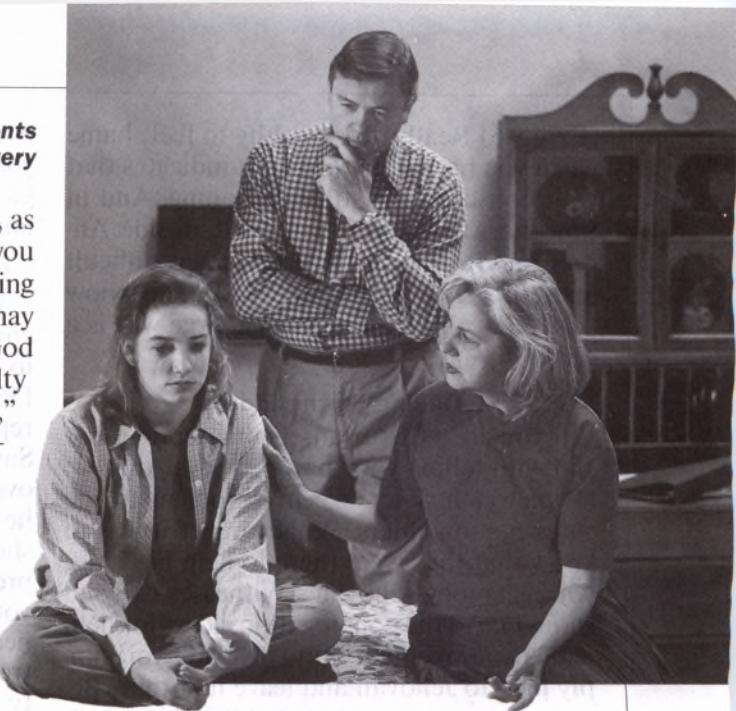
Breaking the Silence

Is there any way to get relief from this emotional turmoil? Yes, there is! The psalmist said: "My sin I finally confessed to you, and my error I did not cover. . . . And you yourself pardoned the error of my sins." (Psalm 32:5; compare 1 John 1:9.) Andrew likewise found real relief in confessing his sin. He recalls: "I approached Jehovah and earnestly prayed for his forgiveness."

You can do the same. Pray to Jehovah. He knows what you have done, but humbly admit it to him in prayer. Ask for forgiveness, not holding back because you feel too wicked to be helped. Jesus died so that we could enjoy a good standing with God in spite of our imperfection. (1 John 2:1, 2) You can also ask for the strength to make needed changes. Reading Psalm 51 may prove particularly helpful to you in making this approach to God.

Telling Your Parents

More is needed, however, than simply confessing to God. You are also obliged to tell your parents. They have been charged by God to raise you "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) They can do this only if they know your problems. Again, telling your folks may not be easy or pleasant. But after their initial reaction, they will likely control their emo-



tions. They may even be pleased that you have trusted them enough to reveal your problem to them. Jesus' parable of the prodigal son tells of a young man who fell into sexual immorality. But when he finally confessed, his father welcomed him with open arms! (Luke 15:11-24) No doubt your parents will likewise come to your aid. After all, they still love you.

True, you may fear that you will hurt your parents. But it is not the confession of the sin that hurts your parents; it is the *committing* of the sin that does so! Confessing is the first step toward soothing that hurt. Ann, mentioned earlier, told her parents and afterward felt tremendous relief.*

Yet another obstacle to confession is shame and embarrassment. The faithful scribe Ezra had not committed the sins himself, but when he confessed the sins of his fellow Jews, he said: "I do feel ashamed and embarrassed to raise my face to you, O my God."

* For information on approaching your parents, see chapter 2 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

(Ezra 9:6) Really, it is healthy to feel shame when you have done wrong. It indicates that your conscience is still functioning. And in time those feelings of shame will subside. Andrew put it this way: "It is extremely difficult and embarrassing to confess. But to know that Jehovah will forgive in a large way is a relief."

Calling on the Elders

If you are a Christian, the matter does not end with telling your parents. Says Andrew: "I knew I had to take my problem to the congregation elders. What a relief it was to know that they were there to help me!" Yes, youths among Jehovah's Witnesses can and should go to the congregation elders for help and encouragement. But why can't you simply pray to Jehovah and leave it at that? Because Jehovah has entrusted the elders with the responsibility of "keeping watch over your souls." (Hebrews 13:17) They can help you avoid falling into sin again.—Compare James 5:14-16.

Do not deceive yourself by reasoning that you can help yourself. If you were really strong enough to do that, would you have

'I encourage all who have sinned to open their hearts to Jehovah.'

—Andrew

fallen into sin in the first place? Clearly, you need to seek outside help. Andrew courageously did so. His advice? "I encourage anyone who is involved in a serious sin, or who has been, to open his heart to Jehovah and to one of his shepherds."

But just how do you approach an elder? Pick one with whom you feel reasonably comfortable. You could begin by saying: "I need to talk about something" or "I have a

problem" or even "I have a problem and need your help." Your being honest and open will go a long way in demonstrating your repentance and desire to change.

'I'm Afraid of Being Disfellowshipped'

What about that possibility? It is true that committing a serious sin makes one liable to disfellowshipping, but not automatically. Disfellowshipping is for those who refuse to repent—who stubbornly refuse to change. Says Proverbs 28:13: "He that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but he that is confessing and leaving them will be shown mercy." The fact that you have approached the elders for help is evidence of your desire to change. Elders are primarily healers, not punishers. They are obliged to treat God's people with kindness and dignity. They want to help you make "straight paths for your feet."—Hebrews 12:13.

Admittedly, where deceit or a long-standing practice of serious wrong is involved, convincing "works that befit repentance" may be lacking. (Acts 26:20) Sometimes disfellowshipping does result. And even where a wrongdoer is repentant, the elders are obliged to impose some form of discipline. Should you become angry or embittered over their decision? At Hebrews 12:5, 6, Paul urges: "My son, do not belittle the discipline from Jehovah, neither give out when you are corrected by him; for whom Jehovah loves he disciplines; in fact, he scourges every one whom he receives as a son." Whatever discipline you receive, view it as evidence that God loves you. Remember, genuine repentance will restore you to a proper relationship with our merciful Father, Jehovah God.

It takes courage to own up to your mistakes. But by doing so, you can set matters straight not only with your parents but with Jehovah God himself. Do not let fear, pride, or embarrassment keep you from getting help. Remember: Jehovah "will forgive in a large way."—Isaiah 55:7.

FLORIDA'S EVERGLADES

A Frantic Call From the Wild

NEARLY a million visitors flock to this amazing tropical paradise each year to behold the marvelous wonders of the Grand Creator's handiwork. Here, there are no mile-deep canyons or sky-high palisades to stand in awe of, no mighty waterfalls to snap pictures of, no wandering moose or ambling grizzlies to admire from a safe distance. Instead, Everglades National Park is the first national park in the world established for its biological bounty rather than breathtaking scenery.

Part grassland, part tropical swamp, it has been called a "river of grass." Life for its denizens is played out as it has been for centuries. Ten-foot-long alligators bask in the sun and the steamy heat, keeping an eye open for their next big catch. At night the swamp resounds with their roars and the ground trembles as they act out their mating rituals. Washtub-size turtles plow through the grass in search of food. Darting, playful river otters share the same habitat. Fresh tracks of Florida panthers on the prowl can be seen in the soft mud. White-tailed deer need to keep ever on the alert, for these stalkers will at every opportunity dine on them. Raccoon, often pictured washing their food in near-

by streams, are at home in the Everglades, with a bounty of food straight from the Glades' menu.

There is also life in abundance that is almost unseen by visitors to the Everglades. Frogs of many varieties sit camouflaged on leaves above ground, on lily pads, and on beautiful water hyacinths in man-made canals. Crawling at truly a snail's pace among the aquatic plants are the apple snails—golf-ball-size mollusks, equipped with gills and a simple-type lung, which enables them to breathe both under the water and out of the water. The shallow waters are alive with crayfish, crabs, and fish of many kinds. There are snakes galore and insects and creeping things aplenty—all waiting to eat or be eaten.

Among the feathered creatures to be seen are the beautiful roseate spoonbills, white ibis, and snowy egrets that circle overhead while their mates may forsake the skies to warm the eggs containing their expected young. The sight of the exotic great blue herons overhead, flying too fast to be counted, will long be remembered. Sea gulls, pelicans, and purple gallinules share airspace with the majestic bald eagle, America's national symbol.

Then there are the long-necked cormorant and the anhinga, or snakebird, so-called because it looks more like a reptile than a bird when it sticks its long S-shaped neck

Alligator

USDA Forest Service

above the water. Both types of birds, ravenous by nature, vie for food in the shallow waters of the Everglades. When they are wet, both spread their wings and expand their tail feathers, creating a flamboyant display as though posing for a picture. Only when their feathers are completely dry can the birds take to flight.

So as not to be overlooked, the crane-like limpkin will startle visitors with its yelling cries. This big, brown-and-white speckled bird has been called the crying bird because it sounds like a grief-stricken human wailing in despair. The rare and endangered Everglades kite, a crow-size bird of prey—whose very survival depends on the availability of the apple snail—is a memorable sight for bird watchers. Gazing upward, visitors will marvel at the huge assembly of birds roosting in the majestic live oaks that are laden with glossy green leaves and tasseled with strands of Spanish moss. Blending in with the colors of the birds are green and red blossoms hanging from delicate vines surrounding the trees. Here, the visitors may forget which country they are in and which continent they are on. Ah, here is a world of its own, a virtual paradise, primitive and beautiful.

Finally, there are the shallow waters and the golden saw grass—the unmistakable signature of the Everglades. As far as the eye can see is this shimmering and glistening silent river of grass, looking as flat as a tabletop, sloping southward at less than two inches per mile. Imperceptibly, without a noticeable current, the water is ever flowing lazily toward the sea. It is the very lifeblood of the Everglades; without it, the Glades would die.

In the early part of this century, before the Everglades were so grossly bruised and mangled by human hands, this sea of

Bald eagle



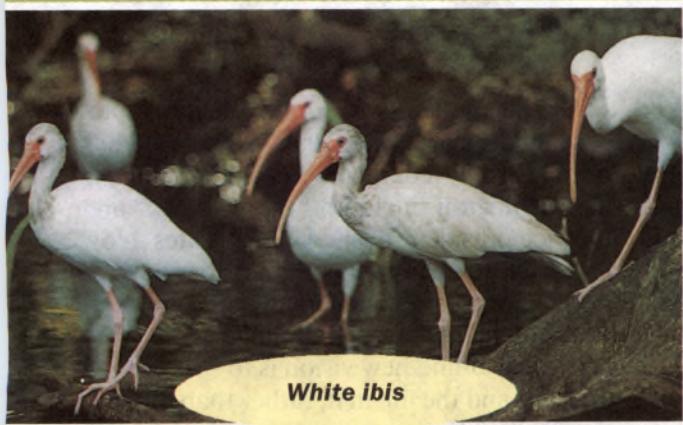
grass measured as much as 50 miles from east to west and extended 300 miles from the Kissimmee River to the Florida Bay. An average-size man could wade the distance without getting his shoulders wet. Airboats skim the surface of the shallow waters through the tall, golden saw grass at stomach-turning speeds, giving windblown tourists the thrill of a lifetime. Anglers come to fish for bass and other freshwater and saltwater fish, as they have for generations.

A Desperate Call for Help

Toward the beginning of this century, Florida politicians and entrepreneurs considered the Everglades to be a morass of undesirable living things that should be removed to make room for real estate promotions, urban expansion, and agricultural development. "Dam it, dike it, drain it, divert it" became their clarion call. In 1905, before his election as governor of Florida, N. B. Broward vowed to wring the last drop of water out of that "pestilence-ridden swamp."

Those were not idle promises. Monstrous earth-moving machines and dredging equipment were brought in. Under the direction and supervision of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 56 miles of canals were dug 30 feet deep, destroying over a million square yards of wetlands in the process. Huge levees, dikes, and pumping stations were put up, and more canals and roads crisscrossed the Everglades. Precious, life-giving waters were diverted from this life-filled tract to support large, newly developed farmlands. Coastal cities also expanded westward, gobbling up more of the Everglades for huge housing communities, freeways, shopping centers, and golf courses.

Although part of the Everglades was declared a national park in 1947, the drainage



White ibis

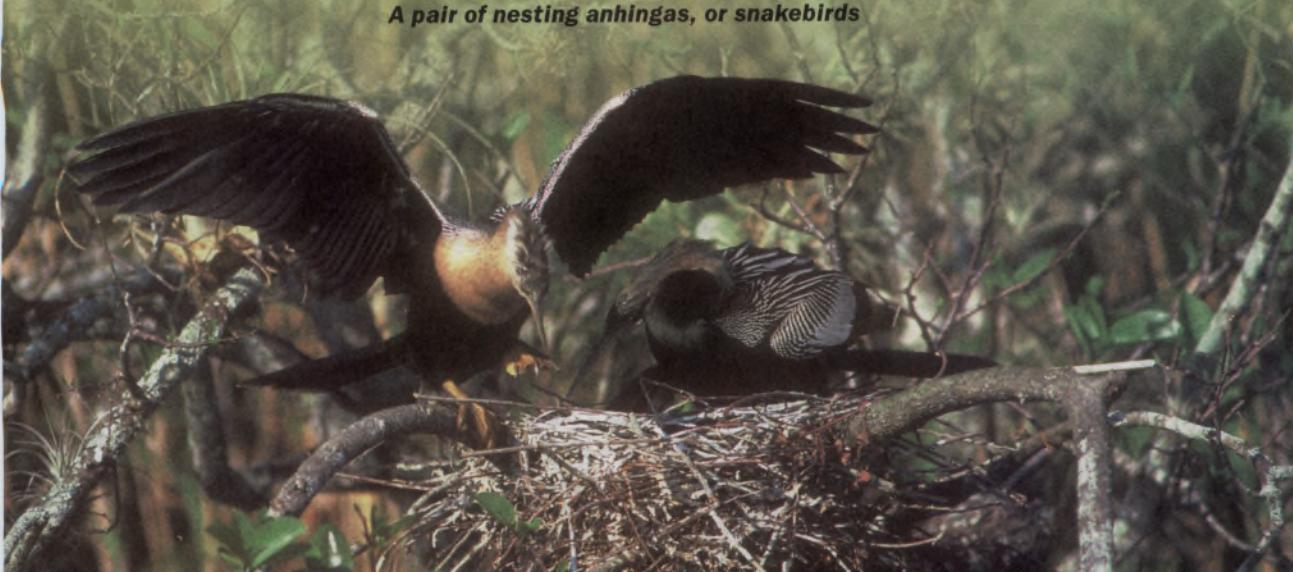
and diversion of the water continued at a ruinous pace. Environmentalists agree that draining the Everglades—and spending millions of dollars to do it—was a huge blunder. Few understood that disrupting the flow of the water would have a devastating impact on the life in the Everglades. It took decades for the damage to show.

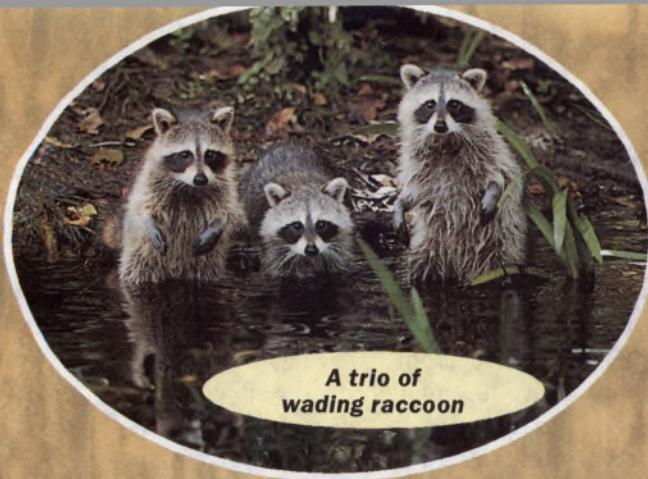
By the mid-1980's, however, environmentalists and biologists were sounding the alarm that the Everglades were dying. It seemed that every living thing there was complaining, crying aloud for help. Water holes where alligators lived began to dry up in the droughts. When the rains came and areas were flooded, their nests and eggs were washed away. Now their numbers are drastically shrinking. Reports have them cannibalizing their young. Exotic wading birds that once numbered more than a million in that

area have been reduced to thousands—down by 90 percent. The beautiful roseate spoonbills that once darkened the skies when returning to their rookeries have dwindled in number to a precious few by comparison. Since the 1960's, the number of wood storks has declined from 6,000 nesting birds to just 500, endangering the species. Also threatened are the rich Florida Bay nurseries for the state's shellfish industry. The population of all other vertebrates, from deer to turtles, has decreased 75 percent to 95 percent, reported one source.

With the steady encroachment of agriculture and other human activities came pollutants from fertilizer and pesticide runoffs that slowly contaminated the land and the water. High levels of mercury have been identified in all levels of the food chain, from fish in the marshes up through raccoon and alligators and turtles. Fishermen are advised not to eat bass and catfish caught in certain waters that are laced with mercury leached from the soil. Panthers have also been victims of man's invasion, killed not only by mercury poisoning but also by poachers. So endangered is this animal that it is believed to number fewer than 30 in the entire state and 10 in the park. A number of the Everglade's native plants are also on the brink of extinction.

A pair of nesting anhingas, or snakebirds



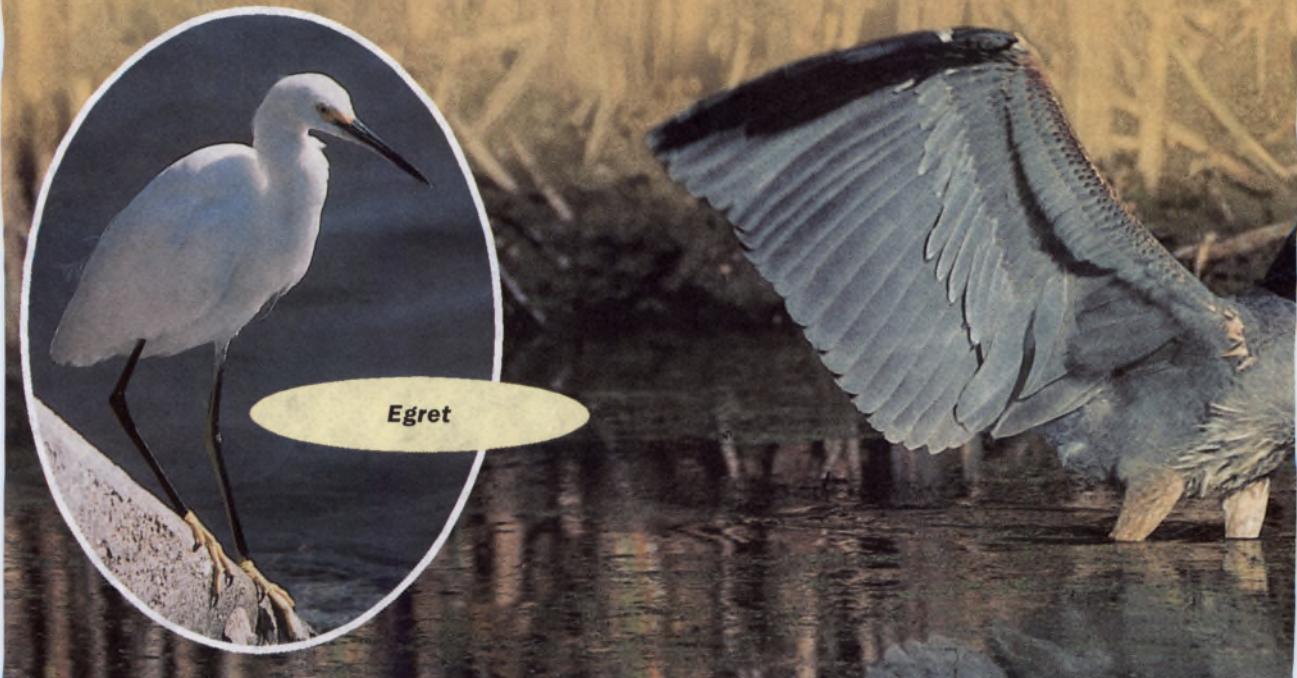


A trio of
wading raccoons

Some observers and environmentalists believe that the Everglades may have reached the point of no return. Government and park officials and many environmentalists believe, however, that with funding and swift action on the part of state and federal agencies, the Everglades can be saved. "No one really knows when something this big and complex reaches the point of no return," said one official. "It may already have happened." Biologist John Ogden admits that the possibility of reclaiming the Everglades is not a rosy one, but he is optimistic. "I have to be," he said. "The alternative is a biological desert, with a remnant of park containing a few alligators here, a few bird nests there and a nice museum with a stuffed panther as the centerpiece."

The hue and cry of Florida officials, biologists, and environmentalists nationwide has been heard by federal officials and politicians in Washington, including the president and the vice president of the United States. Now it is back to the drawing board for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose predecessors botched the job they undertook years ago. Their brand new vision is to save the Everglades and the life in it, rather than drain it, dam it, and divert it.

Clearly, the issue is water. "The base line for success is cleaner water—and plenty of it," wrote *U.S. News & World Report*, and "that can come only at the expense of agriculture or urban areas. South Florida's sugar plantations and vegetable farms are the likeliest targets." "Slicing the water pie will be tough, but we've given enough, and we can't give any more," declared Everglades Park superintendent Robert Chandler. "There has to be serious conservation by others," he said. Proponents of the Everglades reclamation proposal fear that their greatest fight against the project will come from the Florida sugarcane growers and farmers who have large landholdings in the Everglades. At the expense of life in the Glades, huge amounts of



water are being siphoned off to support their needs.

Reclaiming and saving the Everglades would be the boldest and most expensive restoration plan in history. "We are talking about a lot of money, we are talking about a lot of land, and we are talking about ecosystem restoration on a scale we have never seen before anywhere in the world," said the official in charge of the Everglades project at the World Wildlife Fund. "Over the next 15 to 20 years, at a cost of roughly \$2 billion," explained *Science* magazine, "the Corps and state and other federal agencies plan to re-plumb the entire Florida Everglades ecosystem, including 14,000 square kilometers [5,400 square miles] of wetlands and engineered waterways."

Additionally, the plan calls for buying about 100,000 acres of farmland near Lake Okeechobee and converting it into marshland that would filter out pollutants draining off the remaining farmland. Sugarcane growers are up in arms over a proposed cut of the industry's federal subsidy by one cent per pound to raise additional money to clean up the Everglades. "Restoration should be paid for by those who benefited most from de-



Limpkin, also called
the crying bird

stroying it: Florida's sugar growers and processors," *USA Today* newspaper editorialized. It is estimated that the one-cent-per-pound assessment on Florida sugar will produce \$35 million per year.

It is expected that the fight—farmers and sugarcane growers versus biologists, environmentalists, and nature lovers—will continue as it has in other parts of the United States where the same factions are pitted against each other. Vice President Gore appealed for cooperation. "By working together," he said, "we can heal this division and ensure a healthy environment and a vibrant economy. But the time to act is now. There is no other Everglades in the world."



Great blue heron



Cormorant chicks

Why the Grass Is Green

A Closer Look at Photosynthesis

WHY is the grass green?" Perhaps you asked that question as a child. Were you satisfied with the answer? Children's questions such as this one can be very profound. They can cause us to look more deeply at everyday things that we take for granted and reveal hidden wonders that we never suspected were there.

To understand why the grass is green, imagine something that may seem to have nothing to do with grass. Imagine, if you will, the perfect factory. The perfect factory would be quiet in operation and attractive to look at, wouldn't it? Instead of polluting, the perfect factory would actually improve the environment by its very operation. Of course, it would produce something useful—indeed vital—to everyone. Such a factory would be solar powered, don't you think? That way, it would not require an electric connection or deliveries of coal or oil to power it.

No doubt the perfect solar-powered factory would use solar panels far superior to man's current technology. They would be highly efficient, inexpensive, and nonpolluting, both to make and to use. Although it would use the most advanced technology imaginable, the perfect factory would do so un-

obtrusively, without the unexpected glitches, breakdowns, or endless tweaking that cutting-edge technology seems to require these days. We would expect the perfect factory to be fully automated, requiring no human attention to operate. Indeed, it would be self-repairing, self-sustaining, and even self-duplicating.

Is the perfect factory just science fiction? A mere unattainable pipe dream? No, indeed, for the perfect factory is as real as the grass beneath your feet. As a matter of fact, *it is* the grass beneath your feet, along with the fern in your office and the tree outside your window. You see, the perfect factory is any green plant! Fueled by sunlight, green plants use carbon dioxide, water, and minerals to produce food, directly or indirectly, for almost all life on earth. In the process, they replenish the atmosphere, removing carbon dioxide and releasing pure oxygen.

All together, the earth's green plants produce an estimated 150 billion to 400 billion tons of sugar every year—far more material

Inset photo: Colorpix, Godo-Foto



than the combined output of all mankind's iron, steel, automobile, and aerospace factories. They do this by using the energy from the sun to remove hydrogen atoms from water molecules and then attach those hydrogen atoms to carbon dioxide molecules from the air, turning the carbon dioxide into a carbohydrate known as sugar. This remarkable process is called *photosynthesis*. The plants can then use their new sugar molecules for energy or can combine them together into starch for food storage or into cellulose, the tough, stringy material that makes up plant fiber. Think of it! As it grew, that huge sequoia tree towering 300 feet above you was made mostly out of thin air, one carbon-dioxide molecule and one water molecule at a time, in countless millions of microscopic 'assembly lines' called *chloroplasts*. But how?

Taking a Look at the "Engine"

Making a sequoia out of thin air (plus water and a few minerals) is truly amazing, but it is not magic. It is the result of intelligent design and technology far more sophisticated than any possessed by man. Little by little, scientists are prying the lid off the black box of photosynthesis to gaze in wonder at the supersophisticated biochemistry taking place within. Let's take a peek with them at the "engine" responsible for almost all life on earth. Perhaps we will begin to get an answer to our question "Why is the grass green?"

Getting out our trusty microscope, let's examine a typical leaf. To the naked eye, the whole leaf seems green, but that is an illusion. The individual plant cells that we see under the microscope are not so green after all. Instead, they are mostly transparent, but each contains perhaps 50 to 100 tiny green dots. These dots are the chloroplasts, where the light-sensitive green chlorophyll is found and where photosynthesis takes place. What is going on inside the chloroplasts?

How did photosynthesis make this tree grow?

The chloroplast is like a tiny bag with even smaller flattened bags called thylakoids inside it. Finally, we have located the green in the grass. Green chlorophyll molecules are embedded in the surface of the thylakoids, not at random, but in carefully organized assemblies called photosystems. There are two types of photosystems in most green plants, known as PSI (photosystem I) and PSII (photosystem II). The photosystems act like specialized production teams in a factory, each taking care of a specific series of steps in photosynthesis.

"Waste" That Is Not Wasted

As sunlight strikes the surface of the thylakoid, PSII arrays of chlorophyll molecules called light-harvesting complexes are waiting to snare it. These molecules are especially interested in absorbing red light of a specific wavelength. In different locations on the thylakoid, PSI arrays are on the lookout for light with a somewhat longer wavelength. Meanwhile, both chlorophyll and some other molecules, such as carotenoids, are absorbing blue and violet light.

So why is grass green? Of all the wavelengths falling on plants, only green light is useless to them, so it is simply reflected away to our waiting eyes and cameras. Think of it! The delicate greens of spring, like

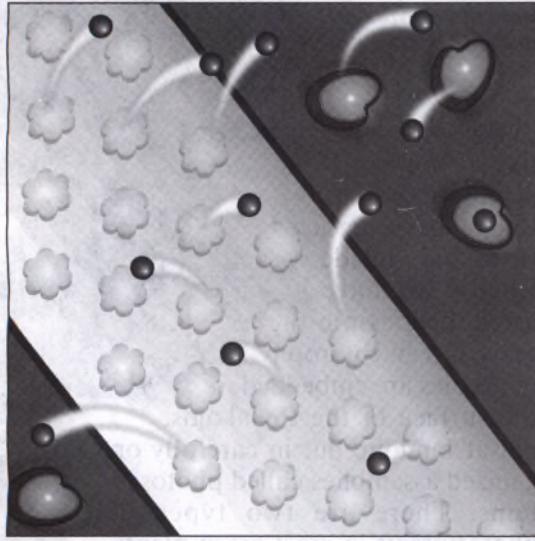


Diagram 1

o pocket was picked, the area of PSII known as the oxygen-evolving complex is frantic. Where is an electron to be found? Aha! Loitering nearby is a hapless water molecule. It is in for a nasty surprise.

Ripping Apart Water Molecules

A water molecule consists of a relatively large oxygen atom and two smaller hydrogen atoms. The oxygen-evolving complex of PSII contains four ions of the metal manganese that remove the electrons from the hydrogen atoms in the water molecule. The result is that the water molecule is broken down into two positive hydrogen ions (protons), one oxygen atom, and two electrons. As more water molecules are dismembered, the oxygen atoms pair off as molecules of oxygen gas, which the plant returns to the air for our use. The hydrogen ions begin to accumulate inside the thylakoid "bag," where they can be used by the plant, and the electrons are used to resupply the PSII complex,

the deep emerald greens of summer, result from the wavelengths that plants do not appreciate but that we humans treasure! Unlike the pollution and the waste of man's factories, this "waste" light is surely not wasted when we gaze upon a beautiful meadow or forest, refreshing our souls with the pleasing color of life.

Back in the chloroplast, in the PSII array, the energy from the red portion of the sunlight has been transferred to electrons in the chlorophyll molecules until, finally, an electron is so energized, or "excited," that it jumps from the array altogether, into the arms of a waiting carrier molecule in the thylakoid membrane. Like a dancer being passed from partner to partner, the electron is passed from one carrier molecule to another as it gradually loses energy. When its energy is low enough, it can safely be used to replace an electron in the other photosystem, PSI.—See diagram 1.

Meanwhile, the PSII array is missing an electron, which makes it positively charged and hungry for an electron to replace the one it lost. Like a man who has just discovered that his

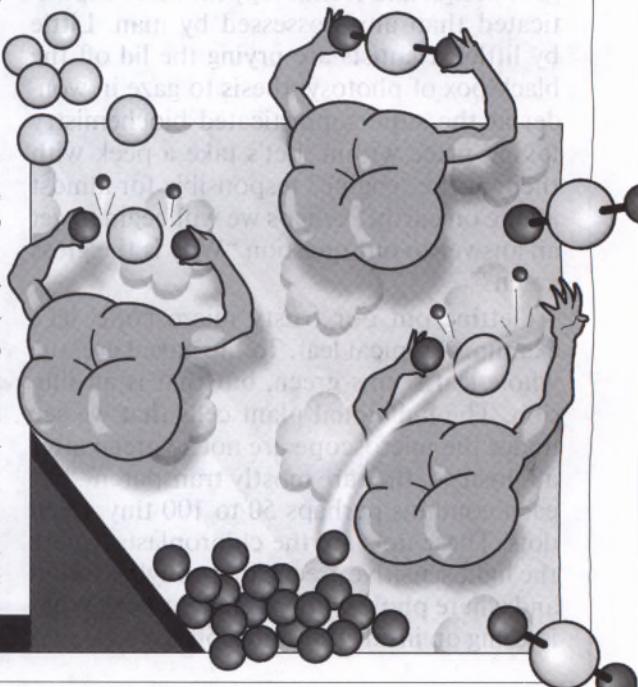


Diagram 2

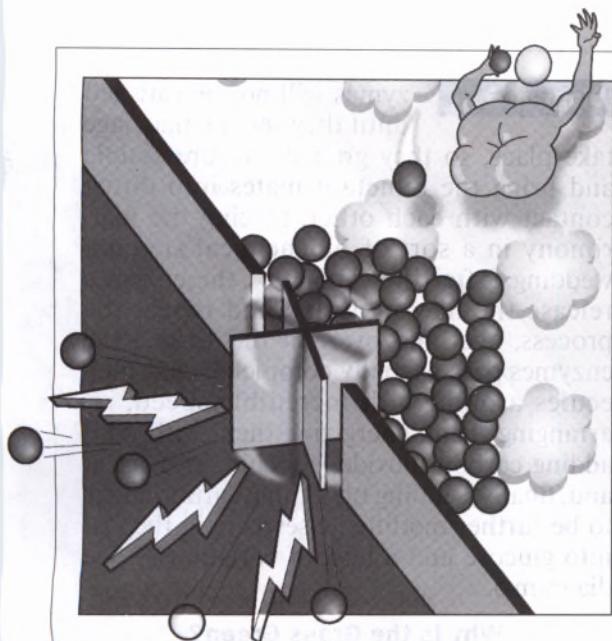


Diagram 3

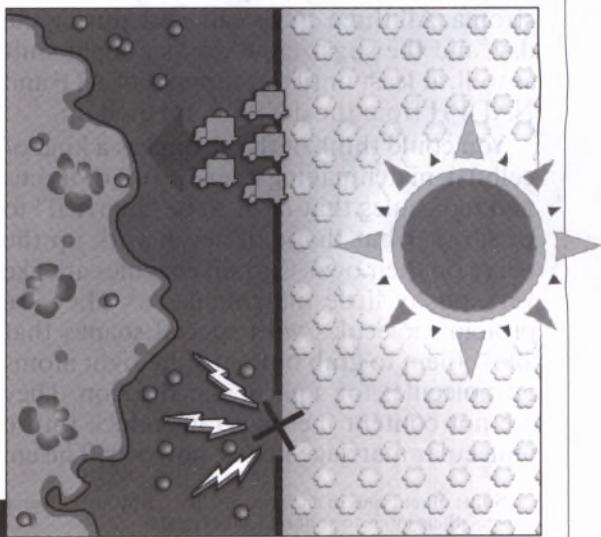
Besides ATP, another small molecule is vital for sugar assembly. It is called NADPH (a reduced form of nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate). NADPH molecules are like little delivery trucks, each carrying a hydrogen atom to a waiting enzyme that needs the hydrogen atom to help build a sugar molecule. Creating NADPH is the job of the PSI complex. While one photosystem (PSII) is busy ripping apart water molecules and using them to create ATP, the other photosystem (PSI) is absorbing light and ejecting electrons that are eventually used to create NADPH. Both the ATP and NADPH molecules are stored in the space outside the thylakoid for future use on the sugar assembly-line.

which is now ready to repeat the cycle many times per second.—See diagram 2.

Inside the thylakoid sac, the crowded hydrogen ions start looking for a way out. Not only are two hydrogen ions added each time a water molecule is broken down but other hydrogen ions are being enticed into the thylakoid sac by the PSII electrons as they are being passed over to the PSI complex. Pretty soon, the hydrogen ions are buzzing like angry bees in an overcrowded hive. How can they get out?

It turns out that the brilliant Designer of photosynthesis has supplied a revolving door with only one way out, in the form of a special enzyme used to make a very important cellular fuel called ATP (adenosine triphosphate). As the hydrogen ions force their way out the revolving door, they supply the energy needed to recharge spent ATP molecules. (See diagram 3.) ATP molecules are like tiny cellular batteries. They supply little bursts of energy, right on the spot, for all sorts of reactions in the cell. Later, these ATP molecules will be needed on the photosynthesis sugar assembly-line.

Diagram 4



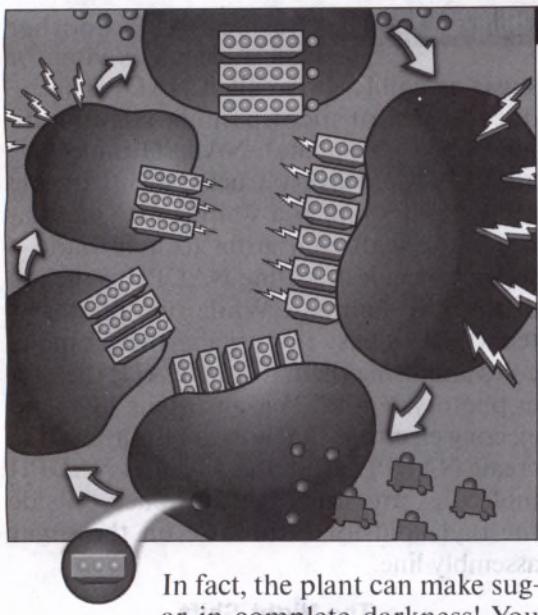


Diagram 5

zymes will not be satisfied until they see the marriage

take place, so they grab the future couple and bring the reluctant mates into direct contact with each other, forcing the matrimony in a sort of biochemical shotgun wedding. After the ceremony, the enzymes release the new molecule and repeat the process, over and over. In the stroma the enzymes pass partially complete sugar molecules around with incredible speed, rearranging them, energizing them with ATP, adding carbon dioxide, attaching hydrogen, and, finally, sending off a three-carbon sugar to be further modified elsewhere in the cell into glucose and a host of variations.—See diagram 5.

Why Is the Grass Green?

Photosynthesis is far more than just a basic chemical reaction. It is a biochemical symphony of amazing complexity and subtlety. The book *Life Processes of Plants* puts it this way: "Photosynthesis is a remarkable, highly regulated process for harnessing the energy of the sun's photons. The complex architecture of the plant and the incredibly intricate biochemical and genetic controls that regulate photosynthetic activity may be viewed as refinements of the basic process of trapping the photon and converting its energy into chemical form."

In other words, to find out why the grass is green is to gaze in wonder at design and technology far superior to anything mankind has devised—self-regulating, self-maintaining, submicroscopic "machines" that operate at thousands, or even millions, of cycles per second (without noise, pollution, or ugliness), turning sunlight into sugar. To us it is to catch a glimpse of the mind of a designer and engineer par excellence—our Creator, Jehovah God. Think about it the next time you admire one of Jehovah's beautiful, life-sustaining, perfect factories or the next time you just walk on that lovely green grass.

In fact, the plant can make sugar in complete darkness! You could compare the chloroplast to a factory with two crews (PSI and PSII) inside the thylakoids making batteries and delivery trucks (ATP and NADPH) to be used by a third crew (special enzymes) out in the stroma. (See diagram 4.) That third crew makes sugar by adding hydrogen atoms and carbon dioxide molecules in a precise sequence of chemical reactions using the enzymes in the stroma. All three crews can work during the day, and the sugar crew works a night shift as well, at least until the supplies of ATP and NADPH from the day shift are used up.

You could think of the stroma as a kind of cellular matchmaking agency, full of atoms and molecules that need to be "married" to each other but that will never work up the nerve on their own. Certain enzymes are like very pushy little matchmakers.* They are protein molecules with special shapes that allow them to grab onto just the right atoms or molecules for a particular reaction. They are not content merely to introduce future molecular marriage mates, however. The en-

* Some other types of enzymes are like pushy little divorce lawyers; their job is to split molecules apart.

"When I Am Weak, THEN I AM **POWERFUL**"



I GREW UP in a little town north of San Francisco, California, called Petaluma. My mom was somewhat religious, but my dad didn't have much use for religion. I always believed in a creator—I just didn't know who he was.

Growing up, I was a happy child. How fondly I remember enjoying those carefree days! Little did I know that there were things happening inside my body that would take away much of my freedom. It was in 1960, my last year of high school, that I remember talking to my best friend about the pain I was having in a couple of fingers.

My feet soon began hurting me so much that my mom took me to a hospital in San Francisco, where I stayed for about six days. I was 18 then, and the test results revealed that I had rheumatoid arthritis. I started taking shots of gold sodium thiosulfate, then prednisone, and then another form of cortisone. In all, I took those drugs for 18 years, and in each case they diminished the pain for a few years but then gradually became ineffective, and I was moved on to the next one. The constant pain could not be ignored, and I became desperate in my search for a different kind of medical aid. I have found some alternative treatments that have helped somewhat. Thankfully, I am not experiencing as much pain as I was when the disease was in more aggressive stages of progression through my body.

One day in 1975, my son came across a record book my mom had kept about me as a baby. I found out that when I was six months old, a doctor had started X-ray treatments on me for an enlarged thymus. I believe that the radiation treatments prescribed for me in infancy may be the reason I am in this condition today. If that is so, what a terrible mistake that was!

I married in 1962. In 1968, during the earlier stages of the disease, my husband, Lynn, and I worked together in a bakery we owned. We would get up at about 4:00 a.m., and my husband would make the dough and then sometimes snooze on the flour sacks while the bread was in the oven. We would

a favor. After she left, I would put them on the shelf unopened for a few days, and then one of us always threw them away. That was quite unfortunate, since now we appreciate their spiritual value. At the time, though, religious matters just didn't seem very important.

Conscious of Our Spiritual Need

One evening my husband and I were discussing how there had to be more to life than eating and sleeping and working so hard. We started searching for the spirituality that was missing in our lives. We turned our attention to a little church down the street, but we did not find the spiritual uplift we had hoped for.

The church members talked mostly about their local problems.

The Witness who brought the magazines had been coming by for about a year, but my routine did not change until I finally read the October 8, 1968, issue of *Awake!*, entitled "Is It Later Than You Think?" I liked what I read, and happily, it affected my husband in the same way. We began studying and absorbing the truth like sponges. We couldn't get enough of all the wonderful things we were learning. In 1969 we were baptized.

As time went on, it became difficult for me to get up and sit down and much harder to walk. I would have to force my knees to bend in order to get in and out of the car. I had learned to live with limitations and pain that made me cry much of the time. So I'd touch up my makeup, and away we'd go to meetings or out in field service. I walked from door to door for as long as I could. I tried to get out in field service once or twice

slice it and pack it up, and then Lynn would deliver it. On occasion an insurance salesman dropped by the bakery and told us about God's promised Kingdom. We liked what we heard, but we were too busy. Our bread route was expanding, and we became burdened with even more secular work. To our delight, another bakery bought us out! Lynn went to work for them, and I went to work in a beauty shop. As the arthritis worsened, however, I could work only three days a week and finally had to quit altogether.

During that period, one of Jehovah's Witnesses came by the house regularly and offered me the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. I always gave her a contribution and took the magazines, thinking I was doing her

*When in a vivacious mood,
I envisioned an adventurous
boy on stilts, with his dog underfoot*

each week, until the stiffness and pain in my knees and feet made it no longer possible. I often worried about falling and not being able to get up. It helps when I talk to Jehovah. Sometimes I cry to him with many tears.

Resorting to tears, however, was not always possible. A person with rheumatoid arthritis can also develop dry eyes. I have had times when the dryness was so severe that it was difficult to read. When that happened, I listened to Bible tapes. I often walked around with my eyes shut because moving my eyelids scratched my eyes. I might as well have been blind. At times, I had to put artificial tears in my eyes every five minutes. Worse yet, I would have to put ointment in my eyes and keep them bandaged for five or six days until they were better. Remaining thankful is no insignificant task when one is struggling with a long-term illness that cannot be reasonably expected to reverse itself in this system.

In 1978, I had to resort to a wheelchair. Making that decision was difficult. I had put it off as long as I could, but I no longer had a choice. I had known that the day would come, but my hope was that God's new world would come first. Lynn bought a tall draftsman's chair that has a wide five-wheel base. With it, I could push myself around the house.

I found it frustrating to reach for something, since I could not stretch my arm far and could not grip well with my bent and twisted fingers. So, then, I would use my "grabber" stick. With it, I can pick up things off the floor, open a cupboard and take out a dish, or get something out of the refrigerator. As I develop new skills with my "grabber" stick, I am able to take care of some

*a boy and his dog in their play
can sometimes take a tumble*



household chores. I can cook, do dishes, iron and fold clothes, and mop. I feel some pride as my abilities improve, and I am happy I can still contribute to some of the household needs. However, what I used to be able to do in minutes now takes me hours.

Witnessing by Telephone

It took time, but I mustered up the courage to try witnessing by telephone. I didn't think I could do that, but now I really do enjoy it and have had some good success. Much to my surprise, it is similar to going from door to door, in the sense that I am able to talk with people about Jehovah and his purposes.

One of the presentations I use begins this

way: "Hello, is this Mr. —? I'm Mrs. Maass. I'm talking to people just briefly, and if you have a few minutes, may I speak with you? (A typical response is: "What is it about?") It's frightening to see what is going on in the world today, isn't it? (I allow for comment.) I'd like to share this Biblical thought that gives us a real hope for the future."

I then read the Lord's Prayer and possibly 2 Peter 3:13. I have given some calls to other Christian sisters or to Lynn to follow up for me.

Over the years, I have had many good conversations and have been able to send brochures, magazines, and books to those who showed interest. Some have begun to study the Bible by phone. One lady I talked to said she felt that just studying on her own would be enough. But after several discussions, she agreed to come to our home for a Bible study, since I told her of my circumstances.

Another time when I was making calls, a recording gave a new number. Although I always call locally and this was not in the local range, I felt motivated to call the number anyway. After talking for a while with me, the lady who answered the phone said that she and her husband wanted to get in touch with people who really are Christian. So Lynn and I went to their home, about one hour away, to study with them.

I still find joy and happiness in talking

to others about Jehovah and his promise of new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is to dwell. Recently, a woman I've been speaking with for several months told me: "Whenever I talk to you, I realize I'm taking in more knowledge." I know the knowledge I'm sharing with others leads to everlasting life and produces a joy that can

Getting phone numbers together for field service

Dialing the phone



shine through even a crippled exterior like mine. Sometimes I'm able to do more in service than at other times, but I wish I could do much, much more all the time! I know that Jehovah knows everyone's circumstances and that he appreciates what we are able to do, no matter how little it might seem. I have often thought of Proverbs 27:11: "Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me," and I do want to be among those who prove Satan a liar.

Being at the meetings is always encouraging, even though it is difficult for me to get there. Jehovah has made so many wonderful provisions for us to be well fed spiritually that I want to take full advantage of them. How happy we are that our two children have made the truth their own! Our daughter, Terri, is married to a fine brother, and they have four children whom I love very much. How it warms our hearts to see that our grandchildren love Jehovah too! Our son, James, and his wife, Tuesday, have made the choice to serve Jehovah at Brooklyn Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, in New York.

An Earthly Paradise Through Jehovah's Power

I try to keep in mind Jehovah's wonderful promise of a paradise earth. Even now, there is an abundance of his creation to find pleasure in. I enjoy a beautiful sunset. I delight in the variety of flowers and their fragrance. I love roses! I am not able to be out of the house very often, but when I can be, I thoroughly enjoy the feeling of warm sunshine. I close my eyes and picture a beautiful setting in the mountains, with my family enjoying themselves in an open meadow filled with wildflowers. There is a babbling brook and plenty of juicy, sweet watermelon for everyone! When I possibly can, I paint pictures of things that help me think of the promised earthly Paradise to come. While I am paint-

ing, I imagine myself there. I know Jehovah can make real the precious mental images I now hold dear.

I like to keep the scripture at James 1:12 in mind. It says: "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him." Paul compared the ailment he had to an 'angel of Satan that kept slapping him.' He prayed that Jehovah remove his disability, but he was told that God's power was being made perfect in his weakness. So Paul's success in spite of his weakness was evidence of God's power upon him. Paul said: "When I am weak, then I am powerful." (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) I feel that what little I can do now in spite of my limitations is only through God's power upon me.

John recorded an account that really encourages me. It is about a man who was confined to a cot for 38 years. He, along with other sick ones, would lie hopefully by a pool of water, desiring very much to refresh himself in it. He was unable to reach the water, which he thought might heal him. One day Jesus saw him and asked him: "Do you want to become sound in health?" How my tears of joy would answer that question! "Jesus said to him: 'Get up, pick up your cot and walk.'" (John 5:2-9) There are many of us eagerly waiting to hear such a call!—As told by Luretta Maass.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Caregiving —Meeting the Challenge

The Flood—Fact or Fable?

When Land Turns Into Desert

WATCHING THE WORLD

China's Aging Population

"China's aging population is increasing at a steady rate," reports the magazine *China Today*. "By the end of 1994 China had 116.97 million senior citizens over age 60, a 14.16 percent increase over 1990." People over 60 now make up nearly 10 percent of the country's population, and the aged population has been growing at a rate that is almost three times that of the total population. How are they being cared for? While labor incomes, pensions, social insurance, and relief take care of the needs of many, over 57 percent of China's senior citizens are supported by their children or other relatives. "Since family relations in China are relatively stable, and China has a fine tradition of respecting and taking care of the old, most senior citizens live with their kinsfolk, and are being well looked after by them," says *China Today*. "Only 7 percent of China's old people live by themselves."

Child Labor —A Growing Problem

According to a recent report by the International Labor Organization, 13 percent of the world's children between the ages of 10 and 14—some 73 million children—are forced to work. The report added that if statistics were available for children under ten and for girls in full-time domestic work, the world's child-labor force would likely number into the hundreds of millions. Although the Geneva-based organization has been trying to combat child labor for 80 years, the problem has continued to increase

and expand, especially in Africa and Latin America. While slave labor and dangerous working conditions are the lot of millions of these children, prostitution was cited as a particular problem. In some countries "adults see the use of children for sexual purposes as the best means of preventing [HIV] infection," says the report. The *International Herald Tribune* of Paris said that the organization "blamed government officials who . . . had ignored the problem."

Meeting Children's Needs

The State of the World's Children 1995, a report by UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), says that it is absurd to think that the world cannot afford to meet the essential needs of its children. To illustrate their point, UNICEF gives the following figures: The estimated extra cost



of meeting the worldwide need for adequate nutrition and basic health care is \$13 billion a year; for primary education, \$6 billion; for safe water and sanitation, \$9 billion; for family planning, \$6 billion—making a total of \$34 billion a year. Compare that, they say, with the estimated amount of what is *already* being spent per year on the following: golf, \$40 billion; beer and wine, \$245 billion; cigarettes, \$400 billion; the military,

\$800 billion. Surely, they say, all the world's children could be adequately cared for if proper priorities were established.

A New Kind of Opium War

That is how *The Times of India* described the all-out efforts of U.S. tobacco companies to push their products in Asia. Although each year in India alone at least one million people die of tobacco-related diseases, the Indian government has not yet passed any antitobacco legislation. This, according to the *Times* report, is due to powerful lobbying by tobacco companies, both national and transnational, as well as "U.S. federal laws that threaten trade sanctions against countries that do not permit the sale of the U.S. tobacco products." It is estimated that 99 percent of the population in rural India is unaware of any harm from tobacco use. Media exposure usually shows a smoker as confident, attractive, and secure. Major competitions in popular sports, like cricket, are sponsored by tobacco companies. Cigarettes are also a significant source of revenue for the government, which has invested in four cigarette companies.

Belief in Hellfire Renounced

A Church of England report has rejected the traditional view that hell is a place of fire and eternal torment. According to the report by the church's Doctrine Commission, "Christians have professed appalling theologies which made God into a sadistic monster and left searing psychological scars on many." It added: "There are many reasons

for this change, but amongst them have been the moral protest from both within and without the Christian faith against a religion of fear, and a growing sense that the picture of a God who consigned millions to eternal torment was far removed from the revelation of God's love in Christ." However, they say that each person still faces a day of judgment and that those who fail the test will be cast into a state of annihilation, or nonbeing. States the New York *Herald Tribune*: "The report made clear there was no chance of all people of all faiths automatically being saved."

Simian Heroine

A three-year-old boy fell into an enclosure where seven African gorillas were on display at the Brookfield Zoo, in suburban Chicago, and he was rescued by one of the female gorillas. The boy, who had broken away from his mother, climbed over the 4-foot railing and plunged nearly 20 feet onto the exhibit's concrete floor, injuring his head. The eight-year-old gorilla, Binti Jua—Swahili for "daughter of sunshine"—ambled over and gently picked up the injured child. With her own baby still clinging to her back, Binti cradled the boy's limp body in her arms and carried him over to the service door of the exhibit, placing him carefully on the ground where zookeepers could retrieve him. Binti, who had been abandoned by her own mother, "had been taught mothering techniques by her keepers, who gave her human dolls to nurture and care for" before the birth of her offspring, reports the New York *Daily News*. She has since attracted thousands of visitors and has been rewarded with offerings of fruit. The boy, who

suffered bruises and abrasions, recovered.

Take Your Choice

"Has your year got off to a bad start?" asked an article in *New Scientist* magazine. "Not to worry, there are at least 14 other new years around the world left to choose from." Actually, only the countries that have adopted the Gregorian calendar count January 1 as the first day of the year. It was Julius Caesar who, in



46 B.C.E., decided that the calendar year would begin on January 1, and this was retained when Pope Gregory revised the calendar in 1582. As different cultures developed their own calendar systems, at least 26 different New Year's Days cropped up. Of those that remain today, the Chinese system is the oldest. For them, the New Year starts this year on February 7. The Jewish New Year will fall on October 2. The Muslim calendar, a totally lunar one, will have its own date as well—May 8.

Smoking Linked to Crib Deaths

Babies and pregnant women should not be exposed to any tobacco smoke, say British researchers. A two-year study by the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, in Bristol, examined every case of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), also known as crib death, in three regions of England. Questioning the par-

ents of 195 babies who died and those of 780 others who lived, they found that of the mothers whose babies died, 62 percent smoked, contrasted with 25 percent of the mothers whose babies lived. "The recent research makes it clear that fathers who smoke are also a problem," says Joyce Epstein, of the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths. "If we could remove all smoking from a baby's environment, we estimate that cot deaths [cases of SIDS] would fall by 61%."

Blood Yields Secret

Hemoglobin has been closely examined for over 60 years and is said to be perhaps the most studied protein in biology. It has long been known to carry oxygen from the lungs to the tissues and to bring back carbon dioxide and nitric oxide. Yet, physicians and scientists were surprised by recent findings that indicate an additional role—that of carrying a differently bound form of nitric oxide, called super nitric oxide, to all parts of the body. Super nitric oxide actually plays an important role in health and in keeping cells and tissues alive, including the maintenance of memory and learning, sexual erections, and blood pressure. Hemoglobin, by regulating the amount of nitric oxide to which the body's blood vessels are exposed, can make the blood vessels expand or contract. "The finding is likely to have significant implications for the treatment of blood pressure and the development of artificial blood," reports *The New York Times*. Presently, most blood substitutes have the tendency to raise blood pressure. This may be because they lack super nitric oxide, the researchers say.

FROM OUR READERS

Adoption Thank you for the series "Adoption—The Joys, the Challenges." (May 8, 1996) I am an adopted child, and I never knew how to talk about this subject with my adoptive parents. It was therefore thrilling to receive this issue of *Awake!* No articles have ever touched my heart so much as these have.

F. R. M., Brazil

I was adopted, and I recently decided to find out what I could about my birth parents. Although I was able to obtain vital statistics about my parents, I also learned that my mother kept me for three months before putting me up for adoption. That hit me very hard! I asked myself, 'How could she do that?' Well, the box "Will My Son Look for Me?" gave me a mother's perspective. How that little article helped me cope!

C. S., United States

The articles were bittersweet for me. I gave up my son 23 years ago. I did so because I knew I couldn't take care of him. Each day I wonder, 'How is he? How has his life been? Will I ever see him again?' The guilt is sometimes overwhelming. But I truly thank Jehovah for his love and mercy.

S. F., United States

Although we have a son of our own, my husband and I have been considering adopting a little girl. The article helped me see the good and the bad and will help us make our decision.

J. G., United States

I got the impression that you were advising against difficult adoptions. But what is to become of such children if they are rejected? Today we do have some problems with our adoptive son. But what sort of problems would such children make for society if they never received the love and security of a family?

D. M., Germany

Our hearts go out to children who have been deprived of the care of loving parents. The articles were written, not to discourage the adoption of "difficult" children, but to encourage couples to "calculate the expense" of doing so, in a realistic way. (Compare Luke 14:28.) Prospective adoptive parents do well to consider if they really have the emotional, spiritual, or financial resources necessary to meet the needs of such children. They should also weigh the possible effects the adoption could have on other children presently at home.—ED.

We have five adopted children, in addition to our three birth children. We have experienced the extreme joy you wrote of and the heartache. All of our children are praisers of Jehovah except our son. After being adopted at age 16, he molested three of our daughters. The adoption agency failed to inform us of his background. One should therefore get as much background information as possible when considering adoption—especially if one is considering taking in an older child. Your articles were well written and plainly presented both sides of the issue.

P. B., United States

It made me very sad to learn that some adoptive parents have had such negative experiences. My husband and I adopted two beautiful children, and they have brought nothing but joy to our lives. We have always been open with them about their adoption. We helped each of them to understand that their birth mothers did not 'give them away' but arranged for their care because they were unable at that time in their lives to care for a child. People often tell us how fortunate our children are to have been adopted by us. However, the truth is that we are the fortunate ones.

B. M., United States

Emmy Zehden
*28. 3. 1900 †9. 7. 1944
Widerstandskämpferin

Emmy-Zehden-Weg

EMMY ZEHDEN WAY The Story Behind the Name

IN May 1992, a street in the city of Berlin, Germany, was named after Emmy Zehden, one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Emmy was born in 1900. She married a Jewish businessman, Richard Zehden, who died in the Auschwitz concentration camp during the Nazi regime. Richard and Emmy had a foster son, Horst Schmidt. Horst and two other young Witnesses of Jehovah were forced into hiding when they were called for military service.

Emmy provided shelter for Horst and his two companions. In time, however, they were discovered. All four were sentenced to death—the three boys for refusing military ser-

vice and Emmy for hiding them. Horst's two companions were beheaded. Emmy applied for a pardon, but it was denied. She was beheaded at Plötzensee in Berlin on June 9, 1944.* Horst Schmidt survived Nazi persecution and later married a Witness who was a concentration-camp survivor.

On May 7, 1992, a street in Berlin was named after Emmy Zehden. In a speech given by a German official, she was praised for her courage and mentioned as an example of the many 'forgotten victims' of the war.

* According to official documents on display at the Berlin-Plötzensee Memorial, Emmy Zehden was executed on June 9, 1944.



A Book That Is Loved Best

Books We Love Best, published about five years ago in California, U.S.A., is a compilation of comments by young people about the books that they like best. One youth chose Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work as the book she liked best. The young writer explained why:

'This wonderful book is about questions and answers youths ask themselves today like, "Why don't my parents understand me?" "Should I try drugs or alcohol?" "How do I know it's true love?" "What's in my future?" "What about sex before marriage?" Those are a few of the chapter titles in this book. I liked this book because it not only has personal questions in it but answers them in easy answers that keep you satisfied. The kids would like it.'

Alcohol and drugs were used as examples of the temptations facing youths

today. 'Magazines and T.V. programs show drinks and alcohol that make you want to take them,' the youngster explained. 'Other youths and teens tempt you to take them. So no wonder kids seem confused about what to do. This book answers those kinds of questions. So now you know why I love this book. My mother and I always study it together on Thursdays. We are about halfway through the book now.'

