

# Awake!

May 22, 1997



**SEARCHING FOR  
Wholesome  
Entertainment**



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## Searching for Wholesome Entertainment

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Much of today's entertainment is saturated with violence and sex. Are you looking for something better? Where can you find wholesome entertainment?



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# THEY CALLED IT Entertainment

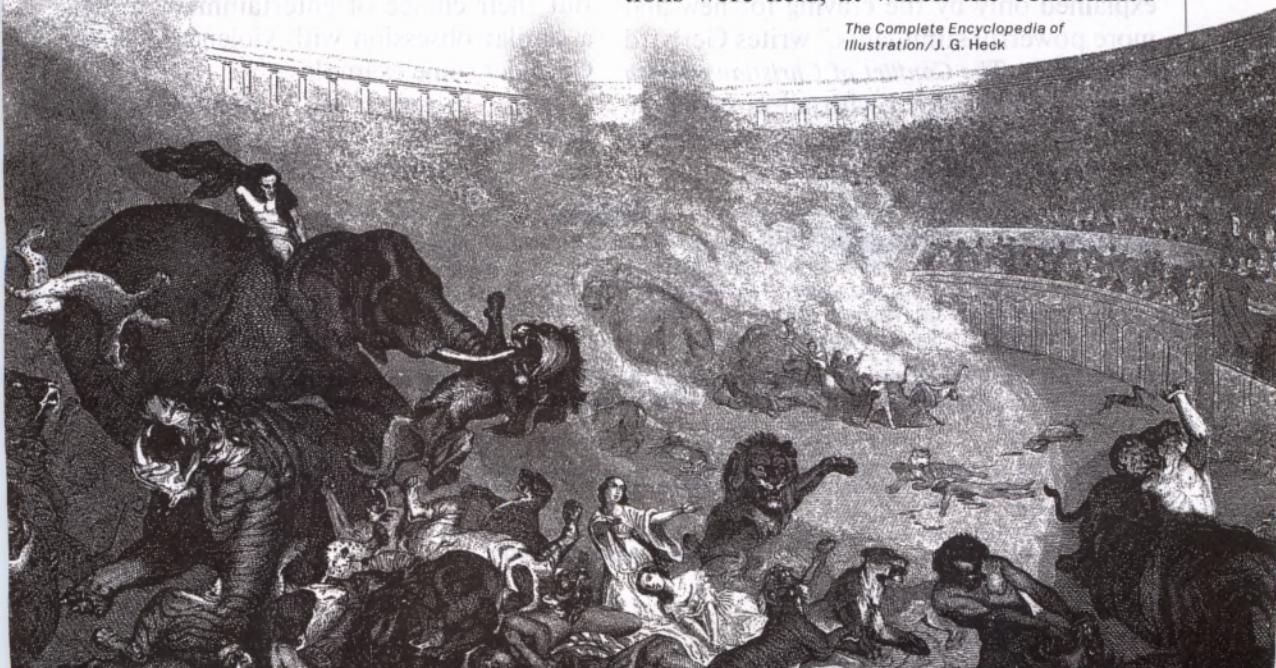
THE amphitheater was charged with excitement. Tens of thousands were gathered for one of ancient Rome's most thrilling spectacles. Pennants, roses, and colored tapestries gaily decorated the arena. Fountains spouted perfumed water, tingeing the air with pleasant aromas. The wealthy were bedecked in their most resplendent attire. The chatter of the crowd was punctuated with outbursts of laughter, but the frivolity of this multitude belied the horror of what was about to occur.

Before long the ominous blast of the *tubæ* summoned a pair of gladiators to battle. The crowd was in a frenzy as the contestants began slashing at each other with merciless savagery. The clanging of swords could barely be heard above the spectators' deafening cheers. Suddenly, with a swift maneuver, one combatant brought his oppo-

nent to the ground. The fate of the felled gladiator was now in the hands of the onlookers. If they waved their handkerchiefs, he would live. With a single gesture of their thumbs, the assembly—women and girls included—ordered the death stroke. Within moments the lifeless body was dragged off the arena floor, the blood-soaked soil was tilled with shovels, fresh sand was scattered, and the crowd prepared itself for the rest of the bloodbath.

To many living in ancient Rome, that was entertainment. "Even the strictest moralists raised no objection to this delight in bloodshed," says the book *Rome: The First Thousand Years*. And the gladiatorial game was just one form of decadent entertainment that Rome offered. Real-life naval battles were also staged for the amusement of bloodthirsty spectators. Even public executions were held, at which the condemned

*The Complete Encyclopedia of  
Illustration/J. G. Heck*



criminal would be bound to a stake and devoured by famished wild beasts.

For those whose tastes were not as sanguinary, Rome offered an assortment of stage plays. At the mimes—short plays about everyday life—“adultery and love affairs were the principal themes,” wrote Ludwig Friedländer in *Roman Life and Manners Under the Early Empire*. “The language was full of vulgar turns of expression, and the humour coarse, with an abundance of grimaces, scurrilous gestures, and, above all, grotesque dances to the flute.” According to *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, “evidence

exists that acts of adultery were actually performed on the mime stage during the Roman Empire.” With good reason Friedländer called the mime “the most frankly outrageous of the farces in immorality and obscenity,” and he added: “The lewdest scenes were the most applauded.”\*

What about today? Has man’s taste in entertainment changed? Consider the evidence, as discussed in the following article.

\* At times, an execution would be performed onstage to lend realism to a dramatic production. The book *The Civilization of Rome* notes: “It was not unusual for a criminal condemned to death to take the actor’s place at the catastrophic moment.”

# WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO Entertainment?

**H**OW could the ancient Romans, who were supposedly at the height of their culture, view the agony of fellow humans as entertainment? “It can be explained only by the craving for new and more powerful stimulants,” writes Gerhard Uhlhorn in *The Conflict of Christianity With Heathenism*. “Satiated with all possible enjoyments, people sought . . . an excitement they no longer found elsewhere.”

Many people today manifest a similar “craving for new and more powerful stimulants.” Granted, they may not gather to watch real-life carnage or licentiousness. But their choice of entertainment reveals a similar obsession with violence and sex. Consider some examples.

**Movies.** In recent years filmmakers have demonstrated “a preference for the perverse,” asserts movie critic Michael Medved.

**Awake!**

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"The message in the movie business," he adds, "seems to be that portrayals of cruelty and dementia deserve more serious consideration, more automatic respect, than any attempts to convey nobility or goodness."

Competition with television has forced filmmakers to go to virtually any length to lure people into the movie theater. "We need pictures that have teeth to them, that have an edge, that stand out from all the stuff people see on TV," says the chairman of one motion picture studio. "It's not like we're committed to blood and guts and [foul] language, but that's what you need today to open a film." Indeed, many are no longer shocked by even the most graphic cinema violence. "People are becoming immune to effects," says movie director Alan J. Pakula. "The death counts have quadrupled, the blast power is increasing by the megaton, and they're becoming deaf to it. They've developed an insatiability for raw sensation."

**Television.** Blatant depictions of sex on TV are now common in many parts of the world, including Brazil, Europe, and Japan. The average TV-watcher in America encounters some 14,000 sexual references in a single year. "The rise in sexual themes and explicitness shows no sign of abating," reports one research team. "One-time taboo topics like incest, sadomasochism, and

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## Television Can Be Hazardous



TELEVISION made its U.S. public debut at the 1939 world's fair in New York. One journalist who was present expressed his skepticism regarding the future of this

new contraption. "The problem with television," he wrote, "is that the people must sit and keep their eyes glued on a screen; the average American family hasn't time for it."

How wrong he was! Indeed, it has been said that by the time the average American graduates from school, he will have spent 50 percent more time in front of a TV than in front of a teacher. "Children who are heavy viewers of television are more aggressive, more pessimistic, weigh more, are less imaginative, less empathetic, and less capable students than their lighter-viewing counterparts," claims Dr. Madeline Levine in her book *Viewing Violence*.

Her advice? "Children need to be taught that the television, just like every other appliance in the house, has a specific function. We do not leave the hair dryer on once our hair is dry, or the toaster on once the toast has popped up. We recognize the specific uses of these appliances and know when to shut them off. Our children need to be similarly educated about television."

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bestiality have become so much grist for the prime-time mill."

According to the book *Watching America*, there is a method to television's permissive madness. It states: "Sex sells. . . . As the networks and production companies discovered that they were titillating more viewers than they outraged, they have gradually increased the sales potential of their product by permitting more and more taboos to be broken in ever more explicit fashion."

**Video Games.** The comparatively innocent age of Pac-Man and Donkey Kong has given way to a new era of gruesomely sadistic games. Professor Marsha Kinder describes these games as "worse than TV or a movie." They communicate "the message that the only way to be empowered is through violence."

Because of public concern, a leading manufacturer in the United States now uses a rating system on its video games. An "MA-17" label—indicating that the "mature" game is unsuitable for those under 17—may include intense violence, sexual themes, and profanity. However, some fear that a "mature" rating will only add to a game's appeal. "If I were 15 and saw an MA-17 sticker," says one young game enthusiast, "I'd get that game at any cost."

**Music.** A magazine that scrutinizes the content of popular music claims that at the end of 1995, only 10 of the top 40 albums were free of profanity or references to drugs, violence, or sex. "The music available to pre-adolescents is numbing, a lot of it downright nihilistic," reports the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. "The [music] that's attractive to some adolescents is full of anger and hopelessness and feeds into feelings that the world and the listener personally are doomed."

Death metal, "grunge" rock, and "gangsta" rap seem to revel in violence. And according to a *San Francisco Chronicle* report, "many industry insiders are pre-

dicting that the most fearsome groups are on their way to the top." Anthems of anger and death have now become popular in Australia, Europe, and Japan. True, some bands have tried to adopt a more benign message. Nevertheless, the *Chronicle* notes: "Evidence suggests that there's not much of a market for innocence."

**Computers.** These are valuable tools with many positive uses. However, they have also been used by some to dispense lewd material. For example, *Maclean's* magazine reports that this includes "pictures and text about everything from bizarre fetishes to prostitution to pedophilia—material that would shock many adults, let alone their children."

**Reading Material.** Many popular books are brimming with sex and violence. A recent fad in the United States and Canada is what has been called "shock fiction"—gruesome horror stories targeting youths as young as eight. Diana West, writing in *New York Teacher*, claims that these books are "desensitizing the very young, stunting the life of the mind before it has even begun."

Many comic books published in Hong Kong, Japan, and the United States feature "intense and brutal war themes, cannibalism, decapitation, satanism, rape, and profanity," reports a study by the National Coalition on Television Violence (NCTV). "The intensity of the violence and degrading sexual material in these magazines is shocking," says Dr. Thomas Radecki, research director of NCTV. "It shows how desensitized we have allowed ourselves to become."

### The Need for Caution

Clearly, in today's world there is a fascination with sex and violence, and it is reflected in the entertainment industry. The situation is similar to that described by the Christian apostle Paul: "Having come to be past all moral sense, they gave themselves over to loose conduct to work uncleanness

## Entertainment Around the World

Awake! asked its correspondents from various parts of the world to describe the trends in entertainment in their locality. The following are some of their comments.

**Brazil:** "TV programs have become more and more degrading. Yet, with many parents working outside the home, children are often left to entertain themselves with TV. CD-ROMs with occult themes and video games featuring raw violence are popular."

**Czech Republic:** "Since the fall of Communism, the country has been flooded with entertainment never seen here before, including TV programs from the West and pornography shops. Young people frequent discos, billiard clubs, and pubs. Extravagant advertising and peer pressure often exert a strong influence on them."

**Germany:** "Unfortunately, many parents are too tired to organize entertainment for their children, so the youths often look to one another to have a good time. Some isolate themselves with computer games. Others attend all-night dance sessions called raves, where drugs are rampant."

**Japan:** "Comic books are a favorite pastime for youths and adults, but these are often filled with violence, immorality, and bad language. Gambling is also common. Another disturbing trend is that some young girls are calling up widely advertised telephone clubs that cater to men with immoral purposes. Some call just for fun, while others go to the point of dating for pay, which in some cases leads to prostitution."

**Nigeria:** "Unregulated video theaters are spreading across West Africa. These makeshift shacks are open to people of any age, including children. Pornographic and horror videos are standard fare. In addition, locally produced films aired on TV commonly feature spiritism."

**South Africa:** "Raves are thriving here, and drugs are often readily available at these."

**Sweden:** "Pubs and nightclubs are successful in Sweden, and often criminals and drug traffickers flock to such places. Television and video entertainment is full of violence, spiritism, and immorality."



of every sort with greediness." (Ephesians 4:19) With good reason many today are looking for something better. Are you? If so, you

will be glad to know that you can find wholesome entertainment, as the following article will show.

# YOU CAN FIND WHOLESOME Entertainment

THE Bible does not condemn the pleasures of entertainment, nor does it treat the enjoyment of recreation as a waste of time. On the contrary, Ecclesiastes 3:4 says that there is "a time to laugh" and "a time to skip about."\* God's people in ancient Israel enjoyed various types of entertainment, including music, dancing, and games. Jesus himself attended a large wedding feast and, on another occasion, "a big reception feast." (Luke 5:29; John 2:1, 2) So the Bible is not against having an enjoyable time.

However, since much of today's entertainment glorifies conduct that is displeasing to God, the question arises, What can you do to make sure that your standards for choosing entertainment remain wholesome?

## Be Selective

In selecting their entertainment, Christians will want to be guided by Bible principles. For example, the psalmist David wrote: "Jehovah himself examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one, and anyone loving violence His soul certainly hates." (Psalm 11:5) And Paul wrote to the Colossians: "Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness . . . Put them all away from you, wrath, anger, badness, abusive speech, and obscene talk." —Colossians 3:5, 8.

Much entertainment that is available to

\* Other forms of the Hebrew word translated "to laugh" can be rendered "to play," "to offer some amusement," "to celebrate," or "to have fun."

day clearly violates this inspired counsel. 'But I would never *do* the things I see depicted on-screen,' some might object. That may be so. But even if your entertainment does not indicate the kind of person you will become, it may reveal something about the kind of person you already are. It might, for instance, tell whether you are among those who are "loving violence" or who are preoccupied with 'fornication, sexual appetite, covetousness, and obscene talk' or whether you are among those who truly "hate what is bad."—Psalm 97:10.

Paul wrote to the Philippians: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things."—Philippians 4:8.

But does this scripture mean that *every* movie, book, or TV show in which a plot deals with some sort of unrighteousness, perhaps a crime, is automatically bad? Or are *all* comedies ruled out because they are not "of serious concern"? No, for the context shows that Paul was discussing not entertainment but the meditations of the heart, which should focus on things that please Jehovah. (Psalm 19:14) Nevertheless, what Paul said can help us when it comes to choosing entertainment. Using the principle at Philippians 4:8, we can ask ourselves, 'Does my choice of entertainment cause me to meditate on things that are not chaste?' If so, then we need to make adjustments.



**Wholesome recreation can be rewarding**



In evaluating entertainment, though, Christians should 'let their reasonableness become known to all men.' (Philippians 4:5) Obviously, there are extremes in entertainment that are clearly inappropriate for true Christians. Aside from that, each individual should weigh matters carefully and make decisions that will leave him with a clear conscience before God and man. (1 Corinthians 10:31-33; 1 Peter 3:21) It would not be proper to judge others over minor matters or to set up arbitrary rules that dictate what others should do.\*—Romans 14:4; 1 Corinthians 4:6.

### The Role of Parents

Parents play a crucial role in the matter

\* For more information, see *Awake!* issues of March 22, 1978, pages 16-21, and December 8, 1995, pages 6-8.

of entertainment. Paul wrote: "Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith." (1 Timothy 5:8) Thus, parents have an obligation to provide for family members not only materially but also spiritually and emotionally. This would include making provision for wholesome relaxation.—Proverbs 24:27.

Sometimes this aspect of family life is neglected. "Unfortunately," says a missionary in Nigeria, "some parents consider recreation to be a waste of time. As a result, some children are left on their own, and they find the wrong type of friends and the wrong kind of fun." Parents, do not let this happen! Make sure that your children have wholesome recreation that really refreshes them.

But caution is in order. Christians should not become like many today who are "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:1-4) Yes, entertainment should be kept in its place. It should refresh—not dominate one's life. So children as well as adults need not only the right *type* of entertainment but also the right *amount*.—Ephesians 5:15, 16.

### Enjoy Other Activities

Much popular entertainment teaches people to be passive rather than active. For example, consider television. The book *What to Do After You Turn Off the TV* notes: "By its very nature [television] teaches us to be passive. Entertainment, and even learning, becomes something we effortlessly receive, not our active creation." Of course, there is a place for even passive entertainment. But if it consumes too much of a person's free time, it deprives him of exciting opportunities.

Author Jerry Mander, who says that he is "a member of the pre-TV generation," describes the occasional periods of boredom

that afflicted his childhood: "An anxiety went with it," he says. "It was exceedingly unpleasant, so unpleasant that I would eventually decide to act—to *do* something. I'd call a friend, I'd go outdoors. I'd go play ball. I'd read. I would do something. Looking back, I view that time of boredom, of 'nothing to do,' as the pit out of which creative action springs." Today, Mander observes, children use TV as a quick fix for boredom. "TV blots out both the anxiety and the creativity that might follow," he adds.

Thus, many have discovered that activities requiring participation rather than passivity can be more rewarding than they imagined. Some have found that reading aloud with others is a source of enjoyment. Others pursue hobbies, such as playing a musical instrument or painting a picture. Then there are opportunities to arrange for wholesome gatherings.\* (Luke 14:12-14) Outdoor recreation also has benefits. An *Awake!* correspondent in Sweden reports: "Some families go camping or fishing or take forest excursions, canoe trips, walks in the mountains, and so forth. The young ones are delighted."

The presence of corrupting elements in entertainment should not surprise us. The apostle Paul wrote that people of the nations "walk in the unprofitableness of their minds." (Ephesians 4:17) Therefore, it is only to be expected that much of what they find entertaining will cater to "the works of the flesh." (Galatians 5:19-21) However, Christians can train themselves to make sound decisions regarding the quality and the quantity of their entertainment. They can also make recreation a family concern and can even try new activities that will be refreshing and will provide fond memories for years to come. Yes, you can find wholesome entertainment!

\* For Scriptural guidelines on social gatherings, see *The Watchtower* of August 15, 1992, pages 15-20, and October 1, 1996, pages 18-19.

# Too Many Gods, *Until I Found the True One*

I WAS born in Croydon, England, in 1921, the eldest girl among three girls and two boys. When I was three years old, some of us children came down with diphtheria. I was hospitalized. My brother Johnnie died, and because he was unchristened, the Anglican Church would not allow a funeral service. My father was upset by this and asked one of the clergy if he would say a prayer when they lowered Johnnie's casket into the ground. He refused.

My mother said that this turned my father away from religion for good. She was so afraid something might happen to me or my sisters that without my father's knowledge, she took us to the church and had us christened. My father became an active member of the Communist party and encouraged us to read material related to dialectical materialism, including books by Huxley, Lenin, and Marx. God was never mentioned at home except when father would say that there was no God.

In 1931, when I was about ten, I sometimes walked down the street to see my father's parents. Grandfather was often criticized by others, but he had a twinkle in his pretty blue eyes and was always happy. He usually gave me some candy and something to read as I walked home. I ate the candy and discarded the reading material. I did not then understand why others spoke negatively about him.

When I was in my teens, I joined the Young Communist League and in time be-

came the secretary. I gave talks at the town hall and did street work with the newspaper *Challenge*, offering it to anyone who would listen. At that time, a Fascist group called the Blackshirts was active and was violently opposed to Communism. I remember that as I stood on the pavement offering the *Challenge*, members of the Blackshirts would come up and talk to me, calling me Sunshine, a nickname they had given me. The older members of the Communist party I was associated with found out that the Fascists were planning to beat me up with knuckle-dusters, so they started providing me with an escort.

On one occasion, we found out that the Fascists were going to march through the East End of London (then inhabited mostly by Jews). We were told to confront them and take along bags of marbles, which we were to throw under the hooves of the policemen's horses as they charged to break up the opposing sides. Many were arrested that day, but fortunately, I was not among them, as I had decided not to go.

## My Conscience Becomes Active

On another occasion, I was told to say something at a public gathering that I knew wasn't true. I refused and was asked, "What difference does it make as long as we get the point across?" It was at this time in my life that my conscience began to bother me, and I started wondering about a number of things.

One time during my early teens, my mother encouraged me to attend a church

service, just to see what it was all about. I recall being told to go to the altar to confess my sins. While there, I noticed that the embroidery on the altar covering had three rings entwined. I inquired as to what they represented and was told that they represented the "Holy Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost." I thought, 'This is strange. They believe in three gods, but my father says there isn't even one!' When I asked additional questions, it was explained that an egg has three parts but is really only one egg. This didn't satisfy me either. I was then told that I asked too many questions. I went home and told my mother that I didn't want to go to church anymore, and I didn't!

By the time World War II broke out, I was no longer active in the Young Communist League. I married a Canadian who was serving in the military, and we had a son. Our first home in London was bombed. A V-1 missile fell in front of our house when my son and I were at home. We lost all our material possessions. We were buried in the rubble but were fortunate enough to escape with our lives. My husband was in Normandy, France, at the time.

About that time, I remember talking to two young women and asking them, "If there is a God, why does he allow all this suffering?" They said something about Satan being the god of this world. "Oh," I thought, "another god that I know nothing about!" Then, a young man came. I plied him with questions, and he said that he was looking for sheep, not goats. Not being familiar with Jesus' illustration, I asked him if he was a minister or a farmer. A few more years went by, and World War II came to an end. My husband came home after seeing 95 percent of the Saskatoon Light Infantry with which he was serving wiped out in the

war. We settled down in another home in Croydon.

### The Witnesses Come Calling

One Sunday, two of Jehovah's Witnesses came and rang our doorbell. My husband answered the door and had a very long discussion with them. He had become bitter against all religion because of the hypocrisy he had witnessed during the war. The fact that the Witnesses had taken a neutral stand impressed him. He told me that he had invited them back for a Bible discussion. I became very concerned and asked my father what I should do. He said that I was not to get involved and that if my husband persisted with this crazy religion, I had better file for divorce.

I decided to sit in on one of the discussions to see what it was all about. All of us sat around the table, and the Witness said: "One of these days you'll be able to put your arms around a lion just as you can a dog." 'Oh, they are crazy,' I thought. I couldn't concentrate on anything else that was said that evening. Afterward, I told my husband that I didn't want them to come back again. Many tears were shed, and we discussed getting a divorce.

Shortly after this, another Witness called. We later found out that he was a circuit overseer who was visiting the local congregation and had heard about us. I remember him very clearly. He had blue eyes and a very kind, patient disposition. He reminded me of my grandfather. I pulled out a list of 32 questions I had written down. "We will discuss them one at a time," he said, and we proceeded to do so. He helped me appreciate that to fully understand what the Bible says, I needed to read and study it. He suggested that someone stop by on a regular basis to study the Bible with us. I told him OK.

As I gradually began to understand about our Creator, Jehovah God, I was moved to tears. I remember going into the bedroom and praying to Jehovah to please forgive me and help me understand the Bible and his purposes. My husband, my son, and I got baptized in 1951. My father was very disturbed to hear about this and said he would rather see me dead than one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

### Serving Where the Need Is Greater

My husband decided to return to Canada, and in 1952 we moved to Vancouver, British Columbia. My father refused to say goodbye, and I never saw him or heard from him again. After we had been living in Vancouver for several years, a call went out to go where the need was greater, especially to areas such as Quebec, where Premier Duplessis had a Hitlerlike attitude toward Jehovah's Witnesses.

In 1958 we packed all our earthly possessions into our car and drove to the international convention in New York. From there we drove to Montreal, Quebec, where we were assigned to a French congregation in Ville de Jacques-Cartier. We had many interesting experiences while serving Jehovah in Quebec. One time, our car was overturned, rocks were thrown at us, and a woman turned the hose on us full blast. This was in a place called Magog.

Another time, my companion and I were passing a church just as the people were filling out. Someone recognized us and shouted: "*Témoins de Jéhovah!*" ("Jehovah's Witnesses!") A chase ensued, led by the priest,



but we outran the crowd. We were arrested many times. However, I had the pleasure of helping quite a few people learn about Jehovah, many of whom are still actively serving him.

In the early 1960's, my husband's employer transferred him to Los Angeles, and we served in a congregation there for over 30 years. What a delight it was for us to talk about the truth to people who had moved to Los Angeles from all parts of the earth! I had the privilege of studying with people from Lebanon, Egypt, China, Japan, France, and Italy, to name just a few. I recall meeting a young woman who didn't speak any English—fortunately, her husband did. So my husband and I studied with them together. I eventually had a separate study with her. I used the *Let God Be True* book in English, and she would look up the scriptures in her Chinese Bible and answer the questions in Chinese. Then, I would say the answer in English, and she would repeat it in English. Eventually, she became fluent in English, although she speaks it with a British accent. I am happy to say that both she and her husband are now dedicated servants of Jehovah.

We recently moved to Tucson, Arizona, and have the additional privilege of seeing all the members of our family faithfully serving Jehovah, including our grandchildren, who are being taught about our Grand Creator, Jehovah.

By the way, I was thrilled to learn from the brothers in Croydon that my grandfather with the twinkling blue eyes was one of Jehovah's Witnesses.—*As told by Cassie Bright.*

# Opera IN THE JUNGLE

By Awake! correspondent in Brazil

**L**OOKING through the plane's window, we see two rivers heading toward each other—the sand-colored Solimões and the cola-colored Negro. When they meet, they refuse to mix completely until six miles farther downstream. Nearby, the plane lands in Manaus, the capital of Brazil's Amazonas State.

"Here we have two seasons," say the people of Manaus. "It rains every day, or it rains all day." But the rain does not hinder the 1.5 million inhabitants from bustling about in this city of contrasts. Passing high-tech industries on broad avenues and houses and apartment buildings on hilly streets, we are soon in the congested traffic of the city center, where skyscrapers and palatial monuments command attention. We can see why Manaus was once called the Paris of the jungle. One beautiful building, though, especially captures the eye—the opera house.

"There are opera houses in many places," says Inês Lima Daou, the theater's director, "but Teatro Amazonas is different. It's in the middle of nowhere." How did such elegance come to be in the middle of the world's largest rain forest?

## The Rubber Connection

In 1669, Portuguese Captain Francisco da Mota Falcão founded a jungle fortress named Fortaleza de São José do Rio Negro. Following several name changes, in 1856 it was renamed Ma-

naus after a regional Indian tribe called Manáos. By 1900, 50,000 people had flocked to Manaus. What drew the crowds? The *Hevea brasiliensis*, or rubber tree, native to the Amazon basin.

Portuguese colonists noticed that Indians were playing with heavy balls made of latex extracted from the trees. In time, the colonists saw another use for the milky fluid. In 1750, Portugal's King Dom José was sending his boots to Brazil to be waterproofed. By 1800, Brazil was exporting rubber shoes to New England in North America. However, Charles Goodyear's discovery of vulcanization in 1839 and John Dunlop's patent of the pneumatic tire in 1888 propelled the 'rubber rush.' The world demanded rubber.

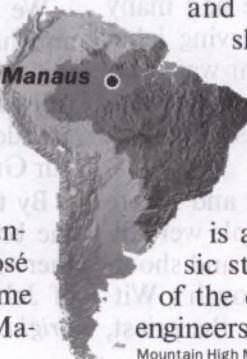
Not long thereafter, nearly 200,000 Brazilians were working as seringueiros, or rubber tappers, milking 80 million rubber trees scattered in the rain forest around Manaus.

Giddy years of wealth brought electricity, the telephone, and even a tramway to town—the first in South America. Rubber barons built mansions and dined on Irish linen, and their families went back and forth to Europe to enjoy its culture—including the opera. Before long, they wanted an opera house like the ones in Europe.

## Transplanting Bits of Europe

The dream began to come true in 1881, when the city selected a site on a hill between two tributaries, next to the church and surrounded by forest. Then, ships loaded with building materials crossed the Atlantic Ocean and continued for another 800 miles up the Amazon River to Manaus.

But wait a moment! Why is a dome sitting on this neoclassic structure? True, it was not part of the original project, but one of the engineers went to a fair in France, saw a



Mountain High Maps® Copyright © 1995 Digital Wisdom, Inc.

dome, liked it, and bought it. About 36,000 green- and yellow-colored German tiles were used to decorate the dome.

The horseshoe-shaped auditorium accommodated 700 cane-backed chairs that were placed on the ground floor, 12 chairs in the official box, and 5 seats in each of the 90 private boxes on the upper three tiers. To secure private boxes, rich families donated 22 Greek masks, which were placed above the columns to honor European composers, musicians, and playwrights.

The illumination in the opera house makes it a showpiece. Hanging in the center of the auditorium is a huge bronze chandelier that was made in France and is adorned with Italian crystal. It can be lowered for changing light bulbs and for cleaning. The 166 bronze-based lamps with 1,630 tulip-shaped glass shades enhance the walls and show off the paintings.

Crispim do Amaral, a 19th-century Brazilian painter who lived in Paris and was schooled in Italy, took his brush to the ceiling and painted four scenes—opera, dance, music, and tragedy. He succeeded in giving the illusion of standing under the Eiffel Tower. On the canvas stage curtain, he painted an exotic theme—the meeting of the two rivers that form the Amazon. The 100-year-old curtain does not roll up but goes straight up into the dome—lessening damage to the painting.

On the second floor is the ballroom, where at each end of the room, a tall mirror of French crystal reflects 32 chandeliers from Italy. The brilliance illuminates



**The two rivers refuse to mix**

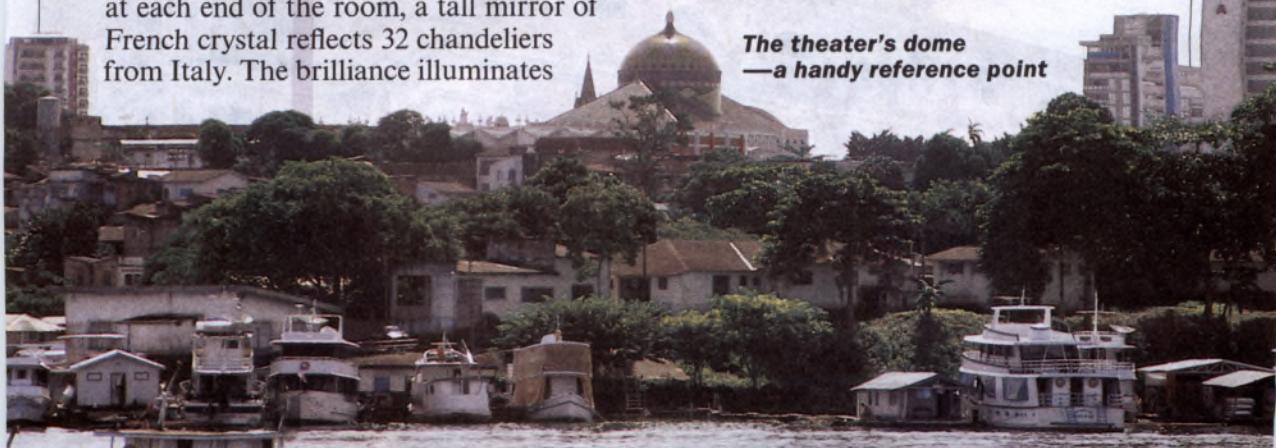
the paintings of Amazonian fauna and flora by Domenico de Angelis, an Italian painter. For a rich appearance, columns of cast iron were plastered and painted to look like marble. Tap on the marble-looking balcony railings; they are wood. The polished floor was laid in the French method, 12,000 pieces of wood fitted together without the aid of a nail or glue. The only Brazilian feature was the wood for the floors, desks, and tables. We could imagine that everyone must have felt at home—and cool. Why cool?

Masons had laid the paving stones of the streets surrounding the theater in a latex-based substance. This cleverly muffled the noise made by the horse-drawn carriages of latecomers. It also allowed for the doors to be left open so that the breeze could blow through the cane-backed chairs to give some relief from the heat.

#### **From Sparkling Champagne to Ominous Clouds**

On opening night in 1896, fountains in front of the opera house flowed with champagne as the doors swung open. This project had taken 15 years of work and had

**The theater's dome  
—a handy reference point**



cost \$10 million. It was a grand house for grand voices. Through the years soloists and groups from Italy, France, Portugal, and Spain came to perform Puccini's *La Bohème* and Verdi's *Rigoletto* and *Il Trovatore*. Although tropical diseases such as cholera, malaria, and yellow fever caused some performers to stay away, another threat to the theater arose—the end of the rubber boom. Ominous clouds hung over Manaus.—See the box "The Kidnapping That Killed the Rubber Boom and Stopped the Opera."

In 1923, Brazil's rubber monopoly deflated. With lightning speed, tycoons, speculators, traders, and prostitutes packed their bags and left town, reducing Manaus to a weedy backwoods. And the opera house? The theater's annexes became storage areas for rubber, and the stage was used for indoor soccer games!

#### Glorious Times Again

Thereafter, Manaus turned into a starting point for ecotourists who came to explore the rain forest's mysteries. Others came for a few days to hold a snake, feed a parrot, or pet a sloth. Restoration of the opera house would make Manaus an appealing attraction of a different kind!

Therefore,

**Elegance in the  
rain forest**

in 1974 the theater underwent a costly makeover to preserve the original style and to make technical improvements. Cleaning cloths went over the lights, mirrors, and furniture. Technicians installed a hydraulic system to move the orchestra pit up and down. They gave the stage a new floor and the backstage new sound, light, and video equipment. They installed air conditioning on the ground floor under the chairs.

Then the symphony orchestra from Rio de Janeiro brought culture back to the theater. Later, the famed ballerina Margot Fonteyn graced the stage by dancing *Swan Lake* and left her ballet shoes showcased in the theater's museum.

For more comfort, beauty, and safety, further touch-ups were necessary. After exhaustive research and careful planning, 600 workers and 30 technicians swarmed the theater for four years. They found the original rose color under eight layers of paint. The dome needed refacing. Off came the old tiles. They were replaced with similar new tiles made in Brazil. The chairs were reupholstered in red French velvet. Scalpel and brush were used to touch up the sensitive art objects and paintings. Unfortunately, humidity had damaged the art work in the hall-



## A grand house again

ways, so a jade-green Chinese brocade was chosen to cover the panels. Furthermore, termites had made themselves at home in the wood columns and balcony railings. To get rid of them, 3,640 gallons of insecticide were injected into the wood.

In 1990, there were grand voices in a grand house again. Brazilian soprano Celine Imbert's arias and Nelson Freire's piano recitals ennobled the theater.

Was that a bell? Yes, it's the chime warning that the performance will start in five minutes.

"To commemorate the 100-year-old *Teatro Amazonas*," says theater director Daou, "we invited the renown tenor José Carreras. He tested the acoustics ('perfect')." That evening ended with a dance in the ballroom. The festivities continued with the visit of conductor Zubin Mehta, tenor Luciano



varotti, and an Argentinean group that presented the colorful opera *Carmen*.

That was the three-minute chime. We'd better take our seats.

All day long the 60 employees have been running around behind the scenes to prepare for the show. And they will have more shows—jazz concerts, folk shows, and plays. But tonight, it is a ballet.

The one minute chime. Hush.

So when are you coming to the opera house in the jungle?

## The Kidnapping That Killed the Rubber Boom and Stopped the Opera

In 1876, Henry Wickham, a young English adventurer, devised a scam that punctured Brazil's rubber boom. With the help of Indians, he "kidnapped" 70,000 prime *Hevea brasiliensis* seeds gathered from the Amazonian forest, loaded them aboard a steamer, and smuggled them past Brazilian customs on the pretext that they were "rare plant samples for Queen Victoria." He nursed them on the

boat crossing the Atlantic and raced them by special chartered train to the greenhouses of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, England, where the seedlings sprouted a few weeks later. From there, they were shipped to Asia and were planted in the swampy soil of Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula. By 1912, the seedlings

had grown into disease-free rubber plantations, and by the time those trees began to produce latex, says one source, "Brazil's rubber boom [had gone] forever bust."



## Will God Stay My Friend?

KING DAVID was a man who enjoyed God's friendship. But at one point he said: "Distresses of my heart have multiplied." David was suffering not only because of mistreatment by others but also because of his own errors. He began to feel that even God had rejected him, and he prayed: "Turn your face to me, and show me favor; for I am solitary and afflicted."—Psalm 25:11, 16-19.

Perhaps you too are feeling distressed. Maybe at home or at school you are in a bad situation that is simply overwhelming. Then again, you may have serious health problems or find yourself discouraged be-

cause of some weakness that has confronted you. Whatever the case, you need not suffer alone; God generously offers his friendship and support.\* If you have already begun developing a relationship with him, you will be comforted to know that he does not abandon his friends when they are having a hard time. Even so, when you are assaulted by troubles, you may feel that God is distant. It may even seem to you that he is not helping you at all. But is that really the case?

### "A Thorn in the Flesh"

First of all, please read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. There the apostle Paul tells of how he suffered from something called "a thorn in the flesh." Likely, the "thorn" was some kind of physical infirmity, perhaps involving his eyesight. Whatever it was, it kept "slapping" him down emotionally. Despite three earnest petitions for God to remove it, the "thorn" remained.

Was Jehovah ignoring Paul's prayers? Not at all! God said to him: "My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you; for my power is being made perfect in weakness." Although Jehovah chose not to extract that "thorn," he did not desert Paul. By means of God's undeserved kindness, Paul enjoyed a close friendship with him. That was "sufficient" to help Paul cope with his infirmity. As Paul struggled to do so, he would also come to experience God's sustaining power in a new and personal way.

### Help in Coping With Difficulties

Like Paul, you may have some "thorn," or problem, that pricks you, causing pessimism and discouragement. As in Paul's case, God may very well allow the trouble to persist. That does not mean that he is no longer your Friend. God told the apostle Paul: "*My power is being made perfect in*

\* See the article "Young People Ask . . . Can I Really Be a Friend of God?" in our July 22, 1995, issue.

**Does God abandon his friends during times of adversity?**

weakness." If you rely on God's power and not on your own, you can endure. You may even find that with the help of God's spirit, you are able to accomplish things you never thought possible. Paul said: "I take pleasure in weaknesses . . . For when I am weak, then I am powerful."

A young woman named Robin\* found this to be true. At age 14 she lost her eyesight because of glaucoma. That same year her mother died suddenly. "I had only Jehovah now," says Robin about starting to deal with these painful "thorns." "I knew that if I was going to make it, I had to stick close to him." Robin did just that, eventually serving as a full-time evangelizer. She says: "I asked Jehovah to help me in everything. He really did."

Many youths have found that experiencing trials actually helps them draw closer to God. Consider young Jeff. His father walked out on his family, leaving Jeff's mother to care for seven children. "I felt the lack of a father keenly," admits Jeff, who was only 12 at the time. "I longed for someone to fill the void I felt every day." What did Jeff do? "I prayed to Jehovah to help me fill that need." Jeff worked in harmony with his prayers and became absorbed in spiritual activities. In time, he could sense Jehovah's hand of support—provided through his strengthening holy spirit and through the Christian congregation. (Compare Psalm 27:10.) Now at age 27 Jeff reflects: "I had no one to whom I could look for security, so I drew very close to Jehovah." He calls that close relationship



"a priceless blessing that came out of this trial."

**How to Obtain God's Help**

Your heavenly Friend will likewise help you through your difficulties. But what must you do? Well, for any friendship to thrive, there must be communication. Prayer is our way of communicating with God. Through it we let him know that we need his help. Prayer is of little value, though, if it is cold or mechanical. Like the youths cited above, you must "pour out your heart" to God! (Psalm 62:8) You may even need to offer supplications. (Philippians 4:6) Supplications are prayers that are especially intense and earnest.

Suppose that you have a problem controlling your thoughts or are having difficulty overcoming a bad habit. Supplicate Jehovah! Beg for his help during times of temptation. This may not always be easy. "When I feel a strong urge to do something wrong, I make myself pray," admitted Gary. "Sometimes I think, 'How can I approach Jehovah?' Yet, I still appeal to him for help. He gives me the

\* Some of the names have been changed.

strength I need in order to hold on." Even if it is difficult at first, keep opening your heart to God.

But what if it seems as if your prayers are not being answered? Lora, for example, was struggling to overcome the bad habit of masturbation. "I would talk to Jehovah about the problem honestly," she explains, "but I just couldn't seem to stop." Sometimes God may allow us to demonstrate how serious we are about our requests. (Compare Psalm 88:13, 14.) We must therefore persist in prayer! (Matthew 7:7; Romans 12:12) Lora did just that. At the same time, she began applying suggestions that appeared in material on the subject in Watch Tower Society publications.\* In time, she began seeing results. She recalls: "Every time I successfully resisted temptation, I would thank Jehovah because I knew he was with me." True, you may suffer some relapses as you struggle to gain the mastery over your problem. But as long as you are fighting and are not deliberately giving in to your weaknesses, God will be pleased by your 'earnest efforts' and will remain your Friend.—2 Peter 1:5.

### Working With God

Another way to avail yourself of God's help is to accept his invitation to be one of his "fellow workers." (1 Corinthians 3:9) This includes having a share in helping others learn about God. (Matthew 28:19, 20) When you feel distressed or discouraged, the idea of engaging in any kind of work may not seem appealing. However, "having plenty to do in the work of the Lord" can really help you. (1 Corinthians 15:58) At the very least, you will get your mind off your own problems. (Compare Proverbs 18:1.) Robin, quoted earlier, says of her times of difficulty: "The thing that kept me going was my work for Jehovah!"

\* See chapters 25 and 26 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

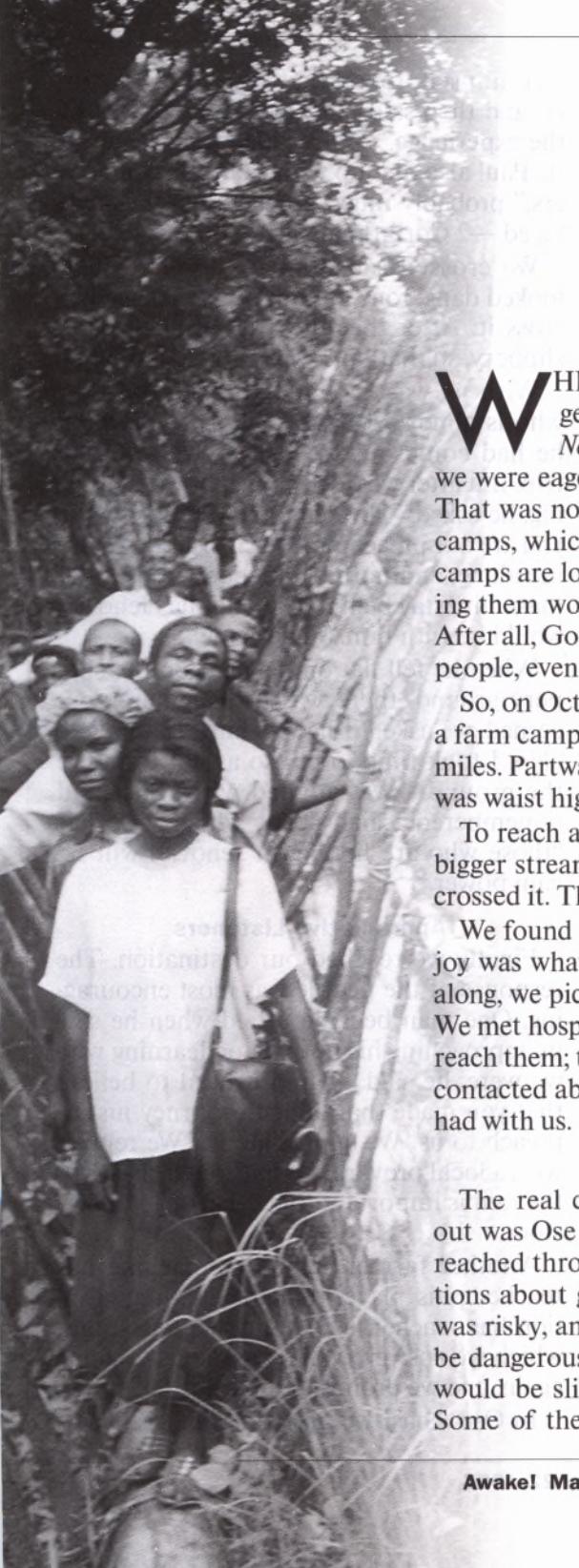
Working with God can also help you overcome any lingering feeling that God has abandoned you. When two people work together as a team for a common goal, do they not often draw closer as friends? As you engage in the preaching work, you constantly face challenges. You find yourself turning to God for help. And as God blesses your labors, his friendship becomes more real. You begin to realize the trust that God has placed in you as a coworker. This can be a real boost to your self-confidence.

Carol, for example, was very insecure. Her mother had committed suicide, and her abusive father constantly put her down. But at age 17 she became one of Jehovah's Witnesses and took up the work of preaching. Now after ten years as a full-time evangelizer, she says: "This work has helped me tremendously because I have seen Jehovah's blessing on me. I say to myself, 'If God loves me, I am not worthless.' Being used by Jehovah in declaring his name has made me more secure."

### Taste and See That Jehovah Is Good

"Out of all my frights [God] delivered me," wrote King David after a narrow escape from a life-threatening predicament. (Psalm 34:4, 6, superscription; 1 Samuel 21:10-12) David could thus say from experience: "Taste and see that Jehovah is good, O you people; happy is the able-bodied man that takes refuge in him."—Psalm 34:8.

Although your life may never be in danger as David's was, you are sure to experience, at times, some stresses and strains. When 'distresses multiply in your heart,' supplicate God. (Psalm 25:17) Do not fear that God will withdraw his friendship. As you patiently endure and experience firsthand Jehovah's support and care, you will "taste and see" for yourself "that Jehovah is good." And he will remain your Friend forever. —James 4:8.



# "What a Fowl Chases in the Rain..."

By Awake! correspondent in Nigeria

**W**HEN our small congregation in southern Nigeria received its supply of the tract *Kingdom News* No. 34, which was distributed worldwide, we were eager to take copies to all parts of our territory. That was not an easy task. Within our territory are farm camps, which grow cassava, yam, and other foods. These camps are located deep in the tropical rain forest. Reaching them would be difficult but by no means impossible. After all, God's will is that the good news reach all sorts of people, even farmers in the jungle.—1 Timothy 2:3, 4.

So, on October 16, 1995, 18 of us set out at 7:30 a.m. for a farm camp named Abomgbada, a distance of about two miles. Partway, we had to wade across a stream. The water was waist high.

To reach another camp the same day, we had to ford a bigger stream. This time, only four brothers and a sister crossed it. The rest of the group stayed behind.

We found many a listening ear that day. Adding to our joy was what we called our bush allowance. As we went along, we picked and ate some fruit that grew in the wild. We met hospitable farmers who appreciated our efforts to reach them; they gave us oranges to quench our thirst. We contacted about 250 people, distributing all the tracts we had with us.

## A Major Challenge

The real challenge came two days later. Seven miles out was Ose Anasi, a camp that has probably never been reached through organized preaching. Some had reservations about going there. The crossing of the Urasi River was risky, and many of us could not swim. Wading might be dangerous because of sharp tree stumps. Muddy areas would be slippery, and falling down could cause injury. Some of the handmade bridges were not strong. There

were snakes, crocodiles, and streams infested with leeches.

Sixteen of us decided to go anyway. We walked for about a mile before boarding a canoe to cross the swift and dangerous Uras-i River. To reach the canoe, we had to descend a steep hill. It was the rainy season, and the river was at flood stage. The entire area has clay soil; and in the rainy season, it is very slippery. When we got out of the canoe, we discovered that the footpath had become a stream that was three feet deep in some places. That was when our real troubles began.

We waded along this stream path for about 30 minutes. The ground was so slippery that many of us fell into the muddy water, drenching our Bibles, magazines, and tracts. We were in good spirits, so that when anyone fell, we would all have a good laugh, including the one who fell.

As we crossed one small stream, leeches attached themselves to our legs. One young sister on whose leg a leech fastened itself let out a tremendous shriek. She was still shouting after the leech had been removed. That too we took in good humor as part of the adventure, and we continued on our way.

At another stream crossing, one brother decided not to wade through as the others did but to leap across. He succeeded with the water but not with the mud. He slipped, then fell flat in the mud. He got up, exam-

ined himself, found that there was no injury, and then said: "No problem; it's part of the experience." We recalled that the apostle Paul also met up with "dangers from rivers," probably much greater than those we faced.—2 Corinthians 11:26.

We crossed a handmade bridge, which looked dangerous, but all of us managed to cross it. After that the area became more slippery, so that falls were more common.

With us was a regular pioneer brother who is almost 70 years old. That morning he had come out to wish us well on our trip. But after we prayed for Jehovah's blessing, he asked: "How can I stay behind while you are out preaching?" He insisted on coming along, and nothing anybody said would make him stay behind. He said that Jehovah would be with him. So he came.

When he fell flat on his back on the slippery ground, there was no laughter. Concerned, we asked if he was hurt. He replied: "No. I took time to fall so as not to injure the ground." We laughed with relief and remembered Isaiah 40:31, which says that "those who are hoping in Jehovah will regain power."

#### Appreciative Listeners

Finally we reached our destination. The response of the people was most encouraging. One man became afraid when he saw us approaching his hut, but on learning who we were, he said: "I find it hard to believe that you made that difficult journey just to preach to us. We appreciate it." We replied with a local proverb: "What a fowl chases in the rain is important to it." The man understood.

Another farmer said: "If preaching has reached this place, that means that salvation has reached us." Many had questions, which we answered. They asked us to come again, and we promised to do so.

In Ose Anasi we placed about 112 tracts

#### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**Sexuality—What  
Changing Attitudes Mean**

**Why Control Your Anger?**

**Singapore—Asia's Tarnished Jewel**



*Crossing a local bridge*



**We crossed many streams infested with leeches**



**At the bottom of this hazardous trail, we boarded a canoe to cross the Urasi River**

—all that we had. Altogether, we witnessed to about 220 people.

On our way back, we got lost. To retrace our steps to the camp would have taken an hour and a half, and night was fast approaching. We offered silent prayers to Jehovah and decided to go ahead, though that meant wading through a menacing stream that reached up to our hips.

After crossing, we found our way and discovered to our amazement that we were now four fifths of the way home. Our getting

lost had turned out to be a shortcut that reduced our journey by at least an hour! Of course, all of us were happy and thanked Jehovah. As the sun was setting, we arrived home—tired and hungry but very happy.

Later, as we talked of the experiences of the day, one sister said: "I have heard stories about the place, so I knew I was going to fall. If it were not for the good news, I would not have gone to this place, not for all the money in this world!" One brother exclaimed: "At last the good news has reached Ose Anasi!"

# Beekeeping

## A “Sweet” Story

By Awake! correspondent in Greece

THE dawn twilight hesitantly spreads its pastel illumination across the sky. Amid the early morning chill and mist, a pickup truck pulls quietly to the side of the road at the base of a mountain slope. Two shadowy figures emerge—clothed in gloves, boots, cotton overalls, and veiled, broad-rimmed hats. With careful but eager movements, they load scores of wooden boxes onto the truck. A couple of thieves making off with easy spoil? No, a couple of beekeepers taking good care of their army of precious bees—ready to hit the road, heading for another destination where there are nectar-producing plants.

Beekeepers are a special breed of people, who boast of an interactive relationship with a special kind of insect. On one hand, there is the hon-

eybee, perhaps the most economically valuable of all insects, which produces honey and beeswax and pollinates a great variety of crops. On the other hand, there are the people who eke out a living tending bees and who at the same time love these little creatures and “understand what makes them tick,” as one of them puts it.

### A Caretaker of “Everyday Miracles”

Becoming a beekeeper may sound easy: Obtain a number of hives full of bee colonies, put them at a nectar-producing location, and return after some months to harvest the products. But this is not so. To find out what is actually involved, we spoke with John and Maria, professional beekeepers, who gladly told us about their beloved occupation.

“Beekeeping is an exercise in everyday



miracles," John remarks as he leans over an open hive. "As yet, no one clearly understands the highly structured community life, the advanced communication skills, and the brilliant work habits of the honeybee."

Tracing the history of professional beekeeping, John mentions that in the past beekeepers harvested honey by destroying the colonies, which inhabited hollow trees and other cavities. In 1851, however, Lorenzo Lorraine Langstroth, an American apiarist, found out that bees leave spaces of about one fourth of an inch between wax combs. Thus, man-made wooden hives in which a similar space is left between comb frames could be used. Removing individual frames from a beehive and harvesting honey and wax without destroying the colony now became possible.

"For successful beekeeping," continues John, "you must have strong affection for your bee colonies. You are like a father to your bees, and I believe that they realize this and respond accordingly. You also become their doctor, their caretaker, their feeder during the difficult times of the winter."



Maria adds: "A good beekeeper can tell much from just a glance at a beehive, which usually contains between 8 thousand and 80 thousand bees. If you are experienced, when you open the hive, the mere sound of the buzzing will tell you if the colony is thriving, productive, and 'happy'; if it is hungry; if it is an 'orphan' because the queen bee has died; if it is agitated by something unpleasant; and much, much more."

### **Important Factors for Successful Beekeeping**

"A careful choice of the location where a beekeeper puts his hives is crucial," John explains. "We take pains to locate flowering pastures where the bees can find food.

"The beekeeper may follow orange and basswood blossoms in order to keep his colonies busy. During summer and autumn, an area full of pine and fir trees will help to produce good quality honey having a clear reddish color, which sells well in the market. Fields of wild thyme blossoms will make for the best kind of honey—the king of honey,

as apiarists call it. The bees also forage on white clover, yellow sweet clover, and alfalfa."



# From the Flower to Your Table



## Back in the hive, nectar is stored in the honeycomb

On entering the hive, the field bee regurgitates the contents of its honey sac into the mouth of a young worker bee. The worker bee then deposits the nectar in a cell and performs the tasks necessary to convert the nectar into honey



## Honey is packed in jars or individual portions

Labels on honey jars tell what plants were foraged by the bees. If the jar is transparent, you may be able to check the quality by the color of the honey



2



## The beekeeper harvests the honey

With a heated blade, he shaves away the wax that covers the cells within each frame. Then he puts the frames into an extractor, which will remove the honey by centrifugal force

4



## 5 Honey is good for your health!

Honey is easily assimilated by the body and quickly converted into energy. Reports show that it can be used for treating burns and various types of flesh wounds

## 1 The field honeybee visits a flower and collects nectar

As they visit flowers, the bees collect nectar in their honey sac, which is an enlargement of their esophagus. To fill this sac, the bee must make between 1,000 and 1,500 visits to individual florets

Common sense is paramount. Maria explains: "When we place the hives in a mountainous region, it is advantageous to put them near the base of the mountain. Bees can therefore fly uphill, visit the flower-laden trees, and then—loaded—fly an easier, descending path back to their hives. If the hives were far up the slope above the trees, this would exhaust the bees and adversely affect the colony's productivity."

"Every beekeeper understands the vital role played by the queen in the welfare and the productivity of a colony," says John as he gingerly holds up one of the hive frames with a young queen nestled at its center. "In hives that produce meager amounts of brood and honey, the queen has to be killed and replaced. Colonies with young queens make the most honey. Also, when we want to create new colonies, we take a healthy double hive teeming with bees and separate the top and bottom boxes. One half holds the queen, so we put a young, mated queen in the other half. By the time the flowers bloom, the new queen will be laying eggs, filling the hive with young worker bees."

How long does a bee live? We are told that the life span of the worker bee is inversely proportional to its industriousness. In summer, when a bee is foraging flowers for about 15 hours a day and flying at a speed of some 13 miles an hour, it lives only six weeks. Wintertime is less physically taxing for the bees, as they work only two to three hours a day, and thus they may manage to live several months.

#### Diverse Products

The first thing that comes to mind when we speak about beekeeping is, of course, honey. This sweet, viscous fluid is nectar converted by the worker bee. On an average, a commercial hive can produce 64 pounds a year. Beeswax is another precious by-

product of the bee's activity. A honeycomb is useful for about five to six years. By then, its color has darkened because of various microbes and parasites residing on it and it must be replaced. The discarded honeycombs are processed for their beeswax. Average commercial production is 20 to 40 pounds of beeswax for every ton of honey harvested.

Pollen—which is the principal source of proteins, vitamins, minerals, and fat for the development of queen, worker, and drone—is also praised by some people as a fine natural medicine for a number of physical ailments. A hive can give about ten pounds of it in one year. Propolis is a substance that bees use to insulate their hive and to encase any intruder that is too large to remove.

Directly or indirectly, the production of about one fourth of the food we consume depends upon the honeybee's ability to pollinate crops. Apples, almonds, watermelons, plums, pears, cucumbers, and different kinds of berries all depend on bees for pollination. So do various seed crops, including carrots, onions, and even sunflowers. Meat and dairy products are also affected by bees, which pollinate the alfalfa that becomes feed for livestock.

#### Instinctively Wise

"I think that most beekeepers do believe in God," says Maria, reminding us of our inability to explain the intricacies of the bees' social structure, their fascinating development of a complex community life, and their superb abilities in orientation and communication. Many people who study and take care of bees would readily ascribe all of this to the fact that bees are "instinctively wise," such instinct having been generously bestowed upon them by our Grand Creator, Jehovah God.—Compare Proverbs 30:24.

## WATCHING THE WORLD

### Cardinal Expounds on Pope's Remarks

Adding to Pope John Paul's statement that the theory of evolution was "more than just a hypothesis," New York's Cardinal O'Connor has proposed that Adam and Eve could have been "some other form," not man and woman. As reported in the New York *Daily News*, O'Connor said: 'the Catholic Church remains open to scientific inquiry, and that's true in the case of biological evolution.' In a sermon given at St. Patrick's Cathedral, the cardinal stated: "Is it possible that when the two persons that we speak of as Adam and Eve were created, it was in some other form, and God breathed life into them, breathed a soul into them—that's a scientific question." A headline in the conservative Italian newspaper *Il Giornale* said succinctly: "The Pope Says We May Descend From Monkeys."

### Advice for the Pope

Italian Catholic journalist Vittorio Messori believes that members of the hierarchy of the modern Catholic Church talk too much. He suggests that they 'rarefy and concentrate' their messages. In an interview reported by the Catholic news agency Adista, he said: "A quick calculation reveals that the church on all levels has produced more words in the past 20 years than in the preceding 20 centuries. The more one talks, the less one is listened to. I have proposed a seven-year sabbatical during which the church should keep quiet, from the assistant parish priest

to the Pope. . . All this proliferation of speeches and encyclical letters . . . I read them, but how many others do? We should make the sacrifice of going back to the custom of the popes of a few decades ago. They used to produce three encyclicals at the most."

### Thrills That Kill

Bungee jumping, free climbing, skydiving, base jumping—thrill sports—have become



the vogue in France. The Paris newspaper *Le Monde* asked several experts why thrill sports have become so popular in France. Alain Loret, director of the study center for sports innovation, said one reason is that traditional sports, with their required rules, discipline, and training, no longer correspond to the values of today's youths, who give more importance to freedom and fun than to the need for discipline. According to French sociologist David Le Breton, "the growing popularity of high-risk sports is a reflection of the crisis of moral values. Indeed, we no longer really know what we are living for. Our society does not tell us that life is worth living. Hence, thrill-seeking . . . can be understood to be a way to make life have sense." However, more and

more youths are risking their lives and losing them.

### Ancient Alexandria Revisited

First, archaeologists announced the discovery of the Pharos, a 2,200-year-old lighthouse, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, in the waters off Alexandria, Egypt. Now they say they have found "the ruins of the ancient court of Alexandria under about six metres [20 feet] of water on the eastern side of Alexandria's old harbor," states *The Vancouver Sun*. According to French marine archaeologist Franck Goddio, the site contains the ruins of Mark Antony's home and temple and those of Cleopatra's palace, including wine amphorae, granite columns, paved streets, and other remains of the ancient city. The researchers found "a beautiful harbor protected by a long pier that is still in good condition after 2,000 years, but it's under water," Goddio said. Alexandria was named after Alexander the Great, who on seeing the magnificent harbor in 332 B.C.E. determined that it would be the site for a city. It became a cultural and commercial center that rivaled Athens and Rome. The famous Alexandrian library was located there. But by the Middle Ages, most of the ancient city was gone, damaged by earthquakes and fires and swallowed by the sea.

### When Does the Millennium Start?

At midnight, December 31, 1999, many people around the globe will celebrate the start of a new millennium, and plans for lavish parties have already been made. But while it is "nat-

ural for a year with such a round number" to be celebrated, says a statement from the Royal Greenwich Observatory, in Cambridge, England, "accurately speaking, we will be celebrating the 2,000th year, or the last year of the millennium, not the start of the new millennium." The confusion arises from the transition from B.C.E. to C.E. determined by Bede, a seventh-century historian and theologian, who endeavored to date events according to the birth of Jesus. No zero year was included, so the time between the first day of 1 B.C.E. and the first day of 1 C.E. was only a year. Consequently, the first millennium started with the first day of 1 C.E. and ended with the last day of 1000 C.E. The second millennium then started on January 1, 1001. "It is thus clear that the start of the new millennium will be 1 January 2001," the researchers said. In any case, the celebrations will be based solely on the Gregorian calendar and not on the actual birth of Jesus, who is now known to have been born some time earlier.

#### Unenviable Record

"The United States has the highest rate of sexually transmitted diseases of any developed country in the world and no effective national system to combat the epidemic [says] a panel of health experts," as reported in *The New York Times*. According to a committee of the Institute of Medicine, a branch of the National Academy of Sciences, the dozens of sexually transmitted diseases carried by Americans are preventable yet continue to cause serious health problems, such as cancer, and thousands of deaths each year. After an 18-month

study, the 16-member committee found that for every \$43 spent on treatment and other costs, only \$1 was spent to prevent the diseases. Their report says that a quarter of the estimated 12 million new cases each year involve adolescents. Left untreated, the diseases—which include herpes, hepatitis B, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis—can cause infertility, birth defects, miscarriages, cancer, and death. Not counting the cost of sexually transmitted HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, these diseases cost the nation at least \$10 billion a year.

#### Seeking the Pure Antarctic

Despite summer temperatures of only 14 degrees Fahrenheit, the number of visitors to Antarctica has doubled in the past ten years. Ten thousand people booked vacations costing up to \$9,000 to view this



southernmost continent with its penguins, seals, and the wonders of five million square miles of frozen landscape. But these intrepid travelers are quick to point out the debris left behind by nations that have worked there—abandoned huts, fuel drums, trash, and even old computers, reports *The Independent* of London. Dr. Bernard Stonehouse, of the Scott Polar Institute, in Cambridge, England, who published the first travel guide to the area, says of these

polluters: "They quite simply haven't bothered to tidy up in the past, but now they are being made to bother. Tourists and visitors have been complaining that they haven't paid money to see a rubbish dump."

#### Lotteries Outdo Churches

Americans spend more on lotteries than they contribute to their churches, says the Associated Baptist Press. As reported in the *Christian Century*, a comparison of figures from a U.S. Census Bureau report with those from the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* shows that in 1994, Americans spent \$26.6 billion on state lotteries yet contributed only \$19.6 billion to their churches.

#### Not for Mosquitoes

Bug zappers, those electric devices hung outdoors that attract bugs at night and noisily electrocute them, do not work on mosquitoes. "These devices are essentially worthless," says George B. Craig, Jr., a professor of entomology. Most mosquitoes are not attracted to the light and when homing in on a meal, the females—who do the biting—are looking for ammonia, carbon dioxide, heat, and other skin excretions not given off by the bug zappers. Not finding these, they veer off. Besides, trying to kill mosquitoes with zappers is like "trying to clean out the sea with teaspoons," says Dr. Craig. A female mosquito can produce over 60,000 female descendants in just half a summer. A three-month study showed that on an average night, only 3 percent of the bugs killed by the zappers were female mosquitoes. Zappers, says Craig, "should be sold in the home-entertainment section, not gardening."

## FROM OUR READERS

**Computer Games** I am 15 years old, and I want to thank you for the article "Young People Ask . . . Should I Play Computer or Video Games?" (August 22, 1996) It really showed the dark side of those games, and it will help Christians weigh the positive and negative aspects of playing them.

F.R., Indonesia

I am 17 years old, and I used to love violent computer games. I thought they didn't affect me, but I became very addicted to these games—especially the violent type you described. Now I have destroyed all my computer disks that had to do with violence and blood. The result? I feel much better, and I have more time to spend studying, learning, and talking about Jehovah God.

S.A., Greece

**Virginity** Thank you for the brief but wonderful article entitled "Virginity—Why?" (August 22, 1996) In this day and age when people think you must be ugly to choose to be a virgin, it was a real encouragement to see young, beautiful people upholding Jehovah's standards. Thank you again!

R.D., United States

**American Indians** I want to express my appreciation for the series "American Indians—What Does Their Future Hold?" (September 8, 1996) I devoured the articles and will read them again. The part about the resurrection particularly moved me.

S.B., Italy

These articles moved me as no others have. They helped me realize that my view of Indians was discriminatory and not in line with divine principles. Since my school days, I have had the view that Indians were nothing more than vicious savages. The history books simply did not give us a clear view of the world around us. Your articles helped me see

the sad plight of the Native Americans—an other example of 'man dominating man to his injury.'—Ecclesiastes 8:9.

M.M., United States

As a descendant of Native Americans, I read your articles with great excitement. It brought tears to my eyes to read of the suffering endured by a people who have such a love for creation. How I long for the day when God will bring about a reversal of the injustices done to all mankind and we can share a paradise earth together.

N.S., United States

**Pompeii** I recently read and thoroughly enjoyed your article "Pompeii—Where Time Stood Still." (September 8, 1996) It was almost like being there! But I would appreciate clarification of one point. The article says that any who visit Pompeii "can still observe the mills for grinding corn." Correct me if I am mistaken, but is not corn a grain native to the American continent that was unknown to Europeans until the days of Christopher Columbus?

R.D., United States

*Sorry if we caused any confusion in this regard. It would have been better to have said that mills for grinding "grain" can be seen there. Interestingly, the English word for "corn" can simply mean "the seeds of a cereal grass," such as wheat or oats.—ED.*

Since childhood I have been fascinated by ancient history. The history of Pompeii in particular has always captivated me. When I read the article, I felt as if I were traveling through the city. Marvelous! I learned many details that were new to me. I also liked the comparison that was made with the time of the end in our day. Thank you for helping me get to know places that I cannot visit.

J.S.A., Brazil

# The Wisdom of Abstinence and Monogamy



TO DATE, nearly 30 million people have been infected with the AIDS virus and over 6 million have died. Some 8,500 new cases are diagnosed every day—1,400 of which are children, who usually die within the first year of life. So-called safe-sex campaigns have stirred up public attention, but some feel that this is not enough. "AIDS is a killer disease," writes Dr. Steven J. Sainsbury in *The Tampa Tribune*, "and any measures taken to prevent its transmission must be 100 percent effective."

Regarding the use of condoms as a means of preventing AIDS, Dr. Sainsbury comments: "Look at it this way. Suppose that, for unknown reasons, automobiles suddenly begin to explode every time someone turns the ignition. Motorists are getting blown up all over the country. Finally, the government comes out with a solution. Just put this additive in the fuel, they say, and the risk of explosion will go down 90 percent. Would you consider the problem solved? Would you still keep driving your car? I doubt it. Then why do we accept condoms as the solution for AIDS?"

Recognizing that AIDS is most often caused by sexual contact, Dr. Sainsbury offers a solution: "No sex until one is ready to commit to a monogamous relationship with an uninfected person. The key words are *abstinence* and *monogamy*."

The Bible commands sexual abstinence for single persons and monogamy for those who are married. The Bible's lofty standards forbid fornication, adultery, and homosexuality. (Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; 7:8, 9) Though many criticize this standard, saying it is out-of-date or old-fashioned, the Bible's morality has promoted health and peace of mind.—Isaiah 48:17.

Come and hear the public discourse

# “Faith and Your Future”



Can your future really be known? Is there something you can do to determine what it will be?

The public discourse, a feature of the “Faith in God’s Word” District Convention of Jehovah’s Witnesses, will show why there is genuine hope for a bright future. You may listen to the talk at a location near your home, since beginning this month it will be delivered at hundreds of conventions throughout the world.