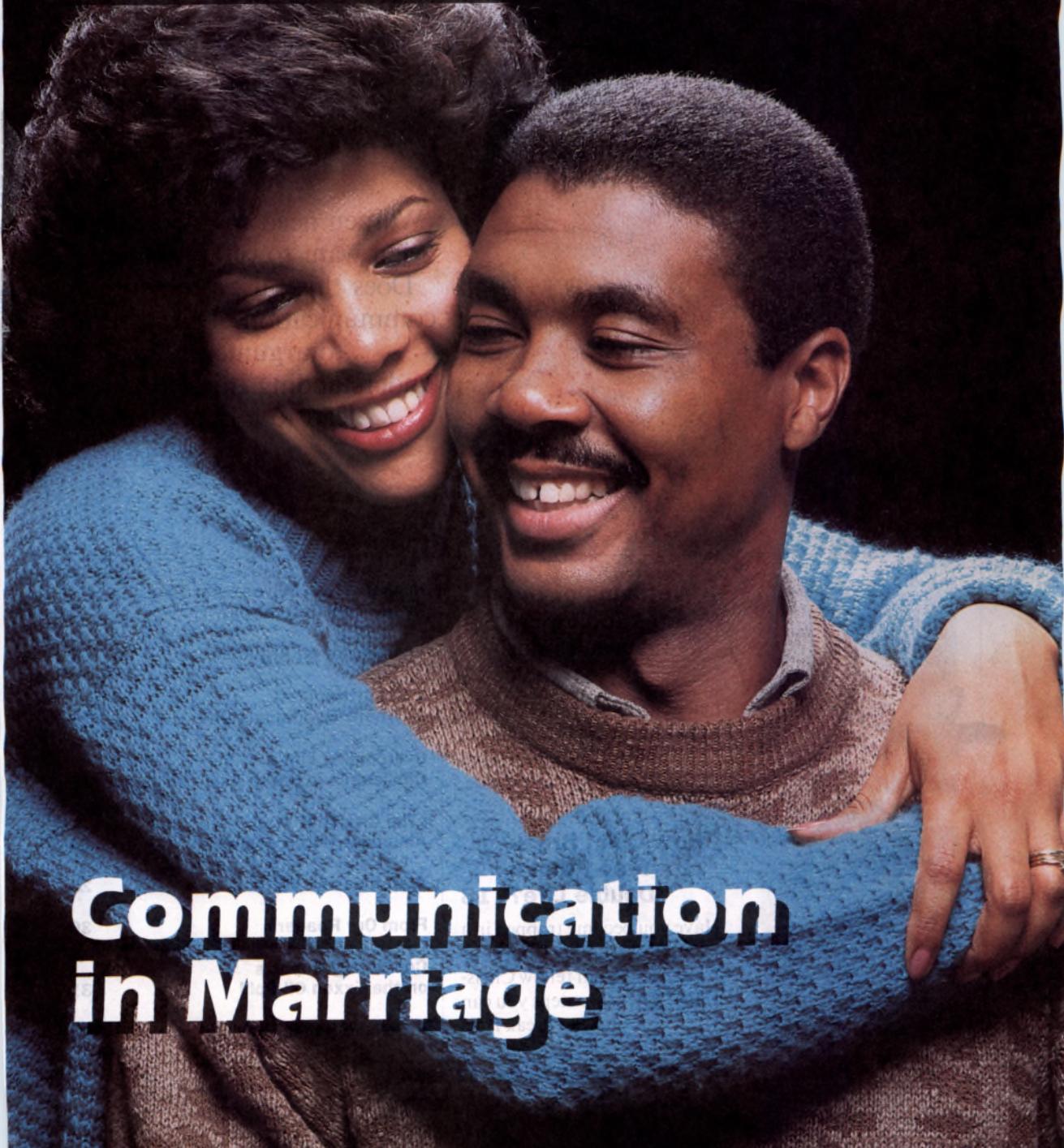


Awake!

January 22, 1994



Communication in Marriage



Communication in Marriage 3-12

Women need to air feelings. Men want to offer solutions. Does this raise problems in communication? Does it lead to arguments? Or can understanding this difference lead to a happy home?



Wetlands of the World—Ecological Treasures Under Attack 13

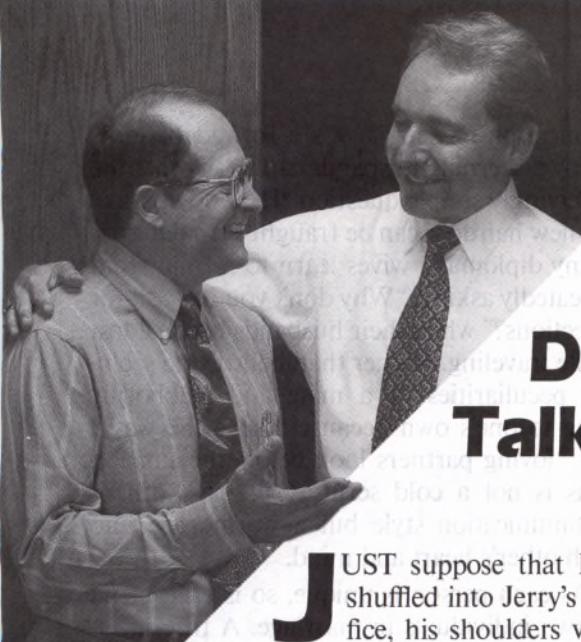
Their contributions to a healthy environment are manifold, yet they are being destroyed worldwide.



How Can I Break Free From a Double Life? 18

Have you become trapped in a double life, hiding from your parents and from fellow Christians? There are steps you can take to break free.

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Husbands and Wives

Do They Really Talk Differently?

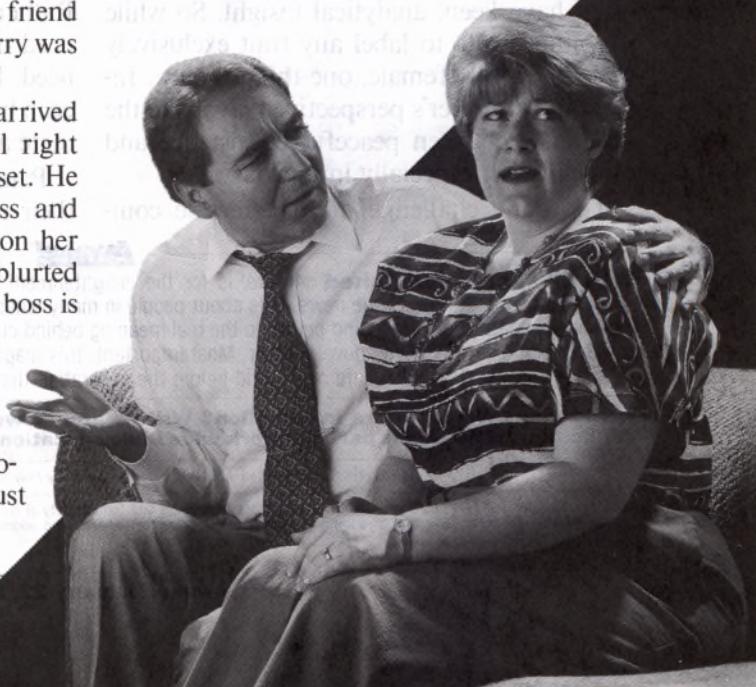
JUST suppose that Bill shuffled into Jerry's office, his shoulders visibly sagging under the weight of his worries. Jerry looked gently at his friend and waited for him to speak. "I don't know if I can close this deal," sighed Bill. "There are so many snags, and the head office is really pressuring me." "What are you worried about, Bill?" Jerry asked confidently. "You know you're the best man for the job, and they know it too. Just take your time. You think this is bad? Why, just last month . . ." Jerry recounted the humorous details of his own little fiasco and soon his friend left the office laughing and relieved. Jerry was happy to help.

And also suppose that when he arrived home that afternoon, Jerry could tell right away that his wife, Pam, was also upset. He greeted her with particular cheeriness and then waited for her to say what was on her mind. After a tense, stony silence, she blurted out: "I can't take it anymore! This new boss is a tyrant!" Jerry sat her down, put his arm around her, and said: "Honey, don't be so upset. Look, it's only a job. Bosses are like that. You should have heard the way mine ranted on today. If it's too much for you, though, just quit."

"You don't even care how I feel!" Pam shot back. "You never listen to me! I can't quit! You don't bring home enough money!" She ran off to the bedroom to have a good cry. Jerry stood outside the closed door in shock, wondering what had happened. Why were there such opposite reactions to Jerry's words of comfort?

A Gender Gap?

Some would attribute the difference in these illustrations to one simple fact: Bill is a



man; Pam is a woman. Linguistic researchers believe that communication difficulties in marriage are often because of gender. Such books as *You Just Don't Understand* and *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus* promote the theory that men and women, though speaking the same language, have distinctly different communication styles.

Unquestionably, when Jehovah created woman from man, she wasn't just a slightly revised model. Man and woman were exquisitely and thoughtfully designed to complement each other—physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually. Add to these innate differences the complexities of individual upbringing and life experience and the molding of people by culture, environment, and society's view of what is manly or womanly. Because of these influences, it may be possible to isolate certain patterns in the way males and females communicate. But the elusive "typical man" or "typical woman" may exist only in the pages of psychology books.

Women are typically noted for their sensitivity, yet many men are wonderfully tender in their dealings with people. Logical thinking may be attributed more to men, yet women often have keen, analytical insight. So while it is impossible to label any trait exclusively male or strictly female, one thing is sure: Insight into another's perspective may make the difference between peaceful coexistence and outright war, especially in marriage.

The daily challenge of male-female com-

munication in marriage is a formidable one. Many discerning husbands can testify that the deceptively simple question "How do you like my new hairdo?" can be fraught with dangers. Many diplomatic wives learn to refrain from repeatedly asking, "Why don't you just ask for directions?" when their husbands become lost while traveling. Rather than belittle the seeming peculiarities of a mate and stubbornly cling to one's own because "that's the way I am," loving partners look below the surface. This is not a cold scrutiny of each other's communication style but a warm gaze into each other's heart and mind.

As each person is unique, so is each blend of two individuals in marriage. A true meeting of minds and hearts is no accident but requires hard work because of our imperfect human nature. For instance, it is so easy to assume that others view things the same as we do. We often fill the needs of others the way we would want them filled for us, perhaps trying to follow the Golden Rule, "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matthew 7:12) However, Jesus did not mean that what *you* want should be good enough for others. Rather, you wish others would give what *you* need or want. So you should give what *they* need. Especially is this vital in marriage, for each has vowed to meet the needs of his or her mate as fully as possible.

Pam and Jerry have taken such a vow. And their marital union of two years has been a

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happy one. However, even though they feel they know each other quite well, situations sometimes erupt that reveal a yawning communication gap that good intentions alone cannot bridge. "The heart of the wise one causes his mouth to show insight," says Proverbs 16:23. Yes, insight in communication is the needed key. Let's see what doors it unlocks for Jerry and Pam.

One Man's View

Jerry navigates in a competitive world where each man must assume his place in a social order, whether a subordinate or a superior in a given situation. Communication serves to establish his position, competence, expertise, or worth. His independence is precious to him. So when given orders in a demanding way, Jerry finds himself resistant. The subtle message "You're not doing your job" makes him rebel, even if the request is a logical one.

Jerry converses basically to exchange information. He likes to talk about facts, ideas, and new things he has learned.

When listening, Jerry seldom interrupts the speaker, even with little responses, such as "uh-huh, yeah," because he is absorbing information. But if he disagrees, he may not hesitate to say so, especially with a friend. It shows that he is interested in what his friend has to say, exploring all the possibilities.

If Jerry has a problem, he prefers to work out a solution on his own. So he may with-

draw from everyone and everything else. Or he may seek to relax with some diversion to forget his dilemma temporarily. He will discuss it only if he is seeking advice.

If a man comes to Jerry with a problem as Bill did, Jerry realizes that it's his job to help, taking care not to make his friend feel incompetent. He'll usually share some troubles of his own along with the advice so that his friend won't feel alone.

Jerry likes to share activities with friends. Companionship to him means doing things together.

Home is for Jerry a refuge from the arena, a place where he no longer has to talk to prove himself, where he is accepted, trusted, loved, and appreciated. Even so, Jerry occasionally finds that he needs solitude. It may have nothing to do with Pam or anything she's done. He just needs some time alone. Jerry finds it difficult to reveal his fears, insecurities, and pains to his wife. He doesn't want her to worry. His job is to care for and protect her, and he needs Pam to trust him to do so. While Jerry wants support, he doesn't want pity. It makes him feel incompetent or useless.

One Woman's Perspective

Pam sees herself as an individual in a world of social connections with others. To her it is important to establish and strengthen the bonds of these relationships. Talk is an important way to create and confirm closeness.

Dependence comes naturally to Pam. She

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feels loved if Jerry finds out her views before making a decision, though she wants him to take the lead. When she has to make a decision, she likes to consult her husband, not necessarily so that he will tell her what to do, but to show her closeness to and reliance on him.

It's very hard for Pam to come right out and say she needs something. She doesn't want to nag Jerry or make him feel that she is unhappy. Instead, she waits to be noticed or drops hints.

When Pam converses, she is intrigued by minute details and asks many questions. This is natural because of her sensitivity to and intense interest in people and relationships.

When Pam listens, she punctuates the speaker's words with interjections, nods, or queries to show that she is following the speaker and cares about what he or she has to say.

She works hard to know intuitively what people need. Offering help without being asked is a wonderful way to show love. She especially wants to help her husband to grow and improve.

When Pam has a problem, she may feel overwhelmed. She must talk, not so much to seek a solution, but to express her feelings. She needs to know that someone understands and cares. When her emotions are excited, Pam makes sweeping, dramatic statements. She doesn't mean it literally when she says: "You never listen!"

Pam's best childhood friend was not one that she did things with but one that she talked about everything with. So in marriage she is not nearly as interested in outside activities as she is in an empathetic listener with whom she may share her feelings.

Home is a place where Pam can talk without being judged. She doesn't hesitate to reveal her fears and troubles to Jerry. If in need

of help, she is not ashamed to admit it, for she trusts that her husband is there for her and cares enough to listen.

Pam usually feels loved and secure in her marriage. But occasionally, for no apparent reason, she begins feeling insecure and unloved and urgently needs reassurance and companionship.

Yes, Jerry and Pam, complements of each other, are quite different. The differences between them create the potential for grave misunderstandings, even though both may have the best of intentions to be loving and supportive. If we could hear each one's perspective on the above situation, what would they say?

What They Saw Through Their Own Eyes

"The minute I walked through the door, I could see that Pam was upset," Jerry would say. "I assumed that when she was ready, she would tell me why. The problem didn't seem so major to me. I thought if I just helped her to see that she didn't need to be so upset and that the solution was easy, she'd feel better. It really hurt, after I listened to her, when she said, 'You never listen to me!' I felt as if she were blaming me for all her frustration."

"The whole day had been one big disaster," Pam would explain. "I knew it wasn't Jerry's fault. But when he came in all cheery, I felt he was ignoring the fact that I was upset. Why didn't he ask me what was wrong? When I told him the problem, he basically said I was being silly, that the whole thing was petty. Instead of saying he understood how I felt, Jerry, the repairman, told me how to fix the problem. I didn't want solutions, I wanted sympathy!"

Despite the appearances of this temporary breach, Jerry and Pam love each other very much. What insights will help them express that love clearly?

Seeing Through Each Other's Eyes

Jerry felt that it would be intrusive to ask Pam what was wrong, so he naturally did for her what he would want others to do for him. He waited for her to open up and speak. Now Pam was upset not just over the problem but over the fact that Jerry seemed to ignore her plea for his support. She didn't see his silence as a gesture of gentle respect—she saw it as uncaring. When Pam finally spoke, Jerry listened without interrupting. But she felt he wasn't really hearing her feelings. Then he offered, not empathy, but a solution. This said to her: 'Your feelings are invalid; you're over-reacting. See how easy it is to solve this little problem?'

How different things would have been if each had been able to see things from the other's viewpoint! It might have gone like this:

Jerry comes home to find Pam upset. "What's wrong, dear?" he asks gently. Tears start to flow, and words just tumble out. Pam doesn't say, "It's all your fault!" or imply that Jerry isn't doing enough. Jerry holds her close and listens patiently. When she is finished, he says: "I'm sorry you're feeling bad. I can see why you're so upset." Pam replies: "Thanks so much for listening. I feel much better knowing you understand."

Sadly, instead of solving their differences, many couples simply choose to end their marriage in divorce. Lack of communication is the villain that devastates many homes. Arguments explode that shake the very foundations of the marriage. How does it happen? The next article tells how it happens and how to avoid it.

Anatomy of an Argument

SHE needs to air feelings. He wants to give solutions. The millions of marital arguments down through time may have had many different tunes, but they have often been variations on a few basic themes. Understanding your mate's different perspective or communication style may help reduce these blazing forest fires to glowing charcoal in the hearth of a happy home.

"Don't Run My Life!"

The stereotype of the domineering, nagging wife may hit home with many a husband who finds himself hemmed in at every turn with advice, requests, and criticisms. The Bible ac-

knowledges such feelings, saying: "The contentions of a wife are as a leaking roof that drives one away." (Proverbs 19:13) A wife may make a request that her husband silently resists for reasons unknown to her. Thinking he didn't hear, this time she tells him what to do. His resistance stiffens. A nagging wife and hen-pecked husband? Or two people who simply haven't communicated clearly?

From a wife's perspective, she best expresses her love for her husband when she offers helpful advice. In her husband's view, she is ordering him around and implying that he is incompetent. "Don't forget your briefcase"

is for her a statement of caring, making sure he has what he needs. It reminds him of his mother calling out the door after him, "Did you take your mittens?"

A weary wife may gently say, "Do you want to eat out tonight?" really meaning, "Won't you take me out to dinner? I'm too tired to cook." But her devoted husband may seize the moment to praise her cooking and swear that he prefers it to any other. Or he may feel, 'She's trying to manipulate me!' Meanwhile, a wife may resentfully say to herself, 'Why should I have to ask?'

"You Don't Love Me!"

"How can she think that?" exclaims a frustrated, perplexed husband. "I work, pay the bills, even bring her flowers sometimes!"

While all humans need to feel loved, a woman has a special need to be repeatedly reassured of this. She may not say so aloud, but inside she may feel like an unwanted burden, especially if her monthly cycle is dealing her a dose of the blues. On such occasions her husband may withdraw, thinking she wants some time to herself. She may interpret his lack of closeness as a confirmation of her worst fear—he doesn't love her anymore. She might lash out, seeking to force him to love and support her.

"What's Wrong, Honey?"

A man's response to a stressful problem may be to seek a quiet place to ponder over it. A woman may intuitively sense some tension and instinctively react by trying to pull him out of his self-dug hole. However well-meaning these efforts are, a husband may find them intrusive and humiliating. As he retreats to consider his problem, he glances over his shoulder to see his loyal wife trotting behind in hot pursuit. He hears that persistent loving voice: "Honey, are you all right? What's wrong? Let's talk about it."

If there is no reply, a wife may feel hurt.

When she has a problem, she wants to talk it out with him. But the man she loves doesn't want to share his feelings. "He must not love me anymore" may be her conclusion. So when the unsuspecting man finally emerges from his inner world, content with the solution he has found, he also finds, not the concerned loving mate he left behind, but a riled wife ready to challenge him for leaving her out in the cold.

"You Never Listen to Me!"

The charge seems ludicrous. It seems to him that all he ever does is listen. But as his wife talks, she has the distinct feeling that her words are being screened and analyzed by a computer solving a math problem. Her suspicions are confirmed when, right in the middle of a sentence, he says: "Well, why don't you just . . . ?"

When a wife comes to her husband with a problem, very often she is neither laying the blame on him nor looking for a solution from him. What she wants most is a sympathetic ear that will hear, not just the cold facts, but *her feelings* about it. Then she wants, not advice, but validation of her feelings. That's why many a well-meaning husband has triggered an explosion when all he said was: "Sweetheart, you shouldn't feel that way. It's not that bad."

Oftentimes, people expect their mates to be mind readers. "We've been married for 25 years," said one man. "If she doesn't know what I want by now, she must not care or is not paying attention." One author states in his book on the marriage relationship: "When partners don't tell each other what they want and constantly criticize each other for missing the boat, it's no wonder that the spirit of love and cooperation disappears. In its place comes . . . the power struggle, in which each partner tries to force the other to meet his or her needs."

"You're So Irresponsible!"

A wife may not say so outright to her husband, but she can imply it just as clearly in her tone of voice. "Why are you so late?" could be seen as a request for information. More likely, though, her accusing look and hand on hip says to her husband: "You irresponsible little boy, you had me worried. Why didn't you call? You're so inconsiderate! Now dinner is ruined!"

She is right, of course, about dinner. But if an argument erupts, is their relationship at risk as well? "Most arguments occur not because two people disagree, but because either the man feels that the woman disapproves of his point of view or the woman disapproves of the way he is talking to her," notes Dr. John Gray.

Some are of the opinion that at home one should be free to let the words fly unrestrained. But a good communicator seeks to work out an accord and achieve peace, considering the listener's feelings. We might roughly compare such talk to serving your spouse a glass of ice water as opposed to splash-

ing it in his or her face. We could say the difference is all in the delivery.

Applying the words of Colossians 3:12-14 will dissipate arguments and usher in a happy home: "Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering. Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also. But, besides all these things, clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union."

***He is defending the facts,
she is defending the feelings***



A Happy Home Where Two Equals One

If YOU were to build a strong, secure, comfortable home, what materials would you use? Wood? Brick? Stone? Here is what the Bible book of Proverbs recommends: "By wisdom a household will be built up, and by discernment it will prove firmly established. And by knowledge will the interior rooms be filled with all precious and pleasant things of value." (Proverbs 24:3, 4) Yes, it takes wisdom, discernment, and knowledge to build a happy home.

Who does the building? "The truly wise woman has built up her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands." (Proverbs 14:1) The same is true for the wise man who sees that it is within his hands to make his marriage strong and happy or weak and miserable. What factors make the difference? How interesting that the suggestions of some modern marriage counselors so closely parallel the timeless wisdom of God's Word, written thousands of years ago.

Listening: "Really listening is one of the greatest compliments you can

pay to another person and is crucial in building and maintaining an intimate relationship," says a marriage handbook. "The ear of wise ones seeks to find knowledge," states the Proverb. (Proverbs 18:15) Since open ears are not visible like open eyes or an open mouth, how can you show your mate you are truly listening? One way is by mirroring, or active listening.—See box on page 11.



Really listening is one of the greatest compliments you can pay to another person

Openness and intimacy: "Our culture works against openness," notes the book *One to One—Understanding Personal Relationships*. "We are taught from an early age to mind our own business—to be secretive about money, ideas, feelings, . . . anything personal. This lesson does not simply go away, even when we 'fall in love.' Unless a continuing struggle for openness takes place, intimacy cannot flourish." "There is a frustrating of plans where there is no confidential talk," observes Proverbs, "but with those consulting together there is wisdom."—Proverbs 13:10; 15:22.

Loyalty and trust: Husband and wife vow before God to be loyal. When marriage partners trust that each is loyally committed to the other, love is unencumbered by suspicion, pride, spirit of competition, preoccupation with getting one's fair share.

Sharing: A relationship deepens with

"Pay Attention to How You Listen."—Luke 8:18

Active listening is a method of ensuring that speaker and listener truly understand each other. It is sometimes called mirroring, since the listener attempts to reflect the words he hears and the meaning he perceives. These are the basic steps:

1. Pay careful attention; listen for important messages.
2. Listen for feelings underlying the words.
3. Repeat to the speaker what you hear. Don't judge, criticize, or dispute. Just let the person know you have correctly received the message. Acknowledge the feelings.
4. The speaker will probably either confirm or correct what you say and may perhaps expand on the subject further.
5. If your understanding is inaccurate, try again.

Active listening is especially effective in reducing the sting of criticism. Accept the fact that criticism is often based on some truth. It might be delivered in a painful way, but instead of defensively heaving the pain back on the critic, why not use active listening to defuse the situation? Acknowledge that you understand whatever upset feelings you may be held responsible for, and see how the matter can be rectified.

shared experiences. In time a couple can weave a priceless tapestry of history that each cherishes. To consider tearing apart that bond of friendship is the furthest thing from their minds. "There exists a friend sticking closer than a brother."—Proverbs 18:24.

Kindness and tenderness: Kind acts reduce life's frictions and dilute pride. Patterns of kindness, if ingrained, remain intact even if emotions run high during disagreements, thus minimizing damage. Tenderness creates a warm climate in which love can grow. Though gentleness may be especially difficult for a man to express, the Bible says: "The desirable thing in earthling man is his loving-kindness." (Proverbs 19:22) As for a good wife, "the law of loving-kindness is upon her tongue."—Proverbs 31:26.

Humility: An antidote for the poison of pride, humility prompts ready apologies and frequent expressions of thanks. What if you are truly innocent of a stated offense? Why not gently say, "I'm sorry you're so upset"? Manifest concern for your mate's sensitivities, then together see how to correct the wrong. "It is a glory for a man to desist from disputing."—Proverbs 20:3.

Respect: "The key word in recognizing each other's differences and working them out together is respect. What is important to one spouse may not be equally important to the other. Nevertheless, each spouse can always respect

the other's views." (*Keeping Your Family Together When the World Is Falling Apart*) "By presumptuousness one only causes a struggle, but with those consulting together there is wisdom."—Proverbs 13:10.

Humor: The darkest clouds of crisis may dissipate with a good laugh together. It ripples across the bonds of love and relieves the tension that often cripples clear thinking. "A joyful heart has a good effect on the countenance."—Proverbs 15:13.

Giving: Launch a happy hunt for things to appreciate about your mate and give compliments generously. These coveted items may bring a greater heart response than a silk tie or a bouquet of flowers. Of course, you can still buy or do nice things for each other. But "the greatest gifts you can give," says the book *Lifeskills for Adult Children*, "can't be put in a box. They are your expressions of love and appreciation, your encouragement, and your assistance." "As apples of gold in silver carvings is a word spoken at the right time for it."—Proverbs 25:11.

If these qualities could be compared to building blocks of the marital relationship, then communication is the mortar needed to

cement them together. So, what can couples do when disagreements arise? "Instead of seeing your partner's differing views as a source of conflict, . . . find them a source of knowledge. . . . The details of everyday life become a gold mine of information," says the book *Getting the Love You Want*.

See every occasion of disagreement, then, not as a call to arms, but as a precious opportunity to gain insight into this one you love. Together accept the challenge to work out the difference and sail into the peaceful harbors of harmony, thus strengthening the bonds, deepening the love that makes the two of you one.

Jehovah God sees great beauty in cooperation and so built it into his creation—in the give-and-take oxygen cycle of plants and animals, the orbits of heavenly bodies, the symbiotic relationships between insects and flowers. So, too, in the marital union, there can exist a warm cycle in which a husband, in word and in deed, reassures his wife of his love and a trusting, loving wife contentedly follows his lead. Thus, the two really do become one, bringing joy to each other and to the Originator of marriage, Jehovah God.

"If Anyone Has a Cause for Complaint." —Colossians 3:13

When you have a complaint, how can you best deliver it without starting a war? First, give your mate credit for being well-intentioned. You might feel he or she was inconsiderate, thoughtless, brash, unwise—but overall it is likely that no harm was meant. Calmly state your feelings without accusation: "When you did this, then I felt . . ." No fuel for dispute here. It simply states how you feel and does not accuse your mate. Since the person may never have intended to upset you at all, the reaction may be denial or self-justification. Focus on the problem, though, and be ready to propose a solution.

WETLANDS OF THE WORLD

Ecological Treasures Under Attack

THE Indians called it the Father of Waters. Geographers call it the Mississippi. Whatever you call it, it took its revenge on those who had squeezed it tight in a corset of dikes and levees, robbing it of its wetlands. Swollen by weeks of heavy rains, the river burst through the estimated 75 million sandbags that had been piled up against it and breached 800 of the 1,400 levees that had sought in vain to hold it in. The torrential floodwaters swept along houses, roads, bridges, and sections of railroad tracks and left many towns under water. "Probably the worst ever to wash over the United States," *The New York Times*, August 10, 1993, reported.

The *Times* summarized some of the damage: "In its two-month rampage, the great Midwest flood of 1993 cut an awesome destructive swath. It took 50 lives, left almost 70,000 people homeless, inundated an area twice the size of New Jersey, caused an estimated \$12 billion in property and agricultural damage and stirred anew a debate over the nation's flood-control system and its policies."

Leaving intact the natural flood-control system of wetlands bordering the banks of the Mississippi would have saved 50 lives and 12 billion dollars. When will people learn that cooperating with nature is better than trying to subdue it? Wetlands adjoining a river serve as floodplains that draw off and store the excess water of rivers swollen by prolonged heavy rains.

But serving as natural flood-control mechanisms is only one of the many marvelous services rendered by the earth's more than 3,300,000 square miles of wetlands—which are currently under destructive attack worldwide.

Wetlands, Nurseries of the World

From the vast salt marshes of the coast to the small freshwater swamps, marshes, bogs, and fens inland, to the prairie potholes of the United States and Canada, the primary architect of wetlands is water. Wetlands are areas where the land is covered with water year round or covered only in time of flooding. Another type is coastal, or tidal, wetlands. Since most wetlands are characterized by a prolific growth of vegetation—grasses, sedges, bulrushes, trees, and shrubs—they support a variety of plant, fish, fowl, and animal life throughout the world.

A number of shorebirds and waterfowl make their homes in wetlands. More than a hundred species of them depend on these shallow oases during their spring migration. Many wetlands are nurseries for an immense population of geese and ducks—mallard, teal, and canvasback. These areas also provide food and shelter for such animals as alligator, beaver, muskrat, mink, and moose. Other animals, including bear, deer, and raccoon, use wetlands. They serve as spawning and nursery grounds for most of the fish that support America's three-billion-dollar commercial

fishing industry. It is estimated that 200 kinds of fish and large quantities of shellfish depend on wetlands for all or part of their life cycles.

In addition to being exceptional nurseries of life, wetlands have many ecological virtues. They are natural filters for removing waste and pollutants from rivers and streams and for purifying underground aquifers. They store water during rainy and flooding seasons and later release it slowly into streams, rivers, and aquifers. Tidal wetlands protect shorelines from erosion by waves.

Because of the very nature of their often prolific plant life, wetlands perform significant, essential functions. In the process of photosynthesis, for example, all green vegetation absorbs carbon dioxide from the air and returns oxygen to it. This is necessary for sustaining life. Plants in wetlands, however, are unique in that they are especially efficient in this process.

For centuries many countries have recognized the inestimable value of wetland management for food production. China and India, for example, lead the world in rice production, with other countries of Asia not far behind. Grown in wetlands called paddies, rice is one of the world's most important food crops. About half the world's population eat rice as their chief food. The United States and Canada began in time to realize the importance of wetlands and bogs for their production of rice and cranberries.

Wildlife too share in the feast provided by the wetlands. Not only are seeds and insects in abundance for the birds but they also feed the fish and crustaceans that spawn and grow to maturity in the wetlands. Ducks, geese, and other waterfowl in turn feed on these underwater creatures swimming in abundance in these oases of life. The current ecology balances matters to some extent by serving up a variety of fowl to the four-footed creatures

who may wander into the wetlands looking for a meal. In the wetlands there is something for everything. They are truly nurseries of the world.

The Race to Destroy Wetlands

In the United States, the man who became its first president opened the floodgates of mass destruction of wetlands when in 1763 he formed a company to drain 40,000 acres of the Dismal Swamp—a wild marshland, a haven for wildlife—on the Virginia-North Carolina border. Ever since then, America's wetlands have been viewed as a nuisance, a roadblock to development, a source of sickness and disease, a hostile environment to be conquered and destroyed at any cost. Farmers were encouraged to drain wetlands and use them for cultivated land and were compensated for doing so. Highways were built where wetlands teeming with exotic life once were. Many became sites for urban development and shopping centers or were used as convenient shallow depressions for dumping garbage.

In the last few decades of this century, the United States has been destroying its wetlands at the rate of 500,000 acres a year. Today, only about 90 million acres remain. Consider, for example, the pothole region of North America. In a 300,000-square-mile arc of land that stretches from Alberta, Canada, to Iowa in the United States, thousands of prairie wetlands were the breeding grounds for millions upon millions of ducks. It is said that in flight they would darken the sky like dense clouds. Today their numbers have dwindled alarmingly.

The long-range problem, however, is this: When the wetlands are destroyed, the feeding grounds are gone. Without adequate food, ducks lay fewer eggs, and the hatching rate of those that are laid is notably affected. As their habitats are destroyed, more ducks flock to

Wetlands in Switzerland

the few that remain, thus becoming easier prey for foxes, coyotes, skunks, raccoon, and other animals who dine on them.

In the United States, 50 percent of the pothole region's wetlands have disappeared. Canada trails by less than 10 percent, but her destructive attacks are growing. Parts of North Dakota in the United States were 90 percent dry, *Sports Illustrated* magazine reported. Many farmers view wetlands as unproductive and a nuisance that gets in the way of their farm equipment, ignorant of their ecological value.

The hue and cry, however, to save the wetland habitat of wildlife is today being sounded loud and clear by concerned individuals and wildlife organizations. "The potholes are absolutely crucial," said one concerned official. "If we're going to harbour any long-term hope for ducks, we must preserve the wetlands." "Waterfowl are a barometer of the ecological health of the continent," said an official of the conservation organization Ducks Unlimited. The magazine *U.S. News & World Report* adds its voice: "[The ducks'] dwindling numbers reflect assaults on the environment on many different fronts: Acid rain, pesticides, but most of all, the destruction of millions of acres of priceless wetlands."

"Ninety percent of California's coastal salt marshes have been destroyed," reported the magazine *California*, "and every year 18,000 more acres disappear. The tule elk survive only in a few scattered places. The ducks and geese return in smaller numbers each year to their ever-shrinking wintering grounds. Many wetland species are close to extinction." In si-



lence these whose lives depend on the world's wetlands for survival cry out for help.

The Water Crisis

A terrible thing has happened on man's way to destroying earth's wetlands. He has affected his most valuable and critical resource—water. Water is essential for every living thing. Many of the world's scientists have predicted a time when pure water will be earth's scarcest resource. "Either we manage to limit the waste of water or by the year 2000 we shall be dying of thirst," proclaimed the UN World Conference on water in 1977.

With these ominous warnings of the potential shortage of this valuable resource, conventional wisdom should dictate a respectful management of earth's waters. In man's race to destroy wetlands, however, he has seriously jeopardized this most necessary resource. Wetlands help in the purification of surface water—rivers and streams. Some aquifers are no longer being recharged with pure water but are now contaminated with waste and pollutants, all to man's detriment. Water that was once there in multitudes of wetlands has been drained, adding to the shortage.

Will responsible men hear the frantic cries for help of wetlands-dependent life? Will

action be taken to save such life before it is too late? Or will men remain deaf to these cries, with ears open only to the wails of the greedy?

The Attack Is Worldwide

At the opening of a worldwide campaign promoted by the United Nations to save wetlands, threats to Brazil's Pantanal ecosystem were cited. It is one of the world's largest wetlands. The magazine *BioScience* stated: "The Pantanal, with its extraordinary diversity and abundance of wildlife, is a threatened region. Deforestation; expanding agriculture; illegal hunting and fishing; and pollution of the water with herbicides, pesticides, and by-products of fuel alcohol production have caused a progressive deterioration of the natural environment, placing at risk one of Brazil's most important ecosystems."

The New York Times pointed out the threat to the wetlands along the coast of the Mediterranean. "The loss of wetlands has quickened in the last three decades as the Mediterranean coasts have become more coveted than ever and large stretches of coastline have been covered with concrete in the name of sun worship, comfort and profits. United Nations studies cite major losses in Italy, Egypt, Turkey and Greece."

The wetlands of Spain's fabulous 125,000-acre Doñana National Park become an avian airport in spring as hundreds of thousands of birds en route from Africa to Europe stop off at its swamps and woodlands to nest and breed and feed. But the rash of hotels, golf courses, and farmlands surrounding the park are siphoning off so much of the water that the park's survival is threatened. In the past 15 years, such projects have already pumped so much water that the water table has dropped 6 to 30 feet, and several lagoons have dried up. "Any more growth here," the park's research director says, "will be the death sentence for Doñana."



State of the World 1992 reports: "Mangroves, one of the most threatened and valuable types of wetlands, have suffered heavy losses in Asia, Latin America, and west Africa. Nearly half of these protective swamp forests in Ecuador, for example, have been cleared, mostly for shrimp ponds, and plans call for the conversion of a like proportion of the remaining areas. India, Pakistan, and Thailand have all lost at least three fourths of their mangroves. Indonesia seems determined to follow suit: in Kalimantan, its largest province, 95 percent of all mangroves are to be cleared for pulpwood production."

The value of mangroves is highlighted in Thailand's *Bangkok Post* of August 25, 1992: "Mangrove forests are made up of diverse tree species which thrive in upper tidal zones along flat, sheltered tropical shores. The trees have [thrived] in the harsh environment of brackish water and changing tides. Their special adaptive aerial roots and salt-filtering tap roots have established rich and complex ecosystems. Besides protecting vast areas of coastline from erosion, they are vital to inshore fisheries, wood-products industries, and wildlife."



H. Armstrong Roberts



By courtesy of the National Research Council of Thailand

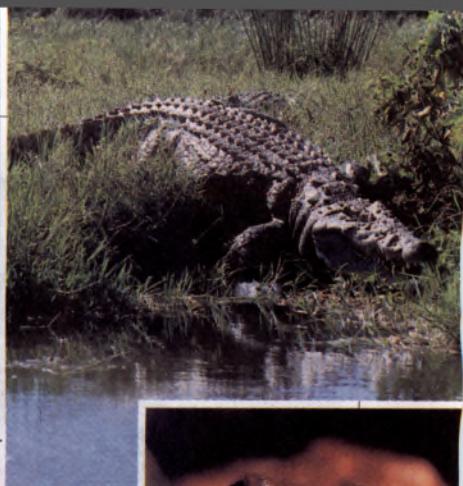
"In the mangrove forest life abounds. One can find shorebirds, crab-eating monkeys, fishing cats and mudskipper fish that skim across the swamp mud to make their way between water holes at low tide."

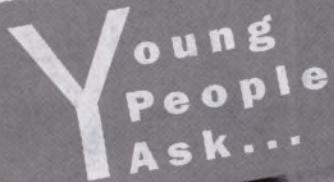
What Will Be the Outcome?

The crisis is worldwide. *International Wildlife* magazine states: "The bogs, fens, bayous, mangrove swamps, salt marshes, prairie potholes and lagunas that once covered more than 6 percent of the Earth's landmass are in deep trouble. So many have been drained for farming, destroyed by pollution or filled in by developers that about half the planet's wetland acreage has disappeared."

Will people make peace with the earth? So far the signs are not encouraging. Yet, some struggle valiantly and claim that they will succeed. Jehovah, the earth's Creator, says they will fail. He promises to step in and stop the assault on his marvelous earthly creation. He will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth," and in their stead he will leave upon it those who will "take care of it." To such appreciative ones, he will present it as a gift: "You are the ones blessed by Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth. As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong, but the earth he has given to the sons of men."—Revelation 11:18; Genesis 2:15; Psalm 115:15, 16.

Residents of wetlands: crocodile, bullfrog, dragonfly, box turtle digging hole to lay eggs





Young
People
Ask...

How Can I Break Free From a Double Life?

"I disregarded everything my parents said," confesses Ann.* "I was rebellious and started lying to them. I would tell them I was going shopping, but I was really going to see a boy."

ANN was leading a double life, and soon she was disregarding not only her parents but also her Bible-trained conscience. Ann, you see, was secretly having sex relations with her boyfriend. She recalls: "I tried to push Jehovah out of my mind altogether." Nevertheless, she soon ran smack into the sobering piece of re-

ality that 'whatever persons are sowing, this they will also reap.' (Galatians 6:7) Ann got pregnant. "I love my child with all my heart," she says, "but no one should have to go through this. Not unmarried. Not alone."

Have you in some way become trapped in a double life—hiding what you are from your parents and fellow Christians? Perhaps you are simply hanging out with some school friends whom you know your parents would disapprove of. Or maybe you have fallen into more serious misconduct, such as smoking, alcohol abuse, or premarital sex. In any event, as with Ann, it is just a matter of time before serious consequences result.*

Even so, some youths don't let this fact deter them at all from their rebellious course. They are like the man who looks at himself in the mirror and "immediately forgets what sort of man he is." (James 1:23, 24) It is our hope that you are of a different sort. Perhaps you have already begun taking a long, hard look at yourself—and don't like what you see. You want to change. You see the need to change. The question is, *how do you change?*

Repentance—The First Step

First, you must make a conscious *decision* to change. Acts 3:19 urges: "Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, that seasons of refreshing may come from the person of Jehovah." Repentance, however, is more than a feat of intellect. To repent means to "feel regret, contrition, or compunction, for what one has done." The Bible writer James exhorted: "Give way to misery and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves in the eyes of Jehovah." (James 4:9, 10) How can you feel bad about something you have enjoyed up till now? Think about how

* Some of the names have been changed.

* See the "Young People Ask . . ." articles appearing in our December 22, 1993, and January 8, 1994, issues.

wrong it is. Think about how it has hurt God. Think of the problems your hidden course has caused you and the lies you have had to tell to conceal it. Remind yourself that God detests the practice of deception! (Psalm 5:6) Meditating on these facts can help you reject wrong conduct both intellectually and emotionally.

Simply feeling bad about what you are doing is not enough, though. A young man

"I tried to push Jehovah out of my mind altogether"

named Robert, who got involved in a secret practice of drug abuse, admits: "I was miserable. I knew right from wrong. Still, I continued leading a double life." Courageous action is thus needed! At 2 Chronicles 7:14, God said that if sinners would "humble themselves and pray and seek [his] face and turn back from their bad ways, then [he himself would] hear from the heavens and forgive their sin."

"Seeking God's face" means to approach him in prayer, confess your wrong, and beg for forgiveness. This may not be easy to do, but you will no doubt feel greatly relieved for having done so. Said the psalmist: "When I kept silent my bones wore out through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. . . . My sin I finally confessed to you, and my error I did not cover."—Psalm 32:3-5.

Telling Your Parents

Someone else needs to know about your problems. But who? Confesses a teenager named Brian: "One of my biggest mistakes was going to my so-called friends with my problems instead of going to my Christian mother. But I was scared to communicate

with her because of how I thought she would react, so I turned to my friends, who just led me further and further away from the truth." Don't make the same mistake. Give your heart to your godly parents. (Compare Proverbs 23:26.) They have a right to know what you have been doing. Chapter 2 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* has a number of suggestions on how to approach your parents in this regard.*

Naturally, they will not exactly be happy about your having lied to them. But parents invariably have strong feelings for their children. Writer Clayton Barbeau observes: "They aren't going to disown you because you have made a mistake or got into some sort of trouble. Kids have become pregnant, come down with a sexually transmitted disease, developed an alcohol or drug problem or gotten into other trouble and predicted their parents would react with horror and revulsion, dynamite the house, and leave the state. But when they've told their parents, they've found themselves given a hug or an arm around the shoulder, and told, 'Well, you're really in a mess, and we'll just have to see what we can

You must make a conscious decision to change

do to get you out of it.'" Yes, when the initial shock and anger wear off, most parents try to be supportive. How much more so is this true when parents are God-fearing! Their main concern should be, not to shame or hurt you, but to set matters straight. (Compare Isaiah 1:18.) In this regard they may also arrange for you to talk with the congregation elders.—James 5:14, 15.

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



Explain to your old friends that you have changed and will no longer join them in wrongdoing

True, there will be some well-deserved punishment from your parents to endure and perhaps some tighter restrictions. But this can actually help you to avoid falling back into your old ways. Besides, talking matters out with your parents and seeing their loving concern may very well change your perception of them. Up till now, you probably resented their rules and restrictions. Admits one girl named Paulette: "It's hard to accept the counsel and guidelines given to us by our parents. But I have come to realize that these are for our own benefit and lasting happiness."

Changing Your Associations

Rarely does a youth pursue a double life on his own. You may even have had a chorus of peers cheering you on in your rebellion! To avoid reverting to a secret life, you will need to change your associations. Said the psalmist: "I have not sat with men of untruth; and with those who hide what they are I do not come in." (Psalm 26:4) Breaking off old friendships is not easy. Like the psalmist you

may need to pray: "From the man of deception and unrighteousness may you provide me with escape." (Psalm 43:1) Work in harmony with this prayer by telling your old associates that you have changed and are determined to do what is right. Rather than being a secret disciple of Jesus, tell others of your faith. (Compare John 19:38.) Usually, bad associates will quickly seek other companions.

Next, you need to replace bad associations with wholesome friends. Are God-fearing youths in short supply? Then think of the prophet Jeremiah, who said: "I have not sat down in the intimate group of those playing jokes and begun exulting. Because of your hand I have sat down *all by myself*." (Jeremiah 15:17) It would be better for you to keep to yourself than to stay involved with youths who will drag you down spiritually. Usually, though, real friends can be found if you put forth effort. Tammy, for example, began associating with a cousin who was a full-time evangelizer. "We became very close," recalls Tammy. "On the days I was not in school, I would go out with her in the preaching work. This helped me to make changes in my life."

But "the very best protection," says one German youth, "is a good conscience, which results from a close relationship with Jehovah God." One young girl who fell into leading a double life admits: "I never developed a close relationship with my Father, Jehovah." Through prayer and personal study, she began to change things. "Now I have a relationship with Jehovah that no one can ever take away," she proudly says. You too can enjoy such a close friendship with God. He will guide and support you, even when you find changing your old ways difficult. Says Psalm 37:24 of a faithful servant of God: "Although he may fall, he will not be hurled down, for Jehovah is supporting his hand." Yes, with Jehovah's help, you can break free from leading a double life.

Overcoming Life's Challenges in South Asia

AS I slowly regained consciousness, I became aware that my left leg was strangely numb. I turned my head. My beloved Henry's life was slipping away. Yet, it was not time for despair. I had to fight—fight to maintain my integrity to the God who had given us so much.

It was May 17, 1982. My husband was a traveling overseer for the Tamil-speaking congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Sri Lanka. We were serving a congregation far from Colombo, the largest city. Riding together on one bicycle, as so many do in this country, we had just a short journey to make to visit a fellow Witness. And then, seemingly out of nowhere, like a cobra a truck hit us.

As the doctors gave up hope of saving Henry, they turned their undivided attention to me. Weak as I was, the urgent need to advise them of my determination to respect Jehovah's law to abstain from blood filled my heart. (Acts 15:28, 29) I must let them know. I gathered what little strength I had to speak: "A piece of paper, please." I laboriously wrote my convictions down and signed the paper. And then the fight began.

I was given first aid. It was only too obvious that I was very seriously injured. My determination to act as a true Christian filled



**Annama Abraham
and her husband, Henry**

my every fiber—this was not yet the time to grieve.

They Refused to Operate Without Blood

For nine days the battle regarding a blood transfusion continued—my fight to live in harmony with my conscience by refusing it, the doctors' fight to convince me to accept it. Although they had the skills, they simply refused to operate without blood. The wound was a major one and needed their immediate attention.

But I did not have to fight the battle alone. Jehovah was with me every moment. And the brotherhood of Jehovah's people was full of loving concern. Colombo was 250 miles away. Dr. Perrin Jayasekera, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, arranged for his fleshly brother, a surgeon there, to admit me to Colombo General Hospital.

Lasting nearly 24 hours, that trip in the rear of a van over rough roads seemed by far the longest trip of my life. Yet, my heart was filled with gratitude to Jehovah for his loving care, just as it had been ever since I first learned the truth in my native country, India. There was now, however, no one of my own by my side. But what had brought me to Sri Lanka in the first place?

I was born to Roman Catholic parents in the state of Kerala, India. We spoke

Malayalam. English was a school subject. How glad I am that I used the opportunity to learn it well! That part of India has a large population of people claiming to be Christian. Tradition says that the apostle Thomas brought Christianity to Kerala in the first century. In any case, over 1,400 years later, when the Roman Catholic Portuguese colonizers led by Vasco da Gama arrived in Kerala, they were surprised to find many there who already believed in Christ.

Challenging Decisions to Make

When my family began to learn the enlightening truths from the Bible with the help of Jehovah's Witnesses, my natural desire was to share this truth with those professing Christianity in my community. So I became a pioneer, a full-time minister, shortly after my dedication and baptism. This meant rejecting the offer of an excellent position as a teacher in my home State. Having the apparent security that such a pensionable position gives is the goal of many young Indians, but my purpose in life had changed. I wanted real security, and that could be found only under Jehovah's protective hand.

Two years later, a new challenge. Would I be willing to move to another part of India to help where there was a greater need for preachers? It posed the challenge of learning a new language, Tamil, and helping people from a very different religious background,

this time Hindu. Yes, the opportunity to demonstrate my appreciation to Jehovah made all the changes worthwhile. Witnessing to those warm, friendly people from a Hindu background was a joy indeed. They could easily accept that we are nearing the end of Kali Yuga (the Wicked Age) and that something far better lies just ahead for those acting righteously now. However, helping them see the difference between true Christianity and what they had experienced from the West was a great challenge. How often I opened my Bible to Matthew 7:21-23: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness." Mohandas Gandhi had said it well: 'I love Christ, but I despise Christians because they do not live as Christ lived.'

Many Hindus are finding, just as I had found, that there is a lot of truth in that statement. And now they also observe that many of their fellow Hindus act little differently from those from the West who hypocritically profess Christianity. But Jehovah's Witnesses are so very different. Hindus by the thousands are beginning to realize that.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**The Challenge of
Caring for Aged Parents**

**Toying With Immorality
—What's the Harm?**

**What Kind of Divorcing
Does God Hate?**

A New Partner, a New Test of Integrity

Two and a half years passed. The "Everlasting Good News" Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses was being held worldwide during 1963. One of the venues was New Delhi, in the north of the country. What a memorable convention! And there I met Henry Abraham. Both of us were looking for someone with whom to share our lives of devotion to Jehovah. Five months later we married.

He had been trained at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in New York State and then sent back to his native land, Sri Lanka, where the need was very great. I hoped he would be willing to move to India, where I felt the need was even greater. But that was not to be. He was needed where he was. So my home became this lovely island of Sri Lanka. Happily, Tamil and English are very useful here. So I did not have to learn another language—then. We enjoyed 18 happy years together in Jehovah's service before tragedy struck in the form of the speeding truck.

But now I was in Colombo, and my fight to live without compromising my integrity by blood transfusion continued. Now my life was in jeopardy, not because of my stand on blood, but because of the delay in treatment.

A plastic surgeon with a Buddhist background and an orthopedic surgeon with a Hindu background joined to offer their skills in my behalf. My blood count (hemoglobin) was now down to about four.

How to amputate at the thigh with so little blood? My determination was clear, but would these two surgeons be willing to give me the assistance I had previously been refused? Their courage in accepting this tremendous challenge without trying to force me to compromise my conscience was outstanding. I lost my leg, but my life was saved, and my integrity to Jehovah was intact.

Without the husband I loved so much, a totally new chapter in my life was now opening. First with crutches, then with a prosthesis (later, through the kindness of many brothers and sisters, replaced by a much-improved artificial leg), I was able to continue in my ministry. Grief slowly gave way to activity.

Should I return to India and live among unbelieving relatives? The marvelous Biblical example of another widow by the name of



An Anna witnessee to the tea pluckers working on a tea plantation in Sri Lanka

Ruth was crystal clear. I too wanted to be where I could serve Jehovah to the very best of my now somewhat reduced ability. Sri Lanka is still my home.—Ruth 1:16, 17.

A Challenging Territory

These past 11 years have passed quickly. There has been "plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58) I keep busy in the field ministry in Colombo. Here are people from very diverse religious backgrounds—Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, nominal Christian, and others. The challenges continue.

Each month a few of us spend a weekend visiting one of the towns to the south where there are still no groups of Jehovah's Witnesses. The vast majority profess Buddhism,

and their language is Sinhalese. Learning to help these people has become very important to me.

Much like the Hindus in India and throughout Sri Lanka, Buddhists have been turned away from the Bible by the conduct of the so-called Christians of the West. Yet, their basic Buddhist principles, the famous Eightfold Path of right thought and right conduct (right belief, intention, speech, action, living, endeavor, thought, meditation), are but imperfect human wisdom compared to the divine principles found in the Bible, most of which was written centuries prior to Siddhārtha Gautama.

When Siddhārtha Gautama spoke to the Kalamas as quoted in the Kalama Sutta, he said: "Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition." How very strange that I should have the privilege of reminding many sincere Buddhists that if that guidance is applied today, no one could believe the myth of evolution or deny the existence of a Creator.

The End of Wickedness Is Near

Jehovah's Witnesses have many good things from the Bible to tell these people—about the *kalpa vinasha*, the end of wickedness, that is so near. The Bible's 1,900-year-old prophecy on this is found at 2 Timothy 3: 1-5, 13. We also have the privilege of showing them that the place to look for preservation through these times is not the religions of the West or the East but, as verses 16 and 17 of that same chapter show, Jehovah's own inspired Word, the Bible.

Buddhism is a search for enlightenment. In the Bible, long before Siddhārtha Gautama began his own search, the true cause of suffering was clearly explained. (Genesis 3:1-19) Rebellion against righteous law right at the beginning of human history brought unhappy

results—sickness and death, which spread inevitably to all human sinners. Troubling questions come up in the minds of many—as at Habakkuk 1:3: "Why is it that you make me see what is hurtful, and you keep looking upon mere trouble? And why are despoiling and violence in front of me, and why does quarreling occur, and why is strife carried?" Only the compassionate Creator can supply the answers and design a means of restoring permanently that which was lost. Even now, millions worldwide are benefiting from the practical wisdom of God's Word. And so now Sinhalese, the major language of this country, has become another challenge for me, for in that language I can help those earnestly searching for the enlightenment I found 37 years ago.

Still another challenge. With new branch offices and a translation center for Sri Lanka under construction, more people need to be trained. Slowly I am learning the new language of computers as I assist in the Accounts Department at our branch office.

My 33 years of full-time service to Jehovah have been but a moment in what I hope will be an eternity of serving him. Many have joined us in Jehovah's service during these years, including the skilled surgeon who arranged both for my admittance to the hospital in Colombo and for the necessary surgery. Now he also is a fellow dedicated Witness of Jehovah.

Jehovah and his family of servants on earth have sustained me so very well. I have felt his protective arms enveloping me, and I know his loyal love holds Henry fast in memory. Only Jehovah can bring my beloved one back from the dust, to allow me to greet him once more, to tell Henry of all the thrilling challenges our generation has brought and how Jehovah has helped us meet them.—*As told by Annama Abraham.*



"The City That Was Abundant With People"

TOKYO, São Paulo, Lagos, Mexico City, and Seoul fit the description, though it was not of them that the Bible prophet Jeremiah spoke. He was referring to Jerusalem shortly after its destruction by the Babylonians in 607 B.C.E.—Lamentations 1:1.

With world population now some five and a half billion, cities abundant with people are not hard to find. The unmistakable trend of the past half century has been toward bigness. Whereas only 7 urban centers in the world numbered five million inhabitants in 1950, estimates are that by the turn of the century, at least 21 cities will have over ten million inhabitants, including the 5 cities mentioned above.



Lagos, abundant with people

How Did They Get So Big?

Megacities are formed when rural residents move into the city in search of work and when city dwellers move out of the inner city in search of more spacious and pleasant surroundings, from which they then commute to work by car, bus, or train. These suburbs, together with their mother city, soon join to form a metropolitan area.

Some megacities became such as "teenagers." Tenochtitlán—today we call it Mexico City—was founded about 1325. By 1519, when the Spaniards arrived, this capital of the Aztec Empire already had a population possibly approaching 300,000.

However, like people suffering from middle-age

spread, other cities have widened out only with advanced age. Seoul, site of the 1988 Olympics, has roots that go back to pre-Christian days, but some 50 years ago, its population was still only one-tenth of what it is today. Now it is called home by almost a fourth of the country's 43 million inhabitants.

Like Seoul, Tokyo's name also means "capital." Actually, in Tokyo's case, "eastern capital." Originally Edo, the name was changed to Tokyo in 1868 when the capital was moved from the more westerly located city of Kyoto. The area around Edo was already inhabited in pre-Christian times, but the foundation was not laid for today's megacity until 1457, when a powerful warrior built a castle there. During the 17th century, the city was founded, and by the mid-1800's it had a population well in excess of a million people. Once said to boast more neon signs than any other city in the world, Tokyo is very up-to-date.

Another equally modern megacity radiating youthful charm is São Paulo, Brazil. With wide avenues and modernistic skyscrapers, it looks remarkably young for its age, having been founded by Portuguese Jesuit missionaries in 1554. Now, during January, its residents—*Paulistanos*—are celebrating its 440th anniversary. São Paulo remained quite small until the 1880's, about which time the money of Brazil's newly born coffee industry served as a magnet to draw emigrants from Europe and later from Asia.

The Portuguese also had a part in developing a megacity in Nigeria. Of course, long before the Europeans arrived in the late 15th century, the Lagos area was inhabited by one of Africa's most populous and most urbanized tropical peoples of precolonial times, the Yoruba. The city was a noted slave market until the mid-1800's. In 1861 it was annexed by Britain, and in 1914 it became the capital of what was then a British colony.

"Big Is No Longer Better"

Bigness has advantages. Generally, the larger the city, the greater the chances its citizens have to live a rich social and cultural life. Economic factors also favor bigness, since a large population provides greater market and job possibilities. Like a powerful magnet, the economic benefits of cities attract people looking for the promised land. But when they fail to find jobs and end up living in slums, possibly begging in order to survive, or when they go homeless, because of the shortage of suitable housing, how quickly disillusionment and bitterness set in!

The magazine *National Geographic* argues that too big is simply *too* big, saying: "Not many years ago, cities proudly drew attention to their growth. Large was good, and the largest cities bragged of their rank in the world. But big is no longer better. Today, to be a contender for the title 'world's largest city' is like a healthy young person's being told he has a serious illness. It may be cured, but it cannot be ignored."

Preventing people from flocking to the cities in unacceptable numbers is almost an impossible task. So megacities try to meet the challenge in other ways, perhaps by building row after row of drab, look-alike tenement buildings, by erecting skyscrapers that stretch ever higher into the heavens, or by turning to completely new concepts. Japanese construction companies, for example, now toy with the idea of building huge complexes underground, where millions of people could work, shop, and even live. "An underground city is no longer a dream," says one building executive, "we expect it to actually materialize in the early part of the next century."

Even from a physical standpoint, big is not always better. Disasters can—and do—strike everywhere. But when they strike cities, the destruction of life and property is potentially greater. To illustrate: Tokyo has suffered se-

vere disasters, both natural and man-made. In 1657 some 100,000 people perished in a calamitous fire, in 1923 a similar number in a murderous earthquake and fire, and possibly as many as a quarter of a million during the heavy bombing raids at the end of World War II.

World problems are mirrored in its cities—urban pollution and traffic congestion. Both problems are graphically illustrated by Mexico City, once described as a “case study in urban disaster.” In excess of three million cars choke the streets. These, together with factories representing over half of total Mexican industry, create such a daily dose of pollution that, according to a 1984 report, “just breathing is estimated to be equivalent to smoking two packs of cigarettes a day.”

Of course, Mexico City is not unique. What modern industrialized city does not have its own pollution and traffic congestion? In Lagos, rush-hour traffic is called the “go-slow,” appropriately enough. The city spreads across four main islands; bridges from the mainland are unable to handle the growing number of cars that clog the roads, bringing traffic almost to a standstill. The book *5000 Days to Save the Planet* muses: “The time has almost arrived when it would be quicker to walk.” Almost?

The Even More Serious Problems

Megacities are plagued by even more serious problems. Besides insufficient housing, overcrowded schools, and understaffed hospitals, psychological aspects are also involved. Dr. Paul Leyhausen, a leading German ethologist, claims that “a great number of neuroses and social maladjustments are, partially or totally, directly or indirectly, caused by over-crowding.”

Megacities rob their citizens of a sense of community, turning the city into a faceless mass of numbers. In the midst of hundreds of neighbors, a city dweller can be lonely, yearn-

ing for friends and companions he can find nowhere. The sense of alienation created by this situation becomes dangerous when it causes multinational populations to break up into racial or ethnic groups. Economic inequalities or acts of discrimination—real or imagined—can lead to disaster, as Los Angeles learned in 1992 when outbreaks of racial violence resulted in more than 50 deaths and 2,000 injuries.

The greatest danger connected with city life is its tendency to crowd out spirituality. City life is expensive, so those who live there can easily be distracted by the anxieties of life. Nowhere else are so many things readily available to sidetrack people into neglecting the things of real and lasting importance. Nowhere else are the opportunities for entertainment—good, bad, and indecent—as great. It was just such a lack of spirituality that doomed Jerusalem, the city abundant with people of which Jeremiah spoke.

What Does the Future Hold?

In view of such overwhelming difficulties, *5000 Days to Save the Planet* concludes that “the task of providing a decent standard of living for today’s city dwellers, let alone those of future generations, poses seemingly insurmountable problems.” Just meeting present demands “is placing an intolerable burden on the environment and society.” And with an eye to the future, it notes: “To expect to meet them when cities have swollen to three times their present population is simply wishful thinking.”

No doubt about it, cities are in trouble. And megacities, because of their size, even more so! Their illnesses have helped put the entire world on its deathbed. Is there a cure in sight?

Megacities affect us. Even smaller cities can influence us, some in a way completely out of proportion to their size. For examples of this, consider the additional cities to be discussed in our next issue.

WATCHING THE WORLD

More Concern Over Blood

Australian medical researchers are concerned that a potentially fatal virus may have contaminated the nation's blood supply. The human T-lymphotropic virus (HTLV-1) is a "cousin" of the AIDS virus and can cause a rare form of leukemia and diseases of the nervous system. It is common in Japan, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Australia (among Aborigines). According to reports, two Australian men have already died of the leukemia associated with the virus, and a third has been diagnosed as suffering nerve damage. HTLV-1 is spread in the same way as AIDS, namely through sex relations, intravenous drug use, breastfeeding, blood transfusion, and childbirth. The director of the New South Wales Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service says that the ingredients "are clearly present" for the transmission of the virus through blood transfusion, according to *The Courier Mail*, a Brisbane newspaper. The virus has been detected in at least six blood donors in Australia.

Ulcers and Smoking

"According to information from the World Health Organization, about 10 percent of the world's population had, have, or will have an ulcer," says gastroenterologist Dr. Thomas Szego from the Albert Einstein Hospital in São Paulo, reports *Jornal da Tarde*. Although gastritis (inflammation of the stomach) may lead to ulcers, "mild gastritis is part of the normal aging process of the stomach," continues the account. Nevertheless, such things as pro-

longed stress, fasting, and alcohol or medicine abuse can irritate the stomach. However, Dr. Szego warns: "If I had to select a single factor as the most harmful to the stomach, I would choose the cigarette. It is very bad for the gastric mucous membrane." He adds: "Along with saliva, the smoker swallows cigarette residues, increasing acid secretion and reducing the stomach's defenses."

The Wolf Returns

The gray wolf has returned to France after a 50-year absence, says the French magazine *Terre Sauvage*. Although these wolves once thrived there and in all of Europe, they were almost entirely eliminated from Western Europe through hunting, poisoning, and loss of habitat. Protected in Italy since 1977, a small wolf population survived in Italy's Apennine



mountains. With the formation in 1989 of the Mercantour National Park in southeastern France and the presence of its now abundant herds of chamois, wild sheep, and deer, wolves are apparently recolonizing France from across the Italian border in search of their natural prey and greater territory. Although wolves have been officially protected in France since 1989, Italian biologist Luigi Boitani notes: "The greatest dan-

ger for the wolf is man's deep-rooted fear of them."

Cheap Power

Tractor power has revolutionized farming. And, of course, it has profited the automotive and oil industries. However, the use of draft animals is still popular. The magazine *Farmer's Weekly* reports on one of the largest citrus estates in the world, near the South African town of Potgietersrust, which breeds its own mules for transport. Draft animals do not require specialized knowledge to maintain, nor do they require the import of expensive spare parts and fuel. "They can be fed crop residue and grazed on available land," explains *Farmer's Weekly*. Animal power, the magazine concludes, should be "used on a far larger scale in large engineering, construction and road building/maintenance projects in rural areas in Africa than is currently the case."

Counterfeit Ferraris

Bank notes, checks, tapes, and designer handbags and jeans are normal in the repertoire of skilled counterfeiters. But recently Italian police have even discovered a trade in imitations of an automobile, the classic Ferrari. Using original spare parts, drawings, and plans, mechanics who once worked for the famous automobile manufacturer were specializing in "perfect" reproductions of models produced in the '50's and '60's and selling them to collectors as genuine. Considering the prices on the international classic-car market, it was "a multi-million dollar con trick," reports *La Repubblica*.

Millions of Street Children

"Worldwide more than 100 million children live on the streets, and at least half of them use drugs," reports the World Health Organization. A study of large cities, such as Rio de Janeiro, Manila, Lusaka, Montreal, and Toronto, showed little difference among them in regard to drug abuse by street children. According to the coordinator of the research, economist Hans Emblad, "seemingly the availability of drugs is the determining factor with regard to the number of drug users." Yet, he continues, "the authorities, just like most of the social institutions that deal with street children, tend to ignore totally the drug problem." Although others "try to drive the minors away," according to Emblad, "the problem is that they have no place to go." The report in *O Estado de S. Paulo* adds that street children "want to survive."

Longest Veil

As many as a hundred bridesmaids were needed to carry the longest bridal veil in the world; 1,000 feet of white material "followed" a young couple who are from Naples, Italy, when they made their way to get married before a crowd of curious onlookers. The stylist who created the nuptial train had been wanting to realize this record veil for some time, but until now he had not been able to find a bride who was prepared to wear it. Then he met the Neapolitan bride, and "the dream became a reality," said the satisfied designer. And the previous record? A veil worn by a French bride, which measured some 912 feet.

AIDS Prevention

"There are obvious gaps between the Ministry of Education,

teachers, and parents on how to handle AIDS education," reports the Japanese newspaper *Mainichi Shimbun*. The controversy is over the ministry's first pamphlet on AIDS education for high school students, entitled *AIDS—For Accurate Understanding*. The pamphlet stated: "The infection [of AIDS] can be prevented if condoms are used properly." The ministry received many letters and telephone calls regarding the pamphlet, 90 percent of which were critical. Some critics insisted that "controlled sexual behavior should be taught rather than the use of condoms." A newspaper prepared by a commercial firm for posting on school information boards featured AIDS prevention and was hailed with approval. It emphasized virginity.

Parrot Testimony

A parrot became the key witness in a court in India's southern state of Kerala. The *Indian Express* reported the court case involving neighbors who were locked in a dispute over who owned the parrot. To settle the argument, the judge ordered the



parrot to appear in court and stand as a witness. Crucial testimony was provided when the cooperative parrot obligingly rattled off the names of the children belonging to the family that had earlier reported the parrot missing. Thanks to the faithful parrot, the district judge decided the case in favor of this family.

Laser-Gun Tag Games

"The object of the game is to shoot and not to get shot too many times yourself," reports *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, Canada. The traditional game of tag has gone high tech. After ten minutes of shooting others with beams of light in a futuristic, sinister, fog-filled arena with "pumped-up music," one participant described it as "stress-relieving." Hundreds of such entertainment centers are popping up in North America, England, Europe, Australia, and Israel. There is growing concern that such amusement encourages violence. University of Calgary sociology professor Robert Stebbins said in *The Globe*: "There is a fuzzy line between war games considered problematic and those considered acceptable, such as chess with its castles and armies. The intent is violent." One teenage player said: "It seems kind of weird to promote a game for pleasure that is associated with war. . . . When you think of the message this gives, it doesn't seem right."

The War That Smokes

Because of the war, food and other essentials became scarce in Bosnia and Herzegovina. But in the city of Sarajevo, even after several months of siege, a cigarette factory was able to keep its production line running. According to *The New York Times*, in that war-torn country, many grumble more about the lack of cigarettes than about the lack of food, water, or ammunition. People have been willing to pay between \$5 and \$50 for a pack of cigarettes. The *Times* noted that anyone who proposed or "tried to enforce a smoking ban in restaurants, offices or anywhere else would surely find himself gazing down the wrong end of a gun."

FROM OUR READERS

Races Unite The series "Will All Races Ever Be United?" (August 22, 1993) helped me to see how racism got its start and how it has been passed down from one generation to another. It also helped me understand why not all Christians have necessarily overcome all their prejudices. In the past I found this to be very discouraging. But now I appreciate that it takes time to rid oneself of such bad inclinations. I'm looking forward to God's righteous new world, where race will no longer be an issue.

C. W., United States

Making Cards Thank you for the article "Let's Send a Card." (August 8, 1993) My grandma has been making cards for many years and sends them to all of us grandchildren. I am 13 years old and have been making cards myself for about two years. Using pressed flowers, as your article suggested, works very well. I learned that if you put some glue on top of the flowers and then sprinkle some glitter on top, it makes for a very nice effect.

J. B., United States

Disabilities Few articles about disabilities have been as realistic as the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Cope With My Disability?" (June 8, 1993) After having served for some years as a minister at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rome, Italy, I was involved in a serious car accident that damaged my spinal column. Simple things like walking and holding a glass of water suddenly became difficult. Overnight I needed someone to help me get up, get dressed, climb stairs, and so forth. After a long period of anger, sadness, self-pity, and silent tears, I finally came to grips with the situation and realized I had to make the best of it. With the support of a dedicated physical therapist, parents, and friends, my condition has improved, and I have contin-

ued serving at the branch. Believe me, in spite of disabilities, one can still be very active and useful!

A. E., Italy

Rock Collecting As a doctor, I read with great interest your article "Treasure Hunting With a Difference." (July 8, 1993) I noticed, however, that when you talked about the use of a hammer, you did not make any mention of protective wear for the eyes. This is very important, as small fragments of a stone can easily be kicked up by a hammer, and these can be very dangerous to one's eyes.

G. T. W., England

We appreciate this helpful safety tip.—ED.

Sense of Smell I really enjoyed the article "Our Versatile Sense of Smell." (July 22, 1993) Three years ago I did a school science project on this subject. Many people just do not realize how important the olfactory system is. Thank you for showing so many people how truly awe-inspiring the sense of smell is.

L. T., United States

Animal Tales I am a 20-year-old Zulu who loves learning about the wonders of creation. I deeply appreciated your article "The Silent Swooper." (March 8, 1993) Among the Zulus, owls are considered birds of ill omen and are believed to be connected with witchcraft. When people see an owl, they will drive it away. Your simple and informative article was therefore appreciated.

Z. P. M., South Africa

Thank you for the article "Jumping Musicians of the Insect World." (April 8, 1993) Grasshoppers are often synonymous with plague. But the article aroused my sympathy for this insect—and also increased my reverence for our meticulous and wise Creator.

V. P., Brazil

Conflicting Reports on the Exxon Oil Spill

LAST April, four years after the disastrous *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in Prince William Sound, Exxon's scientists finally issued their findings. According to *New Scientist* magazine, Exxon said that "the damage from the spill lasted only a few months and that Prince William Sound had recovered almost completely." Far different were the assessments of U.S. government scientists who had spent four years studying the effects of the spill: "It's very clear that long-term recovery is far from complete. In some cases it will take many years." They charged: "Exxon is picking and choosing the information it is using to assess recovery." The following excerpts from the findings of marine biologist and commercial fisherman Rick Steiner give the current conditions in the sound.

"Particularly striking is the dearth of sea otters, harlequin ducks, murres and oystercatchers. . . . In inter-tidal zones, mussel mats retain oil trapped four years ago.

. . . Fishermen had to wait until last summer's salmon return to see if the oil had harmed the progeny of the juvenile pink salmon that had emerged at the time of the spill. The return was disastrous: only one-quarter to one-third of what had been projected. . . . State and federal scientists have found the effects of the oil in organisms from fish to whales—in

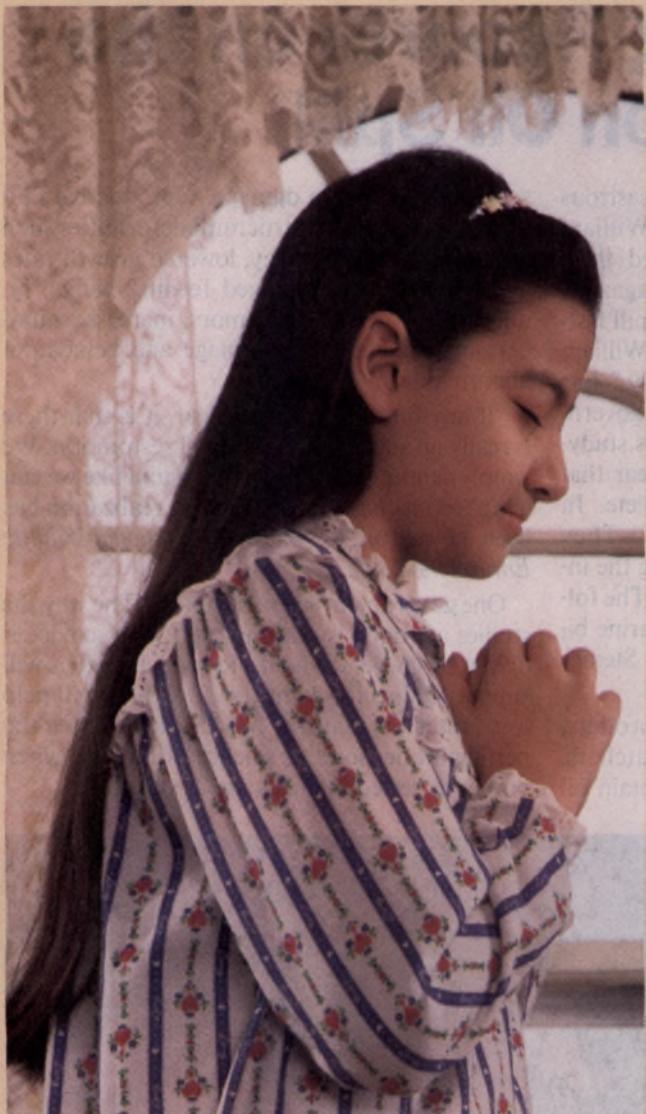
such forms as brain damage, reproductive failure, genetic damage, structural deformities such as curved spines, lethargy, lowered growth rates and body weights, changed feeding habits, reduced egg volume, eye tumors, increased numbers of parasites, liver damage and behavioral abnormalities.

"If anything has become clear, it is that there is really no such thing as oil-spill restoration. We simply cannot fix a broken ecosystem like we can a broken machine. For many, this realization has been a bitter pill to swallow."—*National Wildlife EnviroAction*.

One government scientist states: "The way the studies are done is not impartial. The science is driven by lawyers, who decide which studies will support claims for damages—or which will help to counter the claims." *New Scientist* raises the pertinent question: "Is science of any use when powerful vested interests are at stake?"



Wesley Bock/Sipa Press



It Caused Her to Pray

Karen, one of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York State, said that she sent her mother the book *Listening to the Great Teacher*. "I gave Mom the book," Karen wrote, "for my nine-year-old niece, Jamie, to read at night." Karen explained: "I wrote Jamie a letter and said she should read it every night at Grandma's, and she would have good thoughts before going to sleep."

Karen's mother, who is not one of Jehovah's Witnesses, later told Karen that Jamie went to bed and began reading the book. The next morning she said she had prayed for her baby brother (who was having an operation) before she went to sleep. Karen's mother was quite moved by this because she didn't think that Jamie had ever prayed before.

Karen wrote: "That's a pretty powerful book if it can cause a nine-year-old to pray after reading only a small portion of it. This made me appreciate even more the power of this literature. I think it even impressed my mom because she said she noticed that the book asks a lot of questions and obviously teaches morals and not just stories."