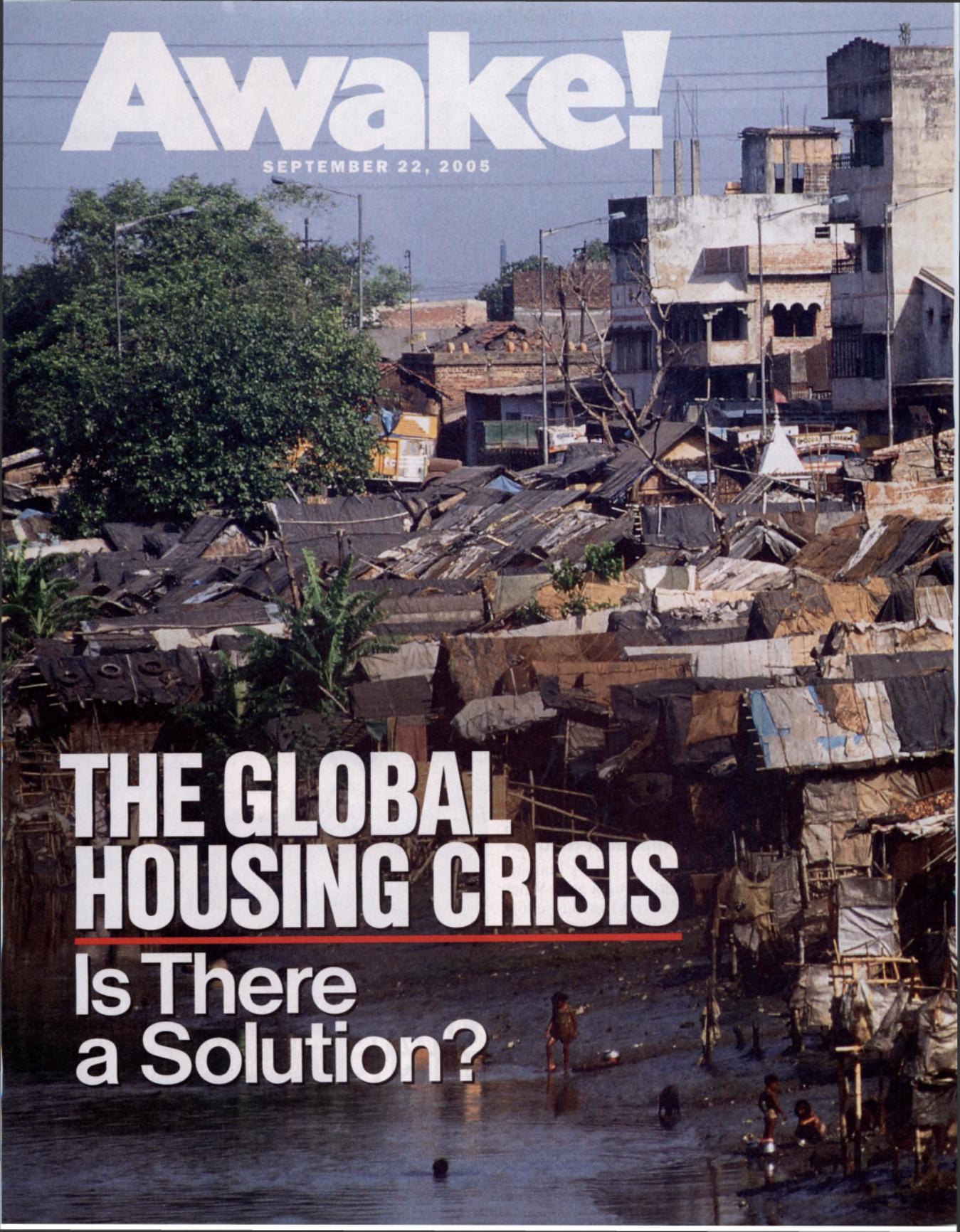


Awake!

SEPTEMBER 22, 2005

THE GLOBAL HOUSING CRISIS

Is There a Solution?



Awake!

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Throughout history humans have eagerly sought gold. What makes this lustrous yellow metal so appealing?



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THE GLOBAL HOUSING CRISIS

Is There a Solution? 3-12

A growing number of people cannot afford a decent place to live. How does the housing crisis affect you? What can be done?



EVERYONE NEEDS A HOME

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including . . . housing.”

—Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25.

ALARGE migrant farmworker population has gradually settled in an area they now call home. Hundreds of families reside just outside town in low-rent trailer camps called *parqueaderos*. Here such basic services as sewage disposal, a reliable water supply, and garbage removal are rudimentary at best or even nonexistent. One reporter described this settlement as “a place so poor [farmworkers] could afford to live there.”

Three years ago, when officials started closing down a few of the sites, some of the families sold their trailers and moved into the already overcrowded houses, apartments, and garages in the center of town. Others simply picked up and moved on, in search of a place they could come back to after each harvest—somewhere they could call home.

Are you picturing some place in Central or South America? Think again. You could find this trailer camp near the town of Mecca in southern California, U.S.A., less than an hour’s drive east of the affluent city of Palm Springs. Although home ownership in the United States is said to be at an all-time high and the median family income in 2002 was about \$42,000, it has been estimated that more than five million American families still live in inadequate housing.

AN ASIAN REFUGEE FAMILY.

In one city 3,500 families live in makeshift tents and are in dire need of water and sanitation

© Tim Dirven/Panos Pictures

While some nations look into colonizing the moon, many of their citizens lack a decent place to live on earth

The situation is much more serious in developing lands. Despite a number of political, social, and religious initiatives, the global housing crisis is steadily getting worse.

A Global Crisis

The number of people living in slums worldwide is estimated to be more than a billion. Brazilian experts in urbanization fear that the ever-growing *favelas*, or slums, in that country will soon "become larger and more populous than the cities in which they were first established." There are Nigerian cities where more than 80 percent of the population live in slums and squatter settlements. "If no serious action is taken," said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2003, "the number of slum dwellers worldwide is projected to rise over the next 30 years to about 2 billion."

Cold statistics like these, however, do not even begin to communicate the devastating personal toll that substandard living condi-

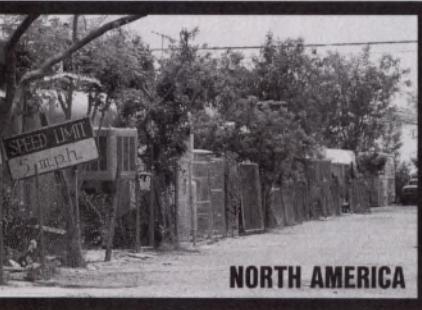
tions exact on the world's poor. According to the United Nations, more than half the people in developing countries lack basic sanitation, a third do not have access to clean water, a quarter lack adequate housing, and a fifth do not have access to modern health services. Most people in developed lands would not even let their pets live in conditions like that.

A Universal Right

Suitable shelter is commonly accepted as a basic human need. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, declared that everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living, including satisfactory housing. Indeed, everyone needs a decent home.

More recently, in 1996, a number of countries adopted what came to be known as the UN's Habitat Agenda. This document outlines specific commitments to provide adequate shelter for all. Thereafter, on January 1, 2002, the UN strengthened this commitment further by formalizing this agenda into a full-fledged UN program.

It is ironic that just as some of the richest nations have begun renewing calls to build colonies on the moon and explore Mars, growing numbers of their poorest citizens cannot even afford a decent place to live here on earth. How does the housing crisis affect you? Is there any real hope that one day all will have their own comfortable home?



Awake!®

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

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WHAT IS BEHIND THE HOUSING CRISIS?



EUROPE

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ON THE outskirts of a large African city, 36-year-old Josephine lives with her three boys, ranging from 6 to 11 years of age. To make a living, she collects empty plastic containers, which she sells to a nearby recycling plant. This backbreaking labor earns her less than two dollars a day. In that city, this is hardly enough to feed her family or pay for their schooling.

At the end of the day, she returns to what she is forced to call home. Its walls are made of baked mud bricks and clay held together by thin twigs. Loose, rusty iron sheets, along with tin and plastic, serve as a roof. Pieces of rock, wood, and old metal plates are stacked on top to keep the roof in place during strong winds. Her “door” and “window” are torn gunnysacks, which offer no real

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resistance to bad weather—let alone would-be intruders.

Even this modest home, though, does not truly belong to her. Josephine and her children live in constant fear of eviction. The land on which their inadequate home stands is to be used for the expansion of a nearby road. Sad to say, similar situations exist in many lands throughout the world.

A Toxic Home

In "poverty housing," says Robin Shell, a senior official of an international housing assistance program, "children are ashamed of the house, . . . the family is always getting sick, and . . . they never know when a government official or landlord might come and sweep away [their home]."

Living in such conditions forces parents to worry constantly about the health and safety of their children. Instead of being able to work to better their situation, they often end up spending the majority of their time and energy struggling to meet their children's basic needs, such as food, rest, and shelter.

Looking on from a distance, it might be easy to conclude that the poor could remedy their situation if they showed more initiative. But merely telling people to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps is not the answer. There are powerful factors involved in the housing crisis that are beyond any individual's control. Researchers point to population

growth, rapid urbanization, natural disasters, political upheaval, and persistent poverty as the main culprits. Like the five fingers of a clenched fist, these forces are squeezing the life out of many of the world's poor.

Population Pressures

It is generally estimated that each year the world needs to house an additional 68 million to 80 million people. According to the United Nations Population Fund, world population passed 6.1 billion in 2001 and is expected to reach between 7.9 and 10.9 billion by 2050. Even more sobering, 98 percent of that growth during the next two decades is forecast to occur in developing countries. Those estimates in themselves represent a formidable housing challenge. Yet, that challenge is further complicated by the fact that the fastest growing areas in most countries are the already overcrowded cities.

Relentless Urbanization

Major cities—such as New York, London, and Tokyo—are often viewed as vital symbols of a country's economic growth. As a result, thousands of rural people annually flock to such 'greener urban pastures,' mainly to seek education and employment.

In China, for example, the economy is expanding rapidly. As a result, one report estimates, over the next few decades, more than 200 million new housing units will be needed in the major urban areas alone. That is almost

AFRICA



6

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SOUTH AMERICA



twice the total number of housing units that currently exist in the entire United States. What housing program could possibly keep up with such demand?

According to the World Bank, "each year, some 12 to 15 million new households, requiring an equivalent number of dwellings, are added to the cities of the developing world." Since not enough affordable housing exists, these urban poor are forced to find shelter where they can, often where no one else chooses to live.

Natural and Political Disasters

Poverty has forced many to occupy areas prone to floods, mud slides, and earthquakes. For example, it is estimated that in Caracas, Venezuela, over half a million people "live in squatter settlements on steep slopes that are continuously affected by landslides." Recall, too, the 1984 industrial accident at Bhopal, India, where several thousand people were killed and many more injured. Why the high human toll? Primarily, it was because a nearby shantytown had grown to within just 15 feet of the factory's boundary.

Political disasters, such as civil wars, are also increasingly responsible for housing problems. One report published in 2002 by a human rights group pointed out that between 1984 and 1999, as many as 1.5 million people, mainly villagers, may have been displaced in southeast Turkey during civil strife.

SOUTH AMERICA



▼ JORGE UZON/AFP/Getty Images; © Frits Meyst/Panos Pictures ▶

YOUR HOUSE AND YOUR HEALTH



According to the World Health Organization, in general, to promote good health, a house should have at least the following items:

- A good roof to keep out the rain
- Good walls and doors to protect against bad weather and to keep out animals
- Screens of wire netting at the windows and doors to keep out insects, especially mosquitoes
- Sunshades all around to protect the walls from direct sunlight in hot weather

Many of them were forced to find shelter wherever they could, often crowding in with relatives and neighbors in makeshift dwellings, rented accommodations, agricultural buildings, or construction sites. One group of families was reportedly living in stables, with 13 or more to a room, using a communal toilet and a single water tap in the courtyard. "We want to get out of this life," one of the refugees said. "We live in a place built for animals."

Economic Stagnation

Finally, the relationship between housing and the economics of poverty cannot

ASIA





TRADITIONAL RURAL AFRICAN HOUSES

For many years traditional African houses dotted the landscape. They came in different sizes and shapes. Some communities, such as the Kikuyu and Luo of Kenya, preferred circular walls and a thatched conical roof. Others, including the Masai of Kenya and Tanzania, adopted a somewhat rectangular shape. In coastal areas of East Africa, some of the houses had a thatched roof that touched the ground and resembled a beehive.

Since much of the construction material used in such structures was readily available, housing problems were few. Mud could be obtained by simply mixing soil and water. The many forests nearby

made it possible for wood, grass, reeds, and bamboo leaves to be obtained easily. So, regardless of how rich or poor a family was, acquiring their own house was generally within reach.

Of course, such houses also had their disadvantages. Since most roofs were made of flammable materials, they posed a high risk of fire. Also, an intruder could easily gain access into the house by simply boring a hole through the mud wall. Not surprisingly, therefore, in many areas today, traditional African homes are slowly giving way to other more durable types of construction.

Source: *African Traditional Architecture*

be overestimated. According to the World Bank report referred to earlier, in 1988 alone, 330 million urban dwellers in developing countries were said to be poor, a situation that was not expected to change much in the following years. When people are too poor to afford such basic necessities as food and clothing, how can they afford to rent or build a decent house?

High interest rates and inflation push bank-loan payments far out of the reach of many families, and soaring utility costs make it difficult for people to get ahead. Unemployment rates as high as 20 percent in some lands make it almost impossible to make ends meet.

These and other factors have forced hundreds of millions in every corner of the earth to settle for substandard housing. People live in old buses, shipping containers, and cardboard boxes. They live under staircases, plastic sheeting, and scraps of used lumber. Even abandoned industrial sites have become settlements for some.

What Is Being Done?

Substantial efforts are already being made by many concerned individuals, organizations, and governments to address the crisis. In Japan, several agencies have been set up to help construct affordable houses. A housing program initiated in South Africa in 1994 has seen the erection of more than a million four-room houses. In Kenya the aim of an ambitious housing policy is to construct 150,000 housing units in urban areas and twice as many in rural areas each year. Other countries, such as Madagascar, have directed their efforts toward identifying construction methods that will result in inexpensive housing.

International organizations, such as UN-HABITAT, have been set up to show the world's commitment to "prevent and ameliorate problems stemming from massive urban growth." Nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations are also trying to help. One nonprofit organization has helped more than

150,000 households in various lands work their way out of substandard housing. By 2005, it estimates that it will have helped a million people to find simple, decent, affordable housing.

Many of these organizations have developed readily available, practical information to assist people living in substandard housing conditions to make the best of their circumstances or even to better them. Certainly, if you find yourself needing help, you can take full advantage of these provisions. There are also many basic things that you can do to

help yourself.—See the box “Your House and Your Health,” on page 7.

Regardless of whether you can improve your personal situation, there is little hope that any one person or human organization can unclench the fist of global forces shaping this crisis. The international community finds itself falling further and further behind the urgent and growing demand for economic development and humanitarian aid. Each year millions of children are born into this downward spiral of poverty. Is there any real hope for a permanent solution?

GOOD HOUSING FOR ALL—AT LAST!

JUST outside Nairobi, Kenya, is the beautiful 140-acre United Nations Gigiri compound, which includes the UN-HABITAT headquarters. This community is a symbol of the international commitment to resolve the global housing

crisis. A walk along the Gigiri Nature Trail, which is on the compound, provides striking evidence of what can be accomplished with concerted effort and adequate funding. Here a former environmental wasteland has been transformed into a fully functional and

(Continued on page II)

***God promises secure housing
for the righteous***





HOUSING IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

Evidently, like the Canaanites before them, the Israelites preferred stone houses, as these buildings were more substantial than others and provided more protection from intruders. (Isaiah 9:10; Amos 5:11) However, in the lowlands, sun-dried or kiln-baked mud bricks were used for the walls of dwellings. Most roofs were flat, sometimes with an upper chamber built on top. Often, there was an oven in the courtyard and, occasionally, a well or a cistern.—2 Samuel 17:18.

The Mosaic Law included several policies on housing. Safety, of course, was of paramount importance. A parapet was to be

constructed around a flat roof for the prevention of accidents. The tenth commandment warned the Israelites against coveting their fellowman's house. Anyone who had to sell his house retained repurchase rights, at least for a while.—Exodus 20:17; Leviticus 25:29-33; Deuteronomy 22:8.

A house in Israel also served as an important place of spiritual instruction. Fathers were specifically directed to teach God's requirements to their sons when sitting in their house, and the home was to be kept free of all appendages of idolatry.—Deuteronomy 6:6, 7; 7:26.

In ancient Israel, homes were used for spiritual activities, such as the celebration of the Festival of Booths



(Continued from page 9)

beautiful recreational area for the staff and visitors.

Just a few miles away, however, sits a relatively new, yet steadily expanding, slum. It is a grim reminder of just how troublesome the current housing crisis is. The shanty homes, built of mud, sticks, and tin, are about 170 square feet in area. The passageways between them reek of dirty wastewater. The residents pay up to five times as much for water as the average citizen does in the United States. Most of the 40,000 or so who live here are in their 20's and 30's. They are not lazy or unmotivated. They came here in search of jobs in nearby Nairobi.

In sharp contrast, world leaders assemble here in clean, functional, attractive surroundings to debate the future of impoverished men, women, and children living right next door. The frustrating truth, according to the secretary-general of the United Nations, is that "the world has the resources, know-how and power" to improve significantly the lives of slum dwellers. What needs to be done then? "It is my hope," Mr. Annan concludes, "that . . . all actors involved [can] overcome the apathy and lack of political will that have been a barrier to progress."

How realistic, though, is that hope? What would it take to get all the international, regional, and local politicians to put aside their interests and work for a common solution? There is Someone who has the resources, know-how, and power to put an end to the current crisis. More important, he also has the compassion and the will to take action soon. In fact, his government has already outlined a detailed program that will permanently resolve the global housing problem.

A New Housing Program

In the Bible, our Creator, Jehovah God, outlines what he purposed to do. He promises: "I am creating new heavens and a new earth." (Isaiah 65:17) That will result in a

dramatic change. The new governmental "heavens" will accomplish what present human governments cannot. God's Kingdom, or government, will guarantee health, safety, and self-respect for everyone making up the new earthly human society. Earlier, Isaiah was told that prospective members of this new earthly society would be gathered during "the final part of the days." (Isaiah 2:1-4) This means that these changes are near at hand. —Matthew 24:3-14; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Significantly, in the words recorded in other verses in Isaiah chapter 65, God specifically offers to provide a permanent home for everyone at that time. "They will certainly build houses and have occupancy," he says. "They will not build and someone else have occupancy." (Isaiah 65:21, 22) Imagine finally having a proper roof over your head and living in clean surroundings and safe conditions in a wonderful paradise! Who does not long for such conditions? But how can you be sure of what God has promised?

A Promise You Can Trust

When God first created Adam and Eve, he did not abandon them in a wasteland. Rather, he settled them in a garden in Eden, a beautiful park with clean air and plenty of water and food. (Genesis 2:8-15) Adam was told to "fill the earth," not to overcrowd it. (Genesis 1:28) From the beginning, God purposed that everyone there should enjoy order, harmony, and an abundance of good things.

Later, in Noah's day, human society became filled with violence and immorality, so

In Our Next Issue

- The Drinking Trap—Are You at Risk?
- Should Women Hide Their Beauty?
- Rehabilitation in Mexico's Prisons

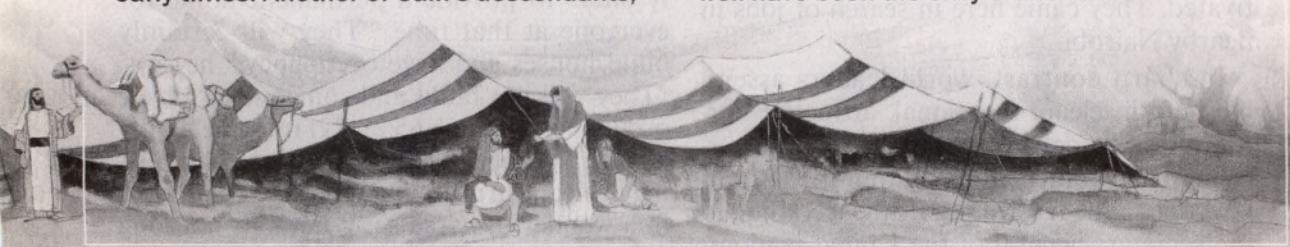
THE EARLIEST HOUSES

The Bible says nothing about the first man, Adam, living in a house. However, Genesis 4:17 says that Cain “engaged in building a city and called the city’s name by the name of his son Enoch.” This city was likely nothing more than a fortified village by present standards. The type of housing used is not stated in the account. Perhaps the entire village was made up of Cain’s immediate family members.

Tents were a common form of shelter in early times. Another of Cain’s descendants,

Jabal, is called “the founder of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.” (Genesis 4:20) Tents would obviously have been much easier to erect and move about.

In time, many civilizations developed cities filled with ever more elaborate homes. In the city of Ur, for example, where the patriarch Abram (Abraham) once resided, ruins indicate that some residents enjoyed the comforts of plastered and whitewashed houses that had 13 or 14 rooms. Such homes may well have been the envy of the times.



“the earth came to be ruined in the sight of the true God.” (Genesis 6:11, 12) Did God just turn a blind eye to the situation? No. He took immediate action. He cleansed the earth by means of a global Flood, both for the sake of his own name and in behalf of righteous Noah and his offspring. So when Noah came out of the ark into his new home, he was told once again to spread out and “become many and fill the earth.”—Genesis 9:1.

Still later, God gave the Israelites the inheritance promised to their forefather Abraham. That Promised Land was described as “a land good and spacious, . . . flowing with milk and honey.” (Exodus 3:8) Because of their disobedience, the Israelites wandered in the wilderness without a permanent home for 40 years. Yet, true to his word, God eventually provided them with a land to settle in. The inspired account reports: “Jehovah gave them rest all around . . . Not a promise failed out of all the good promise that Jehovah had made to the house of Israel; it all came true.”—Joshua 21:43-45.

Home at Last!

It is clear, therefore, that Jehovah’s words in Isaiah chapter 65 are not idle promises. As the Creator of all things, he certainly has the power to do whatever is needed to cleanse the earth and fulfill his original purpose for it. (Isaiah 40:26, 28; 55:10, 11) Moreover, the Bible assures us that he wants to do so. (Psalm 72:12, 13) He has acted in the past to provide righteous humans with adequate housing, and he will soon do so again.

In fact, when his Son, Jesus Christ, came to the earth, Jesus specifically taught his followers to pray for ‘God’s will to take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.’ (Matthew 6:10) He indicated that the earth would be a paradise. (Luke 23:43) Think of what that will mean. No more slums, squatter settlements, people sleeping in the streets, or evictions. What a happy time that will be! Under the rule of God’s Kingdom, everyone will receive a permanent home at last!

THE Cattle Egret

A FRIEND
OF MAN AND BEAST

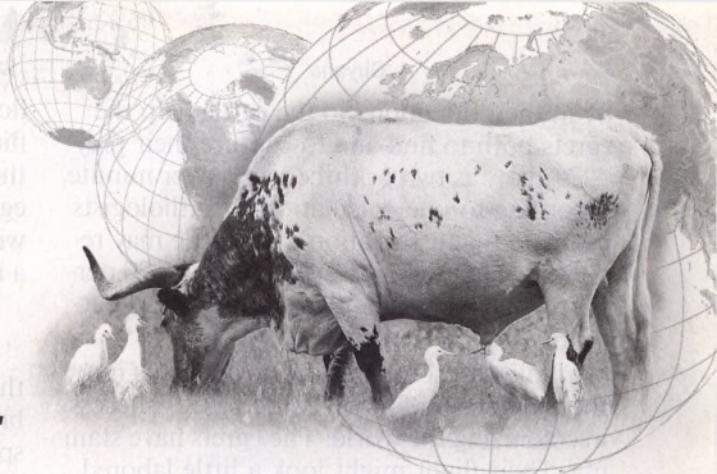
IT MUST be one of the most peaceful colonizations of all time. Not a shot was fired; not a drop of blood was shed. The native peoples were not exploited, and no country was stripped of its wealth. Nevertheless, the invaders inexorably occupied one country after another.

This invasion occurred during the 20th century. But this new conquest went largely unnoticed because the colonizers were birds. These resourceful birds, which now occupy five continents, are known as cattle egrets—or *Bubulcus ibis*, to use their scientific name.

A Colonization Without Precedent

For centuries the cattle egret was mainly confined to tropical Africa. But about a century ago, it successfully colonized South Africa. Some sources say that during the 1930's, sufficient numbers of cattle egrets crossed the Atlantic to enable them to establish a foothold in South America. By the mid-20th century, they arrived in Florida, and a decade later their range extended from Canada in the north to Argentina in the south. "If the cattle egret . . . came to the New World on its own two wings and the wind," wrote Roger Tory Peterson in 1954, "it is the only Old World bird in history to establish residence on the mainland of the Americas without human aid."

Ornithologists have now concluded that the egrets did indeed perform this remarkable feat. It is calculated that with the help of



prevailing trade winds, an egret could cross the ocean separating West Africa from South America in about 40 hours. And the Atlantic Ocean was not the only barrier they traversed. Other cattle egrets flew east until they reached New Zealand. During this same period, they became common birds throughout much of Eurasia, where their vast territory now stretches from the Iberian Peninsula in the west to Japan in the east.

The cattle egret becomes a resident bird in countries where the weather permits; but in areas where the winters are harsh, it migrates to warmer climates after the breeding cycle. Its epic journeys still continue, and it regularly turns up on isolated islands of the Pacific or even in the Antarctic.

The Secret Behind the Conquest

A key factor in the cattle egret's expansion has been its adaptability and its relationship with man, particularly with cattle farmers. Although most egrets feed on aquatic animals, the cattle egret prefers insects. It usually associates with cattle, although it may also follow elephants, kangaroos, tractors, or even forest fires—anything that disturbs the insects on which the egret feeds.

Of course, egrets can find their food without outside help, but cattle make ideal beaters for these avian hunters. As cattle lumber along in the pasture, they stir up grasshoppers, flies, and beetles. The attentive egrets that walk alongside the cattle can snatch the insects that



fly in their direction. So the cattle help the egrets both to find and to capture their prey—as many as two or three insects per minute, according to one calculation. Ornithologists estimate that association with cattle may reduce an egret's energy expenditure by 30 percent while increasing the number of prey it captures by 50 percent.

Finding a useful hunting partner was not the only reason for the cattle egret's success in colonizing the world. The egrets have stamina. Their flight might look a little labored compared with the direct, powerful flight of ducks or pigeons. But egrets can cross the Sahara, and as mentioned earlier, they have flown the 2,500 miles separating West Africa from South America.

Cattle egrets seem to have a nomadic nature, and this wanderlust also favors their expansion. What other insect-eating bird would venture as far south as the desolate Antarctic—seemingly just out of curiosity?

As they wandered far afield, cattle egrets encountered ideal habitat practically everywhere. On every continent they reached, farmers had either turned vast tracts of land into cattle ranches or irrigated fields that swarmed with insects. So the egrets moved in and prospered.

Benefits for Man and Beast

Its all-white plumage, gregarious habits, and fondness for the company of cattle make these egrets easy to observe. Snow-white cattle egrets fluttering in formation over the plains not only beautify the surroundings but also perform an invaluable service as pest controllers. A flock of up to 40,000 egrets was once seen in Tanzania feeding on swarms of grasshoppers. Some farmers consider the cattle egret such a useful bird that they have introduced them for the purpose of controlling insects that damage their crops. Each bird can consume more than 600 grasshoppers and crickets a day.

Cattle also benefit from the presence of a

flock of egrets, since the birds eat flies and other insects that constantly annoy the cattle. The cattle seem to know that the egrets are their friends and willingly put up with the cheeky egrets that occasionally hitch a ride on their back.

Flocking Together

Cattle egrets like to have company, whether they are breeding, roosting, or feeding. When breeding, they readily share a tree with other species of herons or with storks. Apparently, such collective nesting serves to deter predators, and all species benefit from having such a communal home. The breeding colonies are invariably busy and noisy. Egrets are not averse to stealing sticks from nearby nests, so a lot of bickering goes on. Some egrets hunch down over their nests, while others busily forage underneath the tree for useful sticks that have fallen to the ground. Their cousins, other herons and storks, whose large nests occupy more prominent perches, usually ignore all the unruly behavior that goes on around them.

The egrets' striking courting display includes stretching, bill clapping, and an elaborate exhibition of the yellow plumage that the males flaunt during the breeding season. When one of the parent birds arrives at the nest, its mate receives it with a “greeting ceremony” that involves the proud display of its back plumes. These shows are not difficult to observe, since the birds are quite tolerant of humans.

Whether you are taking a safari in Africa, passing through cattle country in North America, or visiting rice fields in the Orient, you may well spot these attractive birds. They might be walking around the feet of elephants, riding cockily on the back of a steer, or just flying home to roost as the sun sets. Wherever you see them, they will undoubtedly add a touch of charm to the countryside, while also performing a useful service for man and beast. Their epic colonization has proved to be one of the kindest the world has ever known.



Australia

Kenya

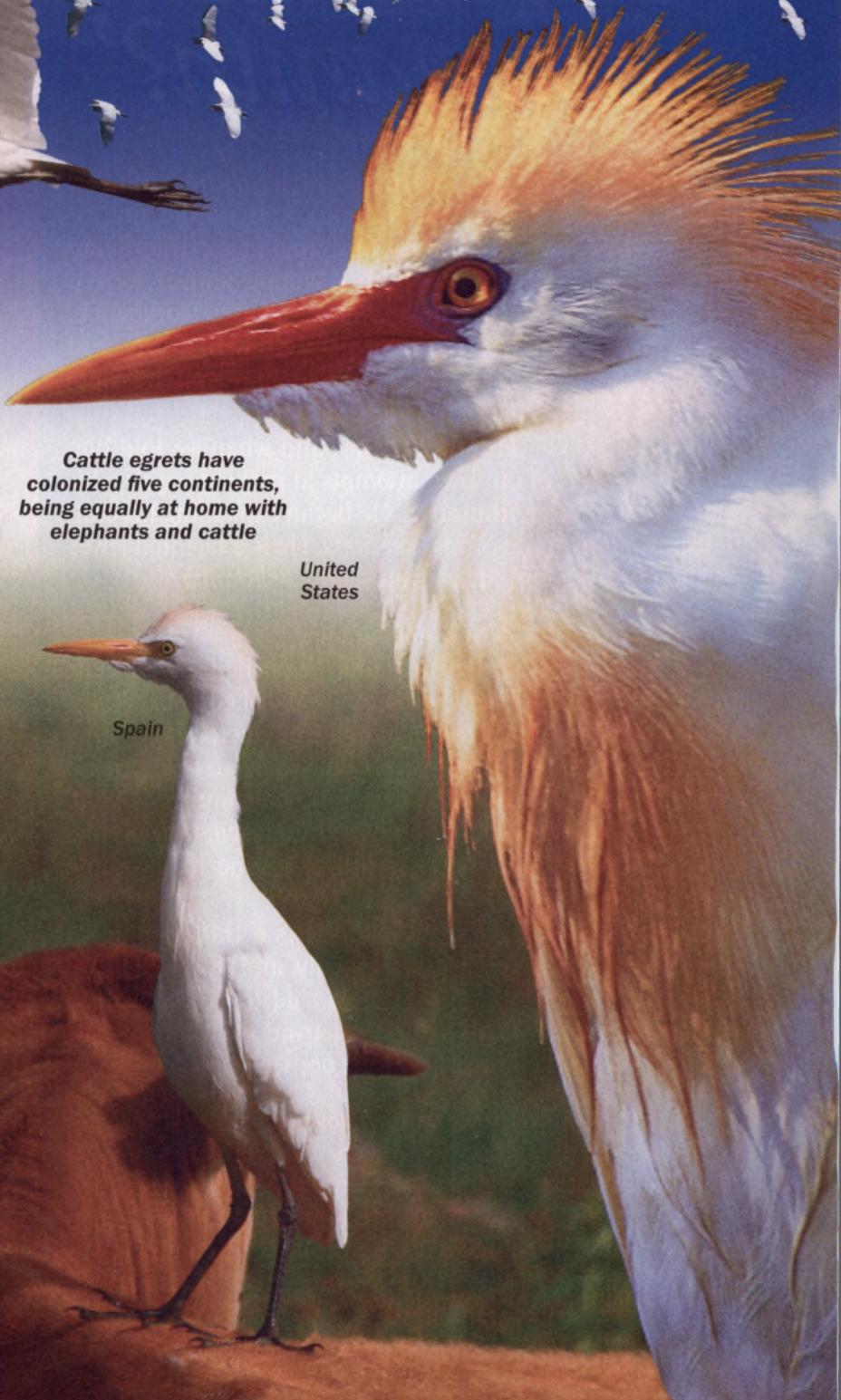
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**Cattle egrets have
colonized five continents,
being equally at home with
elephants and cattle**

United
States

Spain



“Have You Seen a Bolivianita?”

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN BOLIVIA



IT WAS a little room that we squeezed into, and we did not expect to find anything extraordinarily beautiful. A young jeweler looked up at us from his well-used workbench, which was littered with tools and sketches. We told him that we were looking for jewelry.

He was friendly, and when we told him of our own attempts at making jewelry, his eyes sparkled with enthusiasm. He began explaining his craft and showing us some of his creations. He is a talented jeweler. Then he asked us, “Have you seen a *bolivianita*?”

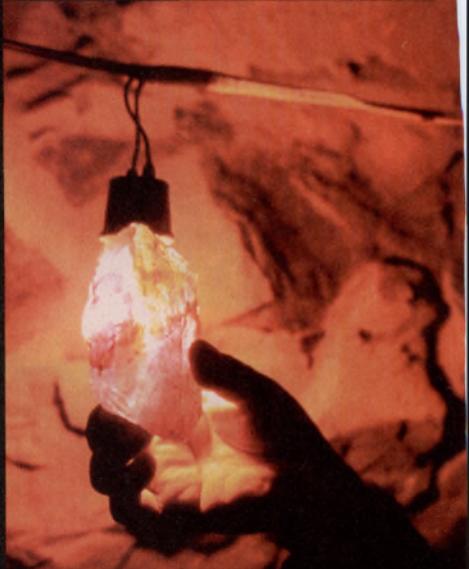
A New Appearance

Noticing our puzzled expressions, he pushed aside the debris on his bench. Then he carefully unrolled a black velvet cloth, giving us our initial glimpse of faceted bolivianite gems—deep purple at first glance. But when we held one up to the light and looked into it, we saw the glimmer of gold. This is the unique beauty of bolivianite, a fascinating combination of purple amethyst and amber citrine in the same stone.

Bolivianite (*bolivianita*, in Spanish) is a trade name for ametrine. It was first marketed openly in 1989. When we heard that Bolivia, where we live, is said to be the world's only significant source of natural ametrine, we wanted to see where this rare but affordable stone comes from.

An Adventurous Voyage

Visiting the mine turned out to be quite an adventure. In Puerto Suárez, near Bolivia's border with Brazil, we boarded a little boat with an outboard motor for the 100-mile trip northward up the Paraguay River through the Pantanal. We

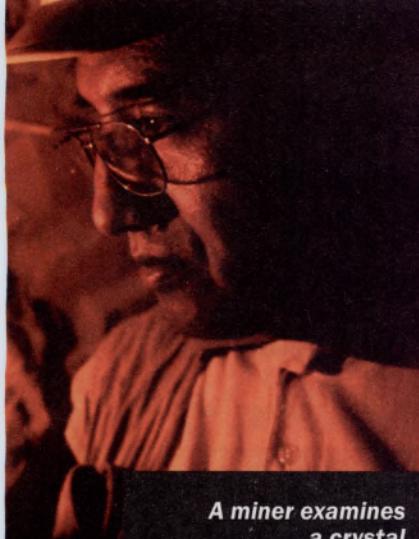


Crystal-lined cavern



Crystal extraction





**A miner examines
a crystal**



were amazed by the wildlife—egrets and jabirus in the air, alligators in the water, and otters playing on the riverbank.

We arrived six hours later, and then we took a four-wheel-drive truck to the mine. Some 120 people work there. Two engineers kindly offered to show us around. The mine covers about four square miles and has numerous shafts, some almost 200 feet deep. The engineers explained that they use the traditional mining methods of drilling and blasting, but once they reach the pockets of precious stone, they extract the crystals by hand. They send the mixture of raw stones to the processing plant, where 18 percent of them are turned into gems. The rest are formed into beads, spheres, and prisms. Some pieces are carved into sculptures, and other chunks are sold as ornaments just as they are.

A Cavern of Crystals

We donned gloves and hard hats for the descent into the mine. Using flashlights, we went down six flights of wooden ladders, descending in a shaft to a depth of about 65 feet. When we came to the end of a winding tunnel, we gasped in amazement. We were gazing into a chamber measuring 13 by 10 by 4 feet, lined with purple-and-gold-colored crystal. The mine owner plans to preserve it as a natural wonder. It is one of the most beautiful sights we have ever seen.

Just how two colors come to be in the same crystal is not completely understood. It seems that as the quartz crystals were forming, some change occurred in the geochemical conditions, temperature, radiation, or pressure. Gemologists skillfully cut and polish the stones so that both colors are included in each gem.

It was an unforgettable trip. Remembering that isolated mine and the effort required to extract, cut, and polish the gems makes us appreciate the beauty of bolivianite even more.—Psalm 104:24.



**A faceted
bolivianite gem**

Gemas, Minerales y Metales del Oriente, S.R.L.



A Pink Lake?

By *Awake!* writer in Senegal

CAN a lake really be pink? Lake Retba is called Pink Lake, and since it is only 18 miles from our home in Dakar, Senegal, in West Africa, we decide to take a trip to see if it truly deserves the name. As we arrive, we catch sight of the water sparkling in the sunshine. Sure enough, it is a lovely shade of pink. Our guide explains that sunlight reacts with microorganisms in the water to produce the extraordinary hue. However, there is more to see here than just the color of the lake.

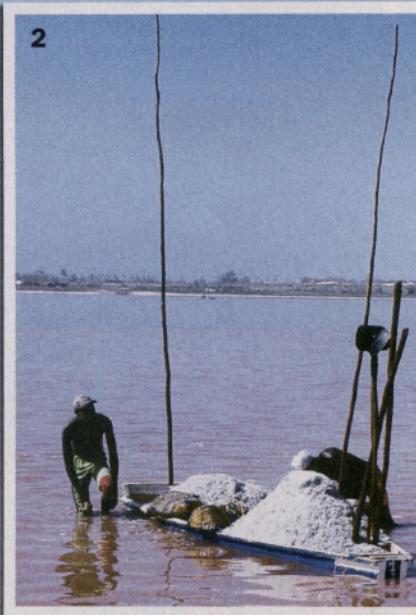
Beneath the lake's shallow waters lies a bed of salt. The water is so salty and buoyant that some visitors, we notice, cannot pass up the opportunity to float effortlessly on its surface.

It is obvious that Pink Lake provides income for hundreds of people (1). Along the waterfront, workers are loading salt onto trucks. We pause for a moment to observe the locals extracting salt from the lake. We can see men standing chest-deep in the lake, breaking up salt with long picks. They shovel it into baskets and load it into boats. One of the workers tells us that it takes three hours to gather a ton of salt. The vessels are so loaded down that they barely keep afloat (2). When the boats arrive at the shore, women take over the job, carrying the salt on their heads in buckets (3). As they work together, they serve as a human conveyor belt.

Our trip was a fascinating experience. This pink lake is another of the many wonders that make our earth a precious gift from Jehovah.—Psalm 115:16.



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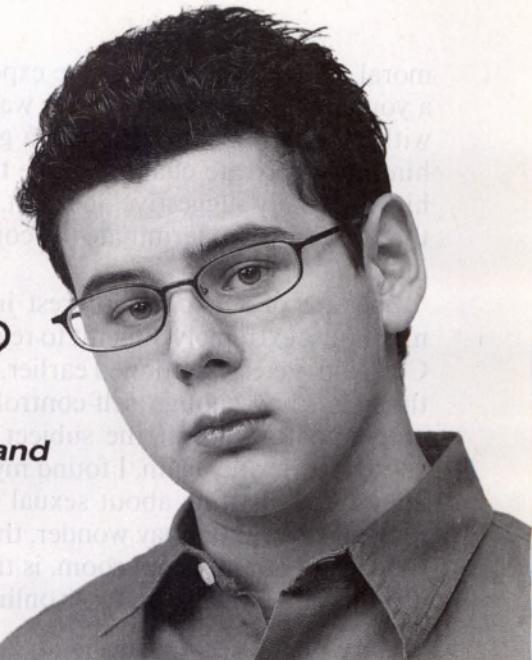


Young People Ask . . .

Chat Rooms —What Should I Know About Them?

"Being shy, I can go into a chat room online and talk with people I normally would not talk to. They have no idea who I am."—Peter*

"In a chat room, you have the feeling that you can say whatever you want."—Abigail.



CHAT ROOMS are “areas” on the Internet where users can have live, two-way conversations via text messages. Chat rooms can accommodate large numbers of people, who can read and respond to each other’s messages.

Some chat rooms are particularly appealing to youthful Internet users. Millions of young people from a variety of cultures exchange opinions daily on almost any subject. Some schools now tap this global resource. For example, with their teacher’s supervision, students in the United States might discuss social issues with fellow students in Spain, England, or elsewhere. Students may even chat about their class project with a qualified engineer, chemist, or another expert.

Many people who visit chat rooms, though, are not there to discuss academic subjects. If you have access to the Internet, what dangers should you be aware of?

A Hunting Ground for Sexual Predators

“I was talking with some people in a chat room,” says Abigail, “when a man asked me if

I knew any 14-year-olds. He wanted to have sex with them. He said that he was willing to give them money for sex.”

Abigail’s experience is not an isolated one. The problem of online predators is so widespread that some governments have produced guides on how youths can be protected. For example, a publication of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the United States warns of individuals who immediately engage in sexually explicit talk. It also warns of those who “gradually seduce their targets through the use of attention, affection, kindness, and even gifts.”

Describing the specific methods used by some of these predators, the FBI guide says: “They listen to and empathize with the problems of children. They will be aware of the latest music, hobbies, and interests of children. These individuals attempt to lower children’s inhibitions gradually by slowly introducing sexual context and content into their conversations.”

It is not just perverted adults who pose a danger. You also need to beware of youths who are ignorant of or who deride the Bible’s

* Some names have been changed.

moral standards. Consider the experience of a young man named Cody. He was chatting with other youths online when a girl invited him into a private chat area. She then asked him a sexually suggestive question. Cody had the self-control to terminate the conversation immediately.

Because of a natural interest in sex, you may find it extremely difficult to react the way Cody did. Peter, mentioned earlier, admits: "I thought I had enough self-control to terminate a chat session if the subject turned to sex. But time and again, I found myself hanging on and chatting about sexual subjects. I felt bad later." You may wonder, though, 'If I hide who I am in a chat room, is there really any harm in talking about sex online?'

Are Online Sex Discussions Harmful?

The Bible talks openly about sex. (Proverbs 5:18, 19) Admittedly, humans have an increased interest in sex during youth. So you should talk about sex. You need answers to your questions on this important subject.*

* The book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* contains sound, Bible-based advice regarding sex before marriage, masturbation, and other similar topics.

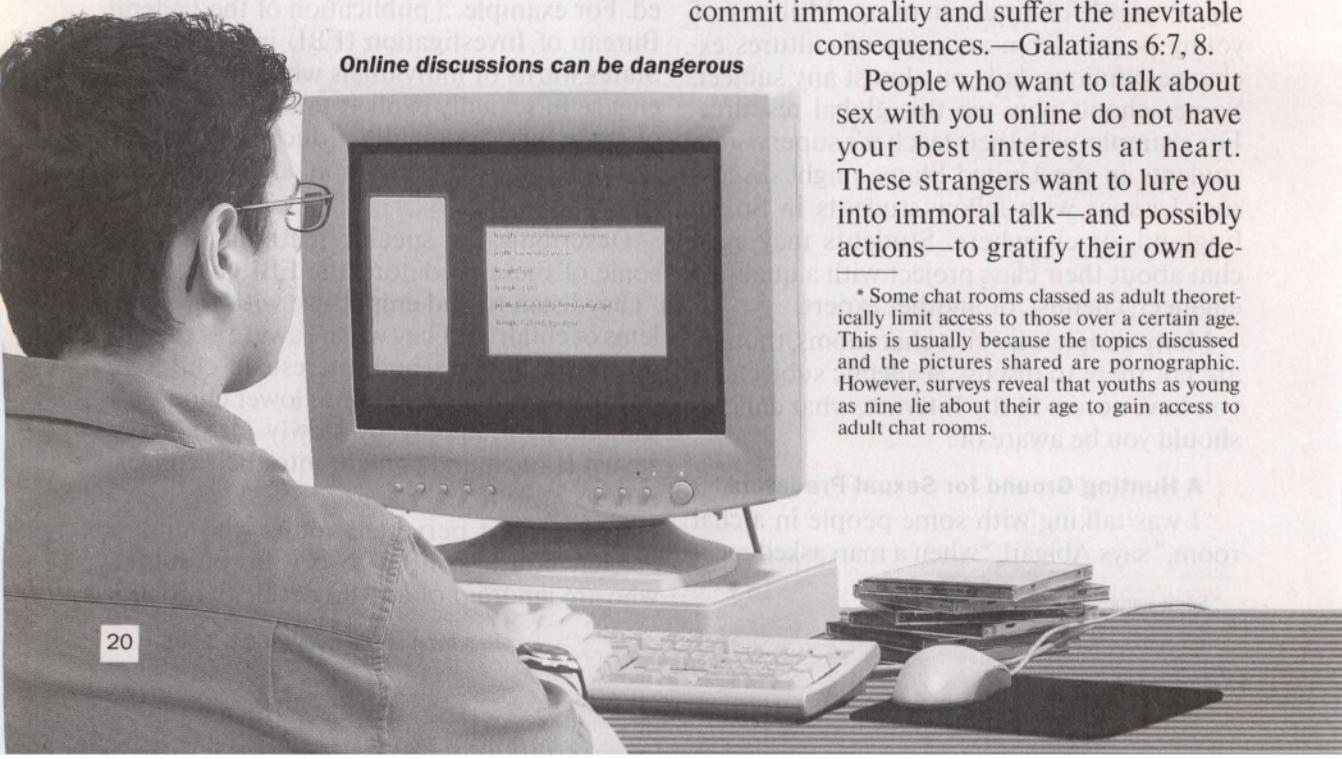
However, the way you satisfy your curiosity about sexual matters will have a profound impact on your happiness, both present and future.

If you choose to chat online about sex, even if it is with people who say they are your friends, your experience could well end up being like that of a young man described in the Bible. Out of curiosity, he wandered near the house of a prostitute. At first, she just talked to him. Once his desire was aroused, though, talk was not enough. "All of a sudden he is going after her, like a bull that comes even to the slaughter, . . . just as a bird hastens into the trap."—Proverbs 7:22, 23.

Similarly, talking about sex online could easily lead to your going after greater gratification. "I was chatting online with someone," recalls a teen named Philip, "when an immoral picture popped up on my screen. The person I was chatting with had sent it to my computer." Once your desire to consider sexually explicit material has been aroused, you may be tempted to pursue your interest further, such as in an adult chat room.* Many who fall into the trap of viewing pornography go on to commit immorality and suffer the inevitable consequences.—Galatians 6:7, 8.

People who want to talk about sex with you online do not have your best interests at heart. These strangers want to lure you into immoral talk—and possibly actions—to gratify their own de-

* Some chat rooms classed as adult theoretically limit access to those over a certain age. This is usually because the topics discussed and the pictures shared are pornographic. However, surveys reveal that youths as young as nine lie about their age to gain access to adult chat rooms.



sires.* In an attempt to protect his son from a sexually exploitative person, King Solomon wrote: "Keep your way far off from alongside her, and do not get near to the entrance of her house, that you may not give to others your dignity, . . . that strangers may not satisfy themselves with your power." (Proverbs 5:8-10) The principle behind this advice might be applied this way: Do not get near chat rooms where sexual topics are discussed so that you do not give your dignity to strangers who just want to satisfy themselves at your expense.

"Those Who Hide What They Are"

You may say, though, that you do not want to talk about sex online. Like Peter and Abigail, mentioned previously, you might see a chat room as a place where you can express yourself anonymously, without fear of embarrassment.[#] Even so, there is another danger that you should be aware of.

The anonymous nature of chat rooms could tempt you into becoming deceitful. Abigail says: "I would start conversations with people and then take on a personality to fit the conversation." Like Abigail, you may be tempted to assume a different personality to fit in with a certain chat room group. You might conform to their standards of language or adopt their interests in an attempt to make new friends. Conversely, you may see a chat room as a place to express ideas and feelings that you think your parents or friends would disapprove of. Either way, you end up deceiving one group or the other. By pretending online to be someone you are not, you are deceiving your chat room contacts. On the other hand, if you do not express your real

* Since you cannot verify whom you are conversing with in a chat room, the person you are talking to may be pretending to be of the opposite sex, though actually being the same sex as you are.

[#] *A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety* recommends that users never reveal their name, address, or phone number to strangers they meet in a chat room!

feelings and ideas to your family and friends, you are deceiving them.

While chat rooms are a relatively recent phenomenon, the tendency for humans to lie and deceive is as old as history itself. The Bible reveals that the original liar, Satan the Devil, pioneered the tactic used by some chat room visitors. He disguised his real identity before telling his first lie. (Genesis 3:1-5; Revelation 12:9, 10) You can avoid being duped by liars by following King David's example. "I have not sat with men of untruth," he wrote, "and with those who hide what they are I do not come in."—Psalm 26:4.

As noted earlier, some chat rooms may serve a useful purpose. Nevertheless, youths who want to please Jehovah must exercise extreme caution in their use of this modern communication method. If you need to access one, such as for a school project, ask your parents or perhaps another mature adult to sit in on your session. A future article will highlight two additional reasons why you should be cautious about logging on to chat rooms. It will also discuss how you can deal with specific problems that might arise even if you are cautious about their use.





By Awake!
writer in the
Dominican
Republic

"How we remember ...the Garlic!"

IF YOU found yourself far away from home with an empty stomach, what food would you want to eat? The fresh fruit and vegetables grown in your native land might come to mind, or perhaps you would think of a succulent stew your mother used to make of meat or fish. But would garlic make your mouth water?

Some 3,500 years ago, as the people of Israel trekked across the wilderness of Sinai, they said: "How we remember the fish that we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers and the watermelons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic!" (Numbers 11: 4, 5) Yes, they longed for garlic. The Jews took such a liking to it that according to tradition, they called themselves garlic eaters.

How did the Israelites acquire a taste for garlic? During their 215-year extended stay in Egypt, that herb was part of their diet. Archaeological evidence indicates that long before Jacob and his family arrived, the Egyptians were cultivating garlic. Greek historian Herodotus reports that Egyptian authorities purchased enormous quantities of onions, radishes, and garlic to feed their pyramid-building slaves. This diet, heavy on garlic, seemed to increase the workers' strength and stamina. When the Egyptians buried Pharaoh Tutankhamen, they left many valuable objects in his tomb, including garlic. Of course, garlic was of no use to the dead, but it has proved very useful to the living.

Strong Medicine

Doctors have long used garlic in treating their patients. Many centuries ago the Greek physicians Hippocrates and Dioscorides rec-

ommended it for digestive problems, leprosy, cancer, wounds, infections, and heart trouble. In the 19th century, French chemist Louis Pasteur studied garlic and described its antiseptic properties. In Africa during the 20th century, Albert Schweitzer, a famous missionary-doctor, used garlic to treat amoebic dysentery and other diseases. When Russian military doctors ran short of modern drugs during World War II, they used garlic to treat injured soldiers. Thus, garlic became known as Russian penicillin. More recently, scientists have studied how the circulatory system benefits from garlic.

Garlic is thus outstanding nutritionally and medicinally, and its smell and flavor are truly unique. Where was garlic first grown? Some botanists believe that it originated in central Asia, from there spreading all over the globe. Let us look at a beautiful place in the Western Hemisphere where garlic is famous.

Growing Garlic in Constanza

The Constanza Valley, in the Dominican Republic, has a temperate climate. Surrounded by mountains, the valley is blessed with rich soil and abundant rainfall. Constanza is an ideal location for growing garlic.

In September or October, the farmers of Constanza clear and plow their fields, leaving deep furrows separated by banks of earth about three feet wide. On each of these banks, they cut three or four shallower furrows in which they will plant garlic. Meanwhile, workers separate whole garlic bulbs into individual cloves. After soaking the cloves in water for 30 minutes, the workers place them in the furrows prepared for planting. During



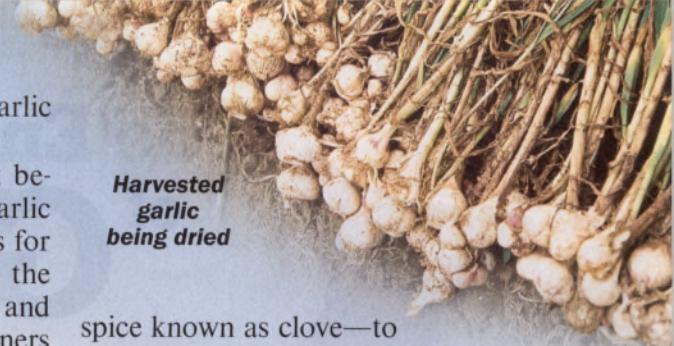
the mild Dominican winter, the garlic grows.

In March or April, the harvest begins. Workers uproot the mature garlic plants and let them lie in the fields for five or six days. Then they collect the garlic, cut off the roots and tops, and place the clean bulbs in open containers called *cribas*. They leave the filled *cribas* in the sun for a day to cure the harvested garlic. After that, it is ready for sale.

A Little Garlic, a Lot of Smell

When you sit down to eat a tasty stew or salad, your nose quickly alerts you if the food contains garlic. Why, though, does garlic have no smell when it is intact in its bulb? Garlic contains potent chemicals that are isolated from each other until a clove is bruised, cut, or crushed. When you mince a clove of garlic, an enzyme called alliinase comes in contact with a substance called aliiin. An instantaneous reaction follows, which produces allicin, the source of garlic's aroma and taste.

When you bite a piece of fresh garlic, it is as if the allicin explodes in your mouth. Whether this brings you delight or not, the aroma of garlic will soon surround you. Can you do anything to lessen garlic odor on your breath? You may try chewing sprigs of parsley or a bit of clove—not another garlic clove but the



Harvested
garlic
being dried

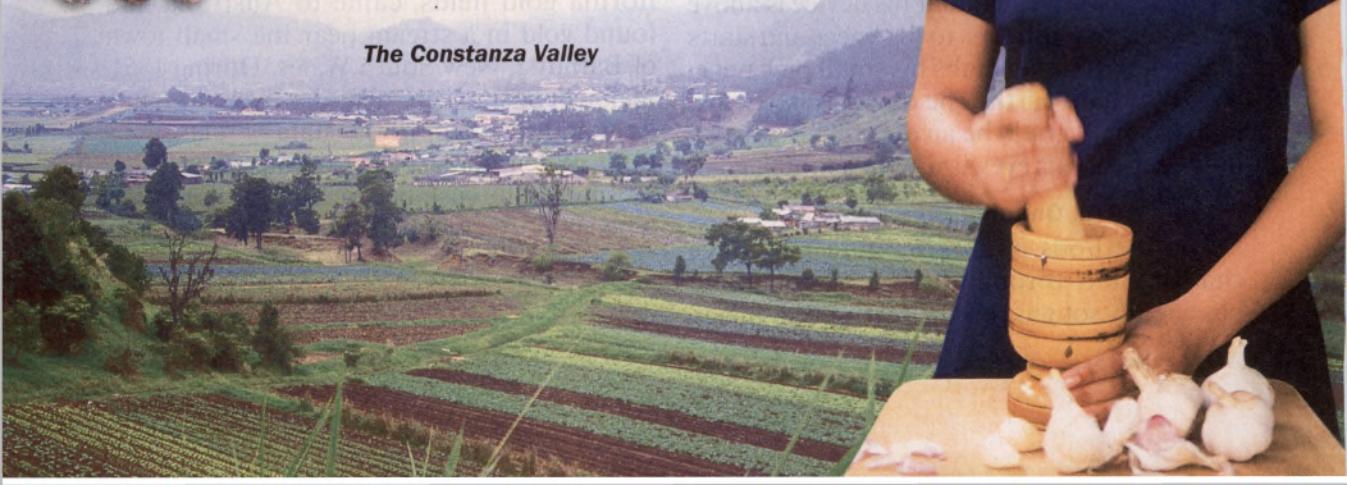
spice known as clove—to cover the odor.

But keep in mind that garlic on your breath comes mainly from your lungs. When you eat garlic, your digestive system transfers it to your bloodstream, which takes it to your lungs. When you exhale, its pungent odor comes out on your breath. So mouthwash and parsley do not eliminate garlic breath. Is there a definitive solution to this problem? Not really. But if you have everyone around you eat garlic, then perhaps no one will notice!

In many lands food without garlic is hard to imagine. And even where garlic is normally used with caution, many garlic eaters believe that its benefits far outweigh any disadvantages.

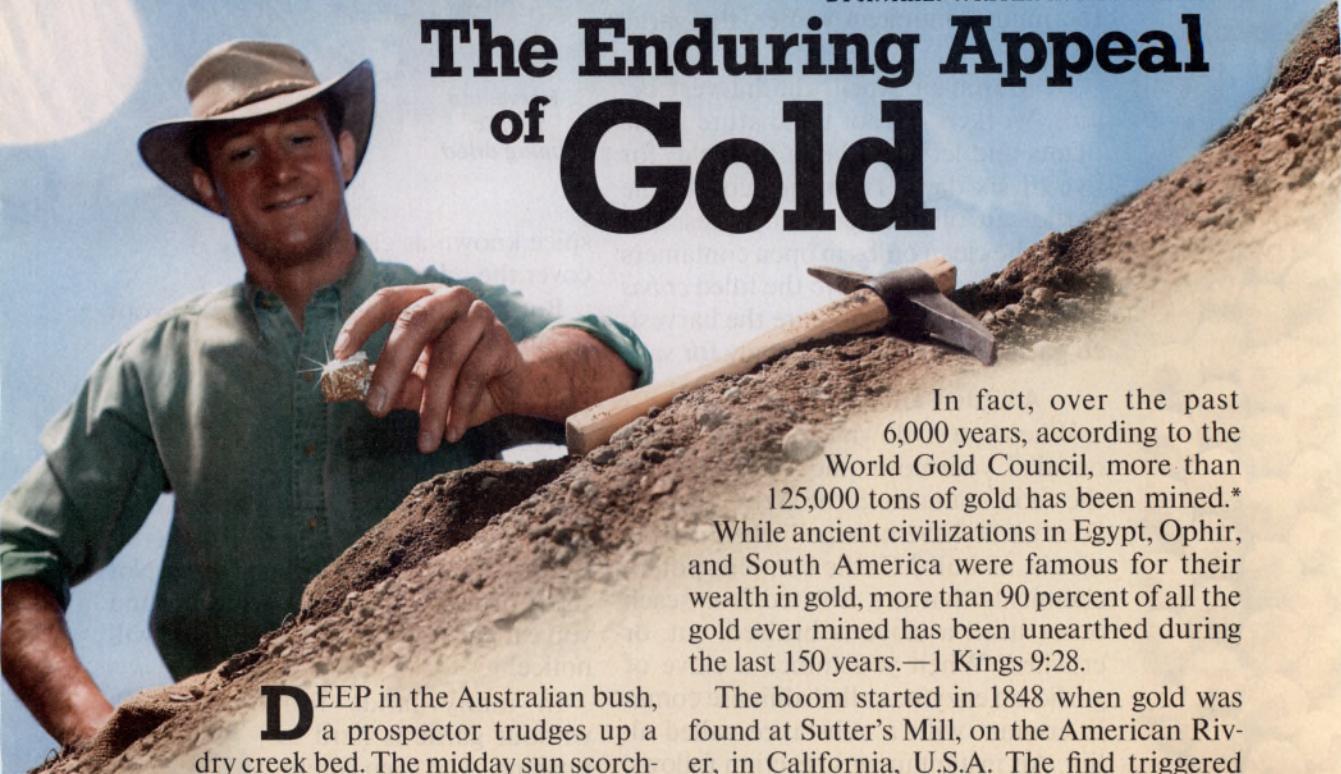


Why does
garlic smell
only after it
is crushed?



The Constanza Valley

The Enduring Appeal of Gold



DEEP in the Australian bush, a prospector trudges up a dry creek bed. The midday sun scorches his back. Sweat seeps through his dusty shirt. Undeterred, he clutches a long metal rod that is attached to a dinner-plate-size device. He swings the state-of-the-art metal detector to and fro across the ground. Its magnetic field penetrates three feet into the stony soil. The headphones clamped to his ears pick up a signal from the metal detector and emit a steady, high-pitched whistle.

Suddenly his pulse quickens as the high-pitched whistle descends to a guttural clicking noise—a sure sign that his device is above buried metal. He drops to his knees and starts digging. With urgent jabs his small pick penetrates the hard earth. The object is likely just a rusty nail. It could be an old coin. But as the hole deepens, his eyes strain for a hint of gold.

An Ongoing Gold Rush

The methods of finding gold may have changed, but throughout history mankind has eagerly sought this lustrous yellow metal.

In fact, over the past 6,000 years, according to the World Gold Council, more than 125,000 tons of gold has been mined.*

While ancient civilizations in Egypt, Ophir, and South America were famous for their wealth in gold, more than 90 percent of all the gold ever mined has been unearthed during the last 150 years.—1 Kings 9:28.

The boom started in 1848 when gold was found at Sutter's Mill, on the American River, in California, U.S.A. The find triggered what came to be known as a rush—a flood of hopeful prospectors descending on an area. All who came dreamed of finding their fortune buried in the California soil. Many failed, but some succeeded spectacularly. In 1851 alone, 77 tons was produced from just the California gold fields.

About the same time, gold was discovered on the other side of the world in the fledgling colony of Australia. Edward Hargraves, who had gained valuable experience in the California gold fields, came to Australia and found gold in a stream near the small town of Bathurst, New South Wales. During 1851, major deposits were also discovered at Ballarat and Bendigo, in the state of Victoria. When news of the discoveries spread, the rush began. Some who came were professional

* Gold is so dense that a cube of the metal measuring just one foot three inches on all sides would weigh about a ton.



Gold boom of the mid-1800's:

1. Sutter's Mill, California, U.S.A.
2. Bendigo Creek, Victoria, Australia
3. Golden Point, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia

miners. Many, though, were farmhands or office workers who had never before swung a miner's pick. Describing the scene in one gold-rush town, a local paper of the day declared: "Bathurst is mad again. The delirium of gold fever has returned with increased intensity. Men meet together, stare stupidly at each other, talk incoherent nonsense and wonder what will happen next."

What happened next? A population boom. In the decade following 1851, the number of people living in Australia doubled as optimistic prospectors converged on the country from all corners of the globe. Gold was discovered in varying quantities across the continent. When one rush slowed, another began. In just the year 1856, Australian prospectors unearthed 95 tons of gold. Then, in 1893,

Where Is Gold Found?

■ Rocks: Gold is present in tiny quantities in all igneous rocks. Some patches of rock contain a high enough concentration of gold to make it worthwhile for companies to mine, crush, and chemically leach the metal from the ore. High-quality ore contains only about one ounce of gold per ton of rock.

■ Reefs: On rare occasions gold is found in sheets or veins wedged between layers of quartz. This is known as reef gold.

■ Rivers: Over time, gold-bearing reefs that become exposed to sun, rain, and wind break down, releasing trapped gold, which then accumulates in creeks and rivers as tiny specks or flakes. In this form it is known as alluvial gold.

■ Earth's Surface: Odd-shaped clumps of gold that seem to form at random in the earth's surface are known as nuggets. These clumps can sometimes reach spectacular sizes. The largest gold nugget ever found in Australia was called The Welcome Stranger, and it weighed about 150 pounds! It was discovered in 1869 in the Australian state of Victoria. Australia is the home of big nuggets, having yielded 23 of the 25 biggest nuggets ever discovered. Today gold nuggets, which can be as small as a match head, are more rare than gem-quality diamonds.



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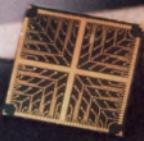
Modern Applications of Gold

High-quality compact discs contain a thin layer of gold

Gold foil is used on space vehicles
NASA photo



► Gold is used on microchips
Carita Stubbe



◀ Gold-plated wires have an outstanding ability to conduct electricity
Courtesy Tanaka Denshi Kogyo



miners started coaxing gold from the ground near Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Western Australia. Since that time, over 1,300 tons has been extracted from what is described as "the richest square mile of gold-bearing dirt in the world." That area is still producing gold and now boasts the world's deepest opencut gold mine—a man-made canyon over one mile wide, nearly two miles long, and more than 1,200 feet deep!

Today, Australia is the third-largest gold producer in the world. The industry employs 60,000 people and extracts about 300 tons, or five billion dollars' (Australian) worth, of gold annually. The United States is the world's second-largest miner of gold. For over a hundred years, though, the world's leading gold producer has been South Africa. Almost 40 percent of all the gold ever mined has come from that country. Worldwide, more than 2,000 tons of gold is extracted each year. What happens to all that precious metal?

Wealth and Beauty Combined

Some gold is still used to make coins. The Perth Mint, in Western Australia, is now one of the world's main producers of this type of currency. These coins are not in general circulation but are hoarded by collectors. Additionally, about one quarter of all the gold ever mined has been transformed into gold ingots—solid blocks of tangible

The world's deepest opencut gold mine, in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Western Australia

Courtesy Newmont Mining Corporation



wealth—and locked away in bank vaults. The United States holds most of the world's gold bullion in its bank vaults.

Currently, about 80 percent of the gold mined each year—some 1,600 tons—is crafted into jewelry. The United States may have the most gold in its banks, but when jewelry is included in the count, India has the largest quantity of gold within its boundaries. In addition to being valuable and beautiful, this soft metal possesses attributes that make it suitable for hard work.

An Ancient Metal With Modern Applications

The Pharaohs of ancient Egypt likely recognized that gold is resistant to corrosion and thus used it in fashioning their death masks. Testifying to gold's durability, when archaeologists uncovered the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamen thousands of years after his death, the young king's golden death mask was found to be untarnished and still a lustrous yellow color.

Gold retains its luster because water and air—the destroyers of other metals, such as iron—don't affect it. This resistance to corrosion combined with gold's outstanding ability to conduct electricity makes it ideal for use in electronic components. Each year about 200 tons of gold goes into the manufacture of TVs, VCRs, cell phones, and some 50 million computers. In addition, high-quality compact discs contain a thin layer of durable gold to ensure dependable data storage.

Thin films of gold display some unusual characteristics. Consider the

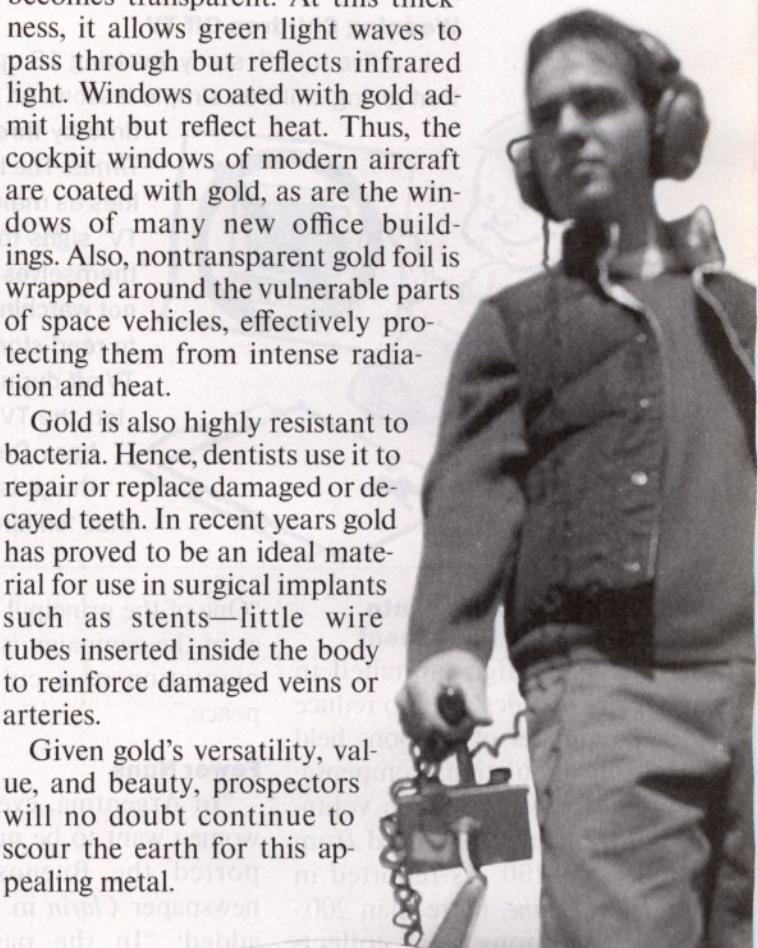
metal's interaction with light. When processed into ultra-thin sheets, gold becomes transparent. At this thickness, it allows green light waves to pass through but reflects infrared light. Windows coated with gold admit light but reflect heat. Thus, the cockpit windows of modern aircraft are coated with gold, as are the windows of many new office buildings. Also, nontransparent gold foil is wrapped around the vulnerable parts of space vehicles, effectively protecting them from intense radiation and heat.

Gold is also highly resistant to bacteria. Hence, dentists use it to repair or replace damaged or decayed teeth. In recent years gold has proved to be an ideal material for use in surgical implants such as stents—little wire tubes inserted inside the body to reinforce damaged veins or arteries.

Given gold's versatility, value, and beauty, prospectors will no doubt continue to scour the earth for this appealing metal.

How Does a Metal Detector Work?

The key components in a metal detector are usually two coils of wire. Electricity is passed through one of the coils, generating a magnetic field. If the metal detector passes over a metal object, such as a gold nugget, it induces a weak magnetic field in that object. The second coil on the metal detector picks up this weak field and signals the operator by means of a light, a gauge, or a sound.



Watching the World

Weaning Children Off TV

In a five-month study involving 16 upstate New York preschools, it was found that giving children simple lessons on alternatives to TV "reduced their viewing

time by three hours a week," reports *The New York Times*. The lessons promoted reading and such activities as making place mats for family meals and "No TV" signs for each TV set in the home. The children themselves also suggested other things to do when not watching TV or videos. Parents were encouraged to read stories to their children daily and to turn the TV off during meals. Twice during the study, families left the TV off for a week. Lead researcher Dr. Barbara Dennison said that parents need not feel that it is impossible to break the TV habit, noting that "children are surprisingly open to alternatives."



Beating Weapons Into Playground Equipment

A campaign launched in Brazil was designed to reduce the number of weapons held by its population. Compensation for each weapon voluntarily turned in varied from \$30 to \$100. As reported in *Folha Online*, more than 200,000 weapons were collected in the country from July through December 2004. Weapons collected in the state of São Paulo were crushed, compressed, melted down, and then transformed into playground equipment, which was installed in a city park. The park now includes a seesaw, swings, and a slide, all made from the reclaimed materials. Minister of Justice Márcio Thomaz Bastos said:

"One of the principal purposes of the campaign is the implantation of a culture of peace."

Fewer Nuns

"In Argentina, ever fewer women want to be nuns," reported the Buenos Aires newspaper *Clarín* in 2004. It added: "In the past four years, the number of nuns has dropped by 5.5 percent, from 9,113 in 2000 to 8,612 this year. The decrease is much more severe—almost 36 percent—if compared with 1960, when there were 13,423 nuns." Among the reasons cited for the decline were "the unattractive image that religious vocations have" and "the fear of a lifelong commitment" to an ecclesiastical career. The

number of priests fell during the same period. "Many feel that the decrease will become worse in the coming years," said *Clarín*, "and all agree that this is a worldwide phenomenon."

Senior-Care Cruises

The costs of caring for the elderly have risen so high that some propose living aboard a cruise ship as an attractive alternative to living in an assisted living facility (ALF). According to a report in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, "cruise ships are similar to assisted living centers in the amenities provided, costs per month, and many other areas." In fact, many cruise ships offer services not always provided in ALFs.

These may include a 24-hour, on-site physician, personal escorts to all meals, and housekeeping and laundry services. Other benefits include the excitement of travel and the opportunity to meet people. The report also suggests that "more visitors would be inclined to 'go see grandma' if she was living on a cruise ship."

Panic Disorder

"Panic disorder can cause attacks at any time, even waking victims at night with symptoms including chest pains, shortness of breath, intense fear, choking, sweating and an urge to flee," says the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper. A recent report compiled from interviews with 36,894 participants indicates that the disorder affects 3.7 percent of

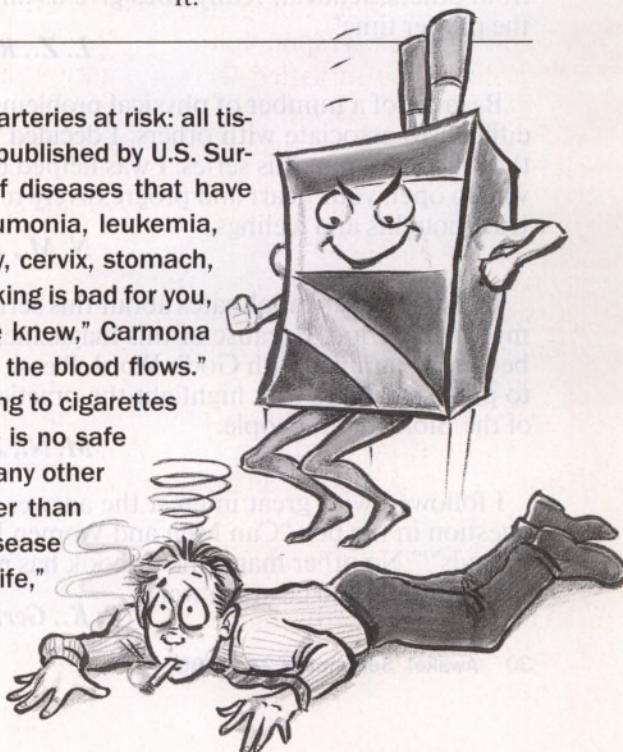
Canada's population aged 15 and older, or about one million people. More women (4.6 percent) reported having experienced a panic attack than did men (2.8 percent). Those who suffer from the disorder "are almost twice as likely to use drinking as a coping mechanism and nearly three times as likely to smoke more than individuals without the condition," says the paper. On the positive side, nearly 70 percent of sufferers seek professional medical help. The report states that Dr. Jacques Bradwejn, chairman of the psychiatry department of the University of Ottawa, believes that although genetic and biologic factors may produce the disorder, attacks "can be triggered by stressful life events."

The Greatest Food Scandal

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), about five million children die of hunger each year, reports the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. The FAO report indicates that worldwide 852 million people do not have enough food —815 million in underdeveloped countries, 28 million in developing countries, and 9 million in developed countries. The report cites a declaration signed by representatives from 110 nations who attended the 2004 World Leaders Summit on Hunger held at the UN headquarters in New York. It stated in part: "The greatest scandal is not that hunger exists but that it persists even when we have the means to eliminate it."

Tobacco Harmful to Entire Body

"Smokers are putting more than their lungs and arteries at risk: all tissues suffer harm," reports *New Scientist*. A report published by U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona lists dozens of diseases that have been linked to the use of tobacco, including pneumonia, leukemia, cataracts, gum disease, and cancers of the kidney, cervix, stomach, and pancreas. "We've known for decades that smoking is bad for you, but this report shows that it's even worse than we knew," Carmona says. "Toxins from cigarette smoke go everywhere the blood flows." For those who think they can avoid harm by switching to cigarettes with lower tar and nicotine, Carmona adds: "There is no safe cigarette, whether it is called 'light,' 'ultra-light,' or any other name." Smokers usually die 13 to 14 years earlier than nonsmokers, he pointed out. "Smoking causes disease in nearly every organ in the body at every stage of life," said Carmona, as reported in *The New York Times*.



From Our Readers

Friends Since my mom's death nearly four years ago, I have had the opportunity to make some really good friends that are near and dear to my heart. The series "How to Make Real Friends" (December 8, 2004) made me think of how thankful I am to have them as friends!

O. B., United States

I am 11 years old, and somehow I could not seem to make friends. After I read this series, things changed for the better. I gave the magazine to a classmate who tends to speak ill of others. Since she read the articles, she has tried not to do that anymore.

J. K., Poland

Reading these articles confirmed to me that I have to be a friend if I want to make friends—that I have to give of myself to others, according to the encouragement found at Acts 20:35. You provided invaluable advice.

A. K., Poland

I always had problems finding friends, even in the Christian congregation. Now I see that I have to be open, take the initiative, and not expect perfection from others. Jehovah really does give us answers at the proper time!

L. Z., Russia

Because of a number of physical problems, I find it difficult to associate with others. I decided to apply the information in this series. I was helped by the advice to open your heart and progressively reveal your true thoughts and feelings.

N. M., Japan

I talked to my schoolmates about this series during my lunch period. Because of this magazine, they are becoming familiar with God's Word. Please continue to publish articles that highlight the practical value of the Bible for all people.

M. N., Japan

I followed with great interest the answer to the question in the box "Can Men and Women Be 'Just Friends'?" No other magazine or book has provided such a simple and clear answer.

R. K., Germany



Your articles are always a great help. They strengthen us in our goal to do much for Jehovah and to make him our friend. Many thanks for the encouragement!

R.V.H., Germany

This series is exactly what I needed. I am 15 years old, and it is hard for me to make friends. The advice you gave will be helpful to me in cultivating and maintaining friendships. To think that I had been praying for advice on how to open up to others!

B. E., France

Unfortunately, some friends recently let me down, and I suffered greatly, since I felt alone. I was encouraged to see that Jehovah does not abandon us. It was also nice to read and apply the practical counsel on how to find true friends.

C. C., Italy

I want my daughter to grow spiritually. This magazine emphasizes that people of all ages can be your friends. I know this series will help her. It has helped me.

A. L., United States

I now know that I must reach out to others and change my personality in order to become a true friend. I am certain that Jehovah will help me.

M. Y., Canada

GIVING A FINE WITNESS IN SCHOOL

By Awake! writer in Mexico

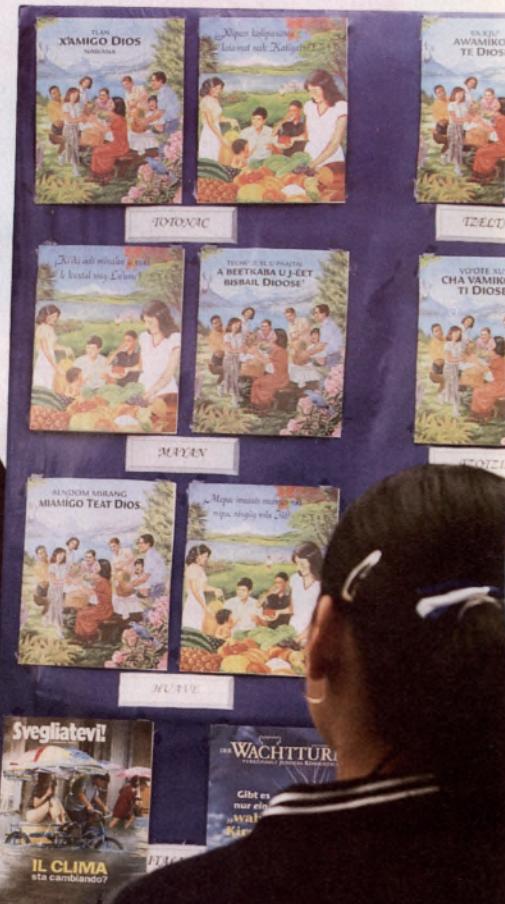
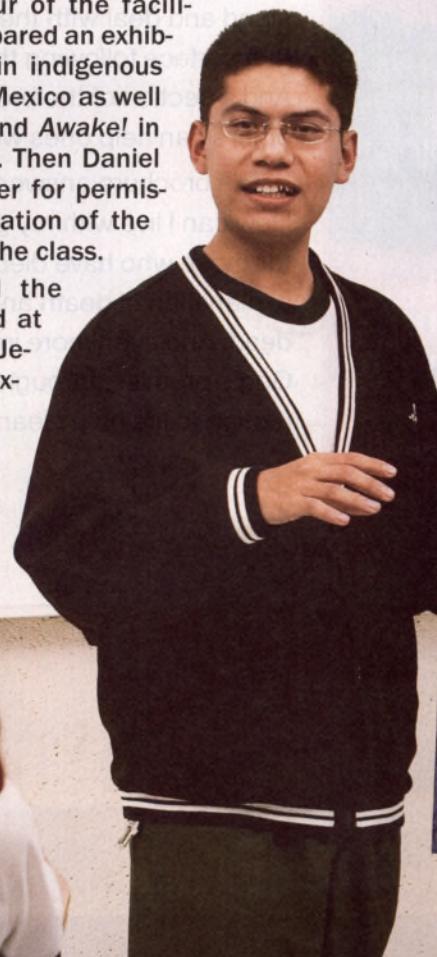
WHEN Daniel, a 17-year-old youth, began the new school year, he was determined to make himself known to his new classmates as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. An opportunity arose when his English teacher asked the class to interview a foreigner whose native tongue is English. The idea was to go to places frequented by tourists in Mexico City, conduct an interview, and take a recording of it to class.

Daniel decided to interview an English-speaking missionary who worked at the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico and, at the same time, make a video in English giving a short tour of the facilities. Additionally, he prepared an exhibit of various brochures in indigenous languages published in Mexico as well as of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* in various other languages. Then Daniel asked his English teacher for permission to make a presentation of the video and the exhibit to the class.

His classmates and the teacher were astonished at the work being done by Jehovah's Witnesses in Mex-

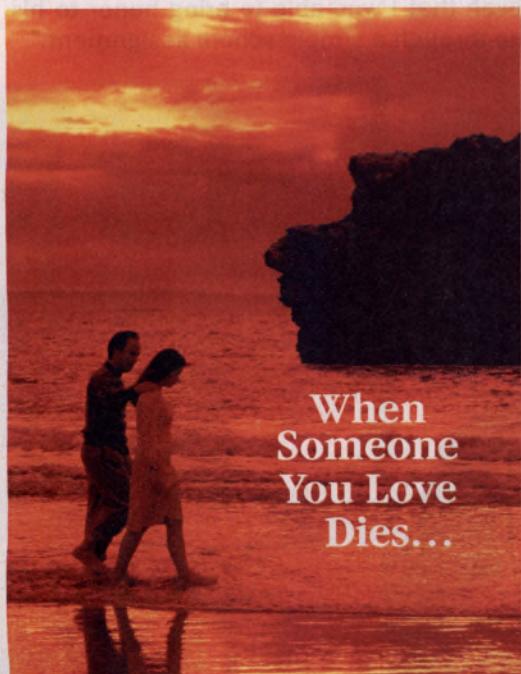
ico. Daniel's listeners were particularly impressed by the Witnesses' efforts to reach the indigenous peoples of Mexico.

After the 25-minute presentation, for which he received the highest marks, Daniel offered copies of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* to all, as well as the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*. Many accepted the literature, and this has opened the way for further Bible discussions. Says Daniel: "I thank Jehovah that I was able to bring honor to his name through a simple school assignment."





Comfort for those who grieve



■ The 32-page, full-color brochure *When Someone You Love Dies* provides such comfort. It can help those who are grieving to understand and deal with the feelings and emotions that surface following the death of a loved one. And a section of the brochure discusses how others can help ones who are grieving.

The brochure answers such questions as: How can I live with my grief? What hope is there for those who have died? It presents the Bible's explanation of death and the condition of the dead. And even more important, it highlights God's promise, through Jesus Christ, of a resurrection to life on a cleansed, paradise earth.