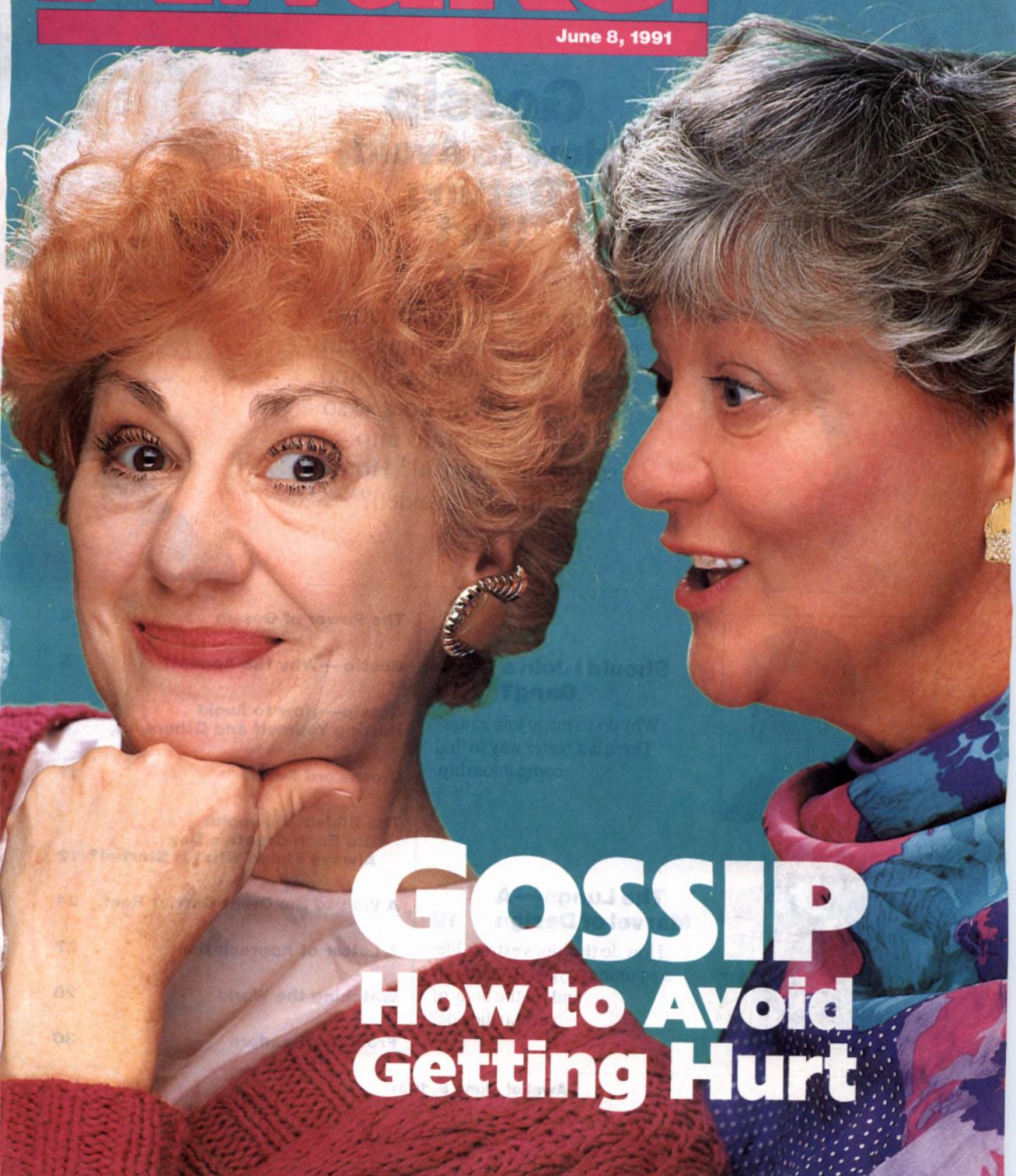


# Awake!

June 8, 1991



## GOSSIP How to Avoid Getting Hurt

# Gossip

## How to Avoid Getting Hurt

### 3-10

Gossip may be informative, entertaining, refreshing, but it may also be vengeful and destructive. Why does it so often degenerate into something hurtful? How can this be avoided?



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# THE POWER OF GOSSIP

**T**HE young woman's suicide shocked the quiet English town. Even more startling was the conclusion of the coroner's jury: 'She was killed by idle gossip!' Evidently, the young woman's name, her reputation, and ultimately her life were ruined by the town's malicious idle talk.

—*Rumor and Gossip—The Social Psychology of Hearsay*, by Ralph L. Rosnow and Gary Alan Fine.

Although the results are rarely that tragic, there is little question that gossip has awesome power. On the one hand, it may be credited as a common means of exchanging useful information. On the other hand, it may be held accountable for governmental turmoil, the splitting of families, the ruining of careers.

Gossip has been blamed for sleepless nights, heartache, and indigestion. And no doubt it has caused you some personal anguish at one time or another. In fact, writer William M. Jones warns that in the world of business, "you have to accept the possibility that in the

course of your career somebody will try to get a knife between your shoulder blades."

Negative gossip is almost universally frowned upon. Among the Seminole Indians of the United States, "talking bad about anyone" is put in the same category as lying and stealing. In one West African community, tale-bearers risked having their lips cut off or, even worse, they risked being executed! Indeed, throughout history, measures have been taken to curb gossip.

Between the 15th and 18th centuries, the so-called ducking stool was popularly used in England, in Germany, and, later, in the United States to try to shame gossips into quitting their harmful chatter. One found guilty of the offense would be tied to a chair and repeatedly ducked in water.

While the ducking stool has long since gone the way of the pillory and stocks, a war against gossip has been carried on even in modern times. During the 1960's, for example, so-called rumor-control centers were



Historical Pictures Service

### **Use of the ducking stool was one way local governments tried to deal with gossips**

established in the United States to respond to rumors that were potentially harmful to government activities. Similar services have operated in Northern Ireland and in England. Laws have even been passed to curb gossip that is designed to cause economic damage to certain financial institutions.

Such efforts notwithstanding, gossip survives. It is alive and flourishing. Neither law nor any other human method has thus far succeeded in extinguishing its scorching power. Gossip is everywhere. There is neighborhood gossip, office gossip, shop gossip, party gossip, family gossip. It transcends all cul-

tures, races, and civilizations, and it has flourished at every level of society. One expert said: "Gossip is so common it is almost like breathing." He also said: "It is deeply a part of human nature."

True, gossip often reveals a very dark side of human nature, a side that delights in tarnishing reputations, distorting the truth, and destroying lives. Yet, gossip is not inherently evil. There is a positive side to casual talk. And knowing where to draw the line between harmful and harmless gossip is the key to avoiding victimizing others—and being a victim yourself.

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# GOSSIP WHY THE APPEAL?

In Chinese it is *shén-tán*; in Finnish, *juoru*; in Italian, *pettegolizzo*; in Spanish, *chisme*. Yes, gossip is universal. In some languages, gossip may have an outright negative connotation. In English the word "gossip" basically means "idle talk," chat about trivial matters.

Interestingly, though, the English term has acquired a negative connotation. "Gossip" is thus frequently preceded by the word "malicious" or "hurtful." This is because idle talk so often amounts to hurtful or troublemaking talk. It may even turn into outright slander, which has been defined as "the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation." Little wonder, then, that an ancient proverb says: "Gossip brings anger just as surely as the north wind brings rain."—Proverbs 25:23, *Today's English Version*.

In view of its potential for damage, then, why do we often find gossip so irresistible, so

appealing? And where does one draw the line between harmless and harmful gossip?

## Gossip—The Information Exchange

There is a rather basic reason for gossip: People are interested in people. Naturally,



**Friendly gossip often serves the purpose of exchanging useful information and fueling conversations**

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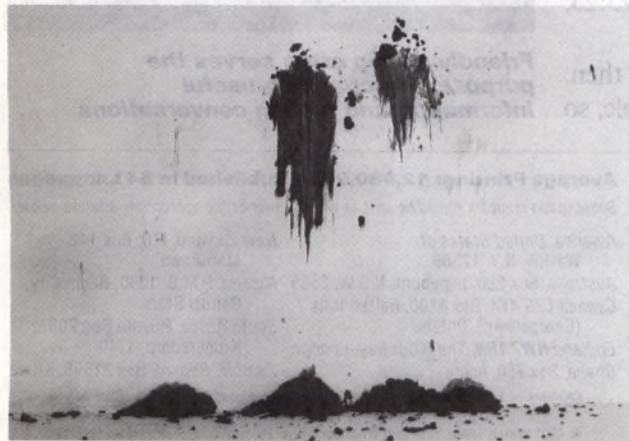
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then, we are prone to talk about other people. As Max Gluckman, an anthropologist, once stated: "Every single day, and for a large part of each day, most of us are engaged in gossiping. I imagine that if we were to keep a record of how we use our waking-time, gossiping would come only after 'work'—for some of us—in the score."

When moderate and kind, casual talk may serve to exchange useful information, as a means of catching up on the latest goings-on. It may involve such innocent things as who got married, who is pregnant, and who died, or it may just be humorous talk that is free of malicious intent.

All too often, though, idle talk strays beyond the bounds of propriety and good taste. Facts are embellished, exaggerated, or distorted. Humiliation is made the source of humor. Privacy is violated. Confidences are betrayed. Reputations are injured or ruined. Things worthy of praise are obscured by complaining, murmuring, and faultfinding. That no harm was intended is of little solace to the one spoken about. Harmful gossip has thus been compared to mud thrown on a clean wall. It may not stick, but it always leaves a dirty mark.



### Fitting In

Another reason we may easily be drawn into gossip is our natural desire to be liked and accepted by others. "For one reason or another," wrote psychologists John Sabini and Maury Silver, "you have an obligation to talk; and gossip is a pleasant, easy, and universally accepted way to fulfill the obligation." (*Moralities of Everyday Life*) To an extent, then, gossip is useful conversational fuel, a means to fit in.

The problem is that people tend to get far more excited about negative information than about positive information. Some even seem to enjoy being shocked by the sensational and the outrageous. Gossip is thus a real attention getter—the more lurid or scandalous the juicy tidbit, the better. Rarely is there any concern for substantiating shocking allegations.

### Media Gossip

This kind of gossip appeals to yet another human foible—inordinate curiosity. We love secrets. We enjoy being in the know. As early as 1730, when Benjamin Franklin began writing a gossip column for the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, it was discerned that people would pay for gossip.

Media gossip continues to survive—and thrive. In Europe newsstands virtually overflow with tabloids featuring stories about royal families, auto racers, and other international celebrities. One newspaper article thus called gossip big business.

But is it beneficial to be obsessively curious about what goes on in the pri-

**Harmful gossip is like mud thrown on a clean wall. It may not stick, but it always leaves a dirty mark**

**Some people gossip so as to be the center of attention**

vacy of people's homes, bedrooms, and minds? Can the reading and viewing of material that tends to arouse prurient desires possibly be healthy? Obviously, media gossip takes curiosity beyond reasonable limits.

**"I Heard It Through the Grapevine"**

Unfounded rumors and misinformation have also provided fuel for harmful gossip. During the American Civil War, endless vinelike strands of telegraph lines were strung between military posts. The "grapevine" thus became a symbol of unconfirmed news, and the expression "I heard it through the grapevine" became a popular excuse for passing on unfounded rumors.

Unfortunately, the grapevine often yields bitter fruit. Rumors have been responsible for panic, death, and havoc. The cost to business alone has been incalculable. One fast-food restaurant chain spent more than a year combating a false rumor that its hamburgers contained worms. A company known for manufacturing soap products spent years—and millions of dollars—trying to squelch a rumor that its corporate symbol was the insignia of Satan and that the company itself was somehow involved in demon worship.

It is individuals, though, who suffer the greatest heartache and damage from rumors. Yet, because wild stories tend to be fascinating, people are inclined to promote them with



little regard for the truth or for the consequences.

**Malicious Gossip—Slander**

Envy and hate are often at the root of the most destructive form of gossip—malicious gossip, or slander. The Greek word for "slanderer" is *di'a'bo'los*, the word translated in the Bible as Devil. (Revelation 12:9) The title fits, as Satan is the great slanderer of God. Like Satan, some speak about others with evil intent. Sometimes the motive is revenge, as a result of hurt feelings or jealousy. In any case, they seek to advance their own interests by murdering the good name of others.

Although malicious gossip, or slander, is clearly the most censurable form of gossip, engaging in *any* form of hurtful, troublemaking gossip is immoral and irresponsible. How, then, can one prevent harmless talk from deteriorating into harmful slander?

# **GOSSIP**

## **HOW TO AVOID HURTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS**

**A**S LONG as there are people, there will be gossip. Even the perfect new world prophesied about in the Bible will likely not be gossip free.\* (2 Peter 3:13) Informal, casual talk about friends and acquaintances is an integral part of the way we communicate with one another and maintain healthy relationships.

Nevertheless, there is never an excuse for hurtful, malicious gossip, or slander! That kind of talk injures and maims; it may even ruin lives, relationships, and reputations. So how can you avoid stepping over the line of propriety and indulging in harmful gossip? How might you protect yourself from it? Some of the best advice ever offered on this subject is written in the Bible. Let us look at just some of this advice.

**Bite Your Tongue:** It has been said that "conversation is an exercise of the mind, but gossiping is merely an exercise of the tongue." Really, most injurious speech reflects, not malice, but a failure to think before speaking. Some blab the business of others; they splice, exaggerate, and distort with little thought to the consequences. They expose to others the faults of their friends, mates, and children without even discerning the damage they inflict.

The Bible thus gives this advice: "In the

\* For further information, see the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., chapter 19.

abundance of words there does not fail to be transgression, but the one keeping his lips in check is acting discreetly." (Proverbs 10:19) In other words, think before you speak. Think before you say something about someone else. Ask yourself: 'Would I repeat it in the person's presence? How would I feel if this was said about me?' (Matthew 7:12) Says Psalm 39:1: "I will guard my ways to keep from sinning with my tongue. I will set a muzzle as a guard to my own mouth."

Admittedly, there may be circumstances in which biting your tongue may prove to be almost impossible. For example, you may have strong suspicions of serious wrongdoing committed against you or your family. You may not have any proof, but you feel the need to do something about it. Would it be slanderous to talk about it with a trusted friend or someone in authority? Are you a malicious gossiper if you approach someone for advice? Clearly not. The Bible acknowledges the wisdom of confidential talk. Of course, good judgment and balance are vital when handling such delicate situations.—Proverbs 15:22.

**Do Not Listen to Hurtful Gossip:** What would happen to 'big mouths,' if there were no 'big ears'? Those who are constantly engaged in foolish talk are only part of the problem; those who take delight in paying attention are also accountable. Simply listening may constitute



### Walk away from hurtful talk

them. On the other hand, suppose you are the victim of an ugly rumor or false story. Sometimes it is possible to track down the source of the story and calmly straighten matters out. But what if you cannot?

Your getting angry accomplishes nothing. Indeed, "he that is quick to anger will commit foolishness," says the Bible. (Proverbs 14:17) Solomon thus gives this advice: "Do not give your heart to all the words that people may speak . . . For your own heart well knows even many times that you, even you, have called down evil upon others." (Ecclesiastes 7:21, 22) Gossip is a fact of life, and at one time or another, you have probably been an active participant in it yourself. Is the matter really worth getting upset over? Will it most likely fade away after a while? There is "a time to

laugh," and perhaps showing that you have a sense of humor, laughing it off would be the best way to extinguish the rumor.—Ecclesiastes 3:4.

***Do Not Add Fuel to the Fire:*** If the story simply refuses to die, ask yourself: 'Could it be that I am giving others a reason to gossip? Am I perhaps behaving in a questionable manner, giving the appearance of wrongdoing?' Consider the following situations:

- A woman's coworkers call her lazy and undependable behind her back—even though she carries out her duties satisfactorily. Why the bad reputation? For one thing, she manifests a carefree, easygoing attitude that is easily misinterpreted as laziness. Her grooming is far too casual for the business setting she works in. Finally, she is indiscreet in her

your silent approval and contribute to the spread of hurtful gossip. Proverbs 17:4 says: "The evildoer is paying attention to the lip of hurtfulness. A falsifier is giving ear to the tongue causing adversities."

So when talk about someone gets out of hand, you may have to show some courage and say, 'Let's change the subject.' And if your present circle of friends prove incurably prone to engage in harmful gossip, you may even have to consider finding new associates. Says the Bible: "A gossip can never keep a secret. Stay away from people who talk too much." (Proverbs 20:19, *Today's English Version*) Likely, it is just a matter of time before you become the topic for discussion.

***Do Not Overreact to Gossip:*** Most people enjoy gossip as long as the gossip is not about



**Does your indiscreet conduct give people reason to gossip about you?**

if your actions are close to the borderline of impropriety, there is always the real danger of actually slipping into wrongdoing—making what was once a rumor a reality.—Compare Galatians 6:7, 8; 1 Corinthians 10:12.

**"Mind Your Own Business"**

Gossip is here to stay. However, it must be respected for its potentially destructive power. You can avoid much heartache and grief for yourself and others simply by following these wise words: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, *continue considering these things* . . . , and the God of peace will be with you."—Philippians 4:8, 9.

Yes, God himself is interested in the way we speak of others. Jesus Christ warned: "Every unprofitable saying that men speak, they will render an account concerning it on Judgment Day; for by your words you will be declared righteous, and by your words you will be condemned."—Matthew 12:36, 37; compare Psalm 52:2-5.

Do you want good relations with others, peace of mind, and, most important of all, a good standing with God? Then follow the inspired counsel of God's Word: "Make it your aim to live quietly and to mind your own business." (1 Thessalonians 4:11) Show an interest in others, but do so in a kindly, dignified way. Thus you will steer clear of malicious, harmful gossip.

handling of personal phone calls, talking loud enough to attract the attention of the whole office staff. Hence, the gossip!

□ A local storekeeper is the talk of his small community. Rumor has it that he has been unfaithful to his wife. The man vehemently denies the false allegation. The cause of the rumor? His reputation for being unduly familiar with female customers.

□ A teenage girl is spoken of as having loose morals. Some claim that she has several lovers and that she is a cocaine user. All the stories are false. But she is known for associating with individuals who are part of the drug scene. She is extreme in her dress, hairstyle, and makeup.

If you are the victim of malicious gossip, it may thus prove helpful to determine if your behavior, your manner of dealing with others, even your dress and grooming, are in some way adding fuel to the fire. Perhaps some adjustments in your life-style would squelch the rumors. "Where there is no wood the fire goes out," says the Bible. (Proverbs 26:20) Besides,

# Crossword Puzzle

## Clues Across

1. Instrument of Jesus' death [2 words] (Mark 15:32)
8. "---- on the watch" (Matthew 24:42)
9. The means by which the two spies escaped from Jericho (Joshua 2:15)
10. The first one mentioned in the Bible to be using God's name (Genesis 4:1)
11. The point to which the Pharisees would wash their hands before eating (Mark 7:3)
12. Where Jehu, 'driving with madness,' told the messengers sent out to him by King Jehoram to go (2 Kings 9:18-20)
13. Benjaminite city (Joshua 18:27)
16. A stage of life (John 9:21)
17. One of the Israelites who acted on Ezra's exhortation to dismiss their foreign wives (Ezra 10:28)
19. On the one called Straight, Ananias found Saul (Acts 9:11)
20. The means by which a sandal is strapped to a foot (Luke 3:16)
22. His grandson Sallu was a postexilic resident of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 11:7)
24. Something toward which an action or emotion is directed (Isaiah 8:12, 13)
26. A son of Sheik Dishon and a descendant of Seir the Horite (Genesis 36:26)
27. This ancestor of Jesus lived for 239 years (Genesis 11:20, 21; Luke 3:35)
28. Stinging plant (Isaiah 55:13)
30. Her sons founded both the royal and the priestly tribes of Israel (Genesis 29:32-35)
32. The number of human souls carried safely through the Flood (1 Peter 3:20)
33. A place mentioned by Jehovah when defining Israel's eastern boundary (Numbers 34:11)
34. His son Eleazar was one of David's three mighty men (2 Samuel 23:9)
35. The watercourse where Daniel

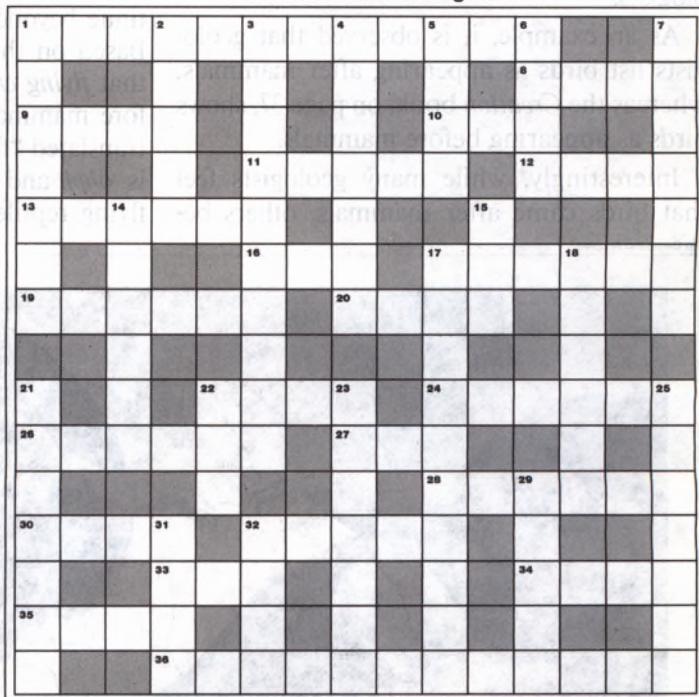
was when he received the vision of the ram and the he-goat (Daniel 8:2)

36. The city where Elisha's attendant anointed Jehu to be king (2 Kings 9:1-6)

## Clues Down

1. The one who did the actual writing of Paul's letter to the Romans (Romans 16:22)
2. "Write, because ---- words are faithful and true" (Revelation 21:5)
3. A disclosure (Galatians 2:2)
4. An expert musician, he was selected by lot to head the 13th division of sanctuary musicians (1 Chronicles 25:20)
5. Afresh (Isaiah 61:4)
6. A son of Ram of the tribe of Judah (1 Chronicles 2:27)
7. A city lost by Jeroboam when he battled King Abijah
14. Of his descendants, 2,172 returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:3)
15. Adam said he did it because of Eve (Genesis 3:12)
17. Reckoning (Hebrews 4:13)
18. Wail (Ezekiel 32:18)
21. What love is not (1 Corinthians 13:4)
22. The congregator used it to signify the heart (Ecclesiastes 12:6)
23. Used to catch fish (Matthew 13:47)
25. Title for Jesus [2 words] (John 1:14)
29. King of Goiim in Abraham's day (Genesis 14:1)
31. It dishonors a man to wear it long (1 Corinthians 11:14)
32. A city in the Shephelah of Judah (Joshua 15:34)

## Crossword Solutions Page 21



# Did Each Creative Day Always Finish What It Started?

FROM time to time, Jehovah's Witnesses receive questions about the order of creation as presented in their book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* Some of these questions point to a difference between the order in the book and the order claimed for these events by most geologists.

As an example, it is observed that geologists list birds as appearing after mammals, whereas the *Creation* book, on page 37, shows birds as appearing before mammals.

Interestingly, while many geologists feel that birds came after mammals, others be-

lieve that mammals appeared after birds. An example of the latter case is found in the book *Evolution*, by Colin Patterson, page 132. This indicates that the evidence from the fossil record is not conclusive.

But did each creative day of Genesis chapter 1 always see the completion of what was started on that day, or did creative events continue beyond the day on which they began? Based on the Bible, the *Creation* book says that *flying creatures* began to be created before mammals appeared. The Hebrew word translated "flying creatures" at Genesis 1:20 is 'oph and may include winged insects and flying reptiles, such as pterosaurs. The first

The Bettmann Archive



insects may have preceded such creatures as the pterosaurs, and these membrane-winged flying reptiles may have appeared before both birds and mammals.

The Bible's creation account does not record in great detail all the creative works of Jehovah God. It simply lists in succession some of the major developments with regard to the preparation of the earth for living things and shows the orderly appearance of large categories of plant and animal life. In keeping with that approach, the Genesis record does not separately list winged insects, flying reptiles, and birds but lumps them together under the general, all-embracing Hebrew term translated "flying creatures."

In the Bible the imperfect state of the Hebrew verbs used in Genesis chapter 1 indicates that creation involved ongoing activity by God. And the creative days of Genesis chapter 1 were not 24-hour days, but they extended over many thousands of years.—See *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?*, pages 26-7.

For example, Genesis 1:3 speaks of the creation of light on the first day. According to J. W. Watts' translation, that verse reads: "Afterward God proceeded to say, 'Let there be light'; and *gradually* light came into existence." The translation by Benjamin Wills Newton gives the same picture of continuing development of a process once started: "And God proceeded to say [future], Let Light become to be, and Light *proceeded to become to be* [future]." (Brackets are Newton's; italics ours in both texts.) The light that penetrated to the surface gradually increased in intensity, and the process proceeded on into the future.—See *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., Appendix 3C, pages 1572-3.

The first day did not complete the "creation" of light with respect to the earth. The sources of it, of course, existed before that first day but were invisible from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 1:1) The first day saw only the penetration of diffused light to the surface of the earth, made possible by the thinning of obscuring layers that enveloped the earth like 'swaddling bands.' (Job 38:9) Illumination at the surface gradually increased with the thinning of the interfering layers.

On the second creative day, God caused a separation to develop between the waters on the surface of the earth and those above it, leaving an expanse, or atmosphere, between the waters above and the waters below. As Genesis 1:6, 7, Watts' translation, expresses it: "Then God continued, saying, 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, also

## **Progressive creative activity is indicated by the use of the word "gradually"**

let there be a separation between the waters.' Accordingly, God proceeded to divide the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and *gradually* it came to be so." (Italics ours.) Just as day one saw the first appearance of light at the earth's surface but not its final state, so day two saw the start of the expanse. The completed state was not immediately reached.

Genesis 1:9, 11, Watts' translation, says concerning day three: "Then God continued, saying, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together to one place, and let the dry

land appear'; and *gradually* it came to be so. Then God continued, saying, 'Let the earth produce grass, herbs yielding seed, fruit-trees which have their seed in them bearing fruit according to their kind upon the earth'; and *gradually* it came to be so." (Italics ours.) The use of the word "gradually" indicates progressive creative activity, as opposed to a single event at a single point in the stream of time.

Day four saw dramatic changes: "Then God continued, saying, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to divide between the day and the night, and they shall be for signs and for seasons and for days and years. Also they shall be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth'; and *gradually* it came to be so. Accordingly God proceeded to make the two great lights, the greater light as a ruler of the day, and the lesser light as a ruler of the night, likewise the stars."—Genesis 1:14-16, *Watts*, italics ours.

Now, for the first time, more concentrated sunlight reached the surface of the earth. The

## The creation of various kinds of life was a progressive activity of God

sources of light—sun and moon and stars—could be seen from the surface of the earth. In the account of the first creative day, the Hebrew word for light is '*ohr*', light in a general sense; but on day four, it is '*ma·ohr*', meaning the source of the light.

Day five was characterized by the creation of forms of life that live in the water, apparently including great aquatic reptiles. The Genesis record reads: "And God went on to

say: 'Let the waters swarm forth a swarm of living souls and let flying creatures fly over the earth upon the face of the expanse of the heavens.' And God proceeded to create the great sea monsters and every living soul that moves about, which the waters swarmed forth according to their kinds, and every winged flying creature according to its kind. And God got to see that it was good." (Genesis 1:20, 21) This, then, was also the period when flying creatures began to be brought into existence. The creation of "every winged flying creature according to its kind" continued after the opening of that creative period during the fifth day.

Genesis 2:19 seems to point to progressive creation involving flying creatures, for it states: "Yahweh God *continued* to form from the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds [“every flying creature,” *NW*] of the heavens and to bring them to the man to see what he would call them."—*Watts*, italics ours.\*

Thus the Bible record of Genesis chapter 1 indicates that broad categories of plant and animal life began to be created by God when the earth had been brought to a stage of development suitable for a given type of creature life. The filling of these broad categories with many individual kinds of life, such as "flying creatures," was a progressive, ongoing activity of God. This ongoing divine activity may have continued beyond the end of the creative day on which it commenced.

The geologic record is incomplete and subject to interpretation according to the theoretical leanings of those seeking to unravel its tangled skeins. As demonstrated in the *Creation* book, the Bible is consistently accurate when it touches on scientific matters, including the order of creation.

\* See "All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial," 1990 edition, published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., page 287.

Light first  
appeared on  
earth on day  
one, but  
increased on  
successive  
days

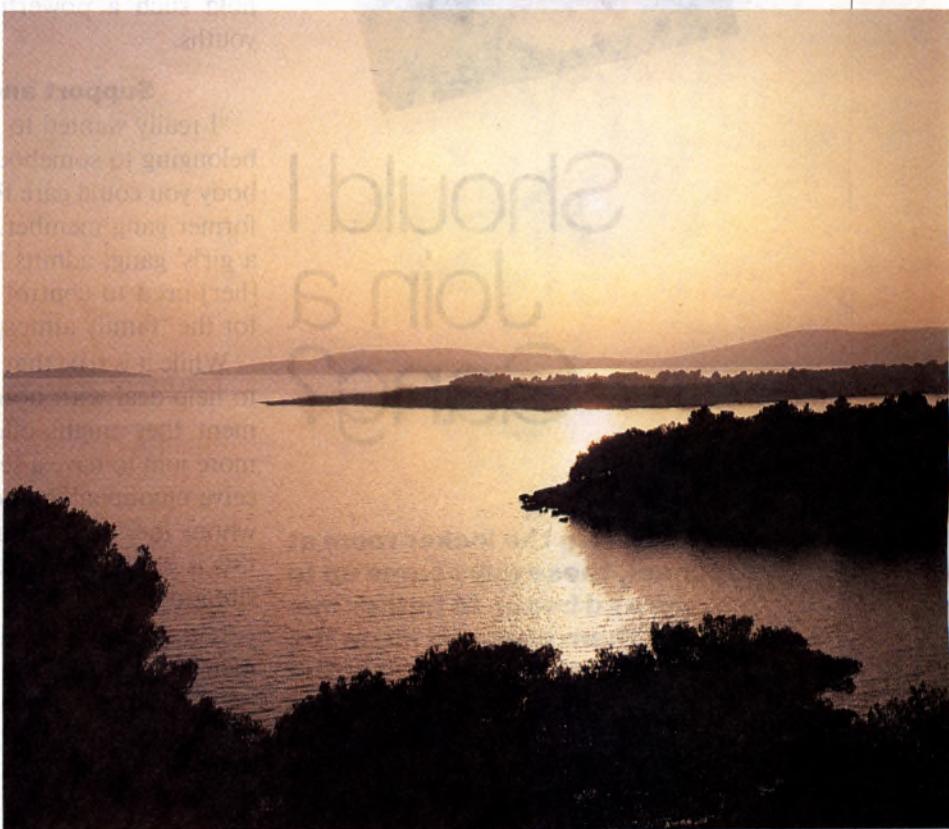
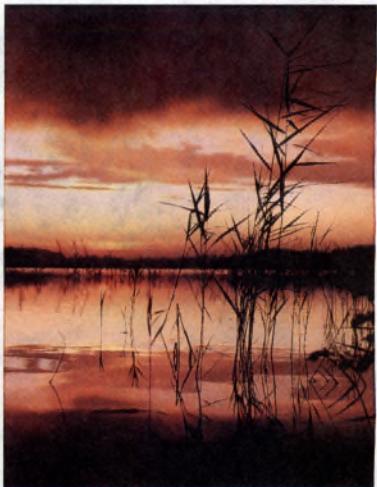
**Day 1**



**Day 2**



**Day 3**



**Day 4**

Light first appeared on earth on day one, but increased on successive days

**Young  
People  
Ask . . .**



# Should I Join a Gang?

**"As I sat in the locker room at school, these guys came up to me and began to bother me. One of them punched me in the chest. At that point one of the guys I knew from the gang in my neighborhood came over and took up for me. I thought to myself, 'If I join the gang, maybe I can have protection like this.'"**—Greg.

**G**ANGS are a growing presence in many schools and neighborhoods. In 1989 police estimated that in Los Angeles County, U.S.A., alone there were 600 gangs, with some 70,000 members. Gangs are not limited to the United States, however. For example, *Maclean's* magazine reported that in the city of Vancouver, Canada, some 13 gangs exist, with over 600 members.

Like Greg, many join gangs to gain protection from school violence, and in these violent times, it is not difficult to understand why some youths may feel such a need. We are witnessing a worldwide "increasing of lawlessness." (Matthew 24:12) However, there are yet other reasons why street gangs hold such a powerful attraction for some youths.

## **Support and Friendship**

"I really wanted to have friends, a sense of belonging to somebody or to a group, somebody you could care for," explains Bernard, a former gang member. Marianne, who joined a girls' gang, admits that she did so "out of [her] need to control something," as well as for the "family atmosphere" it offered.

While it is true that some youths join gangs to help deal with boredom or for the excitement they might offer, it appears that far more join to have a sense of belonging, to receive emotional support, to get friends with whom they share things in common. Often this is done to replace an undesirable family situation.

Bernard says of himself and fellow gang members: "Most of us came from broken homes. Many were being raised by a single parent, usually a mother, in large families. So there was no one to take time to talk to them. Many came from homes where they were physically and verbally abused and where no one cared whether they had feelings or not.

So they felt good, as I did, about being able to talk to someone and be heard."

This point is also made by Canadian youth counselor Lew Golding. He stated: "Kids having problems at home latch on to a gang for emotional nurturing."

In the United States, many gangs are formed along ethnic or cultural lines. Gangs in that land, therefore, offer the additional appeal of association with those who share feelings regarding food, music, language, and a host of other things. For youths and adults alike, the desire to feel needed and accepted is normal. But can these feelings and needs truly be satisfied by joining a gang?

Proverbs 17:17 says: "A true companion is loving all the time." Do gang members really experience such loyalty and true friendship? On the contrary, disagreements and even fights among fellow gang members are all too common. Indeed, in the high-pressure environment in which gangs operate, grudges easily develop. Differences of opinion can be interpreted as disloyalty. Bernard relates: "If we had an argument, I had to be on the alert because all of a sudden, a knife or a gun could come out. And these were supposed to be my friends! Gang life left me disappointed because I had no real friends."

As one 18-year-old gang member adds: "You don't have any friends, not even in your own gang. You are by yourself."

#### **Do Not 'Follow the Crowd'**

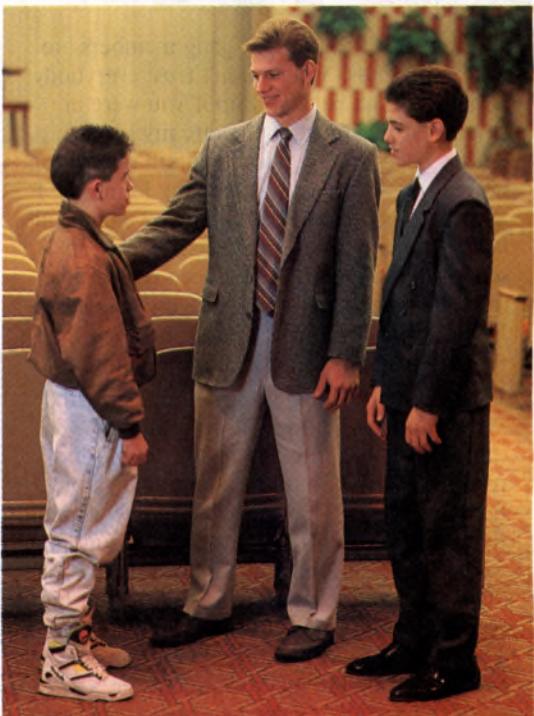
"You must not follow after the crowd for evil ends." (Exodus 23:2) This was said to God's people in ancient times, and in principle it applies well to any youth contemplating joining a gang. You might think of a gang as a means of self-protection or a source of friendship. In reality, though, a gang member is inevitably forced to pursue "evil ends."

*The Globe and Mail* states regarding this:

The gang becomes the family. That also means that the gang determines what is acceptable behavior. In the world of unsupervised teenagers, robberies, beatings, and sexual assaults can be "the" things to do.

In 1989 alone, gangs in Los Angeles County were involved in some 570 homicides. And virtually everywhere that gangs exist, there is violence. Any attempt to resist involvement is sure to be viewed as lack of support for the gang or, worse yet, as cowardice. In either event, you could easily find yourself the object of attack. As one gang member said: "You can't say no to your [gang]." Is a sense of belonging or protection worth this kind of pressure?

The writer of Proverbs 1:10-15 answers: "My son, if sinners try to seduce you, do not



**Why not cultivate friendships with people who really have your interests at heart?**

consent. If they keep saying: 'Do go with us. Do let us lie in ambush for blood. Do let us lie in concealment for the innocent men without any cause. . . . Your lot you ought to cast

### 'I Joined a Street Gang'

"I was 17 years old. My friends and I were sick of seeing people shot, mugged, and raped in our neighborhood. We figured that if we started a gang of our own, maybe we could stop it. At the same time, I wanted to have that sense of belonging to a group. So we formed a gang.

"We started patrolling the neighborhood, and soon other gangs tested us out. Two of our members were jumped by a rival gang. One was hit in the face with a baseball bat; the other was stabbed. We avenged the injustice and soon became the most feared gang around.

"However, I found that gang members are not real friends. You couldn't trust everybody. Some wouldn't back you up if you were in trouble. And some didn't share my ideals—they began to mug and even kill people for no reason. So I began to hate my lot in life. I felt that God existed but wondered why he allowed so many injustices. I also learned in school that the church had been responsible for Inquisitions and for destroying whole civilizations in the name of God. I believed that religions were a front for moneymaking.

"One day I prayed to God to help me find the organization he was using. I flipped through a Bible an uncle had given me and read Acts 20:20. It talked about going from house to house. The only ones I knew who did that were Jehovah's Witnesses. So I found out where the local Kingdom Hall was and went the next morning. With tears in my eyes, I approached one of the Witnesses and whispered, 'I want to learn.' I had found God's people. My days as a gang member were over."—*The writer, who chooses to be anonymous, now serves as the presiding overseer of a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.*

in among us. . . . ' My son, do not go in the way with them."

### Living by the Sword

Think, too, about the possible consequences to your health and well-being. One gang member said that 'you must be willing to die for fellow gang members.' And it often turns out that way.

In contrast, consider the lesson that Jesus taught his disciples on the night of his arrest. Jesus was unarmed and faced with a violent mob. Did Jesus want his disciples to band together and violently defend him? Peter thought so. He removed his sword and attacked one of the men in the mob, cutting off his ear. Jesus' response, though, must have stunned Peter. Jesus miraculously healed the man's ear and said to Peter: "Return your sword to its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword."—Matthew 26:52.

The lesson? Arming oneself for defense is not only unscriptural but also foolish, impractical. A proverb puts it this way: "As for the one searching for bad, it will come upon him."—Proverbs 11:27.

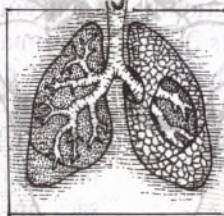
### Finding a Real Sense of Belonging

Some 50 years ago, a study was made that outlined various factors contributing to the formation of gangs. Among the problems listed were inadequate family life, poverty, deteriorating neighborhoods, and poor education. Gang activity has not helped this situation at all, nor has it really helped lonely youths to find genuine friendships. The Christian congregation, however, offers you association with people who have your best interests at heart. Why not cultivate friendships there?

How, though, can you protect yourself if you live in an area where gangs are prevalent? A future article will discuss this.

# THE LUNGS

## A Marvel of Design



**Y**OU can survive without food for weeks. You can live without water for days. But if you hold your breath, severe discomfort sets in after mere seconds. And just four minutes of oxygen deprivation can cause brain damage and death. Yes, oxygen is the prime need of the human body!

You probably do not have much control over the quality of the air you breathe. Nonetheless, you need air, and you need it now! How do you survive when the air is too cold or too hot or too dry or too dirty? How do you extract life-sustaining oxygen from such air, and how does the oxygen reach every part of your body? How do you rid your body of carbon dioxide, a gas? All of it happens thanks to your marvelously designed lungs.

### The Lungs at a Glance

Your lungs are the two main organs of respiration. Ideally located inside your rib cage, they lie on either side of the heart. Your right lung has three sections, or lobes, and your left lung has two lobes. Each lobe is somewhat independent of the others. Because of this, surgeons are able to remove a diseased lobe without sacrificing the usefulness of the other lobes. At first glance the texture of the lung tissue may appear to resemble a sponge.

The lungs reach downward to the diaphragm, a powerful sheet of muscle that separates the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity. The diaphragm is the most important muscle of respiration, contributing to the constant inflation and deflation of the lungs. From the diaphragm, your lungs extend all

the way up into the base of your neck. A thin membrane covers each lung. This membrane, or pleura, also lines the inside of the chest wall. The space between the two layers of the pleural membrane is filled with a lubricating fluid. This fluid enables the lungs and the rib cage to slide easily, without friction, during respiration.

Some 25 to 30 different types of cells in the lungs have now been identified by scientists. Various muscles and nerves, bones and cartilage, blood vessels, fluids, hormones, and chemicals all play key roles in the functioning of the lungs. Although certain aspects of the lungs are still not fully understood by scientists, let us acquaint ourselves with some of the many features that are understood.

### A "Tree" of Airways

Your respiratory tract is essentially an interconnecting series of tubes and passageways. Before air reaches your lungs, it has quite a journey to make. First, the air flows from your nose or mouth into the pharynx, or throat. The pharynx is used both for the swallowing of food and for breathing. To prevent food and drink from entering your airways, a small movable lid known as the epiglottis blocks the entrance when you swallow.

The air then passes through the larynx, where your vocal cords are located. Next is the almost 4 1/2-inch-long trachea, or wind-

pipe, reinforced by about 20 C-shaped bands of cartilage spaced throughout its length. The windpipe then branches into two one-inch-long tubes known as the main bronchi. One bronchus enters the left lung, the other enters the right lung. Inside the lungs these tubes further divide into more branches.

This branching occurs again and again inside the lungs until a structure resembling a tree is formed, with trunk, branches, and twigs. Of course, at each branching the airways become thinner and thinner. The air then enters the small branches, a network of miniature vessels called bronchioles, each with a diameter of about one twenty-fifth of an inch. The bronchioles lead to even smaller ducts, which send the air into some 300 million small air sacs known as alveoli. These air sacs are arranged in bunches and resemble hanging clusters of grapes or tiny balloons. It is here that the treelike system of airways ends and the air reaches its final destination.

### The Final Threshold

When it reaches its final threshold, the air you breathe is contained within the extremely thin walls of the alveoli. They measure only 0.00002 inch across. The paper used in this magazine is about 150 times as thick as the walls of the alveoli!

Each one of these tiny alveoli is covered with a web of blood vessels known as pulmonary capillaries. These capillaries are so narrow that only one red blood cell can pass through at a time! And the walls are so thin that the carbon dioxide in the blood can seep through into the alveoli. The oxygen, in turn, passes in the opposite direction. It exits the alveoli to be absorbed by the red blood cells.

Each one of these red blood cells, or corpuscles, traveling in single file, remains in the pulmonary capillaries for about three fourths of a second. This is plenty of time for the car-

### In Our Next Issue

#### **Christians and Jews—Can the Breach Be Healed?**

#### **Do You Need Air-Conditioning?**

#### **Should I Join the School Team?**

bon dioxide and the oxygen to exchange places. This movement of gases is by a process known as diffusion. The oxygenated blood then passes into larger veins in the lungs, eventually reaching the left side of the heart, from which the blood is pumped throughout the body as the fuel of life. All told, it takes about one minute for all the blood in your body to pass through this intricately designed system!

Now that the air has reached its final destination, how does it exit the lungs with its cargo of carbon dioxide? Is there a need for a second set of airways to be used in exhaling? A marvel in design, this "tree" of air ducts in your lungs is used both for incoming air and for outgoing. Interestingly, as you rid your lungs of carbon dioxide by exhaling, you can also make your vocal cords vibrate, thereby creating the sound necessary for speech.

### Quality Control

As the air you breathe passes through your nose and mouth, it is actually being processed by a quality-control station. When the air is too cold, it is quickly heated to an adequate temperature. When the air is too hot, it is cooled down. What happens when the air is too dry? The walls of your nose, nasal sinuses, throat, and other passageways are lined with a fluid called mucus. When you inhale dry air, moisture in the mucus evaporates into the air. By the time the air reaches the farthest point in your lungs, it has a relative humidity of almost 100 percent. Interestingly, when you exhale, the air returns over half of its humidity to the mucus.

This quality-control system also includes a sophisticated air filter. During the course of one day, about 2,500 gallons of air pass through the lungs. This air is often loaded with infectious agents, toxic particles, fumes, or other impurities. However, your respirato-

ry system is designed to remove most of these contaminants.

Initially, the hairs and mucous membranes in your nose do their part in catching larger particles of dirt. Then, you have millions of microscopic, hairlike projections that grow on the walls of your airways. They are called cilia. Like paddles, they wave back and forth at a rate of about 16 times a second, pushing dirty mucus away from the lungs. Your lungs also count on the services of special cells, called alveolar macrophages, designed to kill bacteria and trap dangerous particles.

Hence, the air you breathe is conditioned and filtered before it reaches the most delicate tissues of your lungs. Indeed, a marvel of design!

### An Automatic System

Unlike food and water, oxygen can be drawn from the environment without any deliberate effort on your part. At a rate of some 14 breaths per minute, a healthy pair of lungs extracts oxygen from the air automatically. Even during sleep your lungs continue to work without your conscious supervision.

### CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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## Why Does It Happen?

**Sneeze:** An involuntary and violent rush of air through the mouth and nose. Nerve endings in the nose cause you to sneeze in order to get rid of irritating particles in your nose. Cold air may also induce sneezing. A sneeze may produce an air speed of up to 103 miles per hour and expel up to 100,000 droplets of mucus and microorganisms. For this reason, unless you adequately cover your mouth and nose, your sneeze may be harmful to other people.

**Cough:** An abrupt expulsion of air, ridding the lungs of harmful substances when the lining of the respiratory tract becomes irritated. Coughing may also be a deliberate effort to clear the throat or the bronchi. Like sneezing, coughing can spread germs that cause disease.

**Hiccup:** A sudden, involuntary intake of air caused by a spasmotic contraction of the diaphragm. These abrupt contractions may be caused by irritation of the organs

near the diaphragm. The spasm draws air into the lungs through the larynx. As the air is pulled into the larynx, it strikes the epiglottis, causing the vocal cords to vibrate. This produces the hic sound.

**Snoring:** A harsh sound made during sleep, usually caused by a person's breathing through his mouth. Soft tissue in the roof of the mouth near the throat vibrates as air passes through. The lips, cheeks, and nostrils may also vibrate. If you sleep on your back, the mouth tends to hang open, and the tongue obstructs the air passage. Sleeping on your side may stop the snoring.

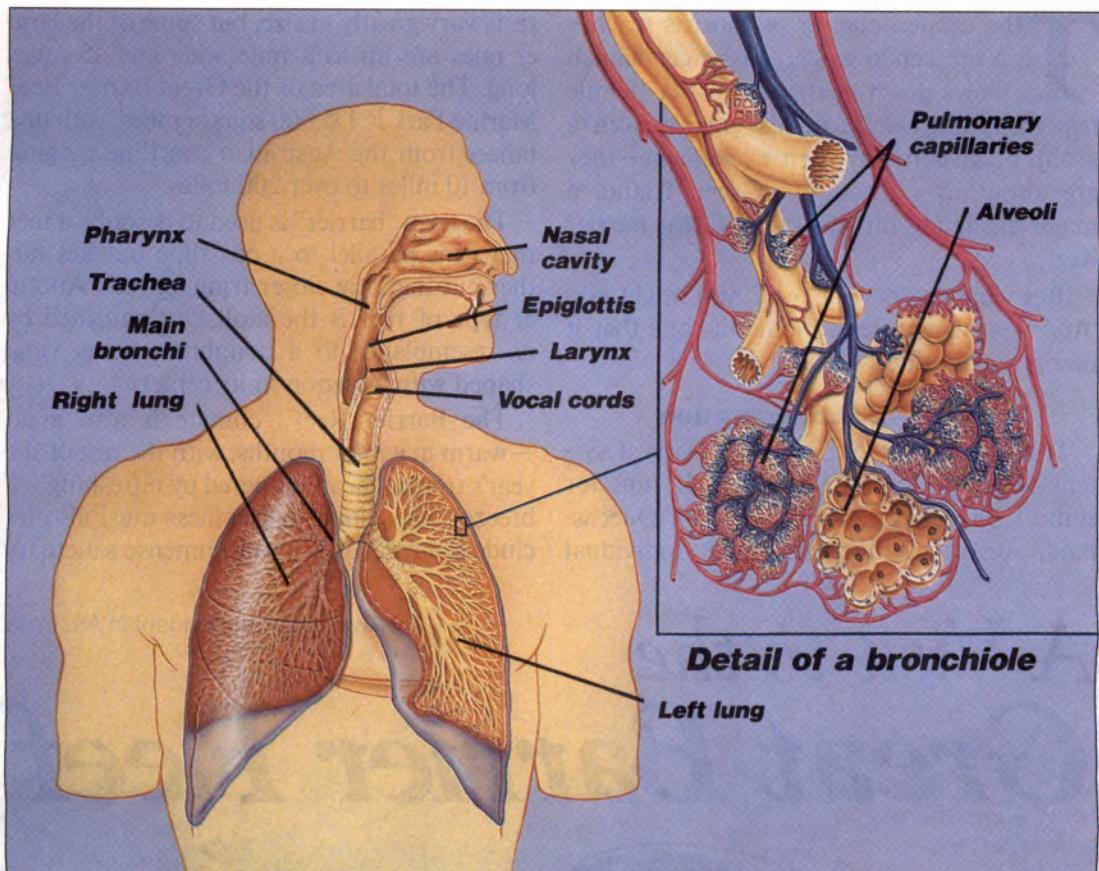
**Yawn:** A deep involuntary inhalation believed to be a response to a buildup of carbon dioxide in the lungs. Yawning has been referred to as a socially infectious habit because of the urge to yawn when you see or hear someone else yawning. Scientists cannot explain this phenomenon.

You also have the option of temporarily overriding this automatic system. Hence, you can deliberately control your breathing to some extent if you wish to do so. After all, would you want the mechanics of breathing to continue operating automatically while you swim under water? At a rate of 14 breaths per minute, would you have enough time to escape a smoke-filled room during a fire if you were unable to hold your breath? Of course, this automatic system cannot be bypassed for long periods of time. After some minutes at most, your lungs will inevitably return to their automatic mode.

But what activates the muscles to inflate or deflate your lungs during this automatic op-

eration? The control center is located in the brain stem. Here special receptors monitor the level of carbon dioxide in the body. When there is an increase in carbon dioxide, messages are sent through a network of nerves, which in turn activate the appropriate muscles of respiration.

This gives remarkable flexibility to your respiratory system. The lungs can keep up with even abrupt changes in your activity. For example, during strenuous exercise, your body may use about 25 times as much oxygen and produce some 25 times as much carbon dioxide as it does when it is at rest. However, your lungs almost instantaneously adjust the frequency and the depth of your breathing in



order to match your constantly changing oxygen requirements.

There are other sophisticated controls that enable the lungs to function properly. For example, some muscles used for respiration are also used in other functions, such as swallowing and speech. These functions are kept in balance so that they rarely interfere with your breathing. And all of this is done without any conscious effort on your part. Yes, automatically!

Of course, many things may go wrong with the lungs, especially when your resistance is low. To name just a few disorders, there are asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, lung cancer, pulmonary edema, pleurisy, pneumonia, tu-

erculosis, and a number of bacterial, viral, and fungal infections.

But these disorders are not the result of faulty or inadequate design of the lungs. Most lung diseases result from exposure to pollutants, dusts, and vapors dumped into the environment by man. Millions today suffer from lung cancer, bronchitis, and emphysema because of tobacco smoking and other self-inflicted abuses of the respiratory system.

Under normal circumstances, however, your lungs stand out as a marvel of design and as a living monument to the Grand Designer, Jehovah God! We are, indeed, as the psalmist put it, 'in a fear-inspiring way, wonderfully made.'—Psalm 139:14.

**T**he excited chatter of tourists reaches a crescendo as the passenger launch slows down at the end of its 18-mile trip from Cairns. Infectious giggles from a group of girls betray their excitement—they are about to set foot on Green Island, a major attraction on Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

'But what is a barrier reef?' you might ask. 'And what is so great about this one that it merits such a title?'

#### **Great—No Exaggeration**

The Great Barrier Reef is the largest system of coral reefs in the world. It runs for some 1,200 miles along the coast of Queensland, Australia's northern state. Individual

reefs vary greatly in size, but some of the larger ones are up to a mile wide and 15 miles long. The total area of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is 135,000 square miles, with distances from the Australian coastline ranging from 10 miles to over 200 miles.

The term "barrier" is used to describe a reef that runs parallel to a coastline but lies farther out than the closer fringing reef. Another type of reef is the atoll, distinguished by its resemblance to a doughnut, being ring-shaped with a lagoon in its center.

The Barrier Reef's climate is also great—warm in winter months, with the rest of the year's tropical heat tempered by refreshing sea breezes. Any claim to greatness must also include the reef's role as an immense sanctuary

# A Visit to the **Great Barrier Reef**

By Awake! correspondent in Australia



for birds and marine animals. It is renowned for its variety of edible fish, such as tuna, grouper, and coral trout, to say nothing of its big-game fish—black marlin, swordfish, barracuda, and shark.

Some of the world's most spectacular shells are found on the reef—big ones too. Giant-clam shells weighing more than 500 pounds are not uncommon. And some of the world's largest oysters have been harvested from the reef. Even pearl shell has been gathered along its northern section.

Of spectacular greatness is the magnificent color of the coral itself. Vying with this are the dazzling colors of tropical fish that abound in its waters: vivid contrasts of blue and orange, black and gold, even scarlet and

green. Also causing astonishment are the bizarre shapes of these fish, strikingly displayed as they dart or glide in and out of the beautiful, complex coral structures.

### The Wonder of Coral

Coral is the limestone “house,” or skeleton, manufactured by a tiny sea animal called a polyp. While alive, it builds the coral “house.” When the little polyp dies, it leaves the skeleton behind, bequeathed as a legacy to future generations. At birth the minute polyp larva swims about freely, but soon attaches itself to coral left behind by its predecessors. Now firmly anchored, it grows into a tubelike shape, with a mouth at the top of the tube from which small tentacles grow. The polyp then begins its diet, consisting of the animal

Photos of coral: By courtesy of Australian Overseas Information Service



constituents of plankton, mainly small crustaceans and fish larvae.

From this point on, it builds industriously, taking calcium salts from the seawater and secreting a hard, limestonelike substance to form a stony cup at its "feet," or base. Successive generations build on these cuplike skeletons, which take different shapes and colors according to the type of coral organism doing the building.

The result is a striking variety of beautiful coral, giving rise to such picturesque names as lace coral, mushroom coral, staghorn coral, star coral, and brain coral, to name just a few. And the breathtaking colors of live coral may be white, yellow, green, brown, orange, pink, red, purple, blue, or black.

So this is the building block of the Great Barrier Reef: colorful, fascinating coral. And though the main types found there are the rounded star and brain corals as well as the delicate staghorn, there are said to be at least 350 different kinds of coral on the reef! The thickness of coral forming the reef varies. Two bores sunk on one coral island reached a depth of 400 feet before finding sand.

### **The Beauty Is Under Water**

Surface coral is not very attractive, being composed of only dead and broken coral. It is the living coral in deeper pools that has the breathtaking color. Therefore, the real beauty of the reef can only be seen through a glass-bottomed boat or by snorkeling and scuba diving.

The water surrounding the reef is crystal clear, so that features as deep as a hundred feet are easily seen by enthralled passengers seated around the edges of the large glass panel in the floor of specially built boats. Even the deepest coral can easily be seen from the water's surface, for reef corals grow best in sunlit water, and reef-building slows as the water gets deeper than 35 feet.

### **The Reef's Enemies**

Man himself is sometimes the greatest enemy of natural wonders such as the Barrier Reef. Consequently, many are pleased that the Australian government has so far prohibited regular oil drilling on the reef, although some exploratory drilling has been done.

There is, however, an "enemy" that is not easily controlled: a starfish known as the crown of thorns. Its name is derived from its appearance; it has as many as 23 arms radiating from a central body, like the spokes of a wheel. Its entire surface is covered with thousands of sharp spines that are toxic to humans. It is one of the largest starfish in the world, reaching up to 28 inches across.

Crown-of-thorns starfish feed on live coral, that is, on the living polyps that are still manufacturing the coral, and they have caused extensive damage to parts of the reef. These starfish have been the subject of intense controversy since they were first observed in 1962.

Some take the alarming view that the entire Barrier Reef is at risk, and they issue warnings such as 'No Reef by the Year 2000.' On the other side, there are scientists who claim that this infestation is natural and necessary, likening it to the long-range benefits of bushfires or forest fires. They point out that so far infestations of the starfish have been confined to one third of the reef.

Whatever the personal view taken about this spiny starfish and the damage being done to the coral reef, most agree that more thorough scientific research is needed. Thus, over the last few years, what has been called the most intensive study of a marine animal ever conducted in Australian waters has been under way. What the final outcome will be, time alone will tell. Meanwhile, if you are able to take a trip down under, a visit to Australia's fascinating and colorful Great Barrier Reef will no doubt deepen your appreciation for the wonders of creation.

# A Letter of Appreciation

SOME months ago *Awake!* magazine received a letter from a young student in which she stated the following:

"Your journals are the most informative, easy to read and comprehend, timely, and encouraging journals I've ever read. They carry the truth of God's Word in meticulous form. They handle the current events with understanding and hope for the future.

"The vocabulary used is easy enough for a young person to read, much easier than other magazines, encyclopedias, and reference books. And they are timely. I often wonder about something, and then there is the answer in the next issue.

"Being a high school student, I must do much research for reports and various projects, which requires many reference books. This is where your magazines have proved so helpful. I'm happy to say that the information for the majority of my projects has come from the magazines. It always seems that when I need a topic for a project, there it is in the magazine. Or when I'm studying something in school, an article on that very subject is there to help me understand it.

"For example, I needed a topic for a science project for the Science Fair that we are required to enter. It was to consist of three posters, a report, and a model. So I decided to do a topic that many people wonder about these days: the greenhouse effect. It was discussed in the September 8, 1989, *Awake!* I used the inside cover illustration for my idea for one poster and the illustration on page 7 for another. The third poster was on the layers of the atmosphere. I also used the information in the articles in my report. Everyone liked my project and the way I presented it, especially my biology teacher. He gave me an A, and I received the first-place award in my section of Ecology and Conservation.

"Then, in March, I needed a topic for my assignment in First Aid. I saw in the March 22, 1990, *Awake!* an article on asthma and treatment for it. I decided to use the picture on page 17 for the poster and the information for a report. I also received an A on this project.

"In our American History class, we studied ancient civilizations, such as the Maya, Aztec, and Inca, and wouldn't you know, when I came home one evening, the May 8, 1990, *Awake!* was waiting for me in the mailbox. I took it out of its wrapper to go through it and came upon the article on page 13, discussing the Maya civilization. I was so happy. I immediately read the article and gave my history teacher a copy of it.

"Thank you for all this timely information, which truly makes doing these projects a learning experience and a joy instead of a burden. Indeed, the magazines are like precious gems. I would never want to part with them. They are truly helpful, especially for young ones such as I am, who can so easily be distracted. By reading the magazines, including the 'Young People Ask' articles, we are fortified with the strength to block these distractions out and keep our eyes on the prize of everlasting life. Thank you so much for your hard work in preparing these magazines for our understanding and enjoyment."—Contributed.

## Watching the World

### "Wracked With Discord"

"Jesus prayed, the night before he was crucified, that his followers would 'all be one . . . perfected in unity,'" states *U.S. News & World Report*. It adds: "Yet for most of its history, the Christian church has been wracked with discord." As proof of this, the seventh assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Canberra, Australia, this past February ended with "few signs of progress toward the 'unity of faith, life and witness' it has sought for more than four decades." "The ecumenical movement, in short, seems stalled," concludes the magazine. "A true uniting of the churches is unlikely in the foreseeable future." Not only were the delegates from the over 300 churches represented more divided by the end of the conference but many were also filled with disgust. There were even incidents of sexual harassment, "so many, in fact, that a special tent called Womanspace had been set aside as a sanctuary for women fleeing the attentions of the self-styled men of God," notes *The Sunday Times* of England.

### Pope's Missionary Call

In a 153-page encyclical entitled "The Church's Missionary Mandate," Pope John Paul II recently issued a call for Catholics to spread their faith throughout the world. To nations that oppose missionary activity and forbid proselytizing, he urged, "Open the doors to Christ!" The encyclical is the first major statement on missionary work by the church since 1959. The pope pointed out that in the past 25 years, the number of potential converts doubled and continues to rise. He sharply criticized those who he felt went too far in sympathy for other religions without attempting to convert their members and lashed out at the belief that

'one religion is as good as another.' Among the difficulties that face the church's missionary drive, the pope noted, are "past and present division among Christians, de-Christianization within Christian countries, . . . and the counter-witness of believers and Christian communities failing to follow the model of Christ in their lives."

### Was She a Saint?

That is the question facing the Roman Catholic Church regarding Queen Isabella I, a 15th-century ruler of Spain. According to French newspaper *Le Monde*, there is a move afoot within the church to beatify Isabella, which would be the first step toward "sainting" her. Isabella is famous for backing Christopher Columbus' explorations, which led to the European



discovery of America in 1492. While the Vatican studies a petition calling for Isabella's beatification, leaflets are circulating that describe her as a role model for adolescents, mothers, and even heads of state. Jews and Muslims, however, are outraged. It was while Isabella reigned with her husband that the brutal Spanish Inquisition began; hundreds of thousands of Jews and Muslims were forced to convert or go into exile. Thousands were tortured and burned.

### Tuberculosis Again on the Rise

Tuberculosis is on the increase worldwide, reports the French

newspaper *Le Monde*; it now kills almost three million people each year. After decades of decline, which caused some medical authorities to predict that the disease would virtually disappear by the end of the century, 20 million people worldwide are now afflicted with active cases of the infectious disease, and 8 million new cases are reported each year. Although a third of the world's population is believed to carry the bacteria that cause tuberculosis, most will never develop the disease unless the body's immune system is damaged in some way. The present jump in the number of tuberculosis cases is said to be directly linked to the spread of the AIDS virus because people who have AIDS are very susceptible to tuberculosis and can spread it to others.

### Bible Translations

With the addition of four new languages in 1990, complete Bibles are now available in 318 languages and dialects, reports Dr. John D. Erickson, the general secretary-elect of the United Bible Societies. The new languages are: Chimborazo Quichua, of Ecuador; Rongmei Naga, of India; and Ranau Dusun and Kayan, both of Malaysia. In whole or in part, the Bible is now published in 1,946 languages, an increase of 18 over the previous year.

### Use or Lose

Almost half of the world's 6,000 languages are "doomed to die out in the next 75 to 100 years," says *Science* magazine. That is because there are no children who are now speaking those languages. Furthermore, another 45 percent are also threatened with extinction as the groups who speak them disappear or are absorbed into other

groups. That leaves only 300 languages safe—5 percent of existing tongues. The Linguistic Society of America, which presented the statistics at their annual meeting early in the year, discussed ways of rescuing the threatened languages. One solution proposed was to "establish language centers where children are taught and encouraged to use the threatened tongues."

### Pollution Solution?

"Mexico city may well have the dirtiest air in the world," states *The Economist*. "It is 7,500 feet (2,300 metres) above sea level, so a given volume of air contains only about one-third as much oxygen as it would at sea level." Some 1,200 tons of pollutants are spewed into the air each day from industries, including an oil refinery, and from three million cars. It is the worst in winter when cold air traps the pollutants and keeps them from escaping over the surrounding mountains. As respiratory infections cause the largest number of deaths in Mexico City, 25 *casietas de oxigeno*, somewhat resembling telephone booths, were installed in the middle of Mexico City. For a little less than \$2, asphyxiating residents can enter and breathe pure oxygen for a minute. Although a noble gesture, "one oxygen booth for every 800,000 people will not cure anybody," notes *The Economist*.

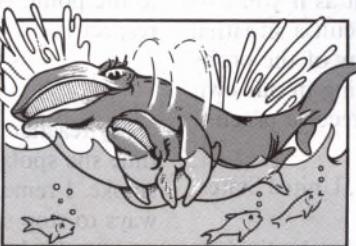
### Fish Lovers

"The Japanese love their sushi," says *Asiaweek*. "They eat five times as much fish per person as Americans and nearly eight times as much as Indonesians." To satisfy this love, Japan catches about 11.5 million tons of fish each year in deep-sea and coastal waters, takes another 250,000 tons from inland rivers and fish farms,

and imports an additional 2 million tons. The Soviet Union is second with 11.2 million tons, followed by 9.4 million tons in China, which is the largest producer of freshwater fish, mostly raised in village ponds. The United States is the largest exporter of fish, as well as the largest importer after Japan. Regarding one popular type of fish, sardines, the magazine notes: "Many small species can be called sardines. The characteristic taste comes from herbs and oils."

### Whale Embrace

In South Africa for several months each year, residents along the coast of the Cape of Good Hope find delight in watching huge right whales (usually about 60 feet long) drifting along and playing together in family groups close to



the shore. Recently, many onlookers were touched by the affectionate interplay between a mother and her calf. The frisky six-ton youngster would repeatedly clamber onto its mother's back, try to balance there, and topple off. Each time, the mother would then roll onto her back and clasp her baby to her belly with her flippers. It was "one of the best displays this century," said a local resident.

### Solving Conflicts With Jewish Law

On the outskirts of Jerusalem, a small building houses the Institute for Science and Halacha, "where 15 engineers and religious scholars labor to find ways to reconcile modern technology and *Halacha*, the

3,500-year-old body of Jewish religious law," reports *The Wall Street Journal*. "Many of the puzzlers presented to it concern the Sabbath, when the Torah bars observant Jews from performing certain kinds of labor and expending energy." The use of elevators posed a particular problem. While having the elevator automatically stop on every floor solved the problem of pushing a button, it was discovered that energy was created and channeled for use elsewhere when a full elevator was slowed on the way down. Now a specially designed system prevents that energy from being used on the Sabbath. Other solutions: a telephone that interrupts rather than creates a current when the buttons are pushed, an ink that disappears after three days so that hospitals could overcome the restriction against unnecessary writing (defined as a permanent mark), and a cardboard "house" for coffins so they can be transported on airplanes on which a member of the Kohanim (priests' caste) is traveling, as they are forbidden from being together in the same room or enclosure.

### Cutting Travel Risks

There are many things that passengers can do to reduce the odds of serious injury or death in air accidents, experts say. One is to stay awake and alert during take-offs and landings and to pay strict attention to the safety briefings, as escape plans vary in planes. As soon as one boards the plane, it is also good to make a mental map of the cabin and memorize the number of rows to the nearest exits. Avoid wearing synthetic fibers, which can melt during a cabin fire. Wool is regarded as one of the less flammable materials. Wear shoes with low heels during the flight. If an emergency develops, curl your body into the tightest crash position. Stay low while evacuating, and try to keep calm.

## From Our Readers

**Global Brotherhood** I truly appreciated the information in the December 8, 1990, issue. I live in a family where there is racial prejudice, and this often irritates me. I've been waiting for information like this to share with them. Presented clearly and to the point, the articles should be beneficial in helping them understand why we should imitate God's example of impartiality.

T. C., United States

**Religiously Divided Homes** Thank you so very much for the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Live in a Religiously Divided Home?" (January 22, 1991) As my children and I read the article together, we felt as if you truly understood how painfully difficult a situation like this can be. It described many of the problems that we personally were facing in our own home. It was so encouraging to receive practical advice from the Scriptures!

D. H., United States

I too am growing up in a religiously divided home. Like the boy quoted in the article, I sometimes feel so sorry for my father because he is left alone in the house when we go to Christian meetings. At times I have been tempted to compromise my faith. After reading this article, however, I decided that while I must be kind and tactful to my father, I will also take great care to avoid spiritual pitfalls.

J. O., Japan

**Taking Criticism** Ever since I became a Christian, my parents have been looking for things to criticize me for. This has been very exasperating. But your article "Do You Hate to Receive Criticism?" (February 8, 1991) has shown me how to deal with this situation.

M. M., United States

**Instant Gratification** I must say 'thanks!' for the articles on instant gratification. (January 22, 1991) I have been struggling with this mentality, thanks to a diet of six hours of television a day during my childhood. Reading the articles refreshed my outlook.

R. D., United States

**Smoking** I found a copy of *Awake!*, dealing with smoking, in a phone booth. (July 8, 1989) The skull on the cover was a real attention getter! I stopped smoking four years ago, but I passed the magazine on to one of my sons who smokes. I have three other sons who also need to quit. The articles were most informative and to the point. Although I am not of your faith, I respect it.

P. T., United States

My teacher smoked far too much, and every time she spoke to me, she smelled of cigarette smoke. I remembered the article with its ten ways to stop smoking. I took my teacher a copy and asked her three months later if she had stopped smoking. She told me that with the help of the magazine and effort on her part, she had stopped. She had been smoking for 25 years.

B. O., United States

**Single Parent Households** I am a single parent, and with the pressures of raising and providing for my children by myself, I tend to become absorbed in how these things affect me, often feeling that I'm in this alone. Your article "How Can I Be Happy Living With Just One Parent?" (December 22, 1990) helped me to see things from another angle—my children's. I've come to realize that my feelings and needs aren't the only ones to be considered.

P. G. B., United States

# The “Lovers of Freedom” District Convention (continued from page 32)

FRESNO, CA, Convention Center, 700 "M" St.  
HAMPTON, VA, Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr.  
JERSEY CITY, NJ (French only), Jehovah's

Witnesses Assembly Hall, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.  
LAFAYETTE, LA, Cajundome, West Congress.  
LOS ANGELES, CA (Tagalog only), Jehovah's  
Witnesses Assembly Hall, 20600 Ventura Blvd.,  
Woodland Hills.

LOUISVILLE, KY, Coliseum, Kentucky Fair &  
Expo Center.

MEMPHIS, TN, Mid-South Coliseum, Mid-South  
Fairgrounds.

MOBILE, AL, Municipal Auditorium, 401  
Auditorium Dr.

NORTH FT. MYERS, FL (Spanish only), Lee  
Civic Center, 11831 Bayshore Rd.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, Myriad, One Myriad  
Gardens.

PROVIDENCE, RI, Civic Center, One LaSalle Sq.  
ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena, 30  
2nd Ave. S.E.

SAINT PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400  
1st St. S.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Spanish only), Cow  
Palace, Geneva Ave.

SPRINGFIELD, MA, Civic Center, 1277 Main St.  
SYRACUSE, NY, Onondaga Co. War Memorial  
Arena, 515 Montgomery St.

TACOMA, WA (Sign language also; Spanish also),  
Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St.

TUCSON, AZ, Convention Center, 260  
S. Church St.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Auditorium, 1610  
Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

## JULY 19-21

FRESNO, CA, Convention Center, 700 "M" St.

HAMPTON, VA, Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr.  
LAFAYETTE, LA, Cajundome, West Congress.

LOS ANGELES, CA (Japanese only), Jehovah's  
Witnesses Assembly Hall, 20600 Ventura Blvd.,  
Woodland Hills.

LOUISVILLE, KY (Sign language also), Coliseum,  
Kentucky Fair & Expo Center.

MEMPHIS, TN, Mid-South Coliseum, Mid-South  
Fairgrounds.

NEW YORK, NY (Spanish only), Yankee Stadium,  
157th St. & River Ave.

NORTH FT. MYERS, FL (Spanish only), Lee  
Civic Center, 11831 Bayshore Rd.

PROVIDENCE, RI (Sign language also), Civic  
Center, One LaSalle Sq.

ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena, 30  
2nd Ave. S.E.

SAINT PETERSBURG, FL, Bayfront Center, 400  
1st St. S.

SAN ANTONIO, TX (Spanish only), Convention  
Center Arena, S. Alamo & Market Sts.

SYRACUSE, NY, Onondaga Co. War Memorial  
Arena, 515 Montgomery St.

TUCSON, AZ (Spanish only), Convention Center,  
260 S. Church St.

## JULY 26-28

FRESNO, CA (Spanish only), Convention Center,  
700 "M" St.

HAMPTON, VA, Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr.  
NORTH FT. MYERS, FL (Spanish only), Lee  
Civic Center, 11831 Bayshore Rd.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, Myriad, One Myriad  
Gardens.

PROVIDENCE, RI, Civic Center, One LaSalle Sq.  
ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena, 30  
2nd Ave. S.E.

SAINT PETERSBURG, FL (Spanish only),  
Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.

SAN ANTONIO, TX (Spanish only), Convention  
Center Arena, S. Alamo & Market Sts.

SYRACUSE, NY, Onondaga Co. War Memorial  
Arena, 515 Montgomery St.

TUCSON, AZ (Spanish only), Convention Center,  
260 S. Church St.

## AUGUST 2-4

LOS ANGELES, CA (Spanish only), Dodger  
Stadium, 1000 Elysian Park Ave.

SAN ANTONIO, TX (Spanish only), Convention  
Center Arena, S. Alamo & Market Sts.

## AUGUST 9-11

COLUMBUS, OH, Greater Columbus Convention  
Center, 400 N. High St.

LOS ANGELES, CA (Spanish only), Dodger  
Stadium, 1000 Elysian Park Ave.

## BRITAIN

### JUNE 7-9

GUERNSEY, C.I., Beau Sejour Leisure Centre,  
Saint Peter Port.

### JUNE 28-30

LEEDS, Leeds United Football Club, Elland Road.

PLYMOUTH, Plymouth Argyle Football Club,  
Home Park.

### JULY 5-7

EDINBURGH, Rugby Union Ground,  
Murrayfield.

LONDON (Italian only), North London Assembly  
Hall, 174 Bowes Road.

MANCHESTER, Manchester City Football Club,  
Maine Road, Moss Side.

STOKE, Stoke City Football Club, Victoria  
Ground, Stoke-on-Trent.

### JULY 12-14

COVENTRY, Coventry City Football Club, King  
Richard Street.

LONDON (Greek only), North London Assembly  
Hall, 174 Bowes Road.

NORWICH, Norwich City Football Club, Carrow  
Road.

### JULY 19-21

CARDIFF, Welsh National Rugby Ground, Cardiff  
Arms Park.

LONDON (CRYSTAL PALACE), National Sports  
Centre, Norwood.

### JULY 26-28

LONDON (Spanish also), Rugby Union Ground,  
Whitton Road, Twickenham.

## IRELAND

### JULY 5-7

NAVAN, Navan Exhibition Centre, Trim Road.

### JULY 12-14

NAVAN, Navan Exhibition Centre, Trim Road.

### JULY 19-21

NAVAN, Navan Exhibition Centre, Trim Road.

## CANADA

### JUNE 28-30

OTTAWA, ONT. (Sign language also), Civic Centre  
Arena, Lansdowne Park, 1015 Bank St.

OTTAWA, ONT. (Arabic only), Salon A, Civic  
Centre Arena, Lansdowne Park, 1015 Bank St.

### JULY 5-7

BRAMPTON, ONT. (Spanish only), Assembly Hall  
of Jehovah's Witnesses, Hwy. 7, 1 mile W. of  
Mississauga Rd., Norval.

EDMONTON, ALTA. (Sign language also; French  
sessions also), Edmonton Northlands Coliseum,  
75th St. & 118th Ave.

KAMLOOPS, B.C. (Sign language also), Kamloops  
Exhibition Association, 479 Chilcotin Rd.

MONTREAL, QUE. (French only; sign language  
also), Olympic Stadium, boul. Pie-IX &  
rue Sherbrooke.

SAINT JOHN, N.B. (Sign language also), Lord  
Beaverbrook Rink, Main St.

SASKATOON, SASK. (Sign language also;  
Ukrainian sessions also), Saskatchewan Place,  
3515 Thatcherville Ave.

VANCOUVER, B.C. (Sign language also;  
Portuguese sessions also), Pacific Coliseum, P.N.E.  
Grounds, Hastings St. E. & Renfrew St.

VANCOUVER, B.C. (Chinese only), Board Room,  
Pacific Coliseum, P.N.E. Grounds,  
Hastings St. E. & Renfrew St.

WINDSOR, ONT., Saint Denis Athletic  
and Community Centre, University of Windsor,  
College Ave. & Huron Church Rd.

WINNIPEG, MAN. (Sign language also;  
Ukrainian/Polish sessions also), Winnipeg  
Convention Centre, 375 York Ave.

### JULY 12-14

BRAMPTON, ONT. (Portuguese only), Assembly  
Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, Hwy. 7, 1 mile W. of  
Mississauga Rd., Norval.

CASTLEGAR, B.C., Castlegar & District  
Community Complex, 2101 6th Ave.

HALIFAX, N.S. (Sign language also), Halifax  
Forum, 2901 Windsor St.

KITIMAT, B.C., Tsimshian Arena, 400 City Centre.  
MONTREAL, QUE. (Italian only), Assembly Hall  
of Jehovah's Witnesses, 12700, boul.  
Métropolitain Est, Pointe-aux-Trembles.

NORTH BAY, ONT., Memorial Gardens Sports  
Arena, 100 Chippewa St. E.

PRINCE GEORGE, B.C., Kin Centre, Arenas I  
& II, Ospika Blvd. S. & 18th Ave.

QUEBEC CITY, QUE. (French only; sign language  
also), Colisée, 2205, avenue du Colisée.

TORONTO, ONT. (Korean, Ukrainian, Polish, and  
Vietnamese sessions also), Maple Leaf Gardens,  
60 Carlton St.

VICTORIA, B.C. (Sign language also), Esquimalt  
Recreation and Sports Centre, 1925 Blanshard St.

### JULY 19-21

BRAMPTON, ONT. (Italian only), Assembly Hall  
of Jehovah's Witnesses, Hwy. 7, 1 mile W. of  
Mississauga Rd., Norval.

HAMILTON, ONT. (Sign language also), Copps  
Coliseum, 101 York Blvd.

HULL, QUE. (French only; sign language also),  
Hull Arena, rue Allard.

MONTREAL, QUE. (Spanish only), Assembly Hall  
of Jehovah's Witnesses, 12700, boul.  
Métropolitain Est, Pointe-aux-Trembles.

NANAIMO, B.C., Beban Park Recreation Centre,  
2300 Bowen Rd.

PENTICTON, B.C., Penticton Trade & Convention  
Centre, 273 Power St.

SAINT JOHN'S, NFLD. (Sign language also),  
Saint John's Memorial Stadium, Lake Ave.

SHERBROOKE, QUE. (French only), Palais des  
Sports, 360, rue Parc.

### JULY 26-28

BRAMPTON, ONT. (Greek only), Assembly Hall  
of Jehovah's Witnesses, Hwy. 7, 1 mile W. of  
Mississauga Rd., Norval.

CALGARY, ALTA. (Spanish only), Calgary  
Kingdom Hall Complex of Jehovah's Witnesses,  
2900 14th Ave. NE.

# DON'T MISS IT!

## The "Lovers of Freedom" District Convention

Beginning this month and continuing through July and into August, over 140 district conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses are scheduled in the United States alone. Listen to helpful Bible discussions on practical matters of life. All sessions are free. Attend a convention near you at any location listed below:

### CONVENTION LOCATIONS

#### JUNE 7-9

LOS ANGELES, CA (Sign language also), Dodger Stadium, 1000 Elysian Park Ave.

#### JUNE 14-16

BILOXI, MS, Mississippi Coast Coliseum, 3800 W. Beach Blvd.

CICERO, IL, Hawthorne Race Track, 35th & Cicero Ave.

CORVALLIS, OR, Gill Coliseum, 600 S.W. 26th St.

DENVER, CO, McNichols Sports Arena, 1635 Clay St.

FORT WORTH, TX, Tarrant County Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.

JACKSONVILLE, FL, Memorial Coliseum, Gator Bowl Sports Complex.

KANSAS CITY, MO, Kemper Arena, 1800 Genessee St.

KNOXVILLE, TN, Thompson-Boling Assembly Center, 1600 Stadium Dr.

MACON, GA, Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.

MADISON, WI, Dane County Memorial Coliseum, John Nolen Dr.

NEW HAVEN, CT, Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 275 S. Orange St.

NEW YORK, NY, Yankee Stadium, 157th St. & River Ave.

PITTSBURGH, PA, Three Rivers Stadium, 420 Stadium Cir.

PONTIAC, MI (Sign language also), Silverdome, 1200 Featherstone Rd.

ROANOKE, VA, Civic Center, 710 Williamson Rd. N.E.

WICHITA, KS, Kansas Coliseum, I-135 at 85th St. N.

#### JUNE 21-23

CICERO, IL (Sign language also), Hawthorne Race Track, 35th & Cicero Ave.

COLUMBIA, SC, Carolina Coliseum, Assembly & Blossom Sts.

CORVALLIS, OR, Gill Coliseum, 600 S.W. 26th St.

DENVER, CO (Sign language also), McNichols Sports Arena, 1635 Clay St.

FORT WORTH, TX (Sign language also), Tarrant County Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.

HOUSTON, TX (Sign language also), Astrodome, Loop 610 at Kirby Dr.

JACKSONVILLE, FL, Memorial Coliseum, Gator Bowl Sports Complex.

KANSAS CITY, MO, Kemper Arena, 1800 Genesee St.

LANDOVER, MD, Capital Centre, Beltway Exit 15 E. or 17.

MACON, GA (Sign language also), Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.

MADISON, WI, Dane County Memorial Coliseum, John Nolen Dr.

NEW HAVEN, CT, Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 275 S. Orange St.

PITTSBURGH, PA, Three Rivers Stadium, 420 Stadium Cir.

RENO, NV, Reno-Sparks Convention Arena, 4590 S. Virginia St.

SACRAMENTO, CA, ARCO Arena, 1 Sports Pkwy.

SAINT LOUIS, MO, The Arena, 5700 Oakland Ave.

SAN DIEGO, CA, Jack Murphy Stadium, 9449 Friar Rd.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, Geneva Ave. SOUTH BEND, IN, N.D.U. Joyce Athletic Center, Juniper Rd.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

#### JUNE 28-30

AMARILLO, TX, Civic Center Coliseum, 3rd & Buchanan Sts.

BILLINGS, MT, MetraPark Arena, Hwy. #10.

BILOXI, MS, Mississippi Coast Coliseum, 3800 W. Beach Blvd.

CICERO, IL, Hawthorne Race Track, 35th & Cicero Ave.

COLUMBIA, SC, Carolina Coliseum, Assembly & Blossom Sts.

COLUMBUS, OH, Greater Columbus Convention Center, 400 N. High St.

CORVALLIS, OR, Gill Coliseum, 600 S.W. 26th St.

FRESNO, CA, Convention Center, 700 "M" St.

GREENSBORO, NC, Coliseum, 1921 W. Lee St.

JERSEY CITY, NJ (French only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.

LANDOVER, MD, Capital Centre, Beltway Exit 15 E. or 17.

LINCOLN, NE (Sign language also), Devaney Sports Center, 16th St. & Military Rd.

LONG ISLAND CITY, NY (Chinese only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.

LOS ANGELES, CA (Korean only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 20600 Ventura Blvd., Woodland Hills.

MACON, GA, Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.

MEMPHIS, TN, Mid-South Coliseum, Mid-South Fairgrounds.

NATICK, MA (Portuguese only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 85 Bacon St.

OGDEN, UT, Dee Events Center, 4600 South 1400 E.

ROCHESTER, MN, Mayo Civic Center Arena, 30 2nd Ave. S.E.

SACRAMENTO, CA, ARCO Arena, 1 Sports Pkwy.

SAINT PETERSBURG, FL (Sign language also), Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, Geneva Ave. SOUTH BEND, IN, N.D.U. Joyce Athletic Center, Juniper Rd.

SPRINGFIELD, IL, Prairie Capital Convention Center, One Convention Center Plaza.

SPRINGFIELD, MA, Civic Center, 1277 Main St. SYRACUSE, NY, Onondaga Co. War Memorial Arena, 515 Montgomery St.

TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St.

TUCSON, AZ (Sign language also), Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Auditorium, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

#### JULY 12-14

BELLEVILLE, MI (Greek only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 43777 Ecorse Rd.

BISMARCK, ND, Civic Center Arena, 601 E. Sweet Ave.

CICERO, IL (Spanish only), Hawthorne Race Track, 35th & Cicero Ave.

COLUMBUS, OH, Greater Columbus Convention Center, 400 N. High St.

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL (French only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 20850 Griffin Rd.

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