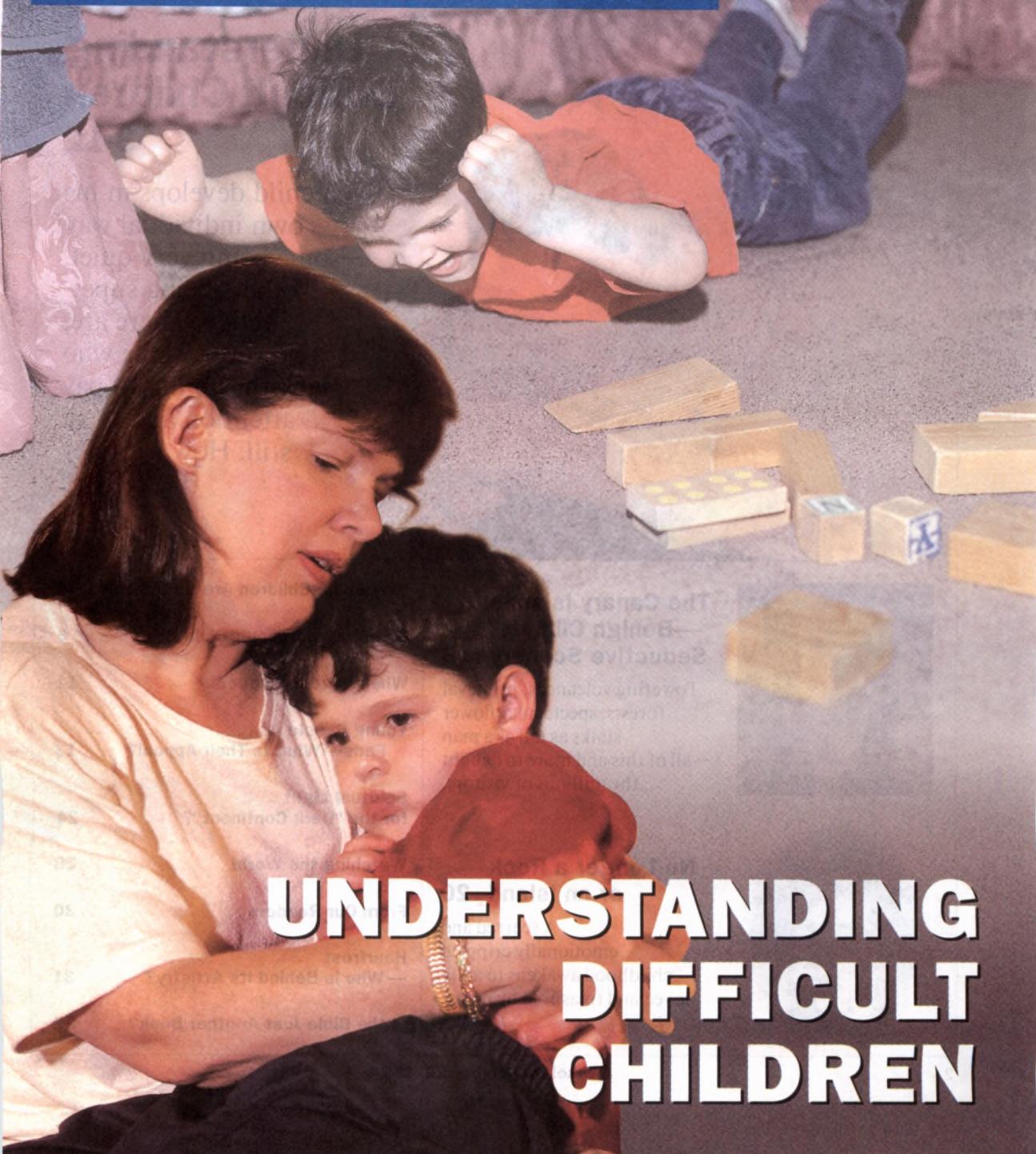
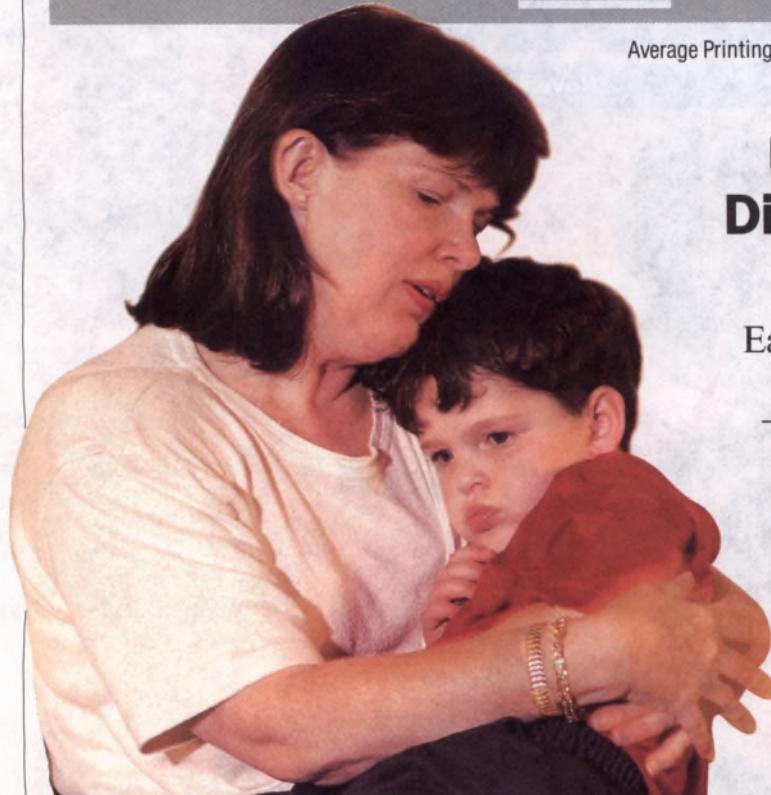


Awake!

November 22, 1994



UNDERSTANDING DIFFICULT CHILDREN



Understanding Difficult Children

3-12

Each child develops in his own individual way —some being very quiet, others being super-active. There are, however, some who lack the ability to pay attention and to sit still. How can they be helped?



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Towering volcanoes, primeval forests, spectacular flower stalks as tall as a man—all of this and more to delight the millions of visitors.

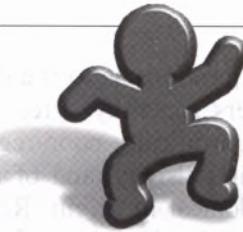


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Why Some Children Are So Difficult



"Genetic influences, brain chemistry, and neurological development contribute strongly to who we are as children and what we become as adults."

—STANLEY TURECKI, M.D.

EACH child grows in his or her own unique, distinctive way. Children display a host of traits and moods that seem to be inborn—traits that parents may have little or no control over. It is true that rambunctious, restless, and disruptive children have always been around. The best of parents can have a child that is difficult to raise.

But why are certain children so much more difficult and challenging to raise? The number of children who are experiencing serious behavioral problems is on the increase. There is general agreement among clinicians and researchers that from 5 to 10 percent of all children exhibit extreme restlessness and that the inability of these children to pay attention, concentrate, follow rules, and control impulses creates numerous difficulties for them and for their family, their teachers, and their peers.

Dr. Bennett Shaywitz, professor of pediatrics and neurology at Yale University Medical School, zeros in on what may be a key problem: "inherited disturbances in certain chemicals in the brain's neurotransmitter systems," which regulate brain cell function and facilitate how the brain regulates behavior. Whatever makes the child difficult to raise, the parents' priority should be to become adept at effectively managing their youngster's behavior, providing encouragement and support rather than criticism and disapproval.

In Bible times, parents were the ones responsible for the education and the training of their children. They knew that discipline and instruction in God's laws would make their child wise. (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7; 2 Timothy 3:15) Therefore, it is the parents' God-given responsibility to expend as much effort as possible, despite busy schedules, to meet a child's needs, especially reacting in a positive way to negative behavior. Inasmuch as many of the behavioral problems seen in pediatric practice today involve children who are hyperactive, impulsive, or inattentive, a discussion of ADD and ADHD as factors in hard-to-raise children may be helpful.*

In the 1950's, these disorders were called "minimal brain dysfunction." That terminology ceased being used, according to pediatric neurologist Dr. Jan Mathisen, when findings reflected that "ADD is not brain damage at all." Dr. Mathisen says: "ADD is an apparent defect in certain areas of the brain. We're still not sure of the precise neurochemical problems involved, but we do feel that there is involvement with a chemical in the brain called dopamine." He believes the problem involves dopamine regulation. "It's probably not one single chemical, but a relationship among several chemicals," he added.

Although there are still many unanswered

* ADD refers to Attention Deficit Disorder, and ADHD refers to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder throughout these articles.

questions as to the cause of ADD, researchers generally agree with Dr. Mathisen that chronically poor regulation of attention, of impulsivity, and of motor activity is neurological in origin. Recently a study conducted by Dr. Alan Zametkin and researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health, in the United States, traced ADD for the first time to a specific metabolic abnormality in the brain, although it was acknowledged that "a great deal more research has to be done to reach more definitive answers."

School Presents a Real Challenge

School is usually very difficult for children who are chronically inattentive, distractible, impulsive, or overly active, since the demands on concentration and for staying quiet increase tremendously in the schoolroom setting. Because such children find it so difficult to stay focused on anything for very long, what else is there for them to do but be maddeningly overactive? For some, their lack of attention is so severe that they cannot keep up normal learning, whether at home or at school. Their receiving discipline for being either the class terror or the class clown is not unusual, since they have difficulty controlling their behavior and evaluating the consequences of their actions.

Ultimately, they develop a poor self-image, perhaps labeling themselves "bad" and "stupid" and acting accordingly. Getting failing grades no matter how hard they try,

these children are susceptible to chronic self-perpetuating failure.

Bewildered, parents become very anxious and confused by their child's disruptive behavior. At times marital discord results, each parent blaming the other for the situation. Many parents spend a good deal of time angrily harping on the bad and forgetting the good. Therefore, their responses to negative behavior patterns cause more negative interaction. Thus the family, and to some extent others who interact with the child, become locked in a power struggle that is the result of their not understanding and not managing the behavior of a difficult child—a child with, or without, Attention Deficit Disorder.

A Mother's Personal Experience With Ronnie

"From the moment Ronnie came into the world, he was never happy but was constantly irritable and crying. Allergic, he had skin rashes, ear infections, and constant diarrhea.

"Ronnie's early motor skills developed well, though, and he was very quick to sit up, stand, and then walk—or should I say run? I hurried to do all my housework during his nap times because when my little 'tornado' woke up, I would be busy trying to keep him from damaging himself and the house as he raced around getting into anything that struck his fancy, and most things did!"

"He had a very short attention span. Nothing occupied him for very long. He hated to

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sit still. Of course, this was a problem when we took him any place where he was expected to sit still—especially congregation meetings. It was useless to spank him for not sitting quietly. He just couldn't. Many well-meaning people complained or gave us advice, but nothing worked.

"Ronnie was bright, so when he was about the age of three, we started a daily short-session reading program with him. By the time he was five, he could read quite well. Then he went to school. After about a month, I received a request to come in and talk to the teacher. She told me that when she first saw Ronnie, she thought he looked like an angel, but after having him in her class for a month, she now thought he was from the other place! She informed me that he was always jumping, tripping other kids, or pulling on them. He wouldn't be quiet or sit still, and he disturbed the entire class. He lacked self-control. She also noted that a rebellious attitude was developing. It was recommended that he be put in a special education class and that we take him to a doctor to get a prescription for a drug to calm him down. We were devastated!

"Medicine was not the appropriate choice for Ronnie, but the pediatrician gave us some practical suggestions. It was his opinion that Ronnie was bright and bored; he therefore suggested that we keep Ronnie busy, that we give him love and more love, and that we

be patient and positive. He thought Ronnie would become less of a problem with age and a change of diet.

"We realized that our son needed to be worked with carefully, that he needed to be helped to learn to channel his energy in a positive way. This would take lots of time; therefore, we changed our daily schedules, spending many hours working with him on schoolwork, patiently teaching and explaining things to him. We ceased using negative words or blaming him for his thoughtlessness and mischief. Our aim was to build up his low self-esteem. We discussed rather than ordered and demanded. If there were any decisions that involved him, we asked for his opinion.

"Some things that come naturally to other children did not come easily to Ronnie. For instance, he had to learn how to be patient, how to be calm, how to sit still, and how to control his exaggerated physical activity. But it was controllable. Once he understood that he had to make a conscious effort to slow down and think about what he was doing, or going to do, he began to get it all together. By age 13, his behavior was normal. Happily, everything went smoothly from then on, even during the usually rebellious teenage years.

"The dividends from giving Ronnie lots of love, and equal amounts of time and patience, have paid off handsomely!"

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Parenting a Difficult Child



DID you have a nice day?" Susan asks her son Jimmy when he clammers into the car as she picks him up from school. Frowning, he ignores her. "Oh, you must have had a bad day," she states sympathetically. "Do you want to talk about it?"

"Leave me alone," he grumbles in reply.

"I'm just worried about you. You seem so unhappy. I want to help."

"I don't want your help!" he screams. "Leave me alone! I hate you. I wish I was dead!"

"Jimmy!" Susan gasps, "don't talk to me like that or—or I'll spank you! I was only trying to be nice. I don't understand what's the matter with you. Nothing I say or do pleases you."

Flustered and frazzled from her own day's work, Susan weaves through traffic wondering how she ever managed to acquire such a child. She feels confused, helpless, and angry, as well as resentful toward her own son, and feelings of guilt hammer at her. Susan dreads taking him home—her own child. She almost doesn't want to know what happened today at school. No doubt the teacher would call again. Sometimes Susan just could not cope.

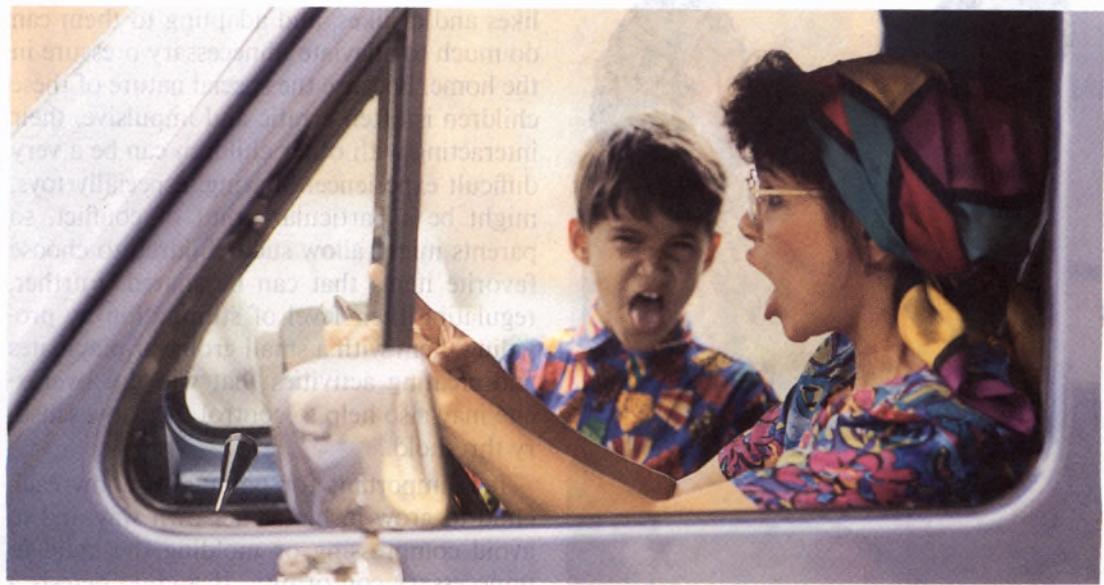
Thus seemingly simple incidents erupt into powerful emotional ordeals fraught with anxiety. Children who are ADD/ADHD, or are otherwise labeled "difficult," characteristically react quite vehemently when confronted with problems. They tend quickly to reach an explosive state, leaving parents angry, bewildered, and ultimately spent.

Evaluation and Intervention

Typically, these children are bright, creative, and keenly sensitive. It is important to realize that they are healthy children with extraordinary needs, consequently requiring a special depth of understanding. Following are some principles and ideas that parents of such children have found successful.

First, it is necessary to learn to recognize the situations and the stimuli that upset the child. (Compare Proverbs 20:5.) It is essential for the parent to observe the signals in the child that precede emotional confrontations and to intervene promptly. A key indicator is the facial expression that reflects a rising frustration level and an inability to handle a given situation. Issuing kind verbal reminders that the child needs to control himself or, if necessary, removing him from the situation may help. Time-outs, for example, are effective, not so much as a form of punishment but as a way to give both the child and the parent a chance to regain calm and then to proceed rationally.

In the illustration given, Jimmy overreacted to simple questions. This is typical everyday behavior for Jimmy. Although it is easy for a parent to take this anger and resentment personally, it is essential to realize that these children often lose comprehension (reasoning) once they have reached their stress-tolerance level. Therefore, it is important to act with insight. (Proverbs 19:11) In Jimmy's case, Susan could defuse the situation by backing off and giving her boy time to con-



Conversations can sometimes flare up emotionally

trol himself, and perhaps later they could discuss the day's events.

Stressed-Out Kids

Never before has the family of man been confronted with such enormous problems, pressures, and anxieties as those that afflict the modern world. Times are different, the demands are more intense, and more is required of children. Concerning this issue, the book *Good Kids, Bad Behavior* relates: "Many of the problems which children seem to be experiencing may be either caused or influenced by changing social expectations." For ADD/ADHD children, school can be a nightmare. As they struggle to cope with their own inadequacies, they are forced to adapt to an explosion of technological advances that rapidly continue to change in an atmosphere that can appear to be both hostile and dangerous, adding to their anxiety. Emotionally, children are too immature to handle all these problems. They need their parents' help.

Reduce the Friction

In order to have happier, healthier children, it is important to provide an environment of order and stability. An effective plan for reducing friction in the home might begin with a simplified life-style. Since these children are impulsive, distractible, and overactive, it is necessary to reduce the negative effect of overstimulation. Cut down on the amount of toys that such children are allowed to play with at one time. Attempt only one chore or project at a time until it is completed. Since these children are often disorganized themselves, organization minimizes frustration. The fewer and the more accessible the items that they have to keep up with, the easier it is to manage what is important.

Another effective way of reducing stress in the home is to implement a structured, not rigid, routine, providing children with a sense of stability. The time schedule is not as crucial as the sequence, the order in which events occur. This might be achieved by applying practical suggestions such as the



**When decisions are made,
explain them, and stick with them**

following. Provide proper nutrition with simple well-balanced meals and snacks at regular times. Make bedtime rituals warm, loving, and relaxing. Shopping trips can overstimulate highly active children, so plan ahead and try not to go to too many stores. And when on an outing, explain what kind of behavior you expect. Definite routines help the child with special needs to control his own impulsive behavior. Furthermore, it helps to establish parental predictability.

Along with a sense of structure, it is beneficial to formulate a system of rules and to include the consequences for breaking non-negotiable rules. Defined rules that are consistent, as well as agreeable to both mates, set the perimeters of acceptable behavior for children—and also teach accountability. Post a list of rules in a prominent place, if needed (for the parent to remember, as well as the child). Consistency is the key to emotional security.

Understanding a child's preferences, his

likes and dislikes, and adapting to them can do much to alleviate unnecessary pressure in the home. Because the special nature of these children is often erratic and impulsive, their interacting with other children can be a very difficult experience. Sharing, especially toys, might be a particular point of conflict, so parents might allow such children to choose favorite items that can be shared. Further, regulating their level of stimulation by providing them with a small group of playmates and creating activities that will not overexcite may also help to control their low sensory threshold.

It is important for parents to allow each child to grow in his or her own way and to avoid compressing or molding the child to unnecessary conformity. If a child detests a certain food or article of clothing, eliminate it. These little thorns of irritation are simply not worth the conflict. In effect, don't attempt to control everything. Be balanced, but when decisions are made as to what is acceptable to a Christian family, stick to them.

Behavior Management

Unpredictable children tend to require a higher degree of management. As a result, many parents are plagued with guilt if they have to discipline frequently. It is important to discern, however, the distinction between discipline and abuse. According to the book *A Fine Line—When Discipline Becomes Child Abuse*, reportedly 21 percent of all physical abuse occurs when children exhibit aggressive behavior. Hence, research concludes that children who are ADD/ADHD are at "greater risk of physical abuse and neglect." Undeniably, raising youngsters who have special needs can be stressful, but their management must be healthy and balanced. Since these children are usually highly intelligent and very creative, they pose a challenge to parents handling situations that require reason-

ing. Such children often have a way of pointing up the flaws in a parent's most brilliant logic. Don't let them! Retain the authority as the parent.

In a friendly way, but firmly, make explanations brief; in other words, don't over-explain, and *do not* negotiate nonnegotiable rules. Let your "yes" mean yes and your "no" mean no. (Compare Matthew 5:37.) Children are not diplomats; consequently, negotiations with them lead to arguments, anger, and frustration and can even escalate into screaming and violence. (Ephesians 4:31) Similarly, avoid warning too much. If discipline is called for, it should be given promptly. The book *Raising Positive Kids in a Negative World* urges: "Calm, confident, and firm—that's what authority is all about." Further, note the excellent suggestions in *The German Tribune*: "Always talk to the child in such a way as to hold its attention: use its name often, keep eye-to-eye contact and use simple language."

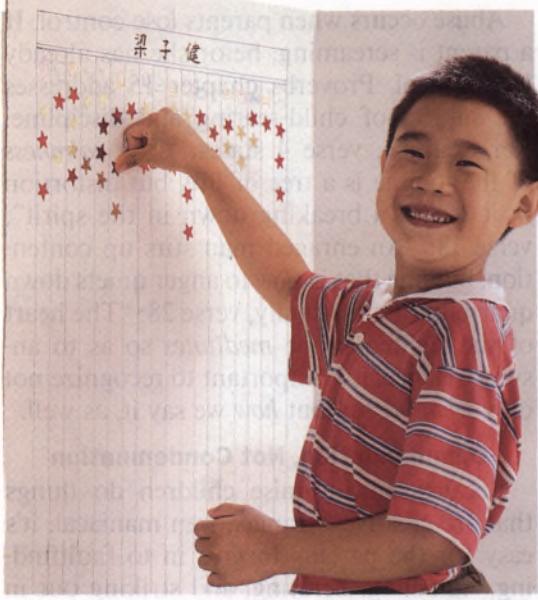
Abuse occurs when parents lose control. If a parent is screaming, he or she has already lost control. Proverbs chapter 15 addresses the subject of child-rearing and discipline. For example, verse 4 states: "The calmness of the tongue is a tree of life, but distortion in it means a breaking down in the spirit"; verse 18: "An enraged man stirs up contention, but one that is slow to anger quiets down quarreling"; and, finally, verse 28: "The heart of the righteous one meditates so as to answer." Hence, it is important to recognize not only *what* we say but *how* we say it, as well.

Commendation, Not Condemnation

Because hard-to-raise children do things that are creative, strange, even maniacal, it's easy for the parents to give in to faultfinding, ridiculing, berating, and striking out in anger. However, according to *Today's English Version*, the Bible at Ephesians 6:4 instructs parents to bring up children with "Christian discipline and instruction." How did Jesus discipline erring ones? Jesus used instructive

Possible rewards for good behavior:

- 1. PRAISE**—verbal commendation for a job well done; expressed appreciation for good behavior, accompanied with love, hugs, and warmth in facial expressions.
- 2. CHART SYSTEM**—prominently displayed, with attractive stickers or stars to encourage good behavior.
- 3. LIST OF GOOD THINGS**—of acceptable and praiseworthy accomplishment. Each time the child does something well, no matter how small at first, write it down, and read it to a family member.
- 4. BEHAVIOR BAROMETER**—depending on the age of the child, adding beans or jelly beans to a jar when the child does something well (tangible reinforcement). The object is to establish a point system for granting a reward that might include something that the family was going to do anyway, such as going to a movie, skating, or eating at a restaurant. Rather than stressing to the child: "If you don't behave, we won't go," try: "If you do behave, we will go." The key is to change negative thinking into positive thinking, while allowing a reasonable time for change to take place.



He proudly adds a new sticker to his chart

discipline that trained and taught people, dealing with them fairly and firmly. Discipline is a process, a method of instruction, that, when dealing with children, usually has to be done over and over again.—See the article “The Bible’s Viewpoint . . . ‘The Rod of Discipline’—Is It Out-of-Date?,” in the September 8, 1992, *Awake!*

Proper discipline creates an environment of trust, warmth, and stability; therefore, when discipline is necessary, it should be administered with explanations. There are no instant solutions when training children, since children learn gradually, over time. It takes a lot of caring and loving, a lot of time and work, to raise properly any child, especially a difficult-to-raise child. The following little saying may be helpful to remember: “Say what you mean, mean what you say, and do what you say you will do.”

One of the most frustrating aspects of the problem of dealing with children who have worrisome behavior is their inordinate craving for attention. Too often the attention that

they receive is negative rather than positive. However, be quick to notice, commend, or reward good behavior or a job well done. This is very encouraging to a child. At first your efforts might seem exaggerated, but they are well worth the results. Children need small but immediate rewards.

A Father’s Experience With Greg

“Our son Greg was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of five, when he was in kindergarten. At that time we saw a developmental pediatrician who confirmed that Greg was definitely ADHD. He told us: ‘It’s not his fault, and it’s not your fault. He can’t help it, but you can.’

“We think of those words often, because they bring home to us that as parents we have a great responsibility to help our son cope with his ADHD. That day the doctor sent us home with literature to read, and we believe the knowledge we have gained in the past three years has been very important in fulfilling our parental responsibilities toward Greg.

“It’s vitally important in raising an ADHD child to reinforce appropriate behavior and to provide warnings and, if necessary, a penalty for misbehavior. The more structured and consistent you can be, the better the results you will see. These simple statements are probably a key factor in raising an ADHD child. Yet, because you need to do it so many times a day, it’s easier said than done.

“A device we have found most effective is the time-out. Whenever we use time-outs to change a misbehavior, we also institute a program of reinforcement to encourage more positive behavior. This reinforcer can be a word of approval, a hug, or even a token or privilege. We went to a store and bought a sticker chart. We put at the top what the appropriate behavior is. Each time we see Greg in the appropriate behavior, we give him a

sticker to put on his chart. When the chart is full, say 20 stickers, he gets a reward. This is usually something he really enjoys doing, such as going to a park. It's helpful because it motivates him to do well. He puts the stickers on and can see how he is doing and how close he is to a reward.

"Another tool we have found effective is to give Greg choices. Instead of a direct command, we give a choice. Either he can do the appropriate behavior or he can get the logical consequence. This teaches responsibility and the making of proper decisions. If it's something that is continually a problem, such as acting up in a store or a restaurant, we can use the sticker chart with a reward. He thus sees benefit in the appropriate behavior, and we show our recognition of his improvements.

"Most people are not aware that ADHD affects the child's ability to regulate his or her behavior and responses. Many people believe that these children could control their

attention span and their behavior if they tried harder, and when they fail, the parents are blamed.

"It is physically impossible for an ADHD child to sit still for two hours in a congregation meeting at the Kingdom Hall. We will never forget how Greg at the mere age of five years old used to cry before every meeting and ask us, 'Is this a long meeting or a short meeting?' He would cry very hard when it was a two-hour meeting because he knew he couldn't sit still that long. We have to make allowances for the disorder and the limitations it brings. We know that Jehovah understands the disorder better than anyone, and that's a source of comfort. At this point Greg is not on medication and is at his grade level.

"Making Jehovah our hope and keeping our eyes focused on the new world sustain us. Our hope already means a lot to Greg. He gets really excited, even teary-eyed, when he thinks of how Jehovah will do away with ADHD in the Paradise earth."

When More Is Needed



ALTHOUGH many of the suggestions in the preceding articles can be very helpful, sometimes more assistance is needed in specific circumstances. Case studies include, for example, reports of children who are not only impulsive but also very dangerous. These children, even though cared for by loving families, manifest their destructive behavior by smashing things, screaming at people, starting fires, shooting guns, stabbing with knives (if available),

and harming animals, other people, or themselves, if it happens to cross their minds to do so. In essence, they epitomize chaos.

Whether or not to obtain medical assistance, in order to have the best care for their child, is a private personal decision to make. Each family must decide how to meet the distinctive individual needs of their child, having in mind the comforting assurance given to parents at Proverbs 22:6.

One of the most controversial treatments,

currently, is the issue of medication. The most frequently prescribed drug, Ritalin, has had mixed results. Many families have been well pleased with the progress of their child while he is on Ritalin or other activity-modifying drugs. However, current debate continues, not only about the usefulness of these drugs but about the overprescription of them. In fact, some doctors challenge their value entirely, stating, for example, that Ritalin used for extended periods can have many harmful side effects. It must be emphasized again, however, that many families and doctors cite few side effects with improved behavior and academic progress. Interestingly, many adults who have been diagnosed as having ADD and who are currently on medication are also happy with the results. Medication is, therefore, a private decision based on careful research and evaluation.

For those who have attempted medication with poor results, there are alternative methods of treatment. Many families have read about and recorded good results with vitamin and herbal treatments or a combination of both. As noted earlier, ADD/ADHD may be caused in some instances by biochemical imbalances in the brain that these treatments are believed to help correct.

Additionally, there are other factors that some believe trigger many of the problems associated with ADD/ADHD. Dr. Doris Rapp, in her book *Is This Your Child?*, states that "some children have physical illness and/or emotional, behavioral, and learning problems that are partly or mainly related to allergies or environmental exposures." Also, reactions to dyes, sugars, and additives may actually mimic these problems with violent tantrums, mood swings, and insomnia.

Many families have learned how to modify their children's behavior, yet their ac-

ademic performance can create additional problems. For some, special services such as tutors, counseling, support groups, and special teachers may help. Because these children tend to do better in a one-on-one arrangement, some families, at their doctor's suggestion, have reported success with home schooling.

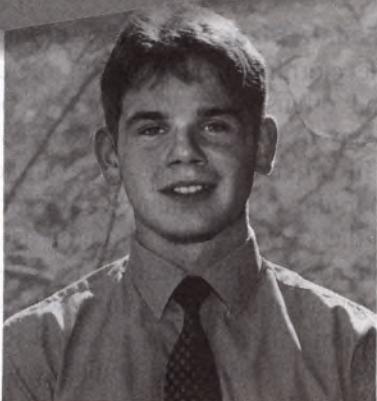
Not to be overlooked are many new educational projects, such as Dr. Mel Levine's *Schools Attuned*, which celebrates individual uniqueness and diversity of children. Dr. Levine's program advocates custom designing education to meet the needs of every child. Wherever this diversified approach to learning has been implemented in the United States, the results seem to have been good.

The Future

Raising children might be likened to purchasing a new home. Both require a lifetime investment; however, because of circumstances, prospective buyers may be forced to settle for less than the ideal. Similarly, imperfect parents raising imperfect children in Satan's world are forced to settle for less than the ideal. The newly purchased home might have unusual or undesirable features, but with work and a little imagination, many awkward features can be practically eliminated. Even a difficult architectural feature may soon become the focal point of the home.

Likewise, if parents adapt to the individual needs of their unusual child, he or she can become a beautiful part of their lives. Each child must be appreciated for his own qualities. Therefore, focus on the positive. Rather than stifling children, encourage each one's creativity, and appreciate that he or she is a worthy person deserving of dignity and love—a precious gift from Jehovah God.—Psalm 127:3-5.

**Young
People
Ask...**



Fads—What Is Their Appeal?

YOUNG Avery is one of the thousands—perhaps millions—of youths who have been swept up by the popular fad of wearing slogan T-shirts. Of course, slogan T-shirts have been around for a long time; your parents may even have worn them as youths. According to *Newsweek* magazine, however, there is a new twist on this fad. Some youths are now “flaunting T shirts that pluck messages directly from the gutter.”

The new shirts carry slogans that are, for the most part, simply unprintable. They range from racial slurs to vulgar comments about women. Followers of this rage seem to have little concern for how others—including their parents—feel about the nasty slogans. When 18-year-old Andrea asked a

youth why he wore a particularly offensive shirt, “he didn’t know what to say, just coming up with excuses like, ‘It’s cool’ and ‘Everybody wears one.’”

Over the past decades, hundreds of fads have captured the attention of youths. One of the most popular—and profitable—fads of all time was the Hula-Hoop craze that hit the scene in the United States back in the 1950’s. Go back a few years earlier, and swallowing goldfish and seeing how many people could fit into a telephone booth were popular. In recent years, break dancing, faded jeans, skateboards, and “streaking” (dashing about naked in public) have all had their moments of popularity. One Bible writer observed: “The scene of this world is changing.” (1 Corinthians 7:31) Today, dozens of fads—some ranging from foolish to dangerous—are currently in vogue among youths.

Youths and Their Clothing Fads

Take clothing, for example. According to *Time* magazine, rap music (often called hip-hop) “is now possibly the most successful American export this side of the microchip, permeating, virtually dominating, worldwide youth culture.” But, as you well know, rap is much more than music. Adds *Time*: “Rap is also a worldwide fashion commodity. Local variations of the basic American street outfit—baggy pants, pricey sneakers, hooded sweatshirts, flashes of jewelry—turn up everywhere.” Heavy promotion by popular groups—and by music videos—has fueled a burgeoning demand for hip-hop styles.

The baggy look is anything but cheap—the high-cut running shoes alone often cost a small fortune! But many youths feel it’s worth the price. According to one youth named Marcus, “if you don’t wear baggy clothes, you’re not hip hop.”

That’s just fine with youths whose tastes

lean toward the popular "grunge" look. The torn jeans and plaid shirts that characterize this dress craze were popularized by some American underground rock bands. One writer called the "grunge" uniform "put-on poverty." Put-on, indeed. The sloppy garb can be anything but cheap. Then there is "retro-chic." According to the Canadian magazine *Maclean's*, these are "fashions that revive fads from the late 1960s and early 1970s." Adults stare in amused wonderment as youths pay top dollar for paraphernalia—such as platform shoes and bell-bottom pants—that seemingly had long since gone the way of disco music.

High Tech High Fashion

Electronic pocket pagers, or beepers, are another example of how imaginative youths can turn virtually anything into high fashion. Originally used by doctors and other professionals who are constantly on call, the gadgets soon became popular with urban drug dealers. The beepers made it easy for drug sellers to arrange meetings with potential customers. According to *The New York Times*, "so widespread was their use that [pocket pagers] became a symbol of the drug culture." Little wonder, then, that school boards nationwide began banning the tiny gadgets from school!

To little avail, however. Beepers have become enormously popular among urban youths. Some use them for their intended purpose, as communication devices, enabling their parents to keep better track of them or to contact them in an emergency. But for other youths, the device is simply a fashion accessory. According to the *Times*, "teen-agers are tucking beepers into knapsacks, coat pockets and belts. There are beeper watches, beeper ties, beeper pens, blue, pink and red beepers, and plain old ordi-

nary black and brown beepers." While some grown-ups still automatically associate beepers with drug use, one New York City police officer says: "It's just a hot market item. A few of the kids who have them are into drugs, but the majority are not. It's just a fad."

Fads—Bizarre and Dangerous

While clothing fads may be tolerable at best and offensive at worst, some popular fads seem to violate all rules of common sense. In order to achieve the waif look of some popular models, many young girls take to fad diets—with little thought as to the consequences to their health and well-being. "Dieting is a national obsession," writes Alvin Rosenbaum. "Take a look at any list of the 10 best-selling books and you'll usually find a diet book listed." Rosenbaum points out that many of these popular books promote diets of dubious efficacy. Many experts blame

**"These shirts . . .
Everybody's
wearing them."
17-year-old Avery**

the thinness craze for the disturbing rise in eating disorders—such as anorexia nervosa—among teenagers.*

Other faddish methods of embellishing personal appearance may be equally dangerous—and bizarre. According to an article in *Newsweek*, "tattooing, the art of the primitive and the outlaw, has been moving steadily into the fashion mainstream." Spurred on by the examples of movie celebrities

* For information on eating disorders, see *Awake!* of December 22, 1990. See also the "Young People Ask . . ." articles of April 22 and May 8, 1994 for balanced information on weight loss.

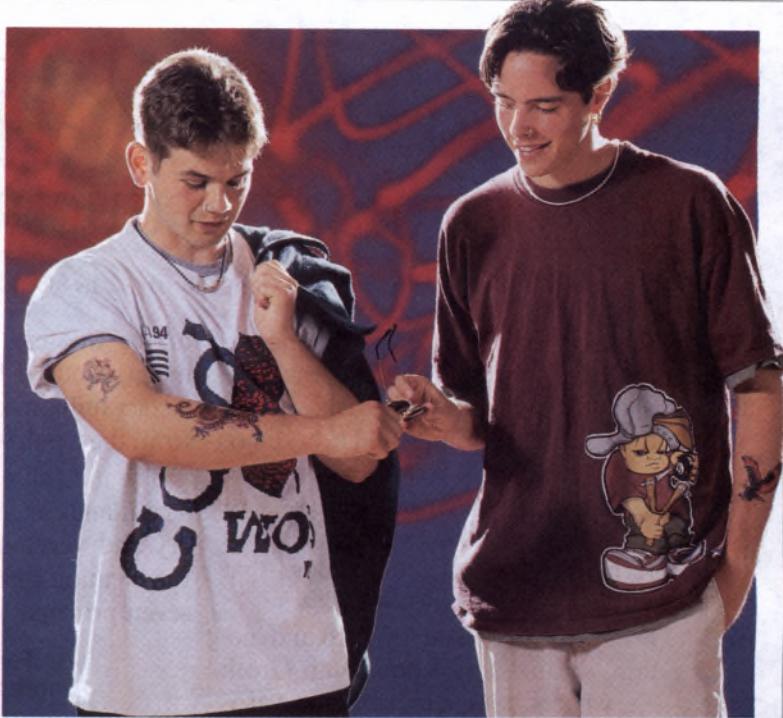
and heavy-metal rock musicians, some youths long for the chance to have elaborate tattoos permanently affixed to their own torsos. Warnings by doctors about the dangers of hepatitis and allergic reactions to tattoo inks do not seem to perturb them.

Or what about the weird fad called body piercing? Whereas pierced ears may be customary for women in some cultures, some have gone beyond all reasonableness and have had holes punched in their tongues and navels from which they dangle ostentatious jewelry. For any youth dead set on offending his or her parents, it is hard to beat a huge nose ring for sheer shock value.

Fads—What Is Behind Them?

The book *Adolescents and Youth* defines a fad as "a sporadic short-term fashion bordering on a cult. Fads are by definition temporary and unpredictable, and they are especially prevalent among teenagers." But just what is it that makes millions of youths suddenly wear baggy jeans or carry beepers? Manufacturers and advertisers would love to have a scientific answer to that question. An article in the British magazine *The Economist* acknowledged: "Fads and fashions seem to defy rational explanation."

The book *Adolescents and Youth*, however, ventures an explanation, saying: "Various factors may explain the popularity of fads: the desire to attract attention; the urge to conform to what peer groups prize; the need



Body piercing and tattooing have become very popular

for distinctiveness as individuals and as age groups; and the fascination with the unusual." One teenage boy put it simply: "High school [secondary school] is a good time to act kind of crazy and get it out of your system."

The Bible does not condemn youthful behavior. In fact, it says: "Young people, enjoy your youth. Be happy while you are still young. Do what you want to do, and follow your heart's desire." However, the Bible follows up that advice with this caution: "But remember that God is going to judge you for whatever you do." (*Ecclesiastes 11:9, Today's English Version*) In view of this sobering advice, how should a Christian youth respond to the latest fads? Should you be the first to jump on the fad bandwagon? Our next article in this series will offer some helpful advice along these lines.

The Canary Islands

Benign Climate, Seductive Scenery

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN SPAIN

FAR across the sea, it was said, beyond the Pillars of Hercules, lay some enchanted islands. The soil was so rich, the climate so benign, that anything and everything would grow there. These were the Fortunate Islands. We now know them as the Canary Islands, "Canary" being derived from the Latin *canis*, referring to the large, fierce dogs that once abounded there.

This romantic blend of fact and fiction, idealized by Roman and Greek writers, was based on the yarns of the few intrepid sailors who plied the Atlantic before the time of Christ. Today, it is the tourist who retraces the steps of those ancient mariners. The islands are real enough, although some of the majestic and most

of the mystery have evaporated. Their climate is indeed benign, seductive enough to attract millions of visitors who seek a respite from the harsh winters of Northern Europe.

The mild climate is not the only attraction. The islands harbor a singular variety of scenery and vegetation that more than justifies the creation of national parks in four of the seven principal islands.

Tenerife—A Rock Garden Above the Clouds

The largest island, Tenerife, is dominated by Pico de Teide, a dormant volcano towering above the clouds that roll in from the Atlantic. Surrounding the volcanic dome lies a huge subalpine amphitheater, which along with the majestic volcano constitutes the Teide National Park. The park is host to a unique flora that comes to life in the late spring and early summer when the plants take advantage of accumulated moisture from winter snows. Suddenly the stark volca-

1

1. *Granadillo*
2. *Tabaiba Majorera*
3. *Verol dulce*
4. *Ercila*
5. *Hierba blanca*
6. *Teide violet*

2





3



4

nic terrain is transformed into a rock garden ablaze with color.

Two of the most unusual flowers of the park are found nowhere else in the world. They are the red *tajinaste* and the Teide violet. The red *tajinaste* is arguably the most impressive plant of the archipelago—a myriad clusters of red flowers growing in tight spirals around a solitary stalk that reaches a height of six feet or more. The tall blooms look like red floral chimneys saluting the deep-blue sky.

The Teide violet, which decorates the volcano's throat with a lilac garland, is remarkable for its tenacity. It grows just a few feet from the 12,000-foot summit, where no other vegetation survives.

La Palma—A Verdant Volcanic Calderon

La Palma has one of the largest craters in the world. Its rim has a circumference of about 17 miles and is almost 8,000 feet high. The immense hollow below, which occupies the center of the island, is a collapsed volcano that over the years has been sculptured by wind and rain into what looks like a massive caldron. Hence the Spanish name *caldera* (Spanish for caldron), a word that is ap-

plied to similar craters throughout the world.*

The caldera, all of which is now a national park, is almost completely covered by a magnificent pine forest. The Canary pine, the dominant tree, covers all but the steepest slopes, protecting the walls of the caldera against further erosion. Nearly cut off from the outside world by its inaccessibility, the unspoiled caldera is a haven of beauty and peace for nature lovers who venture inside.

Gomera

—A Stepping-Stone to America

It was from this obscure island that Columbus sailed into the unknown. It had just been conquered by the Spanish, and

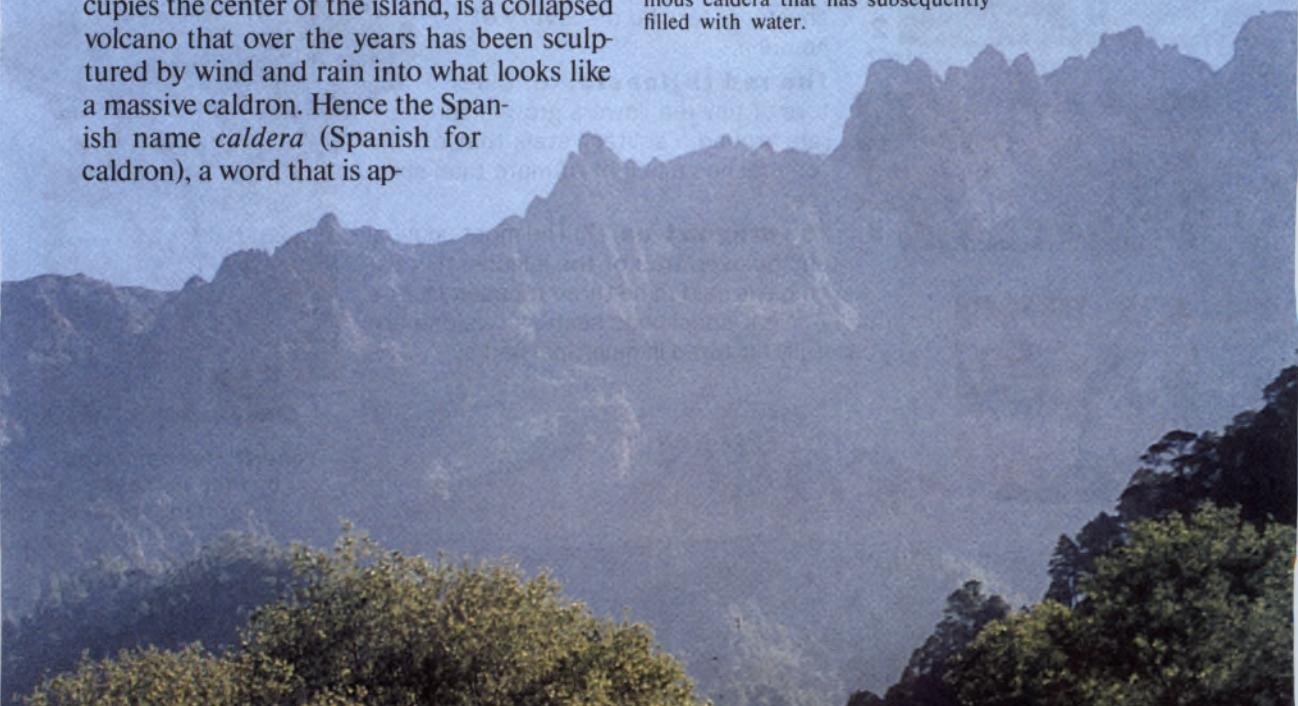
* Crater Lake in Oregon, U.S.A., is a famous caldera that has subsequently filled with water.



5



6



Canary Island Fauna and Flora



1

The canary. (1) Named after the archipelago, these birds are still plentiful, although, in the wild,

they are not as colorful as the popular caged birds whose vivid colors are the result of over four centuries of selective breeding.

Aeonium species. (2) Over two dozen types are found throughout the islands, many growing in rocky crevices. Some, such as *Aeonium lancerottensis*, (3) even grow out of petrified lava.

The Teide violet. (4) These delicate blooms thrive in a hostile volcanic environment nearly 12,000 feet above sea level.

The banana plant. (5) Bananas have been cultivated in the Canary Islands for centuries. Spanish colonizers took them to the Caribbean shortly after the discovery of America.

The red tajinaste. (6) Clusters of tiny red flowers grow in spirals around a solitary stalk that often reaches a height of more than six feet.

The dragon tree. (7) The most unusual and beloved tree of the islands, this example is said to be three thousand years old. Ancient specimens such as this one are carefully nurtured in municipal parks.



2



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Tenerife is dominated by Pico de Teide, a dormant volcano

Columbus stopped in the small port of San Sebastián to take on water and provisions.

At the time of Columbus, the inhabitants of the island, the Guanches, were still living a primitive life, but they were an adaptable people. Because of the hilly nature of the terrain, they had developed a unique language consisting of whistles enabling them to converse with one another from ridge to ridge over distances of a couple of miles or more. Although largely forgotten, this "telewhistle" technique is still used by elderly ones when they wish to pass on a quick news item. Jehovah's Witnesses preaching in isolated villages have heard on more than one occasion the message "The Witnesses are here!" whistled from the hilltops.

On the higher slopes of the island is a national park created to protect a primeval forest. Its dark interior, invariably swathed in mist and full of tortured boughs covered with feathery lichen, conjures up memories of long-forgotten fairy stories. Strange as it may seem, it usually rains here *underneath* the trees. Clouds whipped over the forest by the prevailing northerly winds are "milked" of their water by the trees. Thus, beneath the trees there is usually a steady drizzle, whereas in the open it may not be raining at all.

Fossil remains indicate that this laurel forest (called *laurisilva*) once existed throughout the Mediterranean region. But a change in climate millennia ago drastically reduced its range to just a few hilltops of the Canary Islands.

Lanzarote

—A Desert Island With a Difference

Lanzarote is a desert island that, while not deserted, is certainly desertlike. Rainfall is nearly nonexistent. Life here had always been difficult for the small population, but then two centuries ago a series of violent volcanic eruptions changed the face of the island. The volcanoes brought death and life. Death, in

that a quarter of the island was entombed by lava flows bringing an abrupt end to many villages and homesteads. Life, in that from the ashes of the volcanoes the islanders have wrought a livelihood.

Thanks to vast quantities of porous volcanic gravel, a leftover from the eruptions, the islanders can cultivate fruit and vegetables even though it may not rain for months. The fields are covered with a four-inch layer of gravel that not only preserves the humidity of the underlying soil but actually captures moisture from the humid night air and transmits it to the soil below. Vineyards, fig trees, tomatoes, corn, and other crops sprout unexpectedly from the black gravel.

The Timanfaya National Park includes spectacular craters and a vast surrounding area engulfed by the lava they discharged. The desertlike climate has preserved the congealed lava almost intact, and the visitor who tours the park may well imagine that the eruptions ceased only yesterday. The dramatic volcanic landscape, along with the white picturesque villages, gives the island a surrealistic beauty all its own.

Doubtless these fascinating volcanic islands are a tribute to the adaptability of their inhabitants and the vegetation that grows there. Above all, their natural beauty moves the reverent visitor to attribute praise to the Creator of such variety.

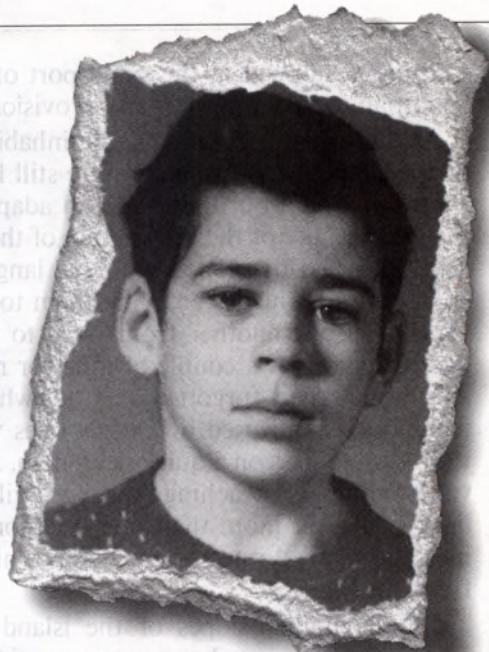
IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**Can Material
Prosperity Guarantee Happiness?**

**Fads—Should I Jump
on the Bandwagon?**

Does God Give Rewards?

No Longer a Rock or an Island



A LINE from a song of the '60's went: 'I am a rock/I am an island/And the rock feels no pain/And an island never cries.' This song was a favorite of mine because it was how I lived. I could never remember feeling things others said they felt, such as love, compassion, and pity. I would fake such feelings and believed others did also. I could not remember ever crying as an adult. And here I was—50 years old and serving as an elder in a Christian congregation, alone in my home, choking on sobs because of a book that I was reading. How could this be happening to this "rock," this "island"?

I was born in 1936 in a suburb of Boston, the fourth of eight children. My father and mother were alcoholics. We did not discuss feelings, hug, or express love in any way that I can remember. When I was six months old, someone put me in the bathtub, put in the stopper, turned the water on, and left. The housekeeper found me and saved my life. The only things I felt as a child were fear, dread, rage, and physical pain.

These were taught me by my father who

would explode with rage and almost without exception express it on my little body with his fists and feet. The look on his face at those times still haunts me a half century later. Most of my life I believed these beatings were because I was such a bad boy, but now I know his rage expressed against me had nothing to do with my being good or bad.

In my fifth and sixth years, I was sexually abused by the family doctor. When I started school, we lived in a city of 250,000 WASPs (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants), and my schoolmates tormented and chased me, the little Jewish boy. When these gangs of 10 or 12 kids could catch me, they would strip off my clothes, beat me, and throw my clothes up into the tops of trees. I had to climb the trees in the nude to retrieve my clothes.

One month shy of my 18th birthday, I joined the military to get away from home. Till then I had never tasted alcohol, but almost immediately I started drinking and was addicted just as immediately. I stayed 20 years in the military and was drunk whenever

I could beg, borrow, or steal the price of a beer. I was married at 24 and had a son, but my wife and son lived in a house dominated and controlled by an alcoholic—me—who viewed them both as a burden and an unnecessary expense.

I retired from the military in 1974 and tried business for a short time, but I soon quit that. I was no longer drinking, since my body would not take any more alcohol. I would break out in hives after only one or two beers. Now I was addicted to drugs—mostly marijuana, but others when available. This made it impossible for me to hold a job, so I stayed home and kept house while my wife, Donna, worked.

Jehovah's Witnesses Come Calling

One morning my wife was leaving for work. It was 7:30, and I was already stoned. This made her angry. On her way out the front door she threw a sign at me and screamed: "I hope they pester you to death." The sign was one that she had always kept in the window and that read, in large letters, "NO JW'S." I put it in the trash. The next morning two women came to my door. They were Jehovah's Witnesses.

By this time I had adopted Buddhism as my religion. I had long ago rejected the Bible because of the hypocrisy of my Jewish and Catholic parents. I had searched for God for a time but had given up looking, assuming there was no God. I believed in evolution and felt I had proved there was no God by standing out in the open during the monsoon lightning season and looking up and calling God every foul name I could think of and saying: "If you exist, strike me dead." If I were God, I would have done so. Since he didn't, I concluded that there must be no God. I thought the world was doomed because of man's inability to stop destroying it,

and I was hoping I could watch it all happen on TV while staying stoned.

As it so happened, that next morning the two women came. I was stoned and looking for amusement. We had a meaningless conversation for about 20 minutes, ending with their offer of a little blue book for 25 cents. I figured 20 minutes of amusement was worth 25 cents and so took the book and tossed it on the table without interest.

The next morning I was looking for something to read so that I could put off smoking dope for a while. I saw the little blue book and picked it up, hoping it could entertain me for an hour or so. Four hours later I had finished the book and was totally convinced that it was what its title said: *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. I had drugs in the house and knew that as soon as I put the book down I would get loaded and discount everything I had read. The last page offered a Bible for just one dollar, so I put a dollar in an envelope and mailed it off, saying to God—I had never prayed in my life—"God, that's all I can do, you will have to do the rest." I mailed it, got stoned, and discounted everything that had just moved me so deeply.

The Bible came in the mail, but I just put it aside. Soon thereafter, two Witnesses came and offered to study the Bible with me, and I agreed. The studies were enjoyable but not progressive because I mostly tried to impress them with my knowledge of philosophy. Additionally, I would use drugs as soon as they left, and this would cancel any progress I had made that day.

Finally, after a year, one of the Witnesses, Jim, came and asked me to read Ezekiel 33:9. I did so, reading: "As regards you, in case you actually warn someone wicked from his way for him to turn back from it but he actually does not turn back from his way, he himself will die in his own error, whereas

you yourself will certainly deliver your own soul." He then asked me what I thought it meant. I answered: "It means you aren't coming back and I am going to die." He said, "That's right," and he left.

The Witness Returns

I am glad to say I discovered I still had a conscience—I had believed I had long before killed mine. Since I did feel some longing for the future I had seen in the Bible, I decided to try to get off drugs. For weeks I tried unsuccessfully by myself. One evening my wife suggested I call "that friend," referring to the Witness, Jim. I told her he had said he would not be back, and I did not know his telephone number. I felt utterly hopeless.

The very next day, we found a *Watchtower* stuck in our front door with Jim's telephone number written on it. His wife had left it for "no particular reason." I called him and confessed my alcohol and drug problem and asked if he could help me. He told me that if I kept off drugs, he would come and study with me every day.

This started a period of intense study that consumed all my days and nights. Not only did he study with me daily but he supplied me with Bible study books and *Watchtower* articles. I slept only four hours a night—a common problem for alcoholics—and all the rest of my time was devoted to Bible study. With the drugs gone, all I had learned for the past year, plus all I was learning by studying from 18 to 20 hours each day, was sounded down at once.

Additionally, I started attending all the Witnesses' meetings. Within just a few weeks, I had progressed to the point of the first real prayer of my life, which was also my dedication prayer. I started going from door to door and preaching to everyone I knew. Seven studies were started, and five of these pro-

gressed to baptism, including my wife and son. I was baptized at a circuit assembly on May 23, 1976, just three months after I made the call to "that friend." I started pioneering (preaching full-time) and continued for 13 years.

This brings me back to where I started this story—50 years old, sitting at home alone, and crying over a book. Self-help books were very popular during the '80's, and I read one of them. Frankly, the self-help part did not help me. I did not feel inclined to follow the worldly thinking it offered. But the book did make me see for the first time how the scarred years of my childhood and the starved emotional needs for love had left me emotionally crippled. The tears that came were both tears of joy because I could now understand why I was always so lacking in the ability to feel emotionally, and also tears of grief over the huge loss I had suffered for 50 years as an emotional human being unable to respond emotionally. It explained the many bouts of depression I had suffered throughout my life.

Gradually, emotional feelings came over me when I read in the Bible of Jehovah and his love, even for me, which I had never felt personally before. Love for my wife and my son, for my brothers and sisters in the congregations of God, and also for persons I preach the good news of God's Kingdom to, that they too may have the opportunity to live forever in Jehovah's promised new world of righteousness here on earth.

Created to Love and to Be Loved

We were created to love and to be loved. When a child is born, it needs this love, and it needs to be accepted. When a child does not receive love and acceptance from his parents, he feels unlovable and has no feelings of self-worth. When I was very small, I craved to be

Larry Rubin and his wife, Donna



picked up, held, petted. I can remember even now that when visitors came in the house, they would look at me in my playpen, and I would hope that they were going to pick me up. They never did, and I would start crying because no one ever picked me up.

Such childhood scars had left me crippled in my husbandly role and as a family head and had left me unable to believe that Jehovah, the heavenly Father, could love me. The truth about Jehovah gradually changed me, moved my concept of him from my head to my heart, and now I know Jehovah loves me unreservedly. I also know that there is no way we can earn that love. It is an undeserved kindness from Jehovah God, the God of love.

The bottom line of all this is that because of Jehovah's blessings, my wife and I now have a good life. We are currently serving where the need for Kingdom preachers is greater, with a small loving congregation in a picturesque little town in the mountains of Arizona. I serve as the congregation's presiding overseer, conduct a congregation book study, and it is also my great joy to conduct the Theocratic Ministry School. I have a small window-washing business that supple-

ments my pension so that we have all we need materially and enough time for our ministry and the rest of our service to our loving heavenly Father.

Looking back to where I was that morning my wife threw that "NO JW'S" sign at me, I am filled with gratitude to my heavenly Father for what he has done for me. From an addict unable to hold a job and with only the hope of seeing everyone else killed with me, I am now a member of Jehovah's visible organization on earth and committed to making known to as many as possible the good news of God's Kingdom, the only hope for the world. Jehovah has also filled my life with people who give me what I have always wanted: love, trust, and acceptance.

And I am no longer trying to be a "rock" that feels no pain or an "island" that never cries.—*As told by Larry Rubin.*

Spiritual Light for the “Dark Continent”?

LESS than 100 years ago, Africa was called the *Dark Continent* because much of it was unknown to Europeans.” What *The World Book Encyclopedia* here refers to was not *African* darkness but, rather, *European* darkness—Europe’s lack of knowledge about a largely unexplored continent. So it is no contradiction that Africa possibly derives its name from the Latin word *aprica*, which means “sunny.”

Still, in one aspect, Africa was in darkness—in darkness as to Bible truth. Donald Coggan, former Archbishop of Canterbury, calls Africa and Asia “the two great continents into which the Churches of the West have poured their resources of manpower and money for the best part of two hundred years.”

Many of Christendom’s missionaries were no doubt sincere. In pursuit of their work, some even sacrificed their lives. Their effect upon African life was profound. But did they, as Christ had done, “shed light . . . through the good news,” thereby ridding the so-called Dark Continent of its spiritual darkness?—2 Timothy 1:10.

Native Missionaries Shed First Glimmers of Light

The first Christian on record to preach in Africa was himself an African, the Ethiopian eunuch mentioned in the Bible at Acts chap-

ter 8. A Jewish proselyte, he was on his way home from worshiping at the temple in Jerusalem when Philip converted him to Christianity. Without doubt, in keeping with the zeal of early Christians, this Ethiopian afterward actively preached the good news he had heard, becoming a missionary in his own land.

Historians fail to agree, however, on whether or not this was the way Christianity became established in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church appears to date back to the fourth century, when a Syrian student of philosophy named Frumentius was ordained as a bishop to Ethiopian “Christians” by Athanasius, a bishop of the Coptic Church of Alexandria.

The Coptic Church—*Copt* is derived from the Greek word for “Egyptian”—claims that its founder and first patriarch was Mark the Evangelist. According to tradition, he preached in Egypt just before the middle of the first century. At any rate, “Christianity” spread to North Africa at an early date, with men like Origen and Augustine rising to prominence. A catechetical school in Alexandria, Egypt, became a noted center of “Christian” scholarship with Pantaenus as its first president. But by the time of Pantaenus’ successor, Clement of Alexandria, apostasy had evidently already taken its toll. *The Encyclo-*

pedia of Religion reveals that Clement "advocated the reconciliation of Christian doctrine and the Bible with Greek philosophy."

The Coptic Church carried on an intensive missionary campaign, particularly in eastern Libya. Archaeological excavations in Nubia and lower Sudan also reveal Coptic influence.

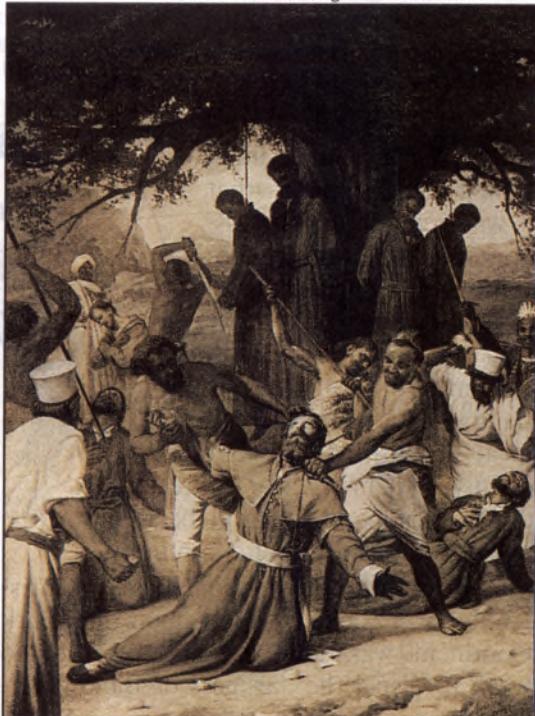
European Missionaries Arrive

Europeans did little missionary work in Africa before the 16th to 18th centuries, at which time the Catholics achieved a measure of success. Protestant religions did not arrive until early in the 19th century, when Sierra Leone became the first West African country their missionaries reached. Although the Protestants tried hard to catch up, today, with few exceptions, every African country boasting a large "Christian" population has more Catholics than Protestants.

The population of Gabon, for example, is 96 percent nominal Christian. Shortly before World War I, Albert Schweitzer, a Lutheran, set up a mission hospital there and later added a leper colony. Despite the major impact his 40-and-more years of Protestant missionary activity had on the country, Catholics still outnumber Protestants by more than 3 to 1.

With increased Protestant participation, however, African missionary activity gained momentum. Adrian Hastings of the University of Leeds explains that "the important legacy of this period [second half of the 19th century] was a significant start on translation of the Bible into scores of African languages."

Bible translations in the vernacular provided a basis for spreading "Christianity," which had previously been lacking. Many Africans believed in dreams and visions, viewed illnesses in terms of bewitchment, and practiced polygamy. Possessing the Bi-



In pursuit of their work, some missionaries even sacrificed their lives

ble in the vernacular gave Christendom's missionaries an opportunity to shed Scriptural light on these subjects. According to Hastings, however, "Africans frequently remained unconvinced on these matters." The result? "From the end of the nineteenth century a multitude of independent churches began to arise, first in South Africa and Nigeria, then in many other parts of the continent where there was already a significant missionary presence."

Today, in fact, some 7,000 new religious movements, with over 32,000,000 adherents, exist in sub-Saharan Africa. According to *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, "these movements have arisen primarily in areas where there has been intensive contact with Christian missionary efforts." Obviously the missionaries failed to unify their converts in

the “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” about which missionary Paul spoke.
—Ephesians 4:5.

Why? The source mentioned above explains that it was because of “the disappointment of local converts with the premises and outcomes of Christianity . . . , the perceived divisions in denominational Christianity and its failure to meet local needs [and] the failure of mission Christianity to break down social and cultural barriers and generate a sense of community.”

The amount of spiritual “light” Christendom’s missionaries shed upon the “Dark Continent” was too little. It was therefore too weak to dispel the darkness of Bible illiteracy.

Agents of Colonialism?

Despite the fact that some of Christendom’s missionaries accomplished good, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* is forced to admit: “Missionaries both pressed for, and facilitated, the colonial takeover, so that Christianity and colonial conquest could seem at times like two sides of a single coin. Modern anticolonialism has often branded Christianity in Africa, with some justification, as an accomplice of colonialism.”

The Collins Atlas of World History gives insight when it explains that Western nations were motivated by a conviction that “colonization would bring the light of reason, democratic principles and the benefits of science and medicine to those tribes of the interior that were thought of as primitive.” And *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* states: “It has been difficult for the Roman Catholic missions to divorce themselves from colonial-

Christendom’s missionaries, such as Livingstone, did not always give preaching top priority

ism, and many missionaries did not want the divorce.”

Logically, then, to the extent that Christendom’s missionaries advocated democracy and praised the benefits of Western scientific and medical advancement, they came across as agents of colonialism. Once people became disenchanted with the economic, political, and social structures of colonial powers, they also lost faith in European religions.

Preaching—The First Priority?

Whenever mention is made of Protestant missionaries in Africa, the name David Livingstone generally comes up. Born in Scotland in 1813, he became a medical missionary and traveled extensively throughout Africa. His deep love for the “Dark Continent” and the excitement of discovery provided him with additional motivation. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* speaks of “Christianity, commerce, and civilization” as “the trinity that he believed was destined to open up Africa.”

Livingstone’s accomplishments were many. His first priority, however, was evidently not preaching the gospel. The *Britannica* sums up his 30 years of missionary work “in southern, central, and eastern Africa—often in places where no European had previously ventured” this way: “Livingstone may have influenced Western attitudes toward Africa more than any other individual before him or since. His discoveries—geographic, technical, medical, and social—provided a complex body of knowledge that is still being explored. . . . Livingstone believed wholeheartedly in the African’s abil-



From the book *Geschichte des Christentums*

ity to advance into the modern world. He was, in this sense, a forerunner not only of European imperialism in Africa but also of African nationalism." Livingstone showed great compassion for the Africans.

While some missionaries supported or at least condoned the slave trade, it would be unfair to accuse them of having done so as a group. But whether the compassion many of them showed was motivated by a desire to uphold God's standards of impartiality and equality or more by normal feelings of personal concern about the welfare of individuals is, in retrospect, difficult to determine.

The latter, however, would be in keeping with the priorities set by most of the missionaries. The book *Christianity in Africa as Seen by Africans* acknowledges that no one "can match their record of humanitarian work." But building hospitals and schools meant putting human physical needs ahead of preaching God's Word in pursuit of divine interests. Some missionaries even set up trading posts to enable Africans to enjoy more European material goods, thus improving their standard of living.

Understandably, many Africans are today grateful for the material benefits Christendom's missionaries made possible. As Adrian Hastings notes: "Even when most critical of missionaries and churches, African politicians seldom fail to express gratitude for their contribution toward secondary education."

'If the Light in You Is Darkness . . .'

According to Hastings, until recent centuries Africa was "a continent in which Christianity failed to make a lasting breakthrough." In fact, by the mid-18th century, Catholic missions had almost completely died out, leading author J. Herbert Kane to question how "failure on such a grand scale"

was possible. For one thing, the mortality rate among missionaries was high. Another factor was the involvement of Portugal in the slave trade. Since all the Catholic missionaries were Portuguese, this "put the Christian religion in a very bad light." But "more pertinent, and perhaps more potent," Kane adds, "were the superficial missionary methods, which resulted in hasty 'conversions' and mass baptisms."

Christendom's missionaries failed to motivate Africans to replace their religions with the missionaries' doctrines. Conversion meant changing religious labels, but not necessarily beliefs and conduct. Eleanor M. Preston-Whyte of the University of Natal notes: "Zulu cosmological ideas have been incorporated into Zulu Christian thought in a number of subtle ways." And Bennetta Jules-Rosette of the University of California at San Diego says modern African religions "blend elements of African traditional religion with those of the introduced religions, Christianity and Islam."

According to Psalm 119:130, "the very disclosure of your [God's] words gives light, making the inexperienced ones understand." Since Christendom's missionaries for the most part failed to give priority to disclosing God's Word, what light could they give? Inexperienced ones remained without understanding.

The "light" offered by Christendom's missionaries in past centuries, their "good works," emanated from a world in darkness. Despite their claims, they were not shedding true light. Jesus said: "If in reality the light that is in you is darkness, how great that darkness is!"—Matthew 6:23.

Meanwhile, how were missionaries faring in the Americas, in the New World? Part five of our series will answer.

WATCHING THE WORLD

UN Failure

"It is a failure not only for the United Nations; it is a failure for the international community. And all of us are responsible for this failure," lamented UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali in speaking of the slaughter in Rwanda. "It is a genocide which has been committed. More than 200,000 people have been killed and the international community is still discussing what ought to be done." As reported on May 26, the secretary-general said that he had written to over 30 heads of State and begged them to send troops and had worked with different organizations in an effort to find a solution. "Unfortunately," he added, "I failed. It is a scandal. I am the first one to say it." Few African nations can afford the costs of sending troops, especially since the UN has delayed reimbursements because of its own financial difficulties. Most Western nations have declined to get involved, and U.S. president Bill Clinton mentioned that using American military power was not justified by the interests at stake. Mr. Boutros-Ghali placed the blame on "donor fatigue," as the nations who supply personnel and money are being asked to do so for 17 different United Nations operations, according to *The New York Times*.

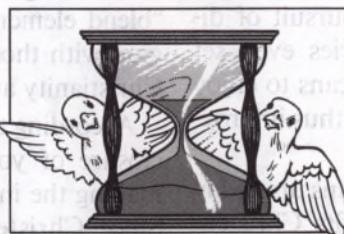
No Human Explanation

"Can anything explain Rwanda's sudden appalling bloodlust?" asks *The Economist* of London. "Even long-standing [ethnic] hostility does not explain the ruthless murder." While the Tutsi and the Hutu may look a bit different, they have lived for centuries alongside one another and have

shared a common language and culture. The article compares their tribal difference to that between the Scots and the English. "Yet now they have turned on each other, not with impersonal mortars or long-range rifles but with machetes, hoes, clubs and bare hands. Neighbours have killed neighbours, even old childhood friends. Men, women and children have been slaughtered alike. Why? No one seems able to say."

Bird Demise Gives Warnings

While hardy species of birds—sparrows, mynahs, crows—flourish under harsh conditions, most of the world's birds are not faring as well. Of 9,600 bird species, 70 percent are declining and 1,000 species may face extinction



in the near future. "What is alarming, beyond the direct losses taking place, is that birds, unlike many other life forms, are particularly good indicators of the health of other species—and of whole ecosystems," says *World Watch* magazine. "What we are seeing is not just a warning of impending degradation, but a part of the degradation itself—a tearing of the ecological web that keeps the planet's health in balance." Birds keep animal and insect pests in check, pollinate plants, and aid in reforestation by scattering tree seeds in their droppings. But their lives

are threatened and their habitats destroyed as humans alter the landscape—cutting down forests, using grasslands for grazing and plowing, draining wetlands, and obliterating huge areas by massive dam projects—not to mention killing them outright by hunting, overuse of chemicals, toxic wastes, and oil spills. "The pace of bird extinctions—along with those of other animals and plants—appears likely to accelerate rapidly," the article notes.

Teenage Mothers

Each year over 15 million women between the ages of 15 and 20 give birth worldwide, estimates *Populi*, a magazine of the United Nations Population Fund. This figure does not include girls younger than 15, nor does it account for abortions or miscarriages. In Africa alone about 28 percent of all women give birth before they are 18 years of age. Researchers say that among the reasons for increasing teenage pregnancy on that continent are ignorance about sexual matters, early marriages, and economic hardship that tempts young women to enter into sugar-daddy relationships with older, wealthy men. "Not only do teenage women face, on average, twice the risk of dying in pregnancy or childbirth than women 20-34 years old," says *Populi*, "but the infants of teen mothers are more likely to die, too."

Computer Help for the Deaf

A newly developed computer system may soon be helping deaf people to learn to speak normally. For the deaf, learning how to speak is almost the same as learning a foreign language. This fact is what sparked the development

of the program by the Research Centre of Language Technologies at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. A report by the Agence France-Presse news service says that the system's computer analyzes a student's speech and instantly indicates where corrections and adjustments are needed for proper pronunciation. Additionally, the program will include a series of lessons designed to help the deaf gradually improve their speech intonation and rhythm. The system will also be adapted for teaching foreign languages to deaf students.

World-War-I Artifact Derails Train

An artifact of World War I derailed the pride of the French National Railways, its TGV (High-Speed Train), on its newly opened Paris-Valenciennes line to the north of France. The Paris newspaper *Le Monde* reports that the accident occurred when previously undetected underground vaults beneath the TGV's rails suddenly collapsed. The area of the accident was the scene of one of the bloodiest battles of the 1914-18 conflict, the Battle of the Somme. Although they are nearly impossible to detect from the surface, underground galleries, buried trenches, and bomb craters—remnants of the trench warfare of the first world war—honeycomb the whole area. Technical crews were sent to comb the rail's roadbed so that other potential danger areas in the railroad could be located and reinforced.

Murderous Use of Handguns

How many people were murdered by means of handguns in 1992? In Australia there were 13, in Britain 33, in Canada 128, in Japan 60, in Sweden 36, in Switzer-

land 97, and in the United States a staggering 13,220, according to recently released statistics. As reported in the *International Herald Tribune*, 38,317 people were killed by firearms in homicides, suicides, and accidents in the United States during 1991—more than 100 deaths each day. U.S. president Bill Clinton spoke of one hospital where the number of admissions for gunshot wounds rose from 449 to 1,220 in just five years. Despite the carnage, manufacturers produce a new handgun every 20 seconds.

Refugee Bears

Humans are not the only ones seeking refuge from the ravages of war. "Frightened by the continuing war in the former Yugoslavia, the brown bear is moving out of the great evergreen forests of Bosnia and heading north towards



Italy," states *New Scientist*. "Environmentalists in Italy and Slovenia have joined forces to try to protect the refugee bears." However, the bears have met other dangers from humans. Several of the migrating bears have been killed by cars on Italian and Slovenian motorways. Some have also been killed after attacking livestock or killed by poachers. Farmers in Slovenia are allowed by law to kill animals that damage their crops or attack their livestock. Money has been raised to supply the bears with food and thus help them to stay in protected areas.

Refugees Get the Worst of Both Worlds

In 1993 there was a great global increase in the number of refugees to over 20 million, says Sadako Ogata, commissioner of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. There were only 15 million refugees in 1991, when she took office. Political instability and ethnic conflicts are the chief reasons for the surge of refugees, reports the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. It seems, however, that refugees get the worst of both worlds. Why? Because in their new host countries, the commissioner added, often refugees were more and more the target for violence. Racial hatred and contempt for foreigners are becoming widespread, she said.

Dangerous Merrymaking

"The number of homicides increases 58 percent at carnival time," reports the Brazilian newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*. In São Paulo, "there were 79 homicides and 124 murder attempts." In addition there were 2,227 robberies (277 in 1993) and 807 assaults (282 in 1993) in those five days, as "thieves attacked homes, stores, industries, people on the street." There were also 37 suicides and 25 rapes. "In Rio de Janeiro, the Civil Police reported that violence increased 14 percent in comparison with the 1993 carnival. There were 63 murders, 10 more than last year." In writing on "the risks of carnival" in the newspaper *Jornal do Brasil*, Dom Eugênio de Araújo Sales, cardinal archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, said: "The Church is not against the carnival as entertainment and manifestation of joy, both very useful for people's psychological balance. The Church condemns, yes, violations of the moral law, which we are subjected to, like it or not."

FROM OUR READERS

Scientific Fraud? Your recent article "Scientists Take Public for a Ride" (January 8, 1994) came to my attention. The scientists involved appear to have made a simple error that they later corrected. This is how science is supposed to work, but the title of your article suggests some kind of wrongdoing. The skull cap in question may have turned out to have been that of an ass, but that fact has no bearing on the authenticity of other finds such as the famous "Lucy" skeleton. We know these creatures existed.

M. P., United States

We were not implying that the scientists involved in this particular discovery were deliberately dishonest. Indeed, we quoted Dr. Moyà himself and noted his candor. The incident was used to illustrate the way scientific truth has often been sacrificed to personal, political, and nationalistic interests. True, legitimate fossil specimens have been found. But there is no proof whatsoever that these creatures were actually ancestors of mankind. "Lucy," for example, had a brain one third the size of a human's. Clearly it was nothing more than a now extinct species of ape.—ED.

Addictions Thank you so much for the series "Addictions—What's Behind Them?" (April 22, 1994) I read the articles from beginning to end twice. You see, I have an eating disorder. I feel somewhat better following treatment in a clinic, but I still have a struggle at times. The article strengthened my resolve.

T. S., Germany

I am a former drug addict and alcoholic. The advice that you give is really appropriate. I was also motivated by recognizing that an addiction is a spiritual barrier, since an addict cannot be totally clean in the eyes of our Creator.

M. G., France

Six and a half years ago, I lost a son to cocaine addiction. Having felt such pain and survived, I was ready to deal with my own food addiction. Growing up in an alcoholic family, I had learned to use food to comfort myself and to run away from pain. I tried diets, only to fail. Further tasting Jehovah's love after 20 years as a Christian has been of great help, however. Thank you, thank you for the articles.

S. E., United States

Reformed Criminal I want to thank you so very much for the article "My Escape to the Truth." (February 8, 1994) I am 24 years old, and I'm on death row in Washington State Penitentiary. This article hit home and makes me want to do what is right in Jehovah's eyes. Brian Garner really touched my heart.

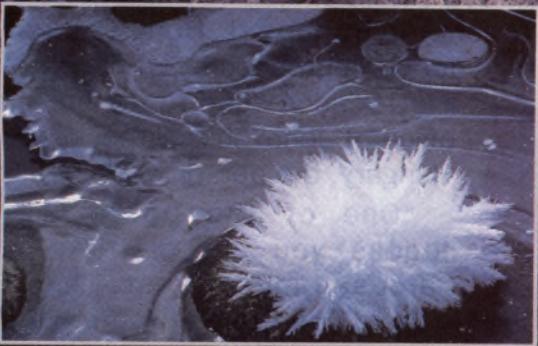
J. B., United States

I am an inmate of a Missouri correctional facility and was inspired by Mr. Garner's decision to turn himself in after learning the truth. This shows the effect your organization can have on people with an open mind and good heart. It is easy to see that true freedom comes only by exercising faith in God.

W. B., United States

A year ago I was embezzling money from the companies I worked for. I stole hundreds of thousands of yen, something no one would have dreamed a 20-year-old girl was doing! However, I was studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, and my conscience began to condemn me. So I returned the money and confessed to those in charge. And while some harsh words were said, no further action was taken. I am deeply grateful for this article, for it has helped me to realize yet again how very great Jehovah's mercy is.

S. M., Japan



HOARFROST

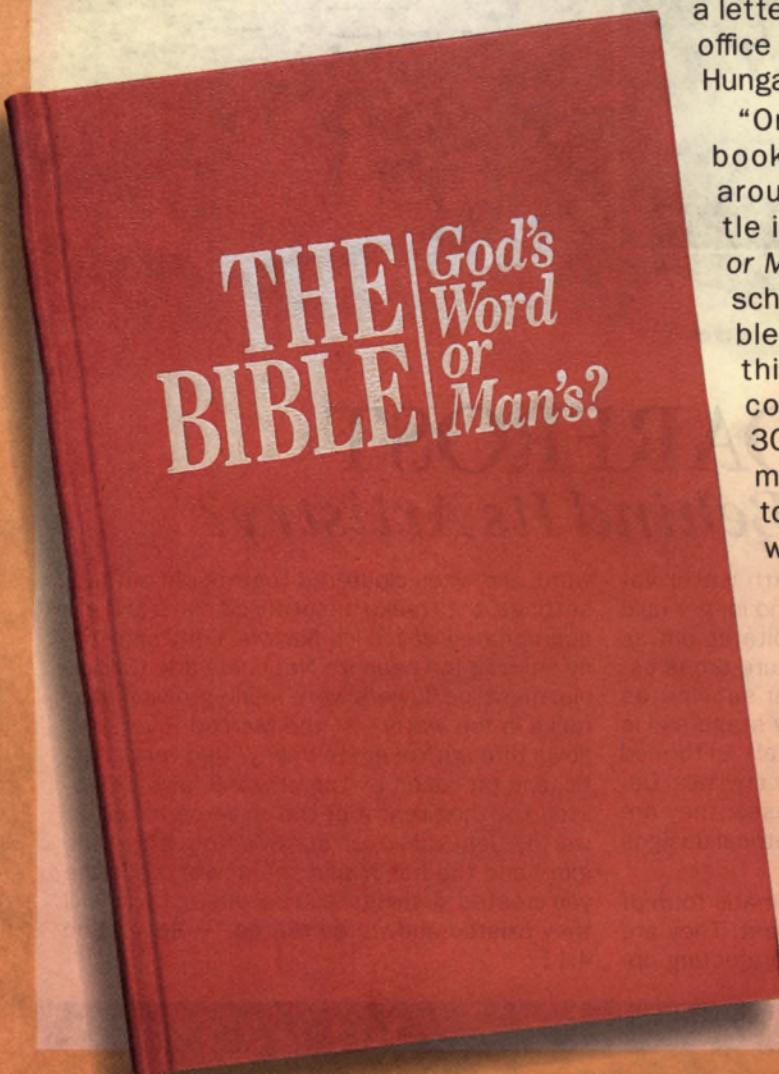
Who Is Behind Its Artistry?

WHEN air that is saturated with water vapor cools in the evening, it can no longer hold all the water. The excess precipitates out as dew. But when the air temperature drops below freezing, the excess water sublimates—that is, it skips the liquid dew stage and is deposited as ice. The frost crystals so formed are platelike and resemble snow crystals. Deposited on windowpanes of houses, they are admired for their striking geometrical designs and lacy patterns. Very artistic.

But there is another more dramatic form of frost crystals known as hoarfrost. They are six-sided hollow spears of ice projecting up-

ward, and when clustered together in outdoor settings, they make beautiful displays and are appropriately called ice flowers. Early one sunny morning in Yosemite National Park, California, these ice flowers were found growing atop rocks in the waters of the Merced River that flows through Yosemite Valley. Also very artistic, and produced by the physical laws established by the Creator of the universe. "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created."—Revelation 4:11.

Is the Bible Just Another Book?



If so, why has it been so viciously attacked throughout history? Can you trust the Bible? Did the miracles it records really happen? Has science proved the Bible wrong?

Satisfying answers to such questions are found in the book *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?* A librarian and teacher in Budapest, Hungary, was deeply impressed by the book. In a letter addressed to the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Hungary, the person explained:

"One of the pocket-size books you are distributing aroused my interest. The title is *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?* I lead a group in our school and teach them the Bible. But nowhere could I get this little book. If possible, could you please send me 30 copies so that more and more young people may turn to Jesus Christ and learn the way to true life?"