

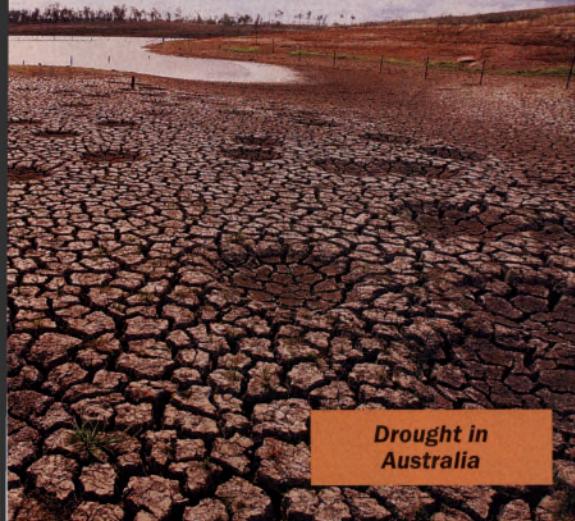
Awake!

AUGUST 2008

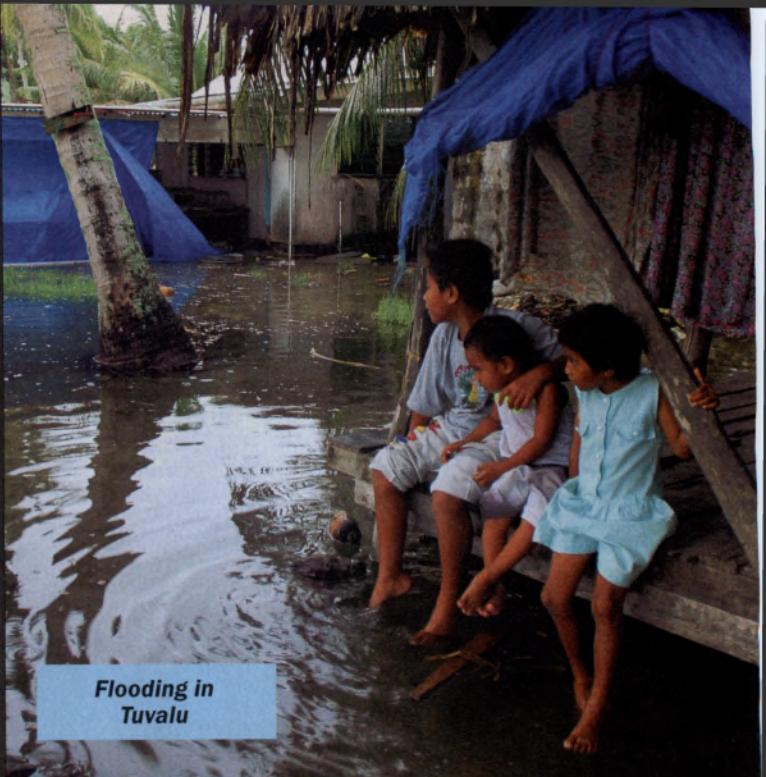


GLOBAL WARMING

Is Planet Earth in Peril?



Drought in Australia



Flooding in Tuvalu

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Increasingly, media reports tell us that unless we act now, global warming may cause significant climate change with potentially dire consequences for us and our environment. Should we be worried? Consider the evidence.



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Signs of Trouble?

"Veu Lesa, a 73-year-old villager in Tuvalu, does not need scientific reports to tell him that the sea is rising," says *The New Zealand Herald*. "The beaches of his childhood are vanishing. The crops that used to feed his family have been poisoned by salt water. In April [2007], he had to leave his home when a spring tide flooded it, and the waves showered it with rocks and debris."

FOR the people of Tuvalu, a group of islands no more than 13 feet above sea level, global warming is, not abstract science, but "a daily reality," says the *Herald*.^{*} Thousands have already left the islands, and many more are preparing to go.

Meanwhile, Robert, who lives in Brisbane, Australia, can water his garden only on certain days, using a bucket—not a hose. And unless he goes to a car wash that recycles water, he can wash only parts of his car—mirrors, windows, and registration plates. Why such restrictions? Robert lives in a part of the country that is suffering from what has been called the worst drought in a century. Other areas are even worse off. Are the problems in Australia and Tuvalu evidence of global warming?

What Some Predict

Many believe that human activities are a major cause of global warming, which may have catastrophic consequences for the climate and the environment. For example, large-scale melting of land-based ice and the expansion of the oceans as water warms could cause sea levels to rise drastically. Low-lying islands such as Tuvalu could disappear, as could large parts of the Netherlands and Florida, to name just two other areas. Millions of people could be displaced from such places as Shanghai and Calcutta, as well as parts of Bangladesh.

* "Global warming" refers to an overall increase in temperature in earth's atmosphere and oceans.

At the same time, rising temperatures could intensify storms, floods, and droughts. In the Himalayas, disappearing glaciers—from areas that feed seven river systems—could cause shortages of freshwater for 40 percent of the world's population. Also at risk are thousands of species of animals, including polar bears, whose hunting grounds are largely on the ice. Indeed, reports already indicate that many bears are losing weight and some are even starving.

Rising temperatures may also foster the spread of disease by enabling mosquitoes, ticks, and other disease-carrying organisms, including fungi, to spread farther afield. "The dangers posed by climate change are nearly as dire as those posed by nuclear weapons," says the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. "The effects may be less dramatic in the short term . . . , but over the next three to four decades climate change could cause irremediable harm to the habitats upon which human societies depend for survival." Adding an even more ominous note, some scientists believe that changes attributed to global warming are occurring faster than they had expected.

What are we to make of these predictions? Is life on earth really at a crossroads? Skeptics of global warming say that such dire predictions are groundless. Others are not sure. So, what is the truth? Is earth's future—and ours—in peril?

Is Planet Earth Under Threat?

GLOBAL WARMING has been described as the greatest threat facing humanity. What worries researchers, says the journal *Science*, "is the prospect that we've started a slow-moving but relentless avalanche of change." Skeptics question this assertion. True, many agree that the earth is warming, but they are uncertain of both the causes and the consequences. Human activities may be a factor, they say, but not necessarily the primary one. Why the disagreement?

For one thing, the physical processes that underlie global climate systems are complex and not fully understood. In addition, interest groups tend to put their own spin on the scientific data, such as that used to show why temperatures are rising.

Temperature Rise—Is It Real?

According to a recent report of the UN-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), global warming is "unequivocal," or a fact; and "very likely," mankind is largely to blame. Some who differ with this conclusion, especially in regard to the human factor, concede that cities may be heating up because they are growing in size. Moreover, concrete and steel readily absorb the sun's heat and tend to cool down slowly at

night. But urban readings, skeptics say, do not reflect the trend in rural areas and can distort global statistics.

On the other hand, Clifford, a village elder who lives on an island off the coast of Alaska, says he has seen changes with his own eyes. The people of his village travel across sea ice to the mainland to hunt caribou and moose. Rising temperatures, though, are making the traditional lifestyle impossible. "The currents have changed, ice conditions have changed, and the freeze-up of the Chukchi Sea has . . . changed," says Clifford. The sea used to freeze up at the end of October, he explains, but now it does not freeze until late December.

In 2007, warming was also evident in the Northwest Passage, which was fully open for the first time in recorded history. "What we've seen this year fits the profile of lengthening melt seasons," said a senior scientist for the National Snow and Ice Data Center in the United States.

The Greenhouse Effect—Vital for Life

A reason given for such changes is an intensification of the greenhouse effect, natural phenomena vital for life on earth. When energy from the sun reaches the earth, about 70 percent is absorbed, heating air, land, and

Awake!®

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

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sea. If it were not for this mechanism, the average surface temperature would be about zero degrees Fahrenheit (-18 degrees Celsius). Eventually, the absorbed heat is released back into space as infrared radiation, thus preventing the earth from overheating. But when pollutants change the composition of the atmosphere, less heat escapes. This can cause earth's temperatures to rise.

Gases that contribute to the greenhouse effect include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, and methane, as well as water vapor. The atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases has increased markedly over the past 250 years, since the start of the industrial revolution and the increased use of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil. Another greenhouse-enhancing factor seems to be the rising population of farm animals, whose digestive processes produce methane and nitrous oxide. Some researchers point to other causes of warming that they say occurred before humans could have influenced climate.

Just Another Fluctuation?

Skeptics of human-induced warming point out that earth's temperature has undergone substantial fluctuations in the past. They point to the so-called ice ages, when the earth was supposedly much cooler than it is now; and in support of natural warming,

HOW DO YOU MEASURE EARTH'S TEMPERATURE?

To illustrate the challenges, how would you measure the temperature of a single, large room? Where, for example, would you put the thermometer? Heat rises, so air near the ceiling will likely be warmer than air lower down. The reading will also be affected if the thermometer is near a window, in direct sunlight, or in the shade. Color may also contribute to different readings, since dark surfaces absorb more heat.

One measurement, therefore, would likely be insufficient. You would have to take readings at several points and then calculate an average. And readings may change from day to day and from season to season. So to get a true average, you would have to take many readings over an extended period. Imagine how complicated it is, then, to measure the overall temperature of earth's surface, atmosphere, and oceans! Yet, such statistics are essential to the accurate assessment of climate change.

they cite evidence that cold regions, such as Greenland, at one time supported vegetation that prefers warm areas. Of course, scientists concede that the further back they go, the more their certainty about climate diminishes.

What may have caused temperatures to vary significantly before human influence was a factor? Possible causes include sunspots and solar flares, which correlate with fluctuations in solar energy output.

Languages: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Chitonga, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech, [#]⁺ Danish, [#]⁺ Dutch, ^{*} English, [#]⁺ Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish, ^o French, [#]⁺ Georgian, German, [#]⁺ Greek, Gujarati, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian, [#]⁺ Japanese, [#]⁺ Kannada, Kirghiz, Korean, [#]⁺ Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, ⁺ Norwegian, ⁺ Polish, [#]⁺ Portuguese, [#]⁺ Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian, [#]⁺ Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silioti, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, [#]⁺ Swahili, Swedish, ^o Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

[#] Audiocassettes also available.

⁺ CD also available.

^o MP3 CD-ROM also available.

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NASA photo

IS NUCLEAR POWER A SOLUTION?

Energy consumption worldwide is breaking record after record. Since the burning of oil and coal produces greenhouse gases, some governments are taking a closer look at nuclear power as a cleaner alternative. But it too presents challenges.

The *International Herald Tribune* reports that in France, one of the world's most nuclear-reliant countries, up to 670 billion cubic feet of water is required annually to cool reactors. In the heat wave of 2003, the hot water normally expelled from France's reactors threatened to raise the temperature of rivers to environmentally damaging levels. Hence, some power stations had to shut down. This situation is expected to worsen if global temperatures rise.

"We're going to have to solve the climate-change problem if we're going to have nuclear power," said nuclear engineer David Lochbaum of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Additionally, earth's orbit moves in cycles that take many thousands of years and that affect our planet's distance from the sun. There is also the influence of volcanic dust and changes in oceanic currents.

Climate Modeling

If earth's temperature is rising—no matter what the cause or causes—how will it affect us and the environment? Precise predictions are hard to make. Nowadays, though, scientists have access to powerful computers, which they use to create digital simulations of the climate system. Incorporated into their models are the laws of physics, climate data, and natural phenomena that influence climate.

Simulations enable scientists to experiment with climate in ways that are otherwise impossible. For instance, they can "change" solar output to see how this affects polar ice, air and sea temperatures, evaporation rates, atmospheric pressure, cloud formation, wind,

and rainfall. They can "create" volcanic eruptions and examine the effects of volcanic dust on weather. And they can examine the effects of human population growth, deforestation, land use, changes in the emission of greenhouse gases, and so on. Scientists hope that their models will progressively become more accurate and reliable.

How precise are present models? Much, of course, depends on the accuracy of the data and the amount of it fed into the machines. Hence, climate projections vary from the mild to the catastrophic. Even so, says *Science*, "surprises could spring from the [natural] climate system." And some already have, such as the unusually rapid rate of Arctic melting, which has amazed many climatologists. Still, even if policymakers had only a rough idea of the consequences of present action or inaction, they could make decisions today that might reduce problems tomorrow.

With that possibility in mind, the IPCC examined six different sets of computer-simulated scenarios—ranging from unrestricted greenhouse-gas production to business as usual to severe restraint—each producing different climatic and environmental results. In the light of the predictions, analysts urge a variety of measures. These include mandatory limits on fossil-fuel emissions, penalties for offenders, more nuclear power generation, and the introduction of more environmentally friendly technologies.

Are the Models Reliable?

Present forecasting methods "oversimplify poorly understood climate processes" and "simply ignore others," say critics. They also point to the inconsistencies in computed projections. One scientist who participated in the IPCC discussions said: "There are some

of us who remain so humbled by the task of measuring and understanding the extraordinarily complex climate system that we are skeptical of our ability to know what it is doing and why.”*

Some would argue, of course, that using an element of doubt as justification for doing nothing is gambling with the future. “How would we explain this to our children?” they say. Whether the climate models are accurate or not, we can be certain that the earth is in serious trouble. Its life-sustaining environment is being assaulted by pollution, deforestation, urbanization, and the extinction

* John R. Christy, director of the Earth System Science Center at the University of Alabama, Huntsville, U.S.A., as reported in *The Wall Street Journal*, November 1, 2007.

of species, to name just a few factors that no one can successfully dispute.

In view of what we know, can we expect mankind as a whole to make an about-face so as to spare our beautiful home—and us too? What is more, if human activity is causing global warming, we may have only years, not centuries, to make the needed changes. At the very least, making such changes would mean promptly addressing the root causes of earth’s problems—human greed, self-interest, ignorance, inept government, and apathy. Is such a prospect probable or just wishful thinking? If the latter, are we without hope? That question will be discussed in the next article.

WEATHER-RELATED DISASTERS IN 2007



The year 2007 saw a record number of weather-related disasters for which the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued 14 emergency appeals—4 more than the previous record, set in 2005. Listed here are just some of the disasters that occurred in 2007. Keep in mind, of course, that individual events do not necessarily indicate a long-term trend.

- **Britain:** More than 350,000 people were affected by the worst flooding in over 60 years. England and Wales saw the wettest May to July since record-keeping began in 1766. ■ **West Africa:** Floods affected 800,000 people in 14 countries.
- **Lesotho:** High temperatures and drought destroyed crops. Some 553,000 people may require food aid. ■ **Sudan:** Torrential rains left 150,000 people without shelter. At least 500,000 received aid. ■ **Madagascar:** Cyclones and heavy rains lashed the island, displacing 33,000 people and destroying the crops of 260,000. ■ **North Korea:** An estimated 960,000 were severely hit by widespread flooding, landslides, and mud slides. ■ **Bangladesh:** Flooding affected 8.5 million people and killed over 3,000, as well as 1.25 million farm animals. Nearly 1.5 million homes were either damaged or destroyed. ■ **India:** Floods affected 30 million people. ■ **Pakistan:** Cyclonic rains left 377,000 people displaced and hundreds dead.
- **Bolivia:** More than 350,000 were affected by flooding, and 25,000 were displaced. ■ **Mexico:** Regional flooding left at least 500,000 homeless and affected more than a million. ■ **Dominican Republic:** Prolonged heavy rainfall caused floods and landslides, displacing 65,000. ■ **United States:** Fires across tinder-dry southern California forced 500,000 residents to flee their homes.

Earth's Future—In Whose Hands?

“GLOBAL WARMING presents the greatest test we humans have yet faced,” asserted the October 2007 edition of *National Geographic*. If we are to meet that challenge successfully, said the magazine, we need to “move quickly and decisively—and with a maturity we’ve rarely shown as a society or a species.”

Will such maturity rise to the fore? Working against it are many factors: apathy, greed, ignorance, vested interests, the scramble for wealth in developing lands, and the business-as-usual philosophy of millions who want to maintain a high-energy-consuming lifestyle.

An ancient prophet of God gives us a realistic appraisal of our capacity to solve our ethical, social, and governmental problems. He wrote: “To earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step.” (Jeremiah 10:23) Mankind’s tragic history underscores those words. And today, although armed with significant developments in science and technology, we are faced with previously unimaginable threats. So how confident can we be that tomorrow will be better?

It is true that there has been a lot of talk about tackling climate change and other harmful trends, but little has been done. For example, how did the nations respond in 2007 when the Northwest Passage opened up for navigation for the first time? An editorial in *New Scientist* magazine answers: “With an unseemly scramble to lay claim to the exposed chunks of continental shelf so they [could] drill for more oil and gas.”

Nearly 2,000 years ago, the Bible accurately foretold that humans would reach the point where they would be “ruining the earth.” (Revelation 11:18) Clearly, the world needs both a leader who has the wisdom and power to achieve the desired goals and subjects who will submit to him. Could a sincere and brilliant political leader or scientist fill that role? The Bible answers: “Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs.”—Psalm 146:3.

Earth's Future—In Good Hands!

There is only one Leader who can successfully address the problems confronting the world. Concerning him, the Bible fore-

BEYOND THE REACH OF SCIENCE

Knowing full well the risks involved, millions of people harm their minds and bodies by using recreational drugs, abusing alcohol, and smoking tobacco. To them, life is anything but a sacred gift from God. (Psalm 36:9; 2 Corinthians 7:1) Regrettably, a similar godless attitude toward the earth has contributed to its woes.

What, then, is the solution? Can it be found in science and secular education? Not really. What is essentially a spiritual problem calls for a spiritual solution. The Bible acknowledges this fact. Hence, it promises that the time will come when humans “will not do any harm or cause any ruin” to the earth because it will be “filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea.”—Isaiah 11:9.

told: "Upon him the spirit of Jehovah [God] must settle down, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of mightiness, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah . . . With righteousness he must judge the lowly ones, . . . and with the spirit of his lips he will put the wicked one to death."—Isaiah 11:2-5.

Who is that One? He is none other than Jesus Christ, who lovingly laid down his life in our behalf. (John 3:16) Now a mighty spirit entity, Jesus has been authorized and empowered by God to rule over the earth.—Daniel 7:13, 14; Revelation 11:15.

Contributing to Jesus' qualifications is his vast knowledge of God's creation, which he acquired before coming to earth. In fact, untold aeons ago when God formed the physical universe, Jesus was his "master worker." (Proverbs 8:22-31) Think about that: Jesus, the very one who helped make the earth and all living things, will take the lead in undoing the damage caused by human folly.

Who will Christ's subjects be? They will be truly meek and righteous people, ones who know the true God, Jehovah, and obey Jesus Christ as Ruler. (Psalm 37:11, 29; 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8) Jesus said that they "will inherit the earth," which will be transformed into a paradise.—Matthew 5:5; Isaiah 11:6-9; Luke 23:43.

How can you put yourself in line to share in the fulfillment of the Bible's promises? Jesus himself answers: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—John 17:3.

Yes, our planet may appear to be in peril, but its continued existence as a home for mankind is not in doubt. Rather, peril awaits those who continue to show disrespect for God's creation and who refuse to obey Jesus Christ. Hence, Jehovah's Witnesses encourage you to take in the knowledge that leads to everlasting life.

***Under Christ's rule the righteous will share
in making the earth into a global paradise***



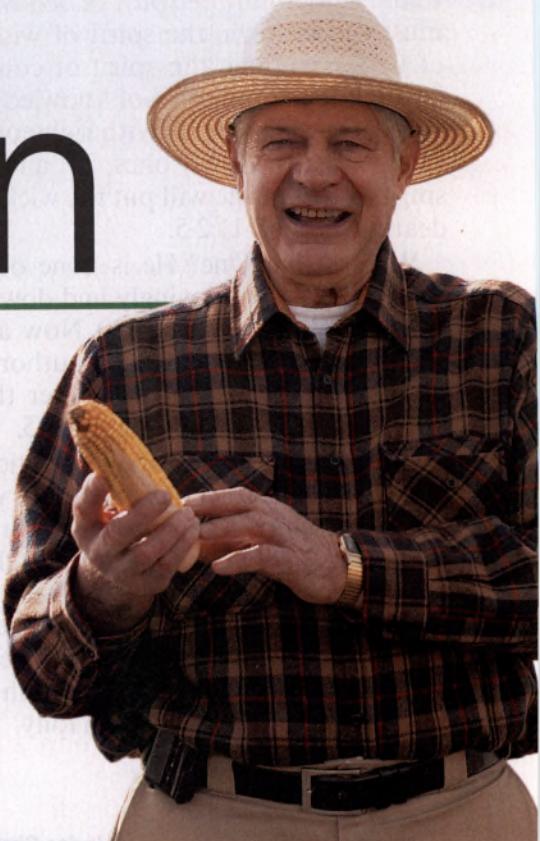


THE WONDERS OF Corn

UNTIL recent years Harlin was a corn farmer in the Finger Lakes region of New York, in the United States. He always took delight in explaining to friends and visitors some of the wonders of corn, also called maize. *Awake!* invited Harlin to share some of his knowledge with our readers. We will also look at other aspects of this amazing plant. Where, for example, did corn originate? How did it spread around the world? And what uses does this plant have? Let us now consider Harlin's description of some of the wonders of corn.

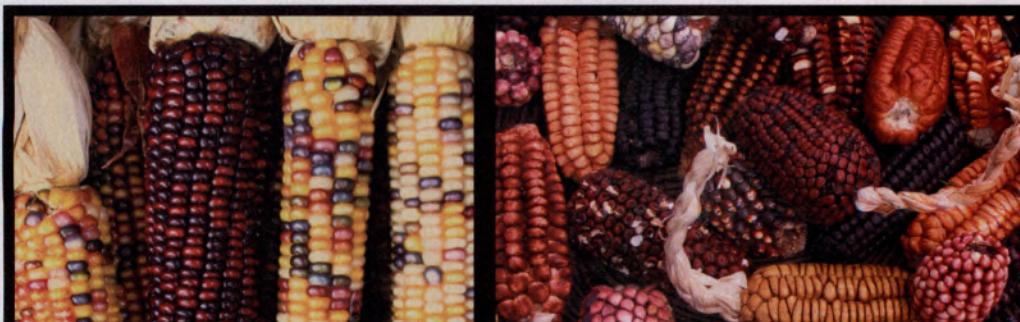
The Plant "Talks" to You

"To me, corn is a work of both art and brilliant mathematics. From the leaves to the individual kernels on the cob, everything is arranged in an aesthetically pleasing and precise pattern. What is more, as the plant grows, it 'talks' to you. It tells



you if it's thirsty or malnourished. A human baby cries when it needs something. A growing corn plant, like many other plants, gives visual signals, such as leaf color and shape, to convey its needs. The secret is to understand those signs.

Corn comes in hundreds of varieties worldwide



Courtesy Sam Fentress

Courtesy Jenny Mealing/flickr.com

"Leaves with a reddish-purple color may indicate a lack of phosphate. Other symptoms may indicate a lack of magnesium, nitrogen, or potash. A farmer can also tell by sight if his corn has a disease or has been harmed by chemicals."

"Like all corn growers, I planted in the spring, as the warmth of the soil allows the seed to germinate. When my crop was fully grown after four to six months, it stood about six feet tall.

"A corn plant grows in stages that can be determined by counting its leaves. When it is at the five-leaf stage, its chemical and "mathematical" powers really come to the fore. First, the roots make a comprehensive soil analysis. The information gained forms the basis for a program of growth that determines optimum ear girth, measured by the number of kernel rows. Then, between the 12- and 17-leaf stage, further soil analysis aids the plant to ascertain the optimum number of kernels it will grow along the cob. In short, each plant somehow calculates how to get the best possible results from the soil. Further evidence of amazing design lies in the intricacies of corn reproduction."

Tassels, Anthers, and Silks

"Each corn plant has both male and female characteristics. The spindly growth protruding from the top of the plant is the male part, the tassel. Each tassel has about 6,000 flowering buds, or anthers. These release millions of grains of pollen per plant. Carried by the wind, the pollen fertilizes the ova, or eggs, inside the undeveloped ears of nearby plants. The eggs are safely hidden inside the husk.

"How does pollen get past the protective husk to the eggs? You might say it takes a silk road. The silks are the soft, whitish fibers that dangle from the tip of an unpeeled ear, or

spike, of corn. Each ear has hundreds of them. If you trace an individual silk to its source, you will come to an ovule (ovary), which houses the egg. One silk, one egg. Each egg, in turn, produces one kernel of corn.

"The visible ends of the silks, which sway in the pollen-laden breeze, have fine hairs, or stigmas, that latch onto drifting grains of pollen. Once a pollen grain is snagged, which can occur anywhere along an exposed silk, the grain germinates and sends a tube, like a root, down through the silk to fertilize the egg.

"Missing kernels are an indication that some silks were not pollinated, perhaps because they failed to grow in time. Dry soil can cause that. Once again, if a farmer knows the symptoms, he can usually do something to correct the problem and improve his yield—if not for the present crop, at least for the next one. Something I did to improve my crops was to plant corn one year and soybeans the next. Soybeans are a legume that adds nitrogen to the soil and that the corn borer—a destructive caterpillar—cannot eat.*

"It always gives me great pleasure to see a bare field gradually turn green and then produce an abundance of food—and all this quietly, cleanly, and beautifully. I am truly convinced that corn—like all plants—is a

* See "Was It Designed? An Amazing Union in the Soil," on page 25.

Hybrid Corn

In many countries, corn farmers usually grow hybrids because of their high yield. Hybrid varieties, mostly of dent corn, are developed by controlled crosses and the inbreeding of plants that have the desired traits. A consequence of this practice, however, is that farmers have to buy seed for every crop. Why? Plants grown from the seed of a previous hybrid crop may vary in quality and produce a lower yield.

wonder of creation. And what I have learned barely scratches the surface."

Have Harlin's comments piqued your curiosity about other aspects of this amazing plant? Consider its history and versatility.

From Mexico to the Rest of the World!

The cultivation of corn began in the Americas, most likely in Mexico, and spread from there. Pre-Inca Peruvians worshipped a corn goddess adorned with a crown of corn ears radiating laterally from her head like the spokes of a wheel. Nature writer Joseph Kastner states that the Indians of the Americas "worshiped [corn] as the stuff made by gods, the stuff of which man himself was made . . . It was so cheap to produce—a single plant gave a man enough food for a day." However, the native peoples supplemented their diet with beans, a common Latin-American practice to this day.

The European discovery of corn came in 1492 after explorer Christopher Columbus arrived in the Caribbean. Columbus' son Ferdinand wrote that his father saw a grain "that they call maize and is most tasty, boiled, roasted, or ground into flour." Columbus took seed home, and "by the mid-1500s," Kastner writes, "[corn] was growing not just in Spain but in Bulgaria and Turkey. Slavers carried corn to Africa . . . [Portuguese-born Spanish explorer Ferdinand] Magellan's men dropped Mexican seed off in the Philippines and Asia." The corn boom had begun.

Nowadays, corn is the second-largest cereal crop in the world, surpassed only by wheat.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- **Is There Life Beyond the Grave?**
- **Robots—How Far Have They Come?**
- **How Can I Cope With Stress at School?**

Rice is the third-largest cereal crop. These three staples feed most of the human race, not to mention livestock.

Like other grasses, corn comes in many varieties. Indeed, more than 1,000 named kinds, including hybrids, are found in the United States alone. Plants range in height from about two feet to a towering 20 feet! Ear lengths vary too. Some are just two inches long; others, a whopping two feet. "Some kinds of South American corn grown today," says the book *Latin American Cooking*, "produce massive ears shaped like footballs, with flat kernels an inch long and almost as broad."

Corn also comes in a variety of colors. Besides yellow, an ear may be red, blue, pink, or black. And in some cases, kernels may give an ear a banded, spotted, or even striped appearance. Understandably, such colorful corn-cobs sometimes bypass the cooking pot and become eye-catching ornaments.

A Versatile Grain

The many varieties of corn are grouped into six major kinds: dent corn, flint corn, flour corn, sweet corn, waxy corn, and popcorn. Sweet corn is only a minor crop. Its sweetness is due to a metabolic defect that results in less sugar than normal being converted to starch. Worldwide, more than 60 percent of the corn harvest feeds livestock and just under 20 percent is for human consumption. The balance serves industry or is used as seed. Of course, ratios vary from country to country.

Corn has countless uses. The grain or its derivatives can be found in anything from adhesives to mayonnaise and from beer to paper diapers. Corn has even found a niche in the fuel industry—albeit a controversial one—in the production of ethanol. To be sure, the story of this amazing and versatile plant is still being written.

THE end of the 18th century saw winds of evangelism begin to blow across Europe. In Britain, then-future missionary William Carey stirred Protestant hearts with his fervent appeals to evangelize untouched territories, including Tahiti. Carey was roused by Jesus' command to his followers to make disciples of people in all nations. (Matthew 28:19, 20) In 1802, French writer François-Auguste-René de Chateaubriand's best seller *Le Génie du christianisme* (The Genius of Christianity) would similarly rouse Catholic missionary fervor.

Catholic and Protestant missionary associations and societies soon began to spring up. In 1797 the London Missionary Society sent 29 missionaries to Tahiti. In 1841 a band of Catholics belonging to the religious order called the Picpus Fathers arrived, and three years later members of the Mormon Church did likewise. Before long, however, many of the newcomers deviated from their primary spiritual mission and got involved in politics and commerce. Why this deviation?

Allies of the *Ari'i*

At first, the teachings of the Protestant missionaries were not well received. According to one author, "their message had more hell-fire and brimstone than compassion and neighbourly love." Besides, as the preachers soon realized, no one would dare to get baptized as a Christian ahead of the *ari'i*, or chiefs, who also held religious authority. Thus, the missionaries decided to focus on the leaders.

One chief in particular, Pomare II, welcomed the missionaries, seeing them as potential economic and military allies. They, in turn, saw Pomare as a means of promoting their interests. Moreover, from the beginning the missionaries had a measure of influence by serving as intermediaries between the Tahitians and the seamen who regularly stopped for supplies.

WHEN THE CHURCHES CAME TO Tahiti

BY AWAKE!
WRITER IN
TAHITI

The reception of the first missionaries, 1797

fluence by serving as intermediaries between the Tahitians and the seamen who regularly stopped for supplies.

Hopeful that the missionaries would help him to further his political ambitions and to trade for the weapons he wanted, Pomare took an interest in their message, and as early as 1811, he asked to be baptized. The following year he put his desire in writing. For eight years, though, his request was denied, the missionaries feeling it prudent to see if he would truly live in harmony with Bible standards of morality.

In the meantime, Pomare succeeded in establishing himself as undisputed king of the island of Tahiti and its immediate neighbors, which make up the Society Islands. Once again, he asked to be baptized. Finally, in 1819, the missionaries acquiesced.

The effect was immediate. Within about five years, virtually all the inhabitants of the Society Islands, the western Tuamotu Archipelago, and half of the Austral Islands professed Christianity.

The Pomare Code

The wholesale “conversion” of the islanders called for the substitution of new values, customs, and laws to replace the old ones. To that end, Pomare looked to the missionaries. As it was, the latter had long desired to reform tribal customs and to check the power of the king. Consequently, the missionaries acceded to Pomare’s request and formulated a set of laws that combined, according to one reference, “the general principles of the British constitution, the declarations of scripture, and the practice of Christian nations.” Many revisions later, the king accepted the final product as Tahiti’s first written law code. It came to be called the Pomare Code.

The Pomare Code became a model for neighboring islands and archipelagoes, where similar systems of laws were enacted. The code enforced strict observance of the Sabbath; included penalties for such offenses as adultery, bigamy, theft, and rebellion; and decreed the death penalty for murder and infanticide. All forms of lascivious entertainment were forbidden.

Participation in Politics

The Protestant missionaries were “deeply involved in the high politics of the island,” states the book *Where the Waves Fall*. “As well as their purely evangelical role, they had become military strategists, economic advisers, political sages, and legal and constitutional draughtsmen.” Likewise, Mormon and Catholic missionaries essentially took charge of the civil and political affairs of the islands where they settled. On the island of Tubuai, in the Austral Islands, a Mormon missionary asserted: “The reins of government are within the church. . . . I am prime minister of the island.” In the Gambier Islands, Catholics acquired similar influence, one cleric assuming the office of governmental minister.



A missionary with Tahitian converts c. 1845



King Pomare II

Instead of limiting themselves to the sole domain of spiritual life, the missionaries “opted for a political evangelization,” notes historian Claire Laux. They saw this as a more expedient way to get results. In doing so, the missionaries acted contrary to the directives of their church authorities. Nevertheless, to this day, religion and politics remain entwined in French Polynesia.

The Role of Trade

With some missionaries, “political opportunism was closely linked with the trading spirit,” says Professor Niel Gunson of the University of Canberra in Australia. A number of missionaries became traders—supplying, chartering, and even building merchant ships. Some operated plantations, growing arrowroot, coffee, cotton, sugarcane, and tobacco.

Missionaries became so well established commercially that for 25 years they controlled trade between Australia and Tahiti, particularly in salt pork and coconut oil. Some of their number, however, were disturbed by these activities and appealed to the London Missionary Society to intercede. Others felt that trade was essential to their religious goals. How so?

Since their arrival, the missionaries had used both their technical skills and their manufactured goods to impress the islanders. Believing that “civilizing” the people would make them happier, the missionar-

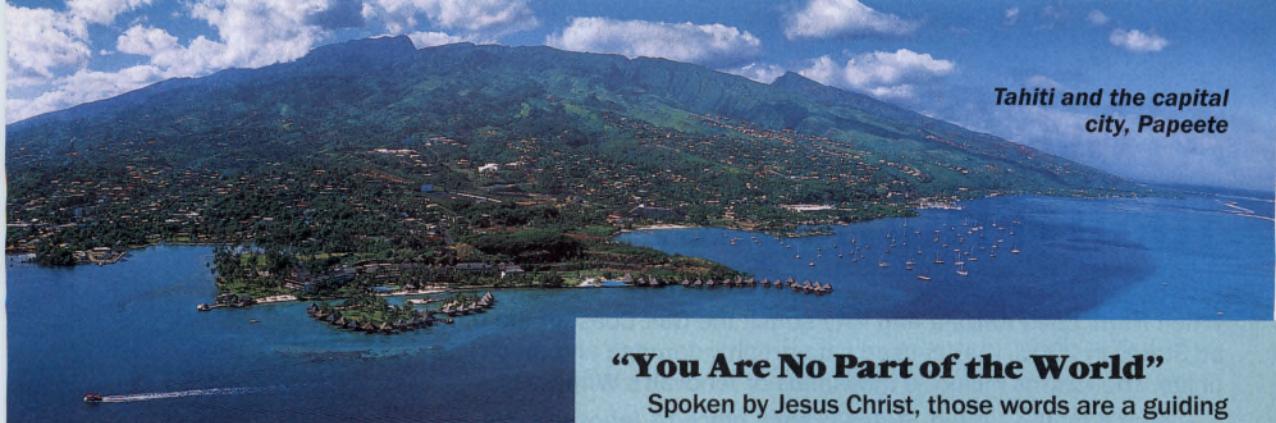


Photo courtesy of Tahiti Tourism

ies promoted hard work and material prosperity, even suggesting that the latter was an indication of God's blessing.

Genuine Conversion?

A London Missionary Society historian later wrote that in the quick mass conversion of these islands, "moral motives, to say nothing of spiritual religion and a change of heart, had little part." The conversion of Tahiti, notes Gunson, was "merely an expression of the will of Pomare II, based on the religious habits (not the beliefs) of the English missionaries."

Many Tahitians had become Christians in name only, and within a few years, paganism made a comeback through a religious movement called *Mamaia*. A morally loose form of worship adopted even by the heiress to the throne, *Mamaia* mixed features of Christianity with traditional beliefs and ways.

There was much bickering among the Protestant groups—which included Anglicans, Calvinists, and Methodists—and hatred between Protestants and Catholics. "Islanders saw no doctrinal differences between denominations, and could not comprehend the vicious rivalries among people who espoused brotherhood," says the book *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*. For example, when two Catholic missionaries landed on Tahiti, they were promptly deported at the

"You Are No Part of the World"

Spoken by Jesus Christ, those words are a guiding principle for his true followers. (John 15:19) In fact, that principle is so important for them that Jesus prayed to God, saying: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:16) Accordingly, Jesus did not participate in politics, nor did he use it as a lever to gain disciples. He also repudiated the avid pursuit of material wealth—another reflection of the world's spirit. Instead, he advocated a simple life focused on acquiring spiritual riches. (Matthew 6:22-24, 33, 34) His true followers imitate his example.

behest of a prominent former Protestant missionary. This action triggered a diplomatic incident between Britain and France that led to the brink of conflict. Finally, Britain conceded to France's claim that Tahiti should come under French "protection."

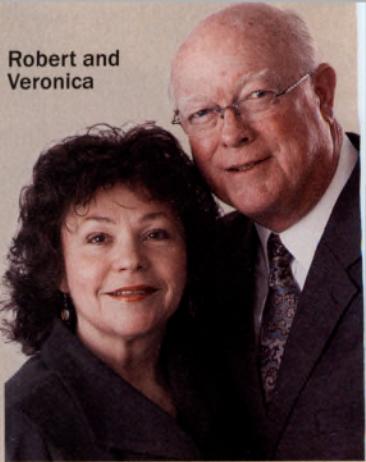
A Positive Legacy

On the positive side, a number of early missionaries zealously promoted literacy and helped to eradicate infanticide, cannibalism, and human sacrifice. Although some missionaries may have been unduly austere and stern, they did endeavor to elevate the islanders' morality.

A particularly noteworthy gift of the missionaries was translation of the Bible into Tahitian. Moreover, by this means, they introduced the people to the divine name, which is still well-known in the islands.*—Psalm 83:18.

* See the article "Men of Humble Origin Translate the Bible," in the July 1, 2003, issue of *The Watchtower*.

Robert and
Veronica



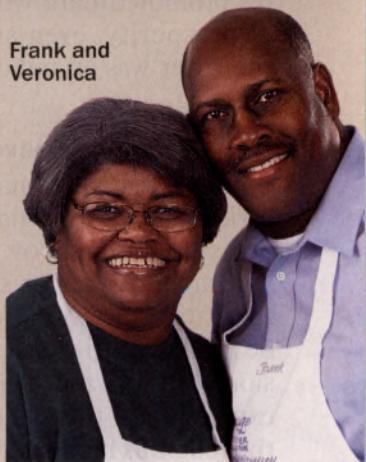
A Love More Powerful Than a Hurricane!

When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck the Gulf Coast of the United States in 2005, they caused catastrophic damage and much loss of life. The victims included thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Directed by the United States branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses, disaster relief committees swung into operation. In Louisiana, they set up 13 relief centers, 9 warehouses, and 4 fuel depots. Their field of operation covered 32,000 square miles. Nearly 17,000 Witness volunteers from all parts of the United States and from 13 other lands poured in to help with emergency aid and reconstruction. The results showed that the forces of nature are no match for Christian love.—1 Corinthians 13:1-8.

The volunteers repaired more than 5,600 homes of fellow believers and 90 Kingdom Halls, the meeting places of Jehovah's Witnesses. These figures represent virtually all such buildings that were damaged. In harmony with Galatians 6:10, which urges Christians to "work what is good toward all," Jehovah's Witnesses assisted a number of nonbelievers as well.

Frank and
Veronica



SHARING in the relief work meant personal sacrifice; nevertheless, the rewards were many. Consider the comments of seven Witnesses who had oversight of various aspects of the work.

"A Highlight of My Life"

Robert: Serving on a disaster relief committee has been a highlight of my life. At 67 years of age, I am the oldest member of the committee. I served with an army of volunteers that included many exceptional young, spiritually-minded Witnesses. It is so encouraging to see the young displaying self-sacrificing love for Jehovah and for fellow Christians!

My wife, Veronica, has been an excellent helper. So that we could make ourselves available, she supported my decision to give

up a job I had enjoyed for over 40 years. We now work one night a week cleaning offices. We have learned to get by on less and enjoy leading a simplified life. The spiritual environment in which we work has given us a deeper appreciation of what it means to put God's Kingdom first in life. (Matthew 6:33) Repeatedly, we have seen that Jehovah takes good care of his people.

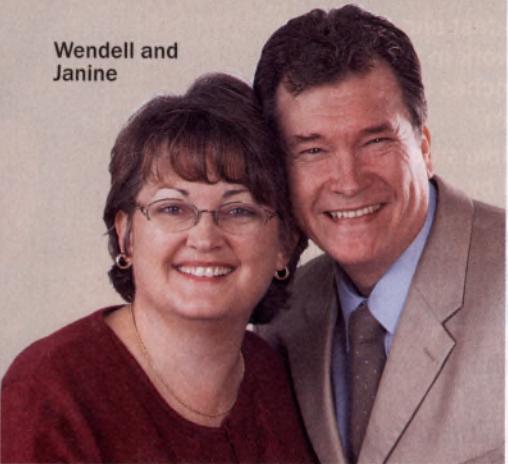
Frank: I serve as overseer of the food service department at the Baton Rouge relief center. Initially, the task of feeding the volunteers meant working between 10 and 12 hours a day, seven days a week. The blessings, though, were many, including seeing firsthand the power of Christian love.

Many volunteers who helped in food service for a week or so asked to return, and by

Gregory and
Kathy



Wendell and
Janine



means of postcards and phone calls, some expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the privilege of helping out. My wife, Veronica, and I have truly been touched by their spirit of self-sacrifice.

Goose Bumps on His Arms

Gregory: My wife, Kathy, and I sold our home in Las Vegas, Nevada, and bought a light pickup truck as well as a trailer, which has become our home. Simplifying our lives has enabled us to share in the relief work in Louisiana for over two years. More than at any other time in our life, we are learning firsthand the truth of the words found in the Bible at Malachi 3:10: "'Test me out, please, . . .' Jehovah of armies has said, '[and see] whether I shall not open to you people the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty

out upon you a blessing until there is no more want.'"

It often makes us smile to ourselves when people say, "Oh, that is so self-sacrificing!" Thirty years ago, Kathy and I wanted to serve at the United States branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses, but we had children to raise. Relief work has satisfied our desire to do more in God's service. Another privilege has been to work closely with fellow Witnesses, some of whom are very talented. For example, one of our cooks had been a chef in a fine restaurant, and another had cooked for two U.S. presidents.

For many volunteers, disaster-relief work has been a life-changing experience. One 57-year-old had goose bumps as he described his work with hurricane victims. Even some Witnesses who were unable to come have been a source of encouragement. For example, two volunteers who do mold remediation presented us with a banner made and signed by everyone—including children—in three congregations in their home state of Nebraska.

'We Have Seen God Care for Damaged Souls'

Wendell: The day after Katrina struck, I received an invitation from the United States branch to assess the damage to Kingdom Halls and homes of Jehovah's Witnesses in Louisiana and Mississippi. Thus began what has become part assignment and part personal journey. Having lived for 32 years in an area where there is a great need for Kingdom proclaimers, my wife, Janine, and I clearly saw Jehovah's care for his people. Now, however, we have seen God's care on a much larger scale.

I am privileged to serve on the Baton Rouge disaster relief committee as chairman. Although challenging, this assignment has given me immense satisfaction. Indeed, hundreds of times during this relief effort, our committee has seen God solve problems,

A Day at a Relief Center

For the kitchen crew at a disaster relief center, work begins at about 4:30 a.m. At 7:00 a.m. the whole family of workers gathers in the dining area for a ten-minute consideration of a Bible text before breakfast. The chairman might also use the occasion to welcome new arrivals and share a recent encouraging experience.

After a prayer of thanks, all enjoy a hearty breakfast and then head off to work. Some stay at the center, perhaps to work in the offices, laundry, or kitchen. The cooks prepare take-out lunches to be picked up at noon by a representative of each off-site team.

Every Monday night the "family" gathers for a Bible study based on an article in the *Watchtower* magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Such studies help all to remain spiritually strong—the secret to enduring with joy and to seeing one's work in the proper light.—Matthew 4:4; 5:3.

open doors, and care for damaged souls in ways that only a loving, Almighty Father could.

Many have asked, "How are you and your wife still able to share in the relief work after more than two years?" It has not always been easy. We have had to make numerous adjustments in our lives. But on the positive side, we have seen the benefits that come from maintaining a 'simple eye.'—Matthew 6:22.

When we made our first search-and-rescue missions in New Orleans, we got little rest. Complicating matters, the city was virtually under martial law because of the chaos that prevailed and the acts of random brutality that plagued the streets. It was easy to become overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the task that lay before us.

We met with thousands of Witnesses who had suffered losses. We prayed with them and tried to console them. Then, with Jehovah's help, we got on with the work. At times, I feel as if I have lived two lifetimes in my two years here.

Time and again, just when I thought that I was exhausted beyond physical and emotional limits, a new wave of volunteers would arrive—some for a number of months, others for the long haul. To see so many joyful and willing helpers, including many young people, has been a sustaining experience.

Often, Jehovah came to our rescue. For example, early on, we discovered that trees had fallen on more than 1,000 homes of our broth-



Matthew and Darline



Ted and Debbie



Justin and Tiffany



"I Have Misjudged You People"

A woman in New Orleans had a sign on her door that read: "Jehovah's Witnesses—Do Not Call." Then one day a crew of volunteers began to restore a hurricane-damaged house across the street from her home. Day after day she observed the warm, friendly spirit of

the workers. Curiosity soon got the better of her, and she went over to investigate. On finding out that the volunteers were Jehovah's Witnesses, she said that no one from her church had even phoned her since the hurricane. "It is obvious that I have misjudged you people," she said. The result? The sign came down, and she invited the Witnesses to call.

ers. Because we had no equipment or personnel to do the dangerous work of removing the trees, our committee prayed about the matter. The very next day, a brother with a truck and the exact piece of equipment we needed offered his services. On another occasion prayer was answered in just 15 minutes, and on yet another occasion, the equipment we prayed about was on its way before we said amen! Yes, Jehovah proved to be the "Hearer of prayer."—Psalm 65:2.

"Proud to Be One of Jehovah's Witnesses"

Matthew: The day after Katrina struck, I was able to help organize the delivery of 15 tons of donated food, water, and other necessities to the devastated area. Jehovah's people certainly proved their generosity!

For our efforts to be more effective, my wife, Darline, and I moved to within a two-hour drive of the affected area. A local Witness gave us part-time secular work so that we could devote most of our time to the relief effort. Another Witness provided us with an apartment. To be a part of such a loving brotherhood fills my heart with appreciation and makes me proud to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Ted: Shortly after Hurricane Katrina, my wife, Debbie, and I volunteered to help with the relief effort. Within a few days, I found a used 28-foot trailer that was light enough for our truck to haul and that was also priced at half the appraised value—well within our budget and an answer to our prayers. This

trailer has been our home for more than two years.

During a break in the work, we sold our house and most of our belongings, freeing us up for additional work in New Orleans, where I serve as project coordinator. A highlight of our experience has been observing how Jehovah has proved to be "the God of all comfort" for his worshippers. Many had lost not just their homes and Kingdom Halls but also, as a result of the evacuation, their congregations and even the entire territory in which they had preached the good news.—2 Corinthians 1:3.

'Their Faith Touched Our Hearts'

Justin: In October 2005 the call went out for volunteers to help with disaster relief on the Gulf Coast. My wife, Tiffany, and I promptly turned in our applications, and in February 2006 we were invited to assist the roofing crew based at the Kenner disaster relief center near New Orleans.

Each day we would work on a certain house and meet the local Witnesses, whose faith and reliance on God touched our hearts. And daily we were powerfully reminded of the folly of trusting in material things. The joy derived from seeing what Jehovah has enabled his people to accomplish and from helping fellow Christians is beyond words.

—Matthew 1:7. 6. Abijah.—Matthew 1:7.
4. Solomon.—Matthew 1:6. 5. Rehoboam.
1. Boastful. 2. Humble and repentant. 3. The tax
collector.

ANSWERS TO PAGE 31

Should God Be Worshipped Through Images?



"I was taught that images would make me feel closer to God."
—Mack.

"Our home was full of religious icons. We thought this made our house pleasing to God."—Herta.

"We would bow to certain images. We gave no thought to how this act made God feel."—Sandra.

HOW do you feel about those statements? Many believe that religious images help them to worship God. Is this view correct? More important, how does God feel about the matter? Consider what his written Word, the Holy Bible, says.

God's View of Religious Images

Religious icons and idols are representations, or symbols, of anything that serves as an object of devotion or veneration. They include crosses, statues, pictures, or any other likeness of things in heaven or on the earth.* Flags can also be objects of veneration.

The use of such objects in worship goes back thousands of years. Hence, in 1513 B.C.E., when giving the fledgling nation

of Israel the Ten Commandments, God clearly stated his view of religious images. He said: "You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them, because I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion."—Exodus 20:4, 5.

Note God's twofold prohibition: First, his people were not to make images for worship, and second, they were not to "bow down to them" or serve them. Why does our Creator forbid the making of images? One reason for not making images of God is that "no man has seen God at any time." Jehovah is not made of physical matter but is a spirit

* See the article "Did Jesus Really Die on a Cross?" in the April 2006 issue of this magazine.

and lives in the spirit realm. (John 1:18; 4:24) A reason for not making images of *anything* is that God insists on “exclusive devotion.” “To no one else shall I give my own glory, neither my praise to graven images,” he says. (Isaiah 42:8) For this reason, it is also wrong to make an image as an aid to worship. When an Israelite leader named Aaron did so, Jehovah was deeply offended.—Exodus 32:4-10.

Why Not Bow Down to Them?

Regarding idols, the Bible says: “A mouth they have, but they cannot speak; eyes they have, but they cannot see; ears they have, but they cannot hear.” Then it adds this sobering warning: “Those making them will become just like them”—lifeless!—Psalm 115:4-8.

Idol worship is also an act of injustice. Ask yourself, ‘How would I feel if I gave my child an expensive gift and he walked away and thanked a total stranger or even a lifeless object?’ That may help you to appreciate how our Creator and Life-Giver feels when others—including lifeless idols—receive the credit and worship that are due him.—Revelation 4:11.

Think, too, how degrading it is for a human—made in God’s own image—to venerate an inanimate object! (Genesis 1:27) Concerning some who did just that, the prophet Isaiah wrote: “To the work of one’s hands they bow down, to that which one’s fingers have made. And earthling man bows down and man becomes low, and you [Jehovah God] cannot possibly pardon them.”—Isaiah 2:8, 9.

What makes false worship even more offensive to God is that it is, in reality, the wor-

ship of demons—God’s enemies. When the Israelites abandoned Jehovah for idols, “they went sacrificing to demons, not to God,” says Deuteronomy 32:17.

Did the early followers of Jesus Christ venerate images or use them as aids to worship? No! Jesus’ apostle John wrote: “Little children, guard yourselves from idols.” (1 John 5:21) The book *Early Church History to the Death of Constantine* states: “Nothing could possibly have been more odious to the early disciples than image-worship.”

The Right Form of Worship

Jesus said: “The true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for, indeed, the Father is looking for suchlike ones to worship him.” (John 4:23) Yes, God wants us to know him as a person—his likes, his dislikes, his standards, and his purpose for us. (John 17:3) In fact, that is why he had the Bible written. (2 Timothy 3:16) Also, because God “is not far off from each one of us,” we can pray to him anytime, anywhere, and without the help of religious images.—Acts 17:27.

“When I entered a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses, I saw no images for worship,” said Sandra, quoted earlier. “The Witnesses used the Bible to show me God’s qualities and requirements. Thus, I learned to pray so as to be heard by God. I now feel that I have a true understanding of the Creator and a close relationship with him.” Yes, Sandra learned how refreshing and liberating Bible truths really are. (John 8:32) You can too.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- Why should we avoid all forms of images in worship?—**Psalm 115:4-8; 1 John 5:21.**
- How is the true God to be worshipped?—**John 4:24.**
- How can you learn the truth about God, and how may you benefit?—**John 8:32; 17:3.**

When a Baby Gorilla Cried

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN CAMEROON

Pitchou, a female gorilla, was born in the central African forest. When Pitchou was about one year old, hunters killed her mother and all the other members of her gorilla group for food. Because Pitchou was too small to sell for meat, she was spared to be sold as a pet. Meanwhile, Pitchou became sick and cried constantly.



PITCHOU is just one of many thousands of orphaned primates. A number of activities have combined to create this sad situation. One is the illegal trade in bush meat. Capitalizing on the demand by some restaurants and individuals for exotic meats, professional hunters prowl forests day and night. Meanwhile, middlemen operate the lucrative, but illegal, local and international networks to market the animals and the meat.

A second activity involves unsustainable logging. When forests are destroyed, animals are robbed of homes, hiding places, and feeding and nesting sites. Moreover, the two practices tend to support each other. How so? For one thing, logging roads provide hunters with easy access to forest habitats, where the now confused, and often displaced, animals become easy prey. Other factors include human population growth, the demand for protein, increased urbanization, and more efficient hunting technologies, as well as warfare and the resulting proliferation of firearms. As a result, primates and a number of other species are being driven ever closer to extinction, leading to what has been called the empty-forest syndrome. But that may not be the only problem. How so? By contributing to seed dispersal, for example, animals play a part in the

health and diversity of forest ecosystems. So when the fauna (animal life) is gone, the flora (plant life) may be affected too.

Yet, the killing continues. In parts of West Africa in just one ten-year period, some primate populations dropped to a tenth of what they had been. "If the poaching continues," say wildlife experts in Cameroon, "soon there will be no more gorillas left in the wild."*

Saving Orphans

In response to this tragic situation, conservation groups, such as the Limbe Wildlife Centre, nestled at the foot of Mount Cameroon in sub-Saharan West Africa, work for the protection of endangered species. At the Limbe center, visitors can observe gorillas, chimpanzees, mandrills, and 13 additional primate species, along with a variety of other animals. In recent years the center has cared for nearly 200 orphaned and displaced animals, providing them with a safe home, food, and veterinary care. Another role of the center is to promote conservation awareness among its many visitors from Cameroon, nearby countries, and around the world —more than 28,300 in a recent year.

* Health experts warn that handling and eating bush meat may also spread such deadly diseases as anthrax and Ebola, as well as viruses similar to HIV, from animals to humans.



*Pitchou
before and
after she
regained
good health*

*A red-eared
guenon*

*A drill taking
care of its
baby*



All photos pages 22 and 23: Limbe Wildlife Centre, Cameroon

This brings us back to Pitchou. Heartbroken by the young gorilla's cries, concerned onlookers bought her from the hunters and gave her to the center. When the youngster arrived, she received a thorough checkup in the center's infirmary. Besides emotional trauma, she suffered from a cough, dehydration, malnutrition, diarrhea, and skin lesions. Because of skin problems, she was named Pitchou, which means "spotted" in the local dialect. Happily, Pitchou responded well to treatment and did not require surgery, which the center can perform when needed.

As is usual for animals arriving at the center, Pitchou's first 90 days there were spent in quarantine. Then she joined 11 fellow gorillas in an outdoor enclosure, which reflects the natural forest environment. The hearts of staff members were warmed at seeing the older primates befriend the new



The Limbe center entrance



**Taking care of Bolo,
an orphaned gorilla**

arrival. This is not unusual, and as a result, Pitchou quickly became part of the group.

Close, friendly contact between the animals and their human caretakers generates strong attachments. Seeing the activities at the center can help a visitor understand the moral responsibility that God imposed on humans when he instructed the first couple to have the earth and its animals in subjection.—Genesis 1:28.

What Future for the Orphans?

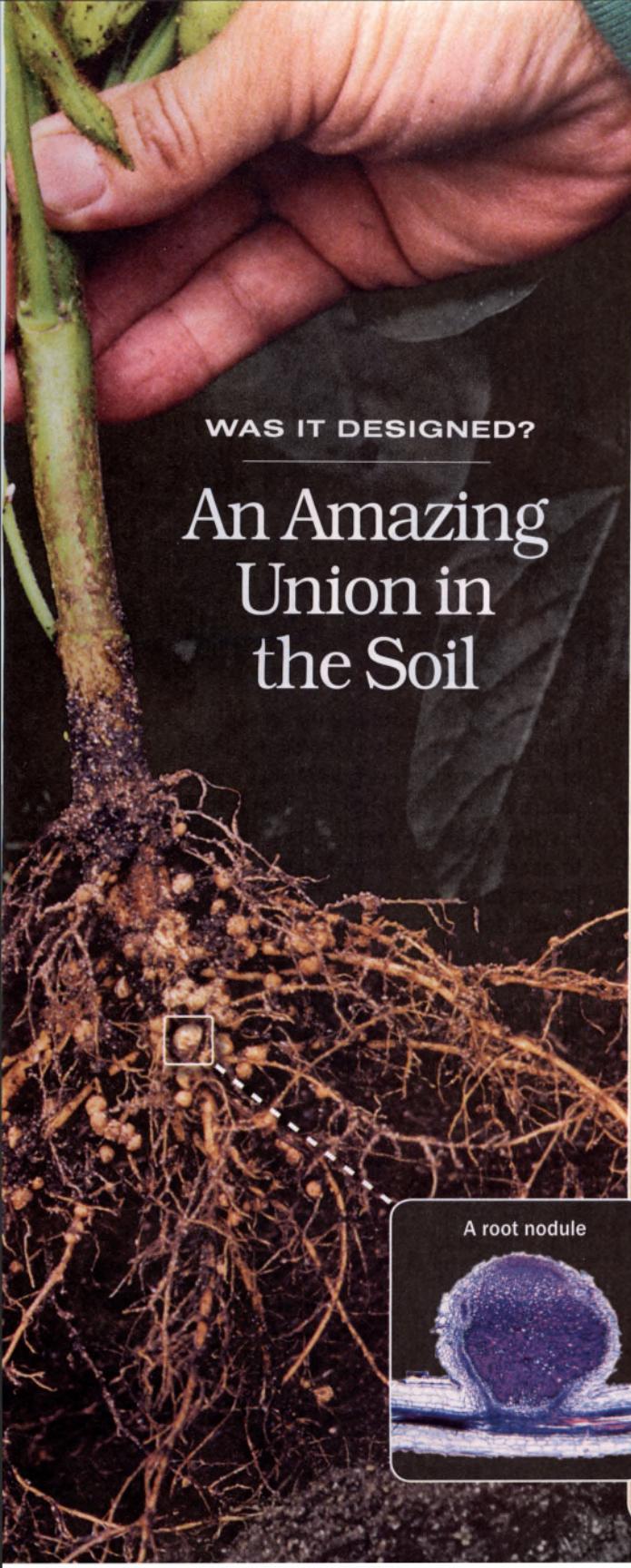
The program's ultimate goal is to release its charges back into the wild. This is a tall order, however. Animals that are used to human care are often ill-equipped to survive on their own. Again they risk becoming meat on someone's table. Several African countries have agreed to create transborder protected areas and to improve the management of existing areas. Hopefully those arrangements will facilitate the release of orphaned animals and contribute to the preservation of not only primates but all the wildlife in the region.

In the meantime, every indication is that the opposing forces—greed, poverty, rapid human population growth, and deforestation—will continue to take a heavy toll on primates and other animals. If increased protection does not come quickly, “a terminal decline in the population numbers of wild species will probably occur,” states Felix Lankester, project manager of the Limbe Wildlife Centre. “The result . . . could be the extinction in the wild of the very creatures that we are working with.”

What a tragedy! But it is an even greater tragedy to see humans suffer from malnutrition and disease and to see children, with bloated bellies and runny eyes, die for want of food. Clearly, Pitchou’s problem underscores the sad state of the world as a whole—especially its inequalities and injustices.

Happily, the Creator is not indifferent to what is happening on earth. Soon he will eradicate the very causes of cruelty, suffering, and extinction and will establish lasting harmony among all living things.—Isaiah 11:6-9.

Both photos: Limbe Wildlife Centre, Cameroon



WAS IT DESIGNED?

An Amazing Union in the Soil

■ In the soil an amazing, cooperative union between certain plants and bacteria helps to make life possible.

Consider: Nitrogen is essential for plant growth and reproduction. But the gas has to be converted, or fixed, into compounds such as ammonia before vegetation can make use of it. Legumes solve this problem by working in close partnership with bacteria called *rhizobia*. Such a mutually beneficial union between unlike organisms is called symbiosis.

By means of a special chemical, the legume attracts the bacteria to its roots, which the bacteria then enter. Although the bacteria and the plant are members of two separate kingdoms, says *Natural History* magazine, they work together "to construct what is essentially a new organ: a fully operational nitrogen-fixing root nodule." Inside the nodule, their new home and workshop, the bacteria get to work. Their main tool is a special enzyme—a form of protein called nitrogenase—which they use to fix nitrogen captured from air pockets in the soil.

"The planet's entire supply of nitrogenase . . . could fit into a single large bucket," says *Natural History*. So every molecule counts! But there is a problem. The enzyme is ruined by oxygen. The solution? The legume produces a special substance that snatches potentially harmful oxygen away.

A membrane around the nodule controls the exchange of ammonia, sugars, and other nutrients between microbe and plant. Like all plants, legumes eventually die. When they do, the ammonia stays in the soil. Thus, legumes have rightly been dubbed "green manure."

What do you think? Could microbes and their plant partners "invent" such an amazing, incredibly complex life-support system, or do we have here yet another evidence of design?

How can I resist temptation?



■ Karen is at the party for no more than ten minutes when she sees two boys arrive carrying several large paper bags. What's in those bags is no mystery. Earlier, she had overheard the same boys saying that there would be "lots of booze" at this party. Karen didn't mention that to her parents, of course. She told herself that the boys were just joking. After all, there were *supposed* to be some adults in this house—somewhere.

Suddenly, Karen hears a familiar voice behind her. "What are you just standing there for, you party pooper?" Karen turns to see her

friend Jessica clutching two freshly opened bottles of beer. Jessica holds one right in front of Karen's face and says, "Now don't tell me you're too young to have a little fun!"

Karen wants to refuse. But the pressure to accept is more powerful than she expected. It's not about the alcohol. It's just that Jessica is her friend, and Karen doesn't want to come across as a party pooper, as Jessica called her. Besides, Jessica's one of the good girls. And if she's drinking, then what's the big deal? 'It's just a beer,' Karen tells herself. 'It's not like taking drugs or having sex.'

WHEN you're young, temptation comes in many forms. Often, it involves the opposite sex. "The girls at school are aggressive," says 17-year-old Ramon.* "They like to touch you and to see how far they can go with you. They won't take no for an answer!" Deanna, also 17, has had a similar experience.

"One boy came up to me and put his arm around me," she says. "I punched him in his arm and said, 'What are you doing? I don't even know you!'"

You too may face temptations, and it may seem that the pressure just won't let up. As one Christian put it, "temptation is like a continuous knock at your door that ignores the Do Not Disturb sign." Do you hear that

* Names in this article have been changed.

knock more often than you'd like? For example, do any of the following tempt you?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smoking | <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking alcohol |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taking drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Looking at pornography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging in immoral sex | <input type="checkbox"/> Other..... |

If you checked off any of the above, don't conclude that you're just not cut out to be a Christian. You *can* learn to control wrong desires and to resist temptation. How? It helps to recognize what's behind temptation. Consider three factors.

1. Imperfection. The inclination to do wrong is common to all imperfect humans. Even the apostle Paul—a mature Christian—candidly admitted: "When I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me." (Romans 7:21) Clearly, even the most upright person will occasionally become aware of "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes." (1 John 2:16) But dwelling on enticements to do wrong only makes matters worse, for the Bible says: "Desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin."—James 1:15.

2. External influences. Temptation is everywhere you look. "At school and at work, people talk about sex all the time," says Trudy. "On TV and in movies, it's always made to seem so glamorous, so exciting. You rarely see the negative consequences!" Trudy knows from experience how powerful such influences can be. "I thought I was in love at 16," she recalls. "My mother sat down with me and told me that if things kept going the way they were, I would end up pregnant. I was horrified that my mom would think such a thing! Two months later, I was pregnant."

3. "The desires incidental to youth." (2 Timothy 2:22) That phrase can include any desire that is typical while young, such as the craving for acceptance or the yearning to forge your own identity. Those desires aren't wrong in themselves, but if left unchecked, they can make temptation harder to resist.

TRY THIS EXPERIMENT

Take a compass, and position it so that the needle points north. Now place a magnet at the side of the compass. What happens? The needle no longer gives an accurate reading. Instead, it is turned toward the magnet.

Your conscience is like that compass. If properly trained, it will point "north" and help you to make wise decisions. But harmful association, like a magnet, exerts a pull that can distort your moral judgment. The lesson? Try to avoid people and situations that may throw your moral sense off course!—Proverbs 13:20.

For example, the longing for your own identity could drive you to turn against good values you've been taught at home. That's what happened to Steve at age 17. He says, "I rebelled against my parents and did anything and everything they had taught me *not* to do—all this shortly after being baptized."

Admittedly, the forces described above are powerful. Nevertheless, you *can* resist temptation. How?

■ First, identify the temptation that exerts the strongest pull on you. (You may already have done this above.)

■ Next, ask yourself, 'When is this temptation most likely to occur?' Check off one of the following:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> While at school | <input type="checkbox"/> While at work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> When alone | <input type="checkbox"/> Other..... |

SUGGESTION

Plan out responses you can use when someone tries to tempt you into wrongdoing. Don't worry. You don't have to come across as self-righteous. Often, a simple, confident refusal is all that's needed. For example, if a schoolmate offers you a cigarette, you could say: "Don't waste it on me. I don't smoke!"



When you give in to temptation, you become a slave to your own desires

Knowing when temptation is likely to occur might even help you to avoid it altogether. For example, consider the imaginary scenario at the beginning of this article. What warning did Karen have that there would be trouble at the gathering she attended? How could she have avoided the temptation in the first place?

■ Now that you've (1) identified the temptation and (2) determined when it is likely to occur, you're ready to take action. Your first priority is to figure out how to minimize or eliminate contact with the temptation. Write below what you could do.

.....
.....

(Examples: If after school you regularly encounter schoolmates who urge you to smoke with them, perhaps you could alter your route to avoid crossing their path. If you often receive unsolicited

ed Internet pornography, you might consider installing programs to block the source and all similar sites. Also, you could be more specific in the key words you enter in a search engine.)

Of course, you can't avoid *all* temptations. Sooner or later, you will probably be confronted with a particularly powerful enticement—perhaps when you least expect it. What can you do about that?

Be prepared. When Jesus was "being tempted by Satan," his rebuff was immediate. (Mark 1:13) Why? Because he already knew where he stood on the issues that arose. Think about that. Jesus wasn't a robot. He *could* have yielded to temptation. But he had already resolved to obey his Father at all times. (John 8:28, 29) Jesus really meant it when he said: "I have come down from heaven to do, not my will, but the will of him that sent me."—John 6:38.

Write in the spaces below two reasons why you should resist the temptation you most often face and two ways you resolve to resist.

1.
.....

2.
.....

Remember, when you give in to temptation, you become a slave to your desires. (Titus 3:3) Why allow yourself to be controlled by your cravings? Have the maturity to control your urges rather than allow your urges to control you.—Colossians 3:5.

More articles from the "Young People Ask" series can be found at the Web site
www.watchtower.org/ype

TO THINK ABOUT

- Can perfect creatures be tempted?—Genesis 6:1-3; John 8:44.
- When you resist temptation, what effect does your faithfulness have upon others?—Proverbs 27:11; 1 Timothy 4:12.

"Thank You for Your Great Love for People"

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN RUSSIA

■ In the eastern Siberian city of Chita, a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses used a school classroom for Christian meetings until they moved into their new Kingdom Hall. Because the Witnesses kept the classroom clean, made repairs, and were kind and courteous, the school directors wrote a letter of appreciation to the congregation.

In part, it said: "Thank you for your great love for people, which is evident to everyone you meet, and for your missionary and humanitarian activities among the general population. We will never forget the impressions gained during the years we have worked together, which demonstrate that those believing in God are decent, conscientious, kind and, most of all, goal-oriented people with faith and a purpose in life." Jehovah's Witnesses appreciate those sentiments.

■ Approximately 3,500 miles west of Chita, a representative of the Russia branch of Jehovah's Witnesses was invited to a special ceremony hosted by the administration of the district of St. Petersburg. The reason? After the snow has melted each year, local Witnesses help to clean up the litter that has accumulated on a 40-mile stretch of road not far from

the branch. Showing appreciation for this community spirit, an official formally presented a certificate of merit to the branch representative. The audience heartily applauded. Interestingly, when a host speaker at the ceremony mispronounced the divine name, Jehovah, several non-Witnesses in attendance quickly corrected him, showing that they were familiar with both God's name and the people known by it.

The main reason for this familiarity is the public ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses, of whom there are approximately 150,000 in Russia. It is their goal to continue showing a "great love for people" by sharing the Bible's comforting message with all who will hear.

—Matthew 22:39.

The Russia branch received a certificate of merit



Violent Video Games in Church

"Hundreds of ministers and pastors desperate to reach young congregants have drawn concern and criticism through their use of an unusual recruiting tool"—an "immensely popular" but "violent video game," reports *The New York Times*. The game in question is intended for mature audiences. In it the player, who takes on the role of a soldier, has to kill in a number of different ways. This has not prevented the organizers of several Protestant and evangelical youth groups from "stocking their centers with multiple game consoles so dozens of teenagers can flock around big-screen televisions and shoot it out," says the newspaper.

Children's Identities Stolen

A growing number of children are victims of identity theft, with potentially devastating impact on their future credit rating and relationships, says *The Wall Street Journal*. Such crimes, usually committed by a family member, can go undetected for decades. "Most people don't realize that someone has been illegally using their identity . . . until they apply for their first job, a driver's license, a student loan or a mortgage," explains the newspaper. Some find out earlier if a credit agency attempts to collect debts that have accumulated in the victim's name.

■ In 2007 some 47 million Chinese suffered shortages of drinking water resulting from the worst drought in a decade. Meanwhile, 42 million were affected by typhoons, and 180 million by floods.—XINHUA NEWS AGENCY, CHINA.

■ "In 2003, an estimated fifth of pregnancies worldwide ended in abortion. In Europe, this proportion was nearer a third . . . [In] the countries of the former Soviet Union, . . . an estimated 45% of pregnancies in 2003 were aborted."—BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, BRITAIN.

Nuclear Warheads "Missing"

On August 30, 2007, a U.S. Air Force B-52 bomber flew over the United States for three and a half hours carrying six nuclear-armed cruise missiles that had been "mistakenly attached to the airplane's wing," reports *The Washington Post*. Neither the pilots that flew the plane nor the ground crew that loaded the missiles noticed the mistake, which "would escape notice for an astounding 36 hours," says the newspaper. According to reports, "Air Force officials said the warheads were not activated and at no time posed a threat to the public." Even so, asked one commentator: "How worried should we be?"



Pigeons Measure Pollution

Studies conducted on pigeons in Jaipur city show that these birds can be used to measure city pollution, say researchers at the University of Rajasthan, in northern India. "Heavy metals present in the environment of the habitat enter the feathers, and remain even after [the feathers] are shed," explains New Delhi's *Gobar Times*, a supplement to *Down to Earth* magazine. Since pigeons normally live in a fixed area, the levels of cadmium, chromium, copper, and lead detected in their feathers may be an accurate indicator of local pollution.

Explain the Illustration

1. In the illustration recorded at Luke 18:9-14, what sort of person was the Pharisee?

(Check one or more of the boxes below.)

- Humble Repentant Boastful

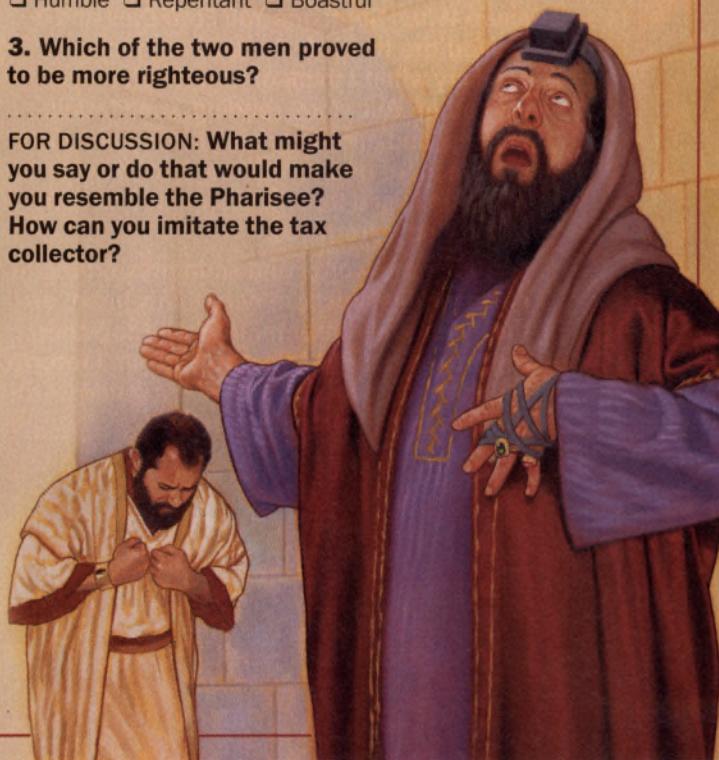
2. What sort of person was the tax collector?

(Check one or more of the boxes below.)

- Humble Repentant Boastful

3. Which of the two men proved to be more righteous?

FOR DISCUSSION: What might you say or do that would make you resemble the Pharisee? How can you imitate the tax collector?



Who Is Part of Jesus' Family Tree?

Consider the clues. Look up the scriptures. Then write the correct names in the spaces provided.

4

CLUE: I could speak three thousand proverbs, and my songs "came to be a thousand and five." Read 1 Kings 4:30-32.



From This Issue

Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

PAGES 8-9 In whose hands is the earth's future?

Isaiah 11:_____

PAGE 20 What is God's view of religious images?

Exodus 20:_____

PAGE 21 The apostle John warned that we should guard against what?

1 John 5:_____

PAGE 27 Even the most upright person will occasionally become aware of what?

1 John 2:_____



Children's Picture Search

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.

5

CLUE: I was the last king of the united kingdom of Israel.

Read 1 Kings 12:1-3, 16-20.

6

CLUE: My army defeated Jeroboam's bigger army because we "leaned upon Jehovah."

Read 2 Chronicles 13:13-20.



Guidance Through the Grieving Process

■ A woman's father died when she was only 12 years old. For many years thereafter, she struggled with anxiety and depression. In a letter to the Canada branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses, she explained:

"I didn't find comfort until I read the brochure *When Someone You Love Dies* and it walked me through the grieving process. I still cry when I think of how much I miss my father. But since reading, meditating, praying, and allowing myself to cry as I read the brochure and scriptures, I don't hurt as much as I used to, and I can now find comfort in God's promises.

"I hold the words and scriptures on the pages of this brochure dear to my heart, as they were instrumental in gluing together my broken heart. I feel whole again. I recommend this brochure as the best guide through the grieving process."

