

Awake!

June 22, 1992



Rearing Children in an Immoral World

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How can parents rear moral children in a world that uses sex to sell shoes, music, TV programs, and supermarket magazines? The following articles show how loving parents have successfully done this.

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A Challenge to Parents

The world is a far less moral place than it used to be. There is a glut of sex-related advertising. Magazines that present women as casual playthings are sold at the grocery store. A rock song endorses date rape. Indeed, as evidenced by what is seen and heard every day, this is an immoral world!

PROFESSOR of family studies Greer Litton Fox observed that of "the 40 or so" acts of intercourse or implied intercourse "that one can be exposed to on television from 1:30 to 11 p.m. daily, less than 5 percent involve married couples." With the media pushing sex, it is not surprising also to read of the "staggering rates and devastating consequences of teen pregnancy."

Surely, for parents who want the best for their children, it is a challenge to rear them in this immoral world. Yet, this does not mean that all young people are engaging in sex relations. Surveys reveal that half of America's 15-to-19-year-old girls are sexually experienced, thereby confirming that half are not! Moreover, even many of those who have become involved sexually wish that they hadn't. One wrote to newspaper columnist Ann Landers:

"Sex with Joe (my first crush) was disappointing, so I tried again with Mike, then Neal, then George. I don't know what I was looking for. Whatever it was, I didn't find it. I had gotten a lot of foolish ideas from mag-

azines, soaps and movies. Real life wasn't like that.

"If I could talk to the young girls who read your column, I would tell them that teenage sex doesn't solve problems, it creates more. It doesn't make a girl feel loved, it makes her feel cheap. I'd let them know that it doesn't make a girl 'more of a woman,' it can make her less of one."

"If I could talk to parents, I'd urge them to emphasize self-respect and high standards."

Actually, young people who are close to their parents and who feel secure in their families and good about themselves are much less prone to fall victim to immorality than are those who are not. And there is an organization of well over four million persons earth wide in which the young people are helped to hold to a far higher standard than is generally followed today.

How, in view of these facts, can you help your children to protect themselves from the increasing immorality in today's world? How can you help them live happier, better, and more moral lives? That is the subject of the next two articles.

Provide the Guidance They Need

HOW can your children learn to protect themselves from the world's increasing immorality? Not from television, which one group of youths listed as their fourth most important source of information about sexuality. Not from the schools, where what teachers teach reflects the changing values and standards of this immoral world. And certainly not from the stories related by schoolmates of your children.

If education in morals and family life is to be successful, it has to begin at home. As one concerned high-school teacher said: "Someone has to have the courage to say: 'Look, kids, it won't hurt you to wait!'"

Have you taught your children that? In view of the barrage of sexual material that surrounds us, do you sometimes wonder if you even know how to teach them?

The Effect of Example

Just as your parents influenced your life by the way they lived, so your example powerfully affects the lives of your children. It reveals a great deal about how much you love them and about the kind of people you want them to be.

Awake!

Why Awake! Is Published *Awake!* is 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 before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address on page 5. This is part of a worldwide Bible educational work that is supported by voluntary donations.

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Erline used to wait for her daughters when they came home at night and listen to them relate all they had done. "If something needed correcting," she said, "I could take care of that later. But I would never have known about it if I hadn't listened." She kept this communication open through her daughters' school years and through their courtships. Such time spent with your children can save many heartaches later on.

But what if your children are not very talkative? If they aren't, you might ask yourself, 'Are they merely quiet by nature, or are they afraid to reveal matters to me because of the way I reacted in the past? Can I rebuild their confidence by making special efforts now to show my interest in them? Can I make it easier for them to bring up small things now and perhaps more serious ones later?'

Important Warnings

Your children need to be warned about the consequences of immorality. They should know, for example, that despite all they hear to the contrary, no method of contraception is foolproof. Unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases often result even when contraceptives are used. According to the organization Planned Parenthood, condoms fail to prevent pregnancy 12 percent of the time, and their failure may even be greater in preventing the transmission of the AIDS virus.

Many young people seem convinced that catastrophes will never happen to them. How-

ever, sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS, can be communicated by people who as yet have no symptoms and who do not know that they are infecting others. Many such diseases that are plaguing young people today can cause infertility, birth defects, cancer, and even death.

As an example, 40 million Americans are now believed to have just one of these diseases, genital herpes, for which there is no known cure. Infected mothers can pass it on to their babies. These innocent children may then become mentally retarded, suffer permanent damage to their central nervous system, or die of severe infections of their internal organs. What a horrible price to pay for a few brief moments of hoped-for pleasure!

The illicit sex that transmitted this disease may not even have been fun. A researcher who questioned many youths said that "for females, twice as many teen-year [sexual] experiences were negative as positive." Parents need to emphasize to their children that sex—the marvelous means by which our Creator purposed that our beautiful earth be populated—should not be furtively commenced outside the bounds of marriage.

Instruction They Particularly Need

Your children need to know that the only sure way to avoid the problems that come with sex before marriage is to follow the time-proved principles that God established. What principles? No sex till marriage, then

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permanent and lifelong fidelity to that one beloved person who, in the ideal situation, also has had no other sex partner.

However, the basic reason for fleeing immorality is not that it causes problems but that our Creator says it is wrong. The Bible urges: "Abstain from fornication." "Flee from fornication." Why? Because, those who continue to practice such things "will not inherit God's kingdom."—1 Thessalonians 4:3; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, 18.

Following godly principles leads to happier, more contented lives. It protects us from sexually transmitted disease, unwanted pregnancies, the problems of single-parent families,

and the heartbreak of being abandoned by people who used us for their own selfish purposes.

For more than 2,500 years, the words recorded by the ancient prophet of God have proved true: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk. O if only you would actually pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea."—Isaiah 48:17, 18.

But how can these moral principles fit in with the modern practice of dating? That question is discussed next.

Help Them Choose a Mate Wisely

DO YOUR youngsters know what to look for in a mate and how to choose wisely? It is vital to think about the matter and to help them make a wise choice, since this will be important to their future happiness.

In lands where dating is the custom, there is growing pressure on young people to pair up at an ever earlier age. "Parents of 10-year-olds tell me they are under intense pressure to let their children date," said Dr. Ronald W. Taffel, a clinical psychologist in New York. "Parents suddenly find themselves hassling with issues they did not expect to deal with until [their children's] adolescence."

What will likely be the consequences if you give in and permit your youngsters to begin dating at an early age? *The Journal of the*

American Medical Association commented: "Early and frequent dating is associated with the initiation of [intercourse]." Yes, you have probably read reports of "the growing number of girls ages 10 to 14 giving birth."

So, what can you do to help your young ones?

Teach Them From an Early Age

Parents need to instill positive Christian qualities in their children and help them to develop these. And they also need to help them to identify these qualities in a prospective mate. When your child brings up the subject of dating, explain that this is not properly viewed as a social pastime for preteens or even for those in their early teens. Rather, make clear to them that dating is for people

who are old enough to be looking seriously for someone to marry.

Children are inexperienced in evaluating character, as they should readily acknowledge. An Indian girl once explained to a marriage counselor: "Our parents are older and wiser, and they aren't as easily deceived as we would be.... It's so important that the man I marry should be the right one. I could so easily make a mistake if I had to find him for myself." Youths can certainly benefit from the help of older ones!

Young people often rate prospective marriage mates according to standards that have little to do with whether they will make good husbands or wives. Boys may be charmed by a pretty face and an attractive figure—but what about later? Bodies and faces change, and later the boy will no doubt want the qualities of a mature woman, including intelligence and ability to shoulder responsibilities. Girls often give priority to a boy's being handsome, a smart dresser, and quick-witted rather than to the more important qualities of his being kind and having love for God and fellow humans.

So, what can you do? Why not call to the attention of your children people whom they know and who have good marriages. You might point out that some of these people chose, not necessarily the prettiest or the most handsome person in town, but someone who had fine qualities and who also had the same tastes, interests, and goals that they did.

Why not discuss these matters with your children? When Ann was 13, her mother asked what

qualities she wanted in a husband. They discussed this, and she made a list of qualities that she would hold out for. This was not an unrealistic list. It included that he should be someone she could look up to, and his tastes and interests should parallel hers. Now a happy grandmother, Ann still recommends that others follow this example.

For a Christian, the Biblical command to marry "only in the Lord" is a vital consideration. (1 Corinthians 7:39) A person who is "in the Lord" is one who is a dedicated, baptized Christian and who is devoted to sharing in the same activity that Jesus performed. Those who ignore this command to marry only in the Lord often experience tragic consequences. So be sure to show your youngsters the importance of considering as a prospective mate only someone who follows the same moral and spiritual principles that they do and who thus will be able to help them pass these on to any children they might have.

Prepare Them to Handle Problems

When you have determined that your children are old enough to date, impress on them



Attractive physical features can be impressive, but fine inner qualities are more important

the wisdom of getting acquainted with their companion in public places, sharing in activities, such as going to restaurants, museums, zoos, or art galleries, that allow them to talk and get to know each other without being isolated from other people. Help them to understand why this is so much wiser than spending time in the privacy of a parked car or in any other place where no one else is around. It is important, too, to teach them that when they come home from a date, it is proper to say good-night at the door and not let the person inside unless, of course, you are up and present.

Warn your children of what could happen. A news report, for instance, tells of a student who invited her date to her room after dinner



to dance and talk. Even though he made suggestive advances, she didn't insist that he leave. Rather, when she protested, he would apologize for his actions, but then he would try again to seduce her. The report says: "He finally forced the issue near dawn" by raping her. How tragic!

So see to it that your children know how to act decisively if anyone should even suggest immoral acts. They should flee the situation the way young Joseph fled Potiphar's insistent wife. (Genesis 39:7-12) They should know that the time-worn plea, "If you love me you will," is so often the line of a deceiver. Anyone who uses it probably does so regularly, then abandons his victim and moves on to a new conquest. Your son or daughter should know that a firm, positive *no* is the best answer to an immoral suggestion.

Be sure to teach your daughter to avoid situations in which she might be raped. Emphasize the need really to know well any young man that she may date and for you, her parent, to be well acquainted with such a person too. If your children no longer live in an area near you, then make sure that they ask a Christian overseer regarding their potential mate. Remember, there are deceitful ones who claim to be Christians and who slip into the congregation, even as there were in the first century.—2 Peter 2:13-15, 17, 18.

Getting acquainted in public places is wiser than spending time in isolated privacy

Whom Will You Marry?

The book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* offers excellent suggestions on how young people can get acquainted with someone they might be interested in marrying.* It shows the need of knowing that person's strong points as well as his weak points, what he or she is really like. How can you do that?

First, you can observe the person. How does he behave? How does he treat other people? How does she talk to her parents or other family members? These things are important because they indicate how you eventually may be treated.

Through casual conversation, you can find out whether his or her interests and goals are similar to yours. You might also find out what other people think about this person.

You will want to learn what kind of person this is, about his or her thoughts, ideas, and inner self. How does he act under pressure? Who are her friends? What is the family like, and how do they treat one another?

Working together can give you a better insight into the person's qualities. Allow time for unpleasant habits to surface. Then, as this excellent book says of young people who have followed such sound advice: "With eyes wide open, they can enter marriage confident of being able to work out disagreements that will arise. Successful courtship has prepared them for a successful and happy marriage."—Chapters 29-32.

* This book is published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., the publishers of this magazine.

In addition, you need to teach your sons that real men do not knowingly hurt other people. They shield and protect them. Real men are masters of, not slaves to, their im-

pulses. They should properly treat ones of the opposite sex as they would their own mothers or sisters, with honor and respect.—1 Timothy 5:1, 2.

Never let your children forget the basic Biblical principle: "Bad company ruins good morals." (1 Corinthians 15:33, *Revised Standard Version*) Thus, your children should realize the need to stay out of the company of anyone who does not live a morally clean life. From their infancy, you should make it clear to them that while others may not see what they are doing, God always does, and he will render to each one of us according to our activity.—Romans 2:6.

Living Morally in an Immoral World

Although worldly authorities have lamented that they "know very little about how to discourage unmarried teenagers from initiating intercourse," Christian parents know that it can be done. By inculcating love for God and genuine respect for his laws in their young ones, parents equip their offspring to resist the temptations of this immoral world and to live upright, moral lives. A large society of millions of Jehovah's Witnesses are remarkable in their adherence to the high moral standards of God's Word. Even the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* says that this group's "conjugal and sexual morality is quite rigid."—Volume 7, page 864.

Young ones among Jehovah's Witnesses who live moral lives know they are wanted and appreciated not just by their parents but by their fellow Christians worldwide. They feel good about themselves, have parts in congregation meetings, develop teaching skills, and participate in Bible education. They demonstrate godly morals, enjoy positive feelings of self-worth, and have the hope of a bright future in God's righteous new world.—1 John 2:17; Revelation 21:3, 4.

Limestone

Commonplace but Precious

By Awake! correspondent in Belgium

PRECIOUS STONES! The term conjures up visions of a multicolored blaze: diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, limestone. *Limestone?* Yes, lowly limestone is a precious stone of sorts.

In Belgium, as in most places, you find limestone almost everywhere. It is used in the construction of simple homes as well as stunning monuments. At the same time, you find it underfoot as gravel. Just what is this material that is found in so many places?

Limestone is a calcareous rock that contains more than 50 percent calcium carbonate. It formed long ago as a result of various processes, which produced different kinds of limestone. Marine animals such as clams, snails, and corals draw calcium carbonate from the water and use it to make their shells and bones. The skeletal remains are left behind when the animals die. Thus, *The World Book Encyclopedia* observes: "Most of the limestone layers in all parts of the earth were once shell or coral sand and mud."

Limestone is also formed when calcium carbonate is forced out of solution by evaporation of the water in which it is dissolved. Some

precipitated directly from water, accumulating around certain springs as well as in lakes and oceans. Upheavals in the earth's crust have caused portions of land formerly underwater to rise above the surface of the water. (Compare Psalm 104:8.) Limestone is thus plentiful. According to one estimate, it makes up 20 percent of all sedimentary rocks. But limestone is also eminently useful.

Chalk, which is composed of microscopic skeletons of tiny marine life, is limestone. But so is marble. Marble is formed when lime-



stone deposits are subjected to heat and pressure over long periods of time. Many famous caverns, such as Carlsbad Caverns in the United States, have beautiful limestone stalactites and stalagmites. These are formed by the dripping of water that contains calcium carbonate.

The Challenge of Getting It

Limestone, however, is not easily obtained. Open excavations, or quarries, are created by removing the earth that covers the limestone deposit. Laboriously, and with incredible perseverance, quarry workers of earlier times dug narrow trenches in order to lift up strips of stone, setting aside the largest blocks. Then came the difficult job of breaking up these blocks with sledgehammers.

Nowadays, machines accomplish these grueling tasks. Even though work in a quarry is dangerous, the need for the stone is so great that man has had to learn to deal with the risks of mining it. Good-quality limestone is often extracted by use of low-energy explosives. Better still, it may be cut out with saws.

Building With Limestone

Limestone is ideal for some construction purposes. For one thing, it provides good insulation for a building. A 12-inch-thick limestone wall keeps the temperature of the interior steady even when the outside temperature varies as much as 35 degrees Fahrenheit. The mass of the stone wall causes its inside face to remain at average room temperature.

Limestone is also good for soundproofing. In addition, when limestone is correctly handled, it can even make itself waterproof. The carbon dioxide in rainwater reacts with the stone and progressively forms a waterproof protective layer on the surface.

Furthermore, limestone is beautiful. The famous Arc de Triomphe in Paris is but one example of a famous limestone structure.

Also noteworthy are the great pyramids of Egypt, constructed of limestone blocks weighing as much as 16 tons! Marble is a form of limestone that can be polished. Its enduring luster and beauty made marble the choice of such sculptors as Michelangelo.

Limestone and Lime

Of course, not all limestone is put to such an outstanding use. Much of it is fed into crushing mills, the first step in processing it into a variety of important products. Since Bible times, for example, man has known how to produce lime (calcium oxide) by the calcination of limestone. Back then, this was done by burning it in conical or cylindrical limekilns. Lime served as the key ingredient in mortar and was used in ancient times in plastering walls and in whitewashing walls and graves.—Deuteronomy 27:4; Ezekiel 13:10; Matthew 23:27; Acts 23:3.

Lime still has many important uses. In some countries the water is drinkable because lime is used to purify it. Limewater, which contains calcium carbonate or calcium sulfate in solution, is a protection against diarrhea. Lime is also used to neutralize the acidity of soil. It increases the water and air permeability of soil, thus helping in the production of nutritious foods. And lime is even used in the manufacture of sugar.

Really, the list of uses of limestone and its products is extensive. Admittedly, though, obtaining limestone creates problems. Open-cut quarries are often abandoned and become real eyesores. Villages around the quarries may be covered with the characteristic white dust, and people nearby are annoyed by the noise and vibrations of blasting.

Nevertheless, when you consider all its uses, limestone is really quite a precious stone. True, it is not a diamond. But then, what building or monument was ever constructed with diamonds?

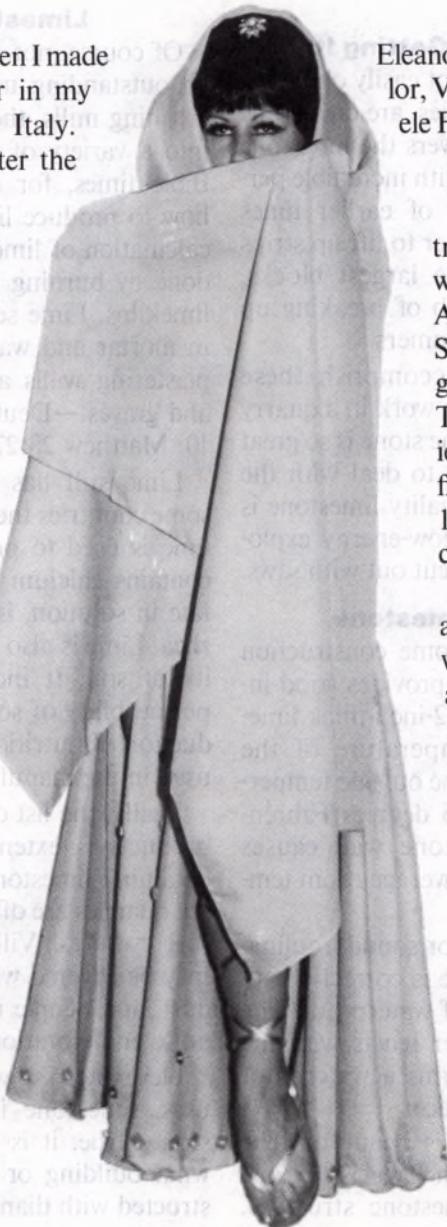
My Quest for Stardom as a Dancer

I HAD just turned 12 when I made my debut as a dancer in my hometown of Rome, Italy. That was in 1945, right after the second world war.

Just imagine how it was for a child who had seen and felt the effects of that frightening slaughter to get up on the dance floor and do just what she liked doing most—dance! I was thrilled!

From dancing in chorus lines, I moved eventually to becoming a solo dancer. I specialized in Afro-Cuban, Oriental, and Hawaiian styles, but I also did various rumbas, chachas, tangos, boogie-woogies, and other dances in vogue at the time.

Dancing opened the doors to fascinating new worlds for me. In the 1950's, for example, I appeared in well-known films, including *War and Peace* and *Quo Vadis*. It was a thrill to work with celebrities such as Elizabeth Taylor, May Britt,



Eleanora Rossi Drago, Robert Taylor, Valentina Cortese, and Gabriele Ferzetti.

Achieving "Success"

In my quest for success, I traveled from one end of the world to the other, visiting Aden, Yemen; Cape Town, South Africa; London, England; Bangkok, Thailand; Tehran, Iran; and various cities in Australia. Success had finally come. While I was yet 19, I was enjoying the so-called beautiful world.

The exhausting training and the harsh treatment I went through to keep in form and remain physically attractive were very difficult. However, when I thought of the success that I had already achieved and my goal of becoming even more famous, I readily accepted such rigors.

In the circles in which I traveled, wealthy and respected people rubbed shoulders with thieves, drug pushers, and mafiosi. It was an unimaginably immoral world, a world saturated with

drugs, alcohol, immorality, and violence. But that was of little concern to me at the time. My life centered on dancing and a luxurious lifestyle of expensive cars, jewelry, clothes, and famous hotels.

Although I made plenty of money, most of it ended up in the pockets of my managers. To maintain the standard of living I had become accustomed to, I found a daytime job as a cashier. And sad to say, I stooped to violating my principles and engaged in immoral activity.

My Return Home

In 1965, after enjoying considerable professional success abroad, I decided to return to Italy to devote myself to becoming a truly great dancer of our time. I thought my experience and reputation abroad would open doors for me at home. Instead, I experienced stinging disillusionment. The road to success seemed suddenly blocked.

In time, I began performing in squalid nightclubs and discos. I felt alone, trapped in a corrupt environment and forced to give in to all sorts of threats and violence. I had two abortions and almost died. What a price to pay for my foolish quest for success! When I had reached rock bottom, I found something that has made my life a real success.

A Momentous Day in My Life

It was a summer afternoon in 1980, and I was on my way to the swimming pool near my apartment in the province of Alessandria. There I met a friend, who made a strange request. "Will you accompany me to a Bible study that I am having with one of Jehovah's Witnesses?" she asked.

"Jehovah? And who is Jehovah?" I wanted to know.

"Jehovah is God's name," she answered.

An animated conversation followed that made me forget all about swimming. I drove my friend to visit the Witness lady, and I asked if I could join the Bible study. I imagined I would find a mysterious atmosphere, perhaps some guru or holy person performing strange and macabre rites in suffused light. Instead, I found myself in a normal house before an ordinary woman who very courteously invited us in. The study was in the third chapter of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, entitled "Who Is God?"

Learning that God has a personal name and that the name of God is "Jehovah" was an extraordinary revelation to me. (Psalm 83: 18) I thought to myself, 'If the churches have hidden even the name of God, who knows what other truths they may have hidden?' I asked the Witness how much her lessons cost and was very surprised to learn that they were free. In the world I lived in, nobody did anything for nothing. I was encouraged to begin a study of the Bible.

Making Changes

I had little free time because of my work schedule—I was still fulfilling dance engagements in various cities. Yet, I couldn't wait

I appeared in well-known films, including *War and Peace* and *Quo Vadis*

for this lady to come and visit me so that I could learn more about the true God, Jehovah. Besides learning that God has a name, I discovered that Jesus and God are not the same person. They are not part of a Trinity. I also discovered how wrong I was to think that God was dead! Instead, I now began to

become acquainted with a real Person, a God who is alive and who is accomplishing things!

I finally found the will to live! How grateful I am to Jehovah! I began to attend all the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. There I gained a better understanding of the marvelous qualities of this loving and merciful God. This was very comforting to me, considering the kind of life I had led. Seeing the calm serenity on the faces of those at the meetings in the Kingdom Hall, I realized I had found a truly beautiful world, and I was determined never to leave it.—Psalm 133:1.

However, I began to realize that if I wanted to live in that world, I would have to make some big changes in my life. After attending a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses and hearing Bible principles clearly explained, I firmly decided I would modify my life. I quit dancing, which until then had been my great joy in life. I left the man I had been living with for the previous six years and completely severed all links with my past life and the corrupt show-business environment. I also destroyed addresses and mementos of impresarios and so-called friends.

A New Life

At this point, I was out of work and homeless, yet I was learning to put my full trust in Jehovah. Since I was in financial need, I sold my valuable things—car, fur coats, jewelry—

the things I thought symbolized real success in life. For secular work, I began scrubbing the stairs of apartment blocks and doing cleaning for families. I have discovered that real success in life is measured, not by possessions or position, but only by whether one has the blessing of Jehovah.

On April 23, 1983, I was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. There were no photographers surrounding me that day, only fellow Witnesses who were happy to welcome a new praiser of Jehovah to their midst. Soon afterward I left for Australia to help my brother learn the marvelous things I had learned. Even though he and his children did not share my enthusiasm for Bible truth, my stay in Australia turned out to be very fruitful.

I was soon able to enter the full-time ministry as a pioneer and found many Italians living in Australia who showed an interest in the Bible. In time, I was conducting many progressive Bible studies. Then, in 1985, I moved back to Italy. At first I had difficulty getting settled in, but now I have a small apartment and live on a pension, which allows me to serve as a full-time minister and attend all congregation meetings.

For many years I desired success in dancing more than anything else. I thought that glory and fame were everything. I tried to imitate worldly idols. How different everything is now! Of course, dancing is something wonderful, but now I have discovered that real success in life comes in helping others learn about the marvelous promises of Jehovah God, not in living for personal glory.

I confidently await the fulfillment of the marvelous promise: "Hope in Jehovah and keep his way, and he will exalt you to take possession of the earth. When the wicked ones are cut off, you will see it." (Psalm 37:34; 2 Peter 3:13)—*As told by Edvige Sordelli.*

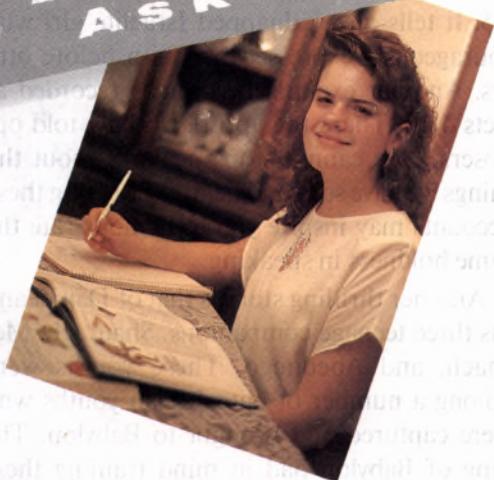
In Our Next Issue

Women—Deserving of Respect

Why Is Golf So Popular?

Death Metal —What's the Message?

**Young
People
Ask . . .**



How Can I Have Courage to Be Different?

"Sometimes peer pressure makes me do what I feel is wrong, but since it is too uncool not to do it, I just say yes."—John.

PEER pressure invades every aspect of our lives." So says writer Lesley Jane Nonkin. Peers try to dictate how you dress. They set the rules on how you walk, talk, and comb your hair. Individuality is not tolerated. Conform—or suffer rejection!

Christian youths, however, are not slaves to conformity. Following the rule Jesus set at John 15:19, they are "no part of the world" of ungodly people.* Being in the world but no part of it is challenging, though. It's like rowing a boat on a turbulent sea. You are in the water and surrounded by water, but to stay alive you try to keep as much of it as possible out of your boat! Similarly, youths among Jehovah's Witnesses strive to keep the world's ungodliness from seeping into their lives.

This is not always easy, however. Consider a young Witness in Japan named Eiichiro. Pressure to conform is very strong in that land, among youths as well as adults. Eiichiro recalls: "In school I could not conscientiously participate in ceremonies involving national symbols and songs. Further, I could not learn the martial arts, as these were opposed to Bible principles." (See Exodus 20:4, 5 and Luke 4:8; Isaiah 2:4 and Luke 10:27.) This made Eiichiro conspicuous—perhaps embarrassingly so—among his peers.

Witness youths the world over face similar situations. "Holidays are the hardest," says one Christian youth. "All the kids ask, 'Why aren't you celebrating?'" For one teenage girl the toughest issue is "whether to go out with guys." Yet another Christian teenager complains of the pressures to socialize. He says: "People ask you all the time, 'Aren't you going to the party?'" Other Witness youths have been ridiculed for refusing to cut classes or cheat on tests. It is easy to see, then, that being different takes a great deal of courage, and not all youths feel they have it.

One youth wrote: "I'm living two lives—one at school and one at home. At school I hang around worldly kids. But these kids swear almost every time they open their mouths, and I'm turning out just like them. What should I

* See the article "Why Do I Have to Be Different?" appearing in our June 8, 1992, issue.

do?" The answer is clear: Find the courage to be different! But how?

The Source of True Courage

Courage is the mental or moral strength to withstand danger, fear, or difficulty. Not all possess it, yet it can be obtained. "God gave us not a spirit of cowardice," explains the apostle Paul, "but that of power and of love and of soundness of mind." (2 Timothy 1:7) Yes, God can supply you the strength needed to stand up to your peers.—Philippians 4:13.

But how do you get this power? One way is by simply asking for it. "Ask and you will receive," promised Jesus at John 16:24. Especially when you are faced with the temptation to compromise should a prayer be on your lips. "I pray to Jehovah to gain control of my mind and heart," says one Christian youth.

Courageous Youths in Early Times

Reading and meditating on Bible accounts that tell about courageous servants of God is

another way to help you to develop fearlessness. For example, are you shy about letting others know that you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses? Then study the account at 2 Kings 5:1-5. It tells of a kidnapped Israelite girl who courageously expressed her faith before others. Another exciting account is recorded at Acts 4:20. There the apostles boldly told opposers: "We cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard." Studying these accounts may inspire you to demonstrate the same boldness in speaking.

Another thrilling story is that of Daniel and his three teenage companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These youths were among a number of elite Jewish youths who were captured and brought to Babylon. The king of Babylon had in mind training these youths for responsible governmental positions. To help assimilate them into the Babylonian way of life, the youths were stripped of their Jewish names and taught the language and



**When
opportunities
to explain
your faith
arise, do you
speak out?**

ways of the Babylonians. Their captors further tried to wean them away from Jewish practice by feeding them "the delicacies of the king." —Daniel 1:7, 8.

To the Babylonian mind, such foods were a gourmet's delight. To God-fearing Jews, Babylonian fare was religiously repugnant. Yet, most of the captive youths apparently succumbed to the temptation—all except Daniel and his companions. Imagine the pressure they may have received from their Jewish peers! How did these youths react to such pressures? Read for yourself the faith-strengthening account in Daniel chapter 1. Perhaps it will help you to have the courage to refuse should someone ever offer you illegal drugs or alcohol!

"Be Brave"

It's not enough simply to read about courage. To develop the courage that will help you stand up to peer pressure, you must daily follow the advice Paul gave men and women in the Corinthian congregation: "Stay firm in the faith; be brave and be strong."—1 Corinthians 16:13, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

For example, when you are out of the sight of your parents and members of the Christian congregation, do you change your dress or hairstyle so as to fit in with worldly youths? Or do you uncompromisingly adhere to Christian standards? "I refuse to follow every style that comes out," says one brave Christian girl.

Another question: Are you brave enough to let your classmates know that you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses? If your school allows you to do so, do you carry your Bible and Bible literature with you? If issues involving evolution, patriotic ceremonies, or blood transfusion come up in class, do you "make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you"? (1 Peter 3:15) Or do you sit at your desk in anxious silence? Said Jesus Christ: 'Whoever becomes ashamed of me and

my words, I will also be ashamed of him.' —Mark 8:38.

Far from being ashamed, a courageous Christian *boasts* about his Bible-based hope! (Compare Hebrews 3:6.) Eiichiro, the Japanese youth quoted earlier, learned to do that. He was often questioned as to why he didn't participate in patriotic ceremonies or martial arts. Was he disadvantaged for being different? "No," he says, "I came to view all of this as a challenge. You see, I had to prepare answers to defend my actions and had to rely on Jehovah's help. So in the long run, the disadvantages became advantages."

Learn to speak up also when you are faced with temptation. Proverbs 1:10-15 says: "My son, if sinners try to seduce you, do not consent. If they keep saying: 'Do go with us . . .' my son, do not go in the way with them. Hold back your foot from their roadway." Of course, this does not necessarily mean preaching a sermon. In her book *How to Say No and Keep Your Friends*, counselor Sharon Scott notes that at times you might simply want to leave, decline the invitation—or simply ignore it. But at times, you may have little choice but to speak up and let others know *why* you cannot join in with them. Counselor Scott recommends that you be firm: "Try not to look passive . . . Maintain eye contact. . . . Speak in a firm and steady voice."

You may still be teased or mocked for your stand. Yet, many will begrudgingly admire you. Mike, another teenager, says: "A lot of the guys know I'm a Witness, and they give me respect. If they're going to discuss something bad, they will say, 'Mike, we're getting ready to talk, so if you want to leave, leave.'" Not all youths will accord you such respect. But God will certainly be pleased by your course. (1 Peter 4:3-6) One Christian youth thus says: "Don't worry about what other kids think about you!" *God's* opinion is what counts. And he will bless you for having the courage to be different.

Kerala's "Flying" Snake Boats

By Awake! correspondent in India



GOOL heavens! What otherworldly creatures! What are they?" exclaimed Neville, my Australian friend, as he spotted some black objects speeding toward us. They came on fast, seemingly beating their wings and flying, barely touching the surface of the water.

My friend could not stay in his seat. Perched atop a wooden gallery, he craned his neck for a better view. He was watching a snake-boat race for the first time.

The boats were still nearly a mile away, but we could hear rhythmic drumming and shrill whistling. Then, as these swift vessels with their 100-man crews drew closer to the finish line, the excitement of the crowds grew to a frenzy. Cheering their favorite boat teams, fans of all ages jumped and clapped wildly.

Colorfully draped women madly waved their silk handkerchiefs. This was just the beginning of the annual Nehru Trophy boat race at Alleppey in the state of Kerala, south India.

Snake boats are a unique feature of the water festivals held in the rivers and back waters of the low-lying central Travancore area. 'But exactly what are snake boats,' you may wonder, 'and how did the whole affair come about?'

A Bit of Background

Snake boats were originally designed for use in battles. At one time the modern state of Kerala was ruled by a number of local rajas, or kings, each with his own small territory. Wars were frequent and occurred at the slightest provocation. Five snake boats could easily carry the entire naval power of a king.

Eventually, a strong ruler took power and unified the area, so the boats became just showpieces. They are decked out on festive occasions and used to welcome visiting political and religious dignitaries. Boat races are always held on such occasions. In 1952, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India, visited Alleppey and watched a boat race. Unmindful of his age and security precautions, he was caught up in the excitement and jumped aboard the victory boat, clapping and singing with the rest. His later gift of a silver snake-boat trophy gave birth to the Nehru Trophy race my friend and I were watching.

Relics of a Bygone Culture

The snake boats are long, slim, sleek, and streamlined wooden canoes. They vary in length from 80 to 100 feet, and at their widest point, they are only about 5 feet across. The stern rises in some cases 20 feet above water level and is shaped like a cobra's hood, hence the name snake boat. The bow, however, is pointed like the beak of a bird.

These rare relics of a culture centuries old are seldom constructed nowadays. Very few skilled artisans—descendants of ancient carpenter families—dare attempt this stupendous task, involving tons of costly timber and months of hard work. When a boat is finished, it is dried in the sun and carefully treated with grease and oil mixed with egg whites to make it "fly" faster.

Training and drilling a team to man such a boat for racing is no easy task either. About a hundred oarsmen with short oars sit in two rows along the length of the vessel. At the stern of the boat stand two or three others with longer oars to steer the craft. To keep up the rowing momentum, a man beats time with a wooden pestle on a sounding board. At least half a dozen others ride along to cheer the oarsmen, clapping in unison with whistles and shouts.

As the race proceeds and excitement mounts, the beating of time increases, and the oars are plied as a single harmonious unit. The rhythmic up-and-down movement of 50 oars on each side of the boat gives the appearance of a vessel flying on its wings. It was this that amazed my friend and caused him to stare in wonder as the boats seemed barely to skim the water.

Racing demands tremendous concentration and a well-coordinated group effort. Just a moment's distraction on the part of a single oarsman is enough to throw the whole team into confusion. So at times singers on board rival boats try to break the concentration with strange sounds and sights. Often tricks are played to gain advantage over the others.

During one race a team captain displayed a monkey on the elevated tip of his boat. As the creature sat gibbering and grinning, the rival captain quickly realized what was happening. Not to be outdone, he cheered loudly, flung off his clothes and stood stark naked at the tip of his boat. This had the desired effect. While the other team looked his way, his own men kept their steady speed and won the race. For him, the ignominy of losing the race would have been greater than his shame at being naked.

It is a sign of prestige for a village to own a snake boat and an even greater honor to win a race. At race time the entire populace turns out to cheer its team. Undaunted by bad weather, fans will brave torrential monsoon rains and mosquitoes, standing knee-deep in muddy water to watch the races. Supporters of rival teams often clash, blows are exchanged, and scores kept for next year's meet.

Kings no longer compete for control of territory and rulership as their ancestors once did. But the competitive spirit continues on in Kerala's cherished sport of snake-boat racing.

The Versatile Oil Palm

By Awake! correspondent in Nigeria

THE beat of the *ekwe* tom-tom grew in volume. This signal transformed the easy, nonchalant pace of the village into the hustle and bustle of a people in a tremendous hurry. The year was 1937, and the oil-palm harvest had begun in Igboland, eastern Nigeria.

Having received the report that ripe fruit had started falling in the wild palm groves, the village chief two days earlier had told the people to begin preparing for the harvest. Workers were organized, machetes sharpened, and climbing harnesses repaired. These harnesses—simple wooden hoops padded with ropes—would support the weight of the climbers as they moved with leaping motions up the tree trunks.

The Oil-Palm Harvest

Matthew, 12 years old, was eager to get started. He had been practicing with the harness. In previous years he had helped the women gather the cut branches, but now his father would permit him to climb the shorter trees. He

would be paid for each bunch of fruit he cut down. However, his real interest was the thrill of being a climber, something all young boys in the village anticipated with joy.

At the sound of the tom-tom, Matthew raced out of the village with his father and the other climbers. Not only was this a job of reaping fruit but it was a contest between experienced climbers. Clambering up trunks more than 30 feet tall and then up into the crowns of large, feathery fronds that added another 15 feet to the tree's height, they would get to show off their climbing skills.

Everything From Soap to Wine

'Why,' you may wonder, 'do palm trees generate all this excitement?' Because of the great value of this versatile plant to the people. The next morning the olive-sized palm fruit would be separated from the bunch stalks. These potassium-rich stalks would then be processed to make soap. While the bulk of the fruit would be sold for export, the rest would be processed right there in the village.

Peter Buckley/Photo Researchers



Harvesting one of the trees

Matthew had often seen his mother boil the fruit to soften the fibrous outer pulp covering the hard nuts. This enabled her to squeeze the oil from the soft fibers with her hands. After this she cracked the nuts with stones so as to get at the kernels. From these she extracted the palm-kernel oil. She used the oil in cooking, as an ointment, and as fuel for her lamps. And the hard shells became fuel for the fire.

Matthew could also have pointed out a handy use for the palm leaves—roof thatching. He could run his fingers along the mat on which he lay and demonstrate that it too was made from palm leaves. Fibers from the leaf stalks could be twisted into ropes and woven into baskets or fish traps. What is more, palm-leaf fences protected the vegetable gardens from animals. Yam vines grew on simple frames made of palm-leaf stalks. And brooms for sweeping the home were made from the ribs of palm leaves.

No wonder the elders of the village strictly controlled the cutting of palm fronds! Wanton cutting of them would destroy the productivity of the trees and even threaten their life. That was why the weaverbirds were so unwelcome. They stripped the palm leaves for material to weave their nests, causing many trees to die.

Yet, even fallen palm trees served their purpose. Mushrooms grew from the rotting tree trunks. The trunks also harbored the large larvae of beetles—a tasty and nutritious meal when fried in palm oil. Sap drained from the male flower stalk was capable of yielding gallons of palm wine. When the sap was freshly tapped from fallen trees, or from living ones, it made a refreshing drink. Frequently, it was used to produce vinegar as well as *kai-kai* (*ogogoro*), a strong alcoholic drink that tastes like gin.

Modern Improvements

Many changes have taken place since 1937. People who paid for their schooling with earnings from the palm-oil trade have moved into larger towns. And the once joyous palm harvest is a thing of the past.

Extensive farms now use scientific methods to cultivate improved varieties of the palm tree. These new breeds are more resistant to disease, mature earlier, are higher yielding, and produce fruit almost at ground level. This makes reaping much easier. Special long knives and hooks are used for reaping the taller trees so that little or no climbing is necessary. However, the newer methods, though efficient, just do not have the charm or excitement of the old harvest!

Processing methods have also improved. In the large processing plants, heavy machinery easily cracks the nuts. The kernel refuse is then made into palm-kernel cake—an important ingredient in livestock feed. The different grades of the oils are used in making edibles (such as margarine, confectionery, and ice cream) and nonedibles (such as detergents, candles, perfume, cosmetics, and even industrial lubricants). Furthermore, the acetic acid from the aged palm wine has found a place in the rubber industry as a coagulant.

Matthew has welcomed all these developments that have taken place since he was a young boy decades ago in Igboland. In the meantime, he has come to know yet something else about the palm tree. Studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, he has learned that God long ago said: "Let the earth cause grass to shoot forth, vegetation bearing seed, fruit trees yielding fruit according to their kinds." (Genesis 1:11) Knowing how the palm tree got its start, Matthew can now do more than admire and appreciate this attractive tree. He can praise Jehovah God, the Creator of the versatile oil palm.

What's So Special About Linen?

By Awake! correspondent in Ireland

WOULD you pay \$5,000 for a shirt? In the fourth century C.E., that was the price of a top-quality linen shirt in parts of the Roman Empire. The money represented 25 weeks' wages for the highest paid linen weaver of the day.

Today, people still highly value all kinds of luxury linen goods. And if you have ever slept between crisp, cool linen sheets in a hot climate, you know that there is something special about linen. What makes it so special?

Early Beginnings

"Linen has been around for a long time, at least from the days of the ancient Egyptians," said Roy, the divisional director of the Ulster Weaving Company. "They saw it as something sacred because it grew on the banks of the Nile River, and they even thought that their gods wore linen."

"There must have been a thriving linen industry around the Nile," Roy continued. "Linen clothed both the living and the dead, since Egyptians used it when they prepared a body for burial." And just imagine the expense involved! A weaver produced only about three yards of linen a week, yet as much as a thousand yards were used when burying a king!

Linen's durability is shown by the fact that fragments have survived for thousands of years in the tombs of the Pharaohs. The cloth was also a mark of position and prestige, as indicated when Pharaoh of Egypt wanted to

honor Joseph. The Bible says that he "clothed him with garments of fine linen." (Genesis 41:42) Interestingly, Jesus' corpse was wrapped in clean, fine linen by Joseph, a rich man of Arimathea.—Matthew 27:57-59.

Among the Israelites who left Egypt with Moses were those skilled in making linen. When they were in the wilderness, these craftsmen produced "fine twisted linen" for use in the construction of the tabernacle.—Exodus 26:1, 31, 36; 35:35.

Since the fabric is cool and comfortable, the people in Israel must have appreciated linen clothes. Moreover, they were easy to wash and keep clean, a real boon when you think of the laws in Israel that required the washing of garments for cleanliness and hygiene. (Leviticus 11:25, 40; 13:34; 15:5-13; 16:4, 32) Fittingly, in the Bible, "clean, fine linen . . . stands for the righteous acts of the holy ones."—Revelation 19:8.

"When linen is washed," said Roy, "it loses a microscopic layer and so renews its smooth, clean surface every time. Because it is actually stronger when it is wet, linen survives repeated washings well." How, then, do we get this remarkable fabric?

Freeing the Fibers

Very early in history, humans learned to make linen cloth from the fibers of the flax plant. It is not easy to extract the fibers that eventually produce beautiful, luxurious linen. Consider briefly the work involved, as it was

done in times past in Ireland, for centuries a center of linen making.

In April or May, the flax seeds were planted by hand. For some 16 weeks, the plants were carefully tended as they grew into tall slender plants, topped with delicate blue flowers. The plants were ready for harvesting by the end of August, when the flax turned a brownish color. The plants were then uprooted by hand. Once the leaves and seeds were removed (linseed oil is made from the seeds), the hard work of freeing the fibers began.

To remove the fibers embedded in the plant stem, the stems were soaked in pools of stagnant water for about two weeks to let the woody bark of the stem rot. According to one authority, "this stage [called retting] is one of the most particular and decidedly the most disagreeable to be encountered in the management of flax." Standing waist-deep in stinking flax pools, carefully hauling out the decomposing plants, and trying hard not to break the long stems was indeed disagreeable work!



Flax plants after drying

The foul-smelling flax was spread out on grass to dry in the sun for another two weeks. Once the flax was dry and brittle, the stems were broken and beaten to get at the fibers. This process was called scutching. One writer claims that in his experience "nothing could have been more laborious in human toil than the old mode of scutching by hand."

Making Linen

When the mass of silky fibers was extracted from the stalks, they were combed to separate the entangled filaments. The shorter ones were used to make coarse products, such as twine, fishnets, tarpaulins, and sails. The longer fibers were spun into exceptionally fine yarns, much finer than could be spun from wool or cotton, which have much shorter fibers.

A loom was used to weave the yarn into linen cloth. However, further steps were required to transform the plain, simple material coming off the loom into beautiful white linen with a smooth satin sheen. For example, the cloth must be beaten repeatedly to flatten the fibers. Afterward, the cloth needed to be bleached.

The Dutch became the recognized masters in the art of finishing and bleaching. One writer explained: "The Dutch system, as practised in Ireland, consisted of an eight or ten day alkali steep (either cows' urine or a lye of seaweed ash), then a wash followed by two or three weeks in buttermilk or bran, followed by a wash, beetling [beating with wooden mallets to produce a high gloss] and protracted grassing [exposure to sun and air]." The whole process is said to have taken seven or eight months.

Nowadays, of course, mechanization and more scientific methods take much of the human toil out of linen making. Modern methods have also made it much easier and faster

to produce not only plain-weave linens but also the more complicated weaves, such as that used in damask.

The term "damask" is derived from "Damascus," where, during the Middle Ages, weavers produced this distinctive fine patterned fabric. The complexity of damask weaving is seen in a set of doilies sent by a Belfast manufacturer to Queen Victoria of Britain in 1887. Each damask doily measured only 17 inches by 15 inches, yet each had 3,060 warp threads and 4,012 weft threads —two and a half miles of thread in each doily!

But since all the threads are the same color, how does the pattern show up? K. G. Ponting, in his book *Discovering Textile History and Design*, explains: "Most of the patterning [in damask] comes from the fact that the light reflections of the warp and weft surfaces will vary. Linen damask, almost always in white, depends entirely on this light effect."

The next time you examine a piece of linen, no doubt you will more fully appreciate the work and care that went into its production. You will be able to recognize what men and women have known for thousands of years —linen is truly something special!

So Glad to Be Alive!

"I AM so glad to be alive!" enthused Bernice, a healthy nine-year-old girl who lives in southern Germany. She has special reason to rejoice.

One day while Bernice was developing in her mother's womb, her sister became sick. She had German measles! The mother was terrified, as this contagious disease can be passed on to an unborn baby during pregnancy and can cause serious disabilities in the child.

After examining blood specimens, the doctor reacted swiftly with a strong recommendation to terminate the pregnancy.

Based on the blood analysis, he had no doubt that both the mother and the unborn child had German measles. Also, the tests indicated that there was a high probability that the baby would be born grossly deformed.

The parents, however, believed abortion to be against God's laws. As Jehovah's Witnesses, they refused to accept such a procedure. None-

theless, the doctor insisted, painting a ghastly picture of what their refusal could lead to. He pointed to the problems associated with bringing up a severely disabled child. But the parents were resolute, explaining their Biblical viewpoint on abortion. They were prepared to face whatever situation might arise and to love the child regardless of what might happen.

The doctor was deeply impressed. He admitted that he himself was not in favor of abortion, believing it to be morally wrong. But he was obliged to present the facts and the consequences very clearly.

Nine years later, Bernice, a normal and healthy child, had to visit a doctor. An analysis of her blood disclosed that she had never had German measles. Apparently, the diagnosis made before her birth had been erroneous. How good it was that the parents remained firm in their belief! No wonder Bernice can say: "I am so glad to be alive!"



Desert Survivors of the Namib

By Awake! correspondent in South Africa

KAOKOLAND and Damaraland are vast regions that overlap the northern part of Africa's Namib Desert. "Lost worlds into which few have been privileged to venture until recently," is how Clive Walker describes them in his book *Twilight of the Giants*. This is the home of the world's only true desert elephants.

There are perhaps fewer than a hundred of these giants left in these regions. Less than six inches of rain falls per year, and sometimes none falls for years. How do the elephants quench their thirst and satisfy their huge appetites?

Adapting to a Desert

Elephants were first reported in western Namib in 1895, and evidence indicates that

they have lived in the desert for generations. During a recent dry period when no rain fell for five years, elephants remained in the desert, and as far as could be established, no adult died as a direct result of the drought, although large numbers of kudu, gemsbok (oryx), and mountain zebra, as well as a few elephant calves, perished. "Elephants," concludes Mitch Reardon in his book *The Besieged Desert*, "are amongst the most adaptable creatures on earth."

Although riverbeds in Kaokoland are usually dry, water from the eastern escarpment filters through under the sand, and the elephants make use of this. They dig and maintain waterholes by excavating in the sand of the riverbed. Water seeps into these holes,

Elephants maintain waterholes by excavating in the sand of the riverbed



and when the elephants have had their fill, literally myriads of other animals, birds, and insects use the same wells and survive.

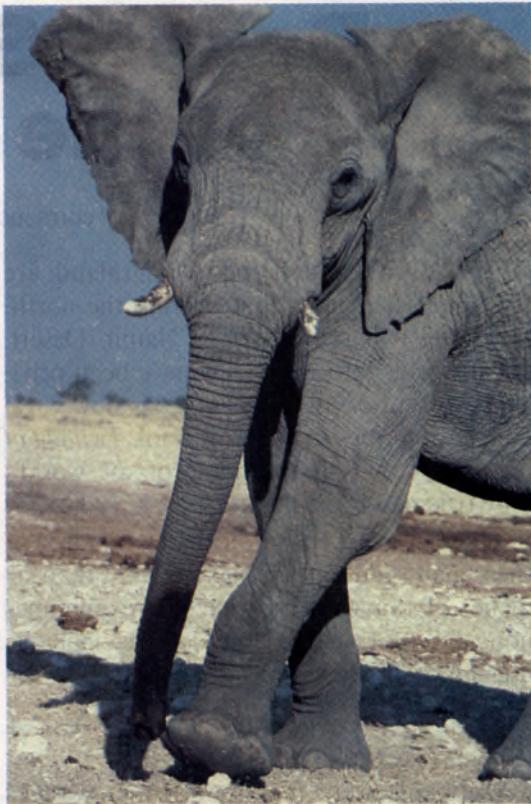
Because elephants are prolific consumers of vegetation, requiring more than 200 pounds a day, some may think they upset the ecology of the region. But notice this observation of a well-known authority, Dr. Anthony Hall-Martin, in the book *Elephants of Africa*: "Elephants in the lush tropics will demolish entire trees for no better reason than to get at a few leaves, but their desert counterparts seldom break down or push over trees. If they did, they would soon have nothing left to eat. Instead, every bit of greenery picked is eaten and we could scarcely find more than a few leaves trodden underfoot and wasted."

In actual fact the desert elephant promotes the growth of trees. One of their favorite foods is the acacia tree, and in season great quantities of the acacia seedpods are eaten. As these seeds pass through the digestive system, the hard pods are softened, then excreted and deposited in a pile of warm, nutritious dung, ready to germinate when the rains eventually fall. Thus, thanks to the elephants, acacias are effectively replaced in a never-ending ecological cycle.

To Remember Is to Survive

You have probably heard the saying, "An elephant never forgets." Let us consider how this applies to the life-style of the desert elephants. They have a highly developed sense of family life, of togetherness, and a calf will stay with its mother for up to ten years, a lengthy childhood compared to other mammals and second only to humans.

During this adolescence, the calf associates with elephants of varying ages, learning from them the secrets of how to survive in an unrelenting environment. He is shown where and how to find water, which plants to eat



Elephants roll a round stone under the foot, apparently to relax the pads of their feet

and when they come into season. And he is taught how to avoid man. It is this fund of teaching and knowledge that the young elephant must never forget when he reaches adulthood. "In times of drought," explains Reardon, "an elephant's memory and experience may be the key to survival."

The elephant way of life is based on a matriarchal society, and a key figure to the survival of the herd is no doubt the older cow. She leads her family, and the herd, in a continuous search for water and food. In perhaps 50 years of living, she acquires an accumulation of survival knowledge. By her leadership and example, this is passed on to the younger ones of the herd. Thus, the killing of

such an older cow by poachers means the loss of a reference library of food-finding facts.

Garth Owen-Smith, of the Namibia Wildlife Trust, says of these desert elephants of the Namib: "Remember . . . we're not just talking about any wild animals. These are *desert* elephants . . . The combination . . . is not found anywhere else in the world. . . . What a waste, what a loss to science and the world if they're allowed to pass from the scene." However, these giants will not easily pass from the scene of their self-chosen home. Not only are they supremely adaptable but they are also superbly equipped to survive.

Other Secrets of Survival

If you were near a herd—downwind, of course—you would be able to observe first-hand some of their survival secrets. You would notice that they gather around a shallow depression of fine-grained sand, chipping away at the ground with their forefeet, taking up the soft dust in their trunks and blowing it over themselves, until they resemble gray ghosts. Do you think it is because they like being dirty? Far from it. The coating of dust, like fine talcum powder, cools the skin and insulates it against the fierce sun.

If you remain very quiet, you will see the herd at rest after the powdering. At rest, that is, except for the large ears. Watch how they are in constant motion in a gentle fanning movement. Besides stirring a slight breeze, which is always welcome, the blood that passes through the network of protruding veins in the ears is cooled by as much as 11 degrees Fahrenheit. This cooler blood is then circulated through the huge body and back again to the ears. Do you sometimes wish you too had a built-in air conditioner?

Maybe by now your feet have become tired from crouching? Watch how that big tusked over there relieves her feet. Look how elegantly she bends her front knee, balancing the

foot on the toenails. She is resting the pad of her foot. Sometimes elephants cross their back legs in an amusing fashion, like someone leaning on a walking stick.

Another curious habit is illustrated on the opposite page. See the round stone that the elephant is rolling under her foot. It is thought that this relaxes the pads of the tired feet, in much the same way as a podiatrist might massage the sole of a patient's sore foot. You must remember that the herd may have walked many miles, and these appear to be some of the ways they have of relieving pressure on their pads.

How Long Will They Survive?

Though able to survive the natural hazards of their environment, can the desert giants also survive the encroachment of their only predator, man? It seems yes. The local tribesmen have now become involved in the conservation of their own natural resources.

According to the magazine *African Wildlife*, a conservation education campaign started by the Namibia Wildlife Trust "resulted in both the Damara and Herero tribal authorities totally banning hunting in the region." The Wildlife Trust also gained support from Himba headmen in Kaokoland, who have appointed their own tribesmen as game guards.

This positive support of the traditional leaders has led to tribal feelings of pride in their natural wildlife. "For the first time in fifteen years," reports *African Wildlife*, "the numbers of elephant and black rhinoceros in this spectacular and fascinating region [have] increased." One can but hope that this interest in their wild-animal kingdom will continue.

Then, indeed, these wanderers of the waterless wasteland will long roam the rocky ranges of their chosen home. With their natural instincts and built-in survival kits, these are the true desert survivors of the Namib.

Watching the World

AIDS Orphans

Orphanages in the province of Manicaland, Zimbabwe, are becoming overcrowded because of the great number of AIDS orphans. In this province alone, there are 'about 47,000 children under the age of 14 who were orphaned as a result of their parents dying of AIDS-related diseases,' reports *The Star* of Johannesburg, South Africa. Of these children, about 10 percent have lost both parents. The newspaper reported that according to a study conducted by the Ministry of Health, 'out of 294 households randomly selected in the province, 29.9 percent had AIDS orphans.'

Bored With Free Time

According to a study by the BAT Leisure Research Institute, some people in Germany are finding it more and more difficult to decide what to do with their spare time. The study found that many who live in prosperity and have much free time forget how to enjoy life. Many get bored or become addicted to adventure. Some become too aggressive, or even violent. This sort of person often takes unnecessary risks in his search for excitement and thrills. The researchers noted that the issue of how to use free time properly will become one of the major problems of the next decade.

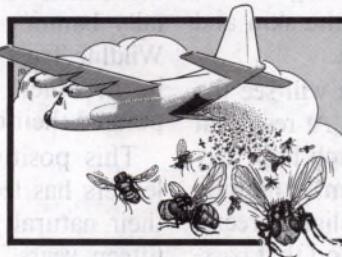
Dangerous Delay

Office workers who daily spend several hours staring at computer screens are "a danger to themselves and others when driving at night," claims Professor Paul Cook of London's Brunel University.

sity. *The Daily Telegraph* of London reports that after a ten-year investigation of night blindness, Professor Cook found that the eyes of people who viewed computer display units for long hours at a stretch took 120 milliseconds to transmit information to the brain. That is nine times longer than normal! Though this increased delay protects the brain from any overload of information displayed by computer screens, at night, in reduced light, it can retard a driver's reactions.

Victory Over Insects

For seven months, plane after plane flew over Libya, opened their cargo bays, and unleashed a powerful biological weapon: sterile male screwworm flies. It was "an emergency campaign to eradicate the New World Screwworm, a pest threatening animals and humans in Africa and beyond," says *New African* magazine. Now,



1.3 billion flies later, victory has been proclaimed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, at a cost of \$65 million—just over half of what was originally estimated. When the females mate with the released sterile males, no offspring are produced. As a result, the flies eventually die out. Surveillance is to continue until the summer of 1992.

Rent-a-Family

A service that provides fake families for elderly people who are lonely is now available in Japan. The *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper reports on an entertainment agency that dispatches actors who, for a price, play the role of family members. The actors are ranked from seventh to first class, depending on their acting ability. There is a greater demand for actresses to play the role of daughters than for actors to pose as sons. The newspaper explains that the reason for this is that the elderly want "someone to spoil them and to listen to their gripes." A three-hour visit from pseudo family members, including a three-year-old granddaughter, could cost up to 150,000 yen (\$1,200, U.S.).

School Boredom

The Toronto Star reports that in a nationwide survey of some 9,000 high school dropouts in Canada, "three out of every 10 dropouts leave school because of boredom." Good grades are no indicator that students will stay in school, as over 30 percent of those surveyed had high marks. Jim Livermore, vice president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation was not surprised. He stated: "Boredom is more of a factor today than it was 20 years ago because of television. To interest kids everything today has to be glitz, high tech and showy." Mr. Livermore feels that some of the brightest minds are not being challenged in school. He added that the "old way of teaching doesn't work any more. Rather than lecture-style teaching, we have to get students more involved in learning."

Children in Accidents

For the first time, researchers in Argentina have compiled information about accidents among children in that country. The study revealed that 41 percent of all hospitalized children in Argentina have suffered accidents in their own homes. Many have suffered accidental falls. After describing the hazardous environment found in many homes, the Buenos Aires newspaper *Clarín* referred to the typical Argentinean house as a "hunting trap for children." Another place where many of these mishaps take place is in the automobile. The newspaper added that in most cases adults bear the responsibility for these tragic, and often fatal, accidents.

Prevent Accidents With Light

In Finland, Denmark, and Sweden, all drivers are required to use daytime running lights on their cars as a measure to prevent accidents. This precaution is especially effective in lands where it is dark much of the day during the winter months. A recent study in Finland revealed that during six winters, driving with the lights on during the day reduced daytime crashes by 21 percent. Some states in the United States have adopted laws requiring the use of headlights when visibility is poor, such as just before sunset and just after sunrise, and when there is any precipitation. During 1990 there were more than 44,000 deaths and 5,000,000 injuries related to car crashes in the United States alone.

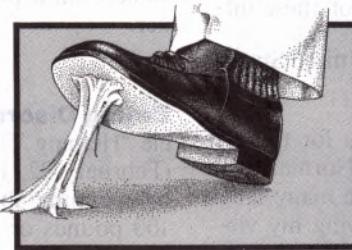
Dangerous Blood

In Japan people who have received a blood transfusion in the past will no longer be qualified to donate blood for transfusions. Why? The Japan Red Cross Society cited "a high percentage of

infection by the C-type hepatitis virus" as the reason, reports *The Daily Yomiuri*. According to the newspaper, the C-type hepatitis contagion rate from people who have had blood transfusions is 8.31 percent, about 12 times higher than from those who have never received blood. Japan thus became the first country to adopt the policy of rejecting blood as dangerous simply because it came from previously transfused people.

Singapore Tightens Gum Control

Visitors to the island republic of Singapore must now declare on their customs forms any chewing gum they have with them. While a few sticks for personal use are allowed, larger amounts are confiscated. Since the beginning of the year, the government has banned the manufacture, sale, and importation of chewing gum. Sellers face



a fine of up to \$1,200, while importers may land in jail for a year and be fined \$6,100. As yet, possession is not an offense. Gum "causes filthiness to our public facilities," said a government spokesman. Subway trains were halted a few times last year when wads of gum caused the doors to jam and prevented them from closing. Gum sales had been \$5 million a year, although gum advertising has been banned in Singapore since 1984. According to *Asiaweek*, the government has also announced plans "for legislation requiring convicted litterbugs to clean up public places."

Babylonian Haute Cuisine

The French magazine *Science Illustrée* reports that after ten years of work, a team of researchers from Yale University has deciphered what appear to be some of the world's oldest recipes. The recipes are part of a cuneiform text that was inscribed on several clay tablets discovered at the site of the ancient city of Babylon. The tablets include menus and 25 recipes for dishes that were apparently reserved for feasts and special occasions. Although the daily diet was rather simple fare, the recipes reveal that the culinary tastes of the ancient Babylonians at times included all sorts of meats and seasonings and contained such "delicacies" as lamb seasoned with garlic and onion, served with fat, curdled milk, and blood.

Germany's Street Gamblers

Police cars have recently taken to patrolling the streets of Berlin, Germany, blaring an unusual message from loudspeakers: "Do not take part in *Hüttenspiel*. You cannot win. It is not played honestly." In *Hüttenspiel*, which literally means "the little hat game" (also long known as the shell game), the player tries to guess which of three little cups conceals a die, while a nimble-fingered con artist rapidly manipulates the cups. A secret partner usually eggs the crowd on by coming forth and appearing to win, while other teammates look out for police. Police believe that such teams can make as much as DM10,000 (\$6,000, U.S.) a day. So far the law has had little success in stopping them. The newspaper *Nürnberger Nachrichten* reports that in the first half of 1991, there were 1,500 street gamblers arrested, but because of lack of hard evidence, only 25 were prosecuted for fraud.

From Our Readers

Divorce Your articles on "Divorce—The Human Cost" (February 8, 1992) prompted me to write. In 1988, I divorced after four years of marriage to my high school sweetheart. I would have tried to save my marriage had I known then what I know now. Divorce ruins you financially. And while married men prey on divorced women, single men frown on women with children. They may date you, but they will not get serious. I certainly hope this article saves at least one marriage; I couldn't save mine.

T. R., United States

Your point that there are painful consequences to divorce, even when there are legitimate grounds, was well taken. Sometimes I feel I'm swimming in a sea of emotions. The passage of time, a routine of spiritual activities, and Jehovah's tender mercies have lessened the frequency and intensity of these difficult emotions.

M. H., United States

Young People Ask Thank you for the article "Young People Ask . . . Is It Normal to Be a Virgin?" (March 22, 1992) Since many laugh at me and ridicule me for preserving my virginity, I began to have doubts in this regard. But this article opened my eyes. I have decided to preserve my physical and emotional well-being, and most important, my fine relationship with God.

A. R., Brazil

I appreciated the "Young People Ask . . ." article "Why Don't I Fit In?" (October 22, 1991) It came at a time when I was feeling really down about not fitting in with the cliques. I could relate to the youth who said, 'If you're not wearing the right tennis shoes, you don't fit in,' because I don't have the money to buy all the in clothes. Your article helped me to see that I'm not alone.

K. M. S., United States

Thank you for the article "Young People Ask . . . What if My Family Is Poor?" (January 22, 1992) Even though I'm not a youth and not truly poor, this article helped me. My husband and I have been going through some hard times. Things looked so hopeless that I felt immobilized. The information helped me to realize that my negative thinking was only making matters worse. Now I am better able to endure.

K. J., United States

Incas I just finished reading the article "A Look at the Golden Age of the Incas." (January 22, 1992) I am 15 years old, and the study of pre-Columbian civilizations of South America has always intrigued me. Your article was very interesting, objective, and different from others that I have read. This kind of material helps us to increase our knowledge of diverse subjects in a practical and entertaining manner.

D. A. S., Argentina

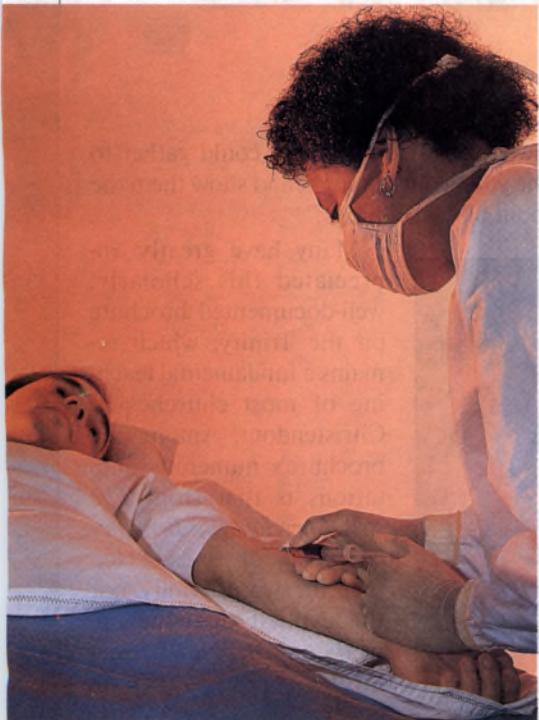
Eating Disorders Thank you for the article "Helping Those With Eating Disorders." (February 22, 1992) My best friend is always complaining about her weight. She only weighs 100 pounds or so, and I am twice her size! So it really makes me ashamed of my obesity. I have tried every diet there is but to no avail. I have had very little respect for myself because of being so big. Your article helped build in me a little more respect for myself.

P. M., United States

I have been free of the vice grip of bulimia for close to two years now. Daily check-ups by my husband, as well as constant prayer to Jehovah, were my springboard to recovery. Another thing that helped was keeping healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables in my kitchen instead of junk foods. It's amazing how sweet a peach begins to taste when you've stopped eating junk foods!

S. G., United States

AIDS Health-Care Workers Take Precautions!



"HEALTH care workers are at risk of acquiring HIV from infected patients." This warning, from the College of Medicine of South Africa, is quoted in the *South African Medical Journal*. It comes in the wake of a number of deaths of medical professionals who lost their lives because of accidental AIDS infection.

Direcives aimed at protecting health-care workers are now being taken very seriously. The following are some points from the policy statement of the college to medical personnel who, in the course of their duties, may come into contact with HIV-positive persons:

In a nonemergency situation, should a patient refuse a blood test for the AIDS virus, the health-care worker has the option to "terminate professional care . . . after full discussion with the patient." A warning is issued that in the emergency situation, all patients should be "treated as if HIV positive."

In an addendum to the document, an extensive list of precautionary steps is outlined. For example, the wearing of rubber gloves "when touching blood and body fluids, mucous membranes, or any compromised skin areas . . . , when handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids . . . , when performing procedures in which hands are likely to be contaminated with blood." Health-care workers are also advised to "wear masks and protective eye or face shields during procedures likely to generate droplets of blood or body fluids."

An entire subsection is devoted to warning health-care workers against carrying unsheathed needles or leaving used sharp objects lying around. Even the "direct passing of sharp instruments between theatre personnel" during operations should be avoided. Furthermore, it is advised that "all blood or body-fluid specimens should be placed in sturdy, leakproof containers" and that these should be dispatched only in a "waterproof plastic bag or container."

Should the health-care worker become exposed to the virus either by a contaminated sharp object causing injury or by blood coming into contact with an open lesion, immediate action is advised. Says the document: "The health care worker should be tested for HIV at the time of exposure, and again at 6 weeks, 12 weeks and 6 months. During this time special precautionary measures should be employed to prevent sexual transmission to the health care worker's sexual partner(s)."

These measures reflect a growing trend on the part of informed medical personnel toward greater caution in the use and handling of blood.

'It Unravels the Mystery'

The Trinity has been called a mystery, but a reader from Australia says the brochure *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* "unravels the mystery and puts it to final rest."

In New York a former teacher in the Roman Catholic Church's Confraternity of Christian Doctrine program said that she wished this brochure had been available decades ago. For 15 years, she says, she stood before classes of 30 to 35 students, from 7 to 12 years old, "drawing a three-leaf shamrock to teach them about the Trinity —three petals for three different Persons, each God, in one stem, making one God! Yet that was what the nuns and priests told us to do," she writes.

"I was troubled about it then," she continues. "Now I have the true answers and facts from

God's own Word. How I wish I could gather to me all the young ones I taught and show them the truth about all these things!"

Many have greatly appreciated this scholarly, well-documented brochure on the Trinity, which remains a fundamental teaching of most churches of Christendom. Among the brochure's numerous quotations is that from *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, which observes: "Neither the word Trinity nor the explicit doctrine appears in the New Testament."

