

Awake!

AUGUST 22, 2002

A color photograph of a man with a shocked expression, looking directly at the camera. He is surrounded by a chaotic scene of discarded items: crumpled newspapers, a calculator, a keyboard, a can of soda, and a plastic container. His hands are raised near his head, palms up, as if he is overwhelmed or trying to shield himself from the mess.

GARBAGE
Will It Bury Us?

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Mankind is producing more refuse than ever before, creating unprecedented problems for the environment. What attitudes have contributed to such a wasteful society, and how can we combat them?



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Learn how to deal with two of the most common causes of traffic mishaps and tragedies.



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More and more youths are seeking surgery as a means of improving their appearance. Is it worth the risks?

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LIVING IN A Throwaway Society

PEOPLE in developed lands throw away mountains of trash. Consider, for example, the annual garbage output of the United States. It has been said that "an equivalent weight of water could fill 68,000 Olympic-size pools." Some years ago, it was estimated that the residents of New York City alone produced enough garbage each year to bury the city's huge Central Park under 13 feet of refuse!*

Little wonder that the United States has been called "a warning example for the rest of the world" when it comes to being "a consumer and throwaway society." But that country is not alone. It is estimated that the garbage annually produced by the people of Germany could easily fill a freight train extending from the capital, Berlin, to the coast of Africa, some 1,100 miles away. And in Britain it was once estimated that the average family of four discards six trees' worth of paper in a year.

* The park covers an area of 843 acres, or about 6 percent of the surface area of the borough of Manhattan.

Developing lands are not immune to the garbage glut. A noted newsmagazine reports: "The really bad news is that most of the planet's 6 billion people are just beginning to follow in the trash-filled footsteps of the U.S. and the rest of the developed world." Yes, like it or not, most of us today are part of a throwaway society.

Of course, people have always had things to throw away. But canned and packaged foods and goods are more widely available now than they were years ago, so disposable packaging is everywhere. The quantity of newspapers, magazines, advertising leaflets, and other printed material has soared as well.

Our highly industrialized and scientific world has also created new kinds of garbage. The German newspaper *Die Welt* claims that "approximately nine million autos are scrapped in the European Union annually." Disposing of them is no simple task. Even more problematic is the question, How do you safely dispose of nuclear or chemical wastes? Back in 1991, the United States reportedly had "mountains of hot garbage and no permanent site for storing it." A million barrels of deadly substances were said to be sitting in temporary storage with an ever-present "danger of loss, theft and environmental damage from mishandling." In 1999 alone, some 20,000

Safely disposing of hazardous waste presents serious challenges



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.

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Changes of address** should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, c/o Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589. © 2002 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

sources in the United States produced over 40 million tons of hazardous waste.

Another factor is the world population, which has skyrocketed during the past century. More people, more garbage! And much of the population is oriented toward consumerism. The Worldwatch Institute recently concluded: "We have used more goods and services since 1950 than in all the rest of human history."

Granted, few of those living in developed lands want to do away with all those "goods and services." For instance, just think of how convenient it is to go to the store and pick up groceries that are already packaged and then bring them home in paper or plastic bags sup-

plied at the store. If people were suddenly deprived of such modern packaging, they might soon realize how deeply they have come to depend on it. And to the extent that it is more hygienic, such packaging contributes, at least indirectly, to better health.

Despite such advantages, though, is there any need for concern that today's throwaway society might have gone too far? Evidently there is, for various solutions that have been designed to address the garbage glut have barely made a dent in the avalanche of human refuse. What is worse, the attitudes that underlie today's throwaway society have even more troubling implications.

IS THERE a Solution?

WHAT should you do with an unwanted item? "Just throw it away" seems a simple, obvious answer. However, waste disposal is not always so simple. Throw it where? An Italian environmental association estimates that a glass bottle thrown into the sea will take 1,000 years to decompose. In contrast, paper tissues will decompose in only three months. A cigarette butt pollutes the sea for up to 5 years; plastic bags,



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Publication of *Awake!* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References* is used.

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In many places recycling is mandatory

10 to 20 years; nylon articles, 30 to 40 years; cans, 500 years; and polystyrene, 1,000 years.

The flow of such refuse has increased enormously. Nowadays the marketplace has plenty to sell, and the advertising world wants us to believe that we need it all. The British newspaper *The Guardian* says succinctly: "Advertisers help us to answer needs we never knew we had." Indeed, we are tempted into buying the latest on the market, lest we miss out on something new. And, of course, in advertising terminology "new" means "better and superior," whereas "old" means "inferior and outdated."

Thus, we are often urged to buy something new rather than repair something old. It is argued that replacing old things is more practical and economical than repairing them. At times, that is true. Often, however, throwing away the old and replacing it with the new is expensive and unnecessary.

Many products today are designed to be thrown away. They may be difficult to repair—a point to keep in mind when making purchases. A German consumer magazine noted: "The life span of individual products continues to get shorter. What was 'in' yesterday is 'out' today and frequently lands in the rubbish. Thus, valuable raw materials daily end up as worthless garbage!"

Does all this unrestrained buying really benefit the consumer? In reality, the beneficia-

ries are businesses intent on filling their cash registers. The Swiss weekly *Die Weltwoche* argues: "An economic collapse would be guaranteed if everyone were to use his furniture and his auto for life or even for twice as long as he now does." An economic collapse is hardly the answer, since this would also put consumers out of work. What, then, are some solutions to the garbage glut?

Throw Away, Recycle, or Reduce?

Some industrialized countries take the easy way out by simply dumping their wastes in developing countries. A report indicates, for example, that "at one notorious site in Nigeria, 3,500 tonnes of toxic chemicals were found to be leaking from over 8,000 rusting and corroding drums, poisoning both soil and groundwater." Such a method of waste disposal seems to be neither a workable solution nor an admirable way to treat others.

What about recycling unwanted items for further use instead of just throwing them away? Of course, such programs require that consumers separate their refuse into different categories, something already required by law in some localities. Officials may ask that garbage be sorted into such categories as paper, cardboard, metal, glass, and organic wastes. Glass, in turn, may have to be sorted according to color.

Recycling clearly has its advantages. The book *5000 Days to Save the Planet* notes that recycling aluminum "saves huge amounts of energy" and can "cut down on the environmental damage caused by strip-mining bauxite." The book elaborates: "For the same amount of paper produced, recycling uses up only half as much energy, and a tenth of the water. . . . Many waste products can be recovered, recycled and re-used. . . . Even where industries cannot re-use their own wastes, they can sometimes recycle them for others to use. . . . In Holland, a waste exchange network has been operating successfully since the early 1970s."

Rather than searching for ways to dispose of refuse, other authorities are placing more emphasis upon preventing waste in the first place. The aforementioned book warns that "action is urgently needed" if mankind is "to move away from a throwaway economy . . . towards a conserver society that minimizes wastes and reduces its consumption of resources."

However, those wanting to "move away from a throwaway economy" would have to be willing to use the goods they purchase for as long as possible, throwing them away only when they are beyond repair. Items that are unwanted but still usable must be passed on to others who will use them. The Darmstadt office of the German Öko-Institut (Institute for Applied Ecology) figures that a household adhering consistently to the principle "Use instead of consume" would produce up to 75 percent less garbage than the average household.

But will enough households adhere to such principles? It seems unlikely. Mankind's garbage problem is merely a symptom of larger issues. In today's throwaway society, more and more people have adopted what we might call

Do changing fads compel you to throw away good clothes and buy new ones?

a throwaway mentality. Let us examine that attitude—and a few of the extremes to which it can lead.

The Dangers of a Throwaway Mentality

A throwaway mentality can easily go beyond minor wastefulness. It can make people unappreciative and thoughtless, so that they casually waste large amounts of untouched food and other resources. Those who are self-centered and governed by fads and trivial likes and dislikes may constantly feel compelled to replace good clothes, furniture, and other items with new ones.

However, the throwaway mentality may extend to more than just things. A German project devoted to the utilization of discarded household goods recently noted: "The way we treat the living room suite, which no longer suits us and is thrown away after five years to be replaced by a new one, is being copied in the way we treat humans. The question is how long our society can tolerate this." The report explains: "As soon as a person is unable to perform at top efficiency, he is replaced. After all, there are plenty of workers available!"

In his book *Earth in the Balance*, former U.S. Vice President Al Gore asked the pertinent question: "If we have come to see the things we use as disposable, have we similarly transformed the way we think about our fellow human beings? . . . Have we, in the process, lost an appreciation for the uniqueness of each one?"

People who lose appreciation and respect for others will probably find it easier—and less blameworthy—to cast off friends or marriage mates. Commenting on this way of thinking, the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* argues: "Twice a year we buy new clothes, every four years a new car, and every ten years a new living room suite; every year we look for a new vacation spot; we change homes, occupations, businesses—so why not our marriage mate?"



A Lack of Respect for Life

Many today seem to think that their own life has little real value. How so? For example, a European magazine recently noted that the readiness of young people to take risks has increased in recent years. This can be seen in their increased willingness to participate in extreme sports. For the sake of a few moments of thrills, they are willing to risk throwing away life itself! Profit-hungry businessmen eagerly take advantage of this trend. A German politician noted that promoters of extreme sports "often consider making money more important than human health and life."

And what about throwing away unborn human life? The World Health Organization estimates that "worldwide some 75 million children conceived annually are not actually wanted by anyone. For many women abortion is the only solution." Even after birth, infants are in danger. According to the Brazilian newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, "cases of babies abandoned on the streets are on the increase." Is this also true in your locality?

All around us in today's world, we see evidence that human life is often viewed as cheap, worthless, something to be thrown away almost casually. We see this trend in the violence of popular entertainment, with "heroes" slaughtering scores of "bad guys" in a single film or TV program. We see it in the ongoing waves of violent crime sweeping the earth, with thieves killing their victims over a bit of petty change—or for no reason at all. And we see it in the news in the sickening reports of terrorist acts, ethnic cleansings, and outright genocides, all involving the hard-hearted, wholesale slaughter of humans—precious lives thrown away like garbage.

We may not be able to avoid living in a throwaway society, but we can avoid adopting a throwaway mentality. The next article will discuss what can help us to cope with today's throwaway society as well as the undesirable attitudes that come with it.

**The unborn
should be
cherished, not
thrown away**

Index Stock Photography
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Some people today seem willing to throw away almost anything once it becomes burdensome. In one European country, for example, an estimated 100,000 cats and 96,000 dogs were abandoned during 1999 by their owners. An animal activist there says that her fellow citizens "don't consider owning a pet a long-term commitment. They'll buy a puppy in September, abandon it [a year later when they go on vacation] in August." Worse still, the throw-away mentality extends to human life itself.

**Life is too precious to risk
throwing it away for the
sake of thrills**



HOW YOU CAN COPE

in a Throwaway Society



Children need to learn how to avoid wasting food

IN NATURE . . . there is no such thing as waste." That, according to *Time* magazine, is the opinion of one respected expert on recycling. He was referring to the remarkable way in which dead or discarded material from one part of an ecosystem is always used to benefit other parts. The same expert reportedly feels that "humanity can emulate nature's garbage-free ways, but it will require innovative technology and a big change in attitude."

Most of us can probably do little to develop some innovative new technology. But our attitude is something we can control! And the right attitude toward certain basic principles of good conduct

Jesus set a fine example in avoiding wastefulness



will help us to cope better with the problems of living in a throwaway society.

Avoid Being Wasteful

Every fifth person on earth goes to bed at night hungry. Knowing this should impress upon us the need to appreciate food and to avoid wasting it. A couple who returned to Europe after 28 years of missionary work in Africa said that one of their biggest challenges in getting used to their home country again was coping with "the wasteful way people throw away food."

Wise parents teach their children to put only as much on their plates as they can eat. Doing so reduces garbage and waste. It is better to take small portions at first before asking for seconds. Of course, parents must set the example. Jesus set the example for all of us by showing genuine appreciation for God's provi-

sions, both physical and spiritual. The Bible indicates that Jesus carefully avoided wasting food—even though it had been miraculously produced in abundance!—John 6:11-13.

The principle of avoiding wastefulness may also be applied to clothes, furniture, and machines. Keeping things in good repair and using them as long as it is practical to do so shows that we appreciate what we have. We need not fall victim to the advertising world's attempts to make us feel dissatisfied with what we have by offering us something bigger, better, faster, stronger. Of course, we may have every right to replace possessions that are still usable. But before doing so, we might want to evaluate our attitudes and motives.

Avoid Greediness

As they traveled through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land, the Israel-

**Why not give others what
you no longer use instead
of throwing it away?**



ites were given food in the form of manna. According to the Bible report, the manna was supplied in sufficient quantity. The Israelites were warned, however, not to become greedy; they were to take only enough for their immediate needs. Those who disobeyed discovered that greed did not pay, for the leftover manna bred worms and began to stink. (Exodus 16:16-20) In no uncertain terms, the Bible strongly and repeatedly condemns greediness.—Ephesians 5:3.

The Bible is not alone in making this point. Seneca, for example, a first-century Roman philosopher and playwright, recognized that a greedy person is never satisfied. He observed: “For greed all nature is too little.” Erich Fromm, a philosopher of the 20th century, reached a similar conclusion: “Greed is a bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction.” Beyond avoiding greed and wastefulness, there are some positive steps that many have chosen to take.

Learn to Share

Before discarding items still in good condition, consider who might be happy to have them. For example, when children grow out of their clothes, could other children still get much use out of them as hand-me-downs? Could you do something similar with other possessions that still have value but that you no longer use as much as you once did? Share the joy an item gave you by passing it on to another. American author and humorist Mark Twain once wrote: “To get the full value of joy you must have somebody to divide it with.” Perhaps you have experienced that joy shared is joy doubled. Besides, by sharing in this way, you help counteract the negative effects of a throwaway mentality.

Sharing with others is a virtue that the Bible highly recommends. (Luke 3:11; Romans 12:13; 2 Corinthians 8:14, 15; 1 Timothy 6:18) Indeed, how much better the world would be if all in it were willing to share!

Be Content With Necessities

A contented person is a happy person. This is a universal truth. A Greek proverb says: “Nothing will content him who is not content with a little.” And the Japanese say: “He is poor who does not feel content.” The Bible also speaks in glowing terms of contentment. We read: “To be sure, it is a means of great gain, this godly devotion along with self-sufficiency. For we have brought nothing into the world, and neither can we carry anything out. So, having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things.”—1 Timothy 6:6-8; Philippians 4:11.

Of course, being content with what we have may require “a big change in attitude.” A young woman named Susanne recently realized that she needed to make such a change. She said: “I made up my mind that since I couldn’t have everything I wanted, I must learn to want what I have. Now I am happy and content.”

Contentment really does lead to happiness. Professor Argir Hadjihristev, a Bulgarian expert on the subject of aging, says: “The basic evil is, first of all, not being content with the little that a person has.” Referring to the health benefits of being content, he adds: “The person who doesn’t try to live better than his neighbor, who doesn’t always try to have more and more, lives without competition and therefore without stress. And that is good for the nerves.”

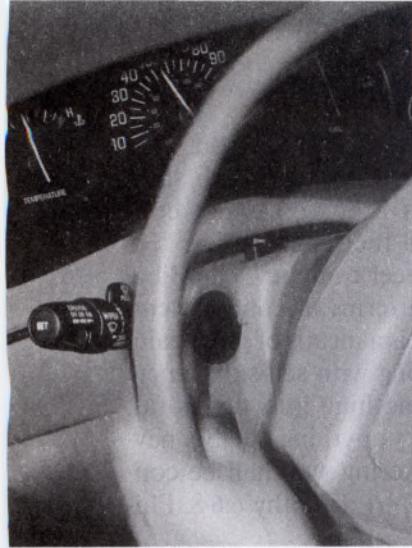
Yes, a throwaway society can never bring about true happiness. Even less so a throwaway mentality! It appears that more and more people are getting the message. Are you?

In Our Next Issue

■ Do Numbers Control Your Future?

■ A Religious Dilemma in Colonial Brazil

■ Prayers That Are Heard by God



Automobile Accidents ARE YOU SAFE?

"I have a good driving record, so I don't need to worry about having an automobile accident." "Accidents happen only to young and reckless drivers." Many think that an automobile accident will never happen to them. Is that the way you feel? When it comes to automobile accidents, are you invulnerable?"

STATISTICS suggest that if you live in a developed country, you are quite likely to be injured in a traffic accident at least once during your lifetime. For many, such accidents prove fatal. Worldwide, there are now more than half a million traffic fatalities each year. Perhaps many of those who were killed this past year felt that it would never happen to them. What can you do to reduce your own risk? Prevention is the key. Consider how you can prevent accidents caused by drowsiness and by the effects of aging.

The Drowsy Driver

Some experts say that a drowsy driver may be as dangerous as a drunk driver. Reports indicate that drowsiness causes an increasing number of accidents. *Fleet Maintenance & Safety Report* recently stated that during a single year, 1 out of every 12 motorists in Norway reported falling asleep while driving. According to *The Star of Johannesburg*, South Africa, driver fatigue causes up to one third of all vehicular collisions in that country. Reports from other lands reveal that fatigue is affecting drivers everywhere. Why are there so many sleepy drivers?

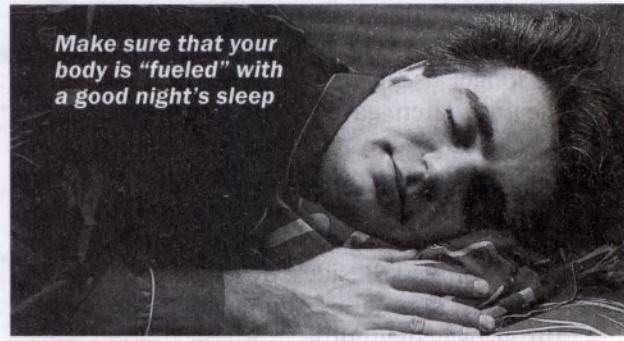
Today's hectic life-style contributes to the problem. *Newsweek* magazine reported recently that Americans may be "sleeping as much as an hour and a half less per night than [they] did at the turn of the century—and the problem is likely to get worse." Why? The magazine quoted sleep expert Terry Young as saying: "People have regarded sleep as a commodity that they could short-change. It's been considered a mark of very

hard work and upward mobility to get very little sleep."

It is said that the average person needs between six and a half and nine hours of sleep per night. When deprived, people develop a "sleep debt." A report distributed by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety states: "Even sleeping 30 or 40 minutes less than needed each night during a normal work week can result in a 3- to 4-hour sleep debt by the weekend, enough to significantly increase levels of daytime sleepiness."

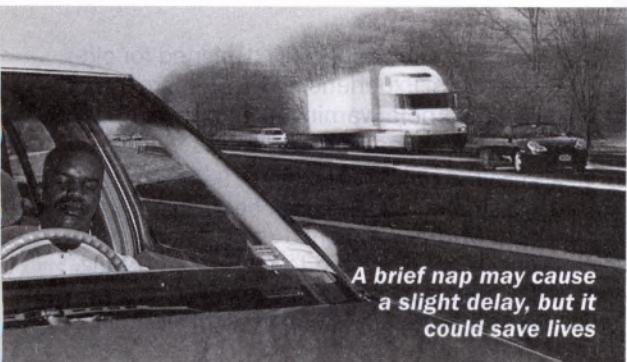
At times, you may miss out on a good night's rest. Insomnia, caring for a sick child, or other factors beyond your control can rob you of sleep. The next day you may well find yourself becoming

Make sure that your body is "fueled" with a good night's sleep



sleepy behind the wheel. What should you do if this happens?

Popular remedies such as drinking caffeine, opening the window, chewing gum, or eating something spicy may not keep you awake. None



A brief nap may cause a slight delay, but it could save lives

of these so-called remedies address the real problem. What you need is sleep. So why not try taking a brief nap? *The New York Times* suggested: "The reviving workday nap should not be longer than 30 minutes; any more and the body lapses into a deep sleep, from which it is difficult to awake." Taking a nap might delay your arrival at your destination, but it can extend your life.

Your pattern of life can make you more susceptible to becoming a drowsy driver. Do you spend long hours on the Internet, or do you stay up late at night watching television? Do you go to social gatherings that last into the early hours of the morning? Don't allow such practices to rob you of your sleep. Wise King Solomon once emphasized the value of even "a handful of rest."—Ecclesiastes 4:6.

Experienced yet Older

Older drivers are often the most experienced on the road. Moreover, they take fewer chances and know their limitations. However, older drivers are not immune to the danger of vehicle collisions. In fact, they may become more vulnerable to such accidents as they age. The U.S. magazine *Car & Travel* reported: "People over 70 years old make up 9 percent of the population, but 13 percent of the traffic fatalities." Regrettably, the number of collisions involving older drivers is increasing.

Consider the observations of Myrtle, who is 80 years of age.* She started driving more than 60 years ago and has never had an automobile accident. Yet, like many others, she is feeling the effects of aging—effects that could make her more likely to have an accident. She recently told

Awake!: "As you get older, everything in life [including driving] becomes a challenge."

What has she done to reduce the risk of having an automobile accident? "Over the years I have made adjustments to compensate for my age," says Myrtle. For instance, she has reduced the amount of time she spends behind the wheel, especially at night. This minor change is helping her to maintain a safe record without relinquishing her car keys.

As difficult as it may be to admit, the aging process takes its toll on everyone. (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7) Various health problems arise, we react a bit more slowly, and our eyesight deteriorates—all of which can make safe driving difficult. However, advancing age on its own does not disqualify a driver. What counts is driver performance. Acknowledging changes in our physical abilities and making appropriate adjustments in our routine can improve our performance behind the wheel.



Older drivers are more experienced but face special challenges

You may not notice it, but your vision is changing. As you get older, your peripheral vision narrows and the retina needs more light. A booklet entitled *The Older and Wiser Driver* states: "A driver aged 60 needs three times as much light to see as a teenager, and will take more than twice as long to adjust to a change from light to darkness." These changes in our eyes can make nighttime driving difficult.

Henry is 72 and has had a safe driving record for over 50 years. As the years passed, he began to notice that nighttime glare made it challenging to drive. After an eye

* The names in this article have been changed.



examination, he learned that he needed new glasses that were designed to reduce nighttime glare. "Driving at night is no longer difficult," says Henry. For him this small adjustment made a big difference in his driving. For others, such as Myrtle, the solution may be to give up nighttime driving altogether.

Aging also affects a person's reaction time. Older minds can be wiser and more sensible than younger ones. However, the older a person gets, the more time it takes to process information and react. This makes driving even more challenging, since traffic and road conditions are constantly changing. These changes must be evaluated quickly if appropriate action is to be taken in time.

Car & Travel magazine reports that "the most common cause of fatal crashes among senior drivers is that the older driver ran through a traffic control device." Why? This same report continues: "The problem . . . seems to be related to situations in which an older driver must evaluate changing information from the left and right periphery before pulling out into an intersection."

How can you compensate for slower reactions? Show caution when approaching intersections. Get into the habit of double-checking the traffic before you proceed. Be particularly cautious when turning. Turning at intersections can be deadly, especially if your path takes you across lanes of oncoming traffic.

In the United States, 40 percent of fatal intersection accidents for drivers over the age of 75 involve left turns. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety suggests to drivers in that country: "You can sometimes make three right turns to avoid having to make a left." You might be able to adapt that principle to the circumstances where you live. With a little planning ahead of time, you may be able to avoid dangerous and challenging intersections.

A Decision to Consider

What can help you to evaluate your driving abilities? Perhaps you can ask a respected friend or family member to ride with you and evaluate your skills. Then, listen carefully to any observations they might have. You might also decide to take a safe-driving course. Many driving associations of-

fer courses especially designed for older drivers. Experiencing two or more close calls could be a warning sign that your driving skills are not as good as they used to be.

Realistically, at some point it may be in your best interests to stop driving. This can be a painful decision to face. Myrtle, mentioned earlier, knows that someday soon she will have to retire from driving. As that day approaches, she is already riding more frequently with others. How does she feel about



There are advantages to traveling with a companion

delegating the driving to someone else? "It's nice to enjoy the ride without the stress of driving," she says.

After giving the matter careful consideration, you may feel the same way. Shopping, running errands, and traveling to appointments and meetings can be more enjoyable with a friend. Perhaps a friend can drive you using your car. Traveling that way may be safer and more enjoyable than going alone. Using public transportation, where available, may be another practical alternative. Remember that your worth does not depend on your ability to drive. Your fine qualities are what make you truly valuable to your family and your friends—and to God.—Proverbs 12:2; Romans 14:18.

Whether you are older or younger, an experienced driver or a novice, you are not immune to the dangers of automobile accidents. Recognize the serious responsibility that comes with driving. Take precautions to reduce your chances of being involved in a collision. By doing so, you may protect yourself and others throughout many journeys yet to come.



Golden Wattle

WELCOMING SPRING DOWN UNDER

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN AUSTRALIA

THE blossom that graces these pages is no ordinary flower. It is famous and beloved in Australia. In fact, since 1912, Australia's coat of arms has been emblazoned with it, and in 1988 it was declared the official floral emblem of Australia. It has also been featured on Australian coins and stamps. Why the popularity?

The answer may be found, in part, in a poem written by Veronica Mason and published in 1929. After describing the somber "olive-green and brown and grey" that dominate the late winter landscape, the poem announces joyously: "But now the Spring has come this way / With blossoms for the Wattle."

Nearly everybody, it seems, loves the news that spring is imminent. Down under in Australia, spring bursts forth while autumn is creeping over the Northern Hemisphere. The southern continent enjoys an early signal that spring is on the way—the sudden blooming of the golden wattle. Thus, every August



schoolchildren may be heard reciting Mason's poem. And in 1992 the governor-general of Australia declared September 1 National Wattle Day.

Of course, the golden wattle does more than just announce the spring—it does so with grace and beauty. Mason's verse speaks of "dainty, curts'ying Wattle," referring to the way the blossom-laden branches bow and sway in the spring breezes. Wattle, however, is not the official name of this tree. It actually belongs to an interesting family that is prominent in warm climates around the world.

A Hardy and Famous Family

The botanical name for the golden wattle is *Acacia pycnantha*. A shrub or small tree, it ranges from 12 to 24 feet in height. But there are some 600 to 1,000 types of acacias in Australia, where they are called wattles. In fact, more than half the acacia varieties known in the world are found in Australia. In Europe and America, the acacia is often called



Wattle blossoms and seed pods

mimosa. Another variety of acacia is mentioned frequently in the Bible. God directed that the ark of the covenant and parts of the tabernacle be made of acacia wood.—Exodus 25:10; 26:15, 26.

A famous member of the acacia family is the umbrella-shaped variety found in Africa. The foliage of that acacia is a favorite food of giraffes. In fact, they would strip the acacia bare were it not for a unique partnership between the tree and a type of ant. The tree provides the ant with a home and nectar to feed on. The ant, in turn, stings the voracious giraffe, prodding the gentle giant to move on and browse at another tree. Such partnerships provide remarkable evidence of intelligent design, do they not?

Australia's acacia varieties do not have any giraffes to threaten them. Still, they do face enemies, such as drought, and for this they have an effective defense. The acacia seed's outer layer is so tough that it has to be damaged in some way before water can penetrate it and growth can begin. So tough are these seeds that gardeners have to steep them in boiling water so that the swollen pods will germinate when planted. In the wild an acacia seed may lie dormant for decades! Finally, a bushfire will cause the tough little seed to germinate. Hence, even during the severest of droughts, there is an acacia "seed bank" lying safe in the ground, just waiting to regenerate.

For years now, some hardy Australian wattles have been exported to Africa for use as a potential food source in times of drought. A big advantage is that these acacias can survive in harsh, infertile soils. Certain varieties can even grow in sand dunes! These trees bind the soil





together, fix nitrogen into it, and act as windbreaks, thereby improving the environment for other plants as well.

The Versatile Wattle

There are scientists who view certain wattle seeds as a potential food crop, noting their high protein content and comparing them with other cereals in terms of food value. Roasted, the seeds have a pleasing, nutty taste; when boiled, certain varieties taste like lentils. Wattle seeds have been ground into flour and made into bread and even pasta. Some varieties of wattle yield up to 22 pounds of seed a year.

The fragrant wattle flower is used in perfume making. In addition, the acacia tree is used extensively to provide animal fodder and to control soil erosion.

But we have barely mentioned the usefulness of acacia wood.

Early Australian Aborigines made boomerangs from acacia wood. One variety of wattle, *Acacia acuminata*, has been called raspberry jam because its timber when freshly cut gives off an odor like that of crushed raspberries. But it was the use of acacias in construction that gave rise to their being called wattle.

The term "wattle" is an ancient one. It originally applied to the wood used in the medieval Anglo-Saxon building method known as wattle and daub. Mud was layered over woven saplings, called wattles, to create walls for the building. Early Australian colonists used acacia trees for their wattle-and-daub houses. In time, the acacia trees became known by the old English name wattle, and the name has stuck.

Is it not remarkable how many uses there are for these trees? However, when springtime comes to Australia, it is not the versatility of the wattle that comes to mind. Rather, as blankets of waving, fuzzy blossoms turn the hillsides gold, hearts soar and poems spring to mind. Both the beauty and the usefulness of the tree remind many an admirer of the ingenuity and brilliance of the one who "constructed all things," God.—Hebrews 3:4.

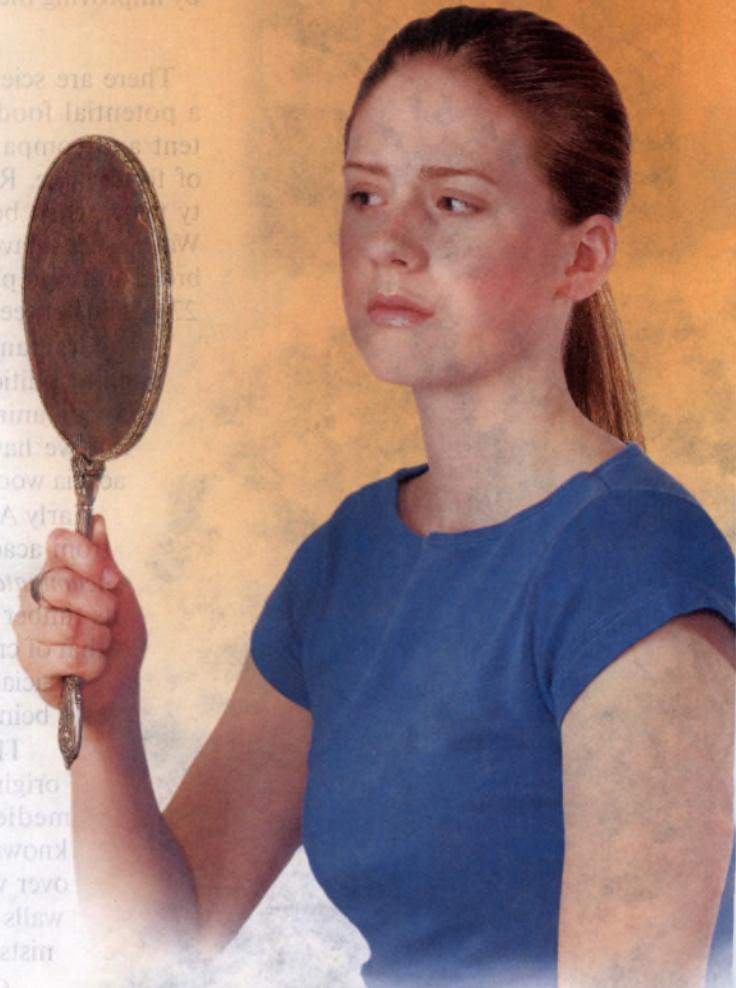
Young People Ask . . .

Should I Have Cosmetic Surgery?

"Prior to my nose operation, I suffered a lot because of teasing. I did not want a nose that was special, just one that suited me. I am very happy with the result, and I would do the same thing all over again."—Eleni.*

"Why should I submit to standardized ideas of good looks? With surgically altered body parts, I would feel like fake money. Not genuine."—Mathias.

"Everyone must decide for himself or herself. It is very difficult for someone else to judge."—Manuela.



WHOOVER is prettier than I am must be wearing makeup." In Germany, that humorous saying has long served as a sort of defense for people who worry that their looks are less than perfect. In some lands nowadays, though, the saying might well be updated to: "Whoever is prettier than I am must have gone under the knife." Indeed, cosmetic surgery is becoming commonplace.

* Some names have been changed.

"The days are over when cosmetic surgery was reserved for the rich," reports the Swiss newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, adding: "Two trends have emerged: More and more men are turning to cosmetic surgeons . . . , and female clients are getting younger than ever." According to a survey in Germany, almost 20 percent of those surveyed between 14 and 29 years of age have either undergone cosmetic surgery already, plan to do so, or have at least thought about it.* Perhaps some of your friends, schoolmates, or relatives have put their looks into the hands of a surgeon.

What about you? Have you ever toyed with the notion of improving your appearance through an operation? Do you feel that your ears protrude, that your breasts are too big or too small, that your tummy or thighs bulge, or that your nose is awkward? If so, you are not the only person to suffer from such feelings. A group of high-school girls wrote an article in a German newspaper stating: "There is hardly a girl our age who hasn't gone through bouts of discontent with her own body." The desire to be attractive and well liked is normal. But is surgery the answer?

A Solution to Your Problems?

Consider the young people you know. Would you be surprised to learn that many of them—perhaps even some that look fine to you—are unhappy with the way they look? But that is very likely the case. The question is, Do you think they should all undergo corrective surgery? Or do you think most would be better off if they learned to feel happier with the positive aspects of their appearance? Might the same principle apply in your own case?

As Eleni's comment shows, cosmetic surgery can in some cases curb ridicule and harassment. On the other hand, cosmetic sur-

gery is no cure-all. It is certainly no substitute for a healthy life-style, which does a great deal for one's personal appearance. And whereas a surgeon might be able to change your looks, he cannot change your personality, nor can he remove your anxieties or increase your self-respect.

Keep in mind, too, that some clinics or doctors make claims they cannot fulfill. They may seem, in effect, to promise you happiness. In truth, though, they may be more interested

Is your "problem" feature really a problem, or do you need to adjust the way you view yourself?

in your money than in your happiness. Sad to say, there are a few unscrupulous surgeons who will undertake an operation that is unnecessary, has little chance of success, or is risky—as long as someone foots the bill.

There are also long-term concerns to think about. For example, what looks terrible to you when you are 16 might look quite different when you are 21. Says aesthetic surgeon Dr. Urs Bösch: "As a general rule, cosmetic surgery should not be performed on teenagers. A teenager's body shape and his awareness of his own body change at this age." Additionally, youths are more likely to need follow-up operations. And as your body grows, the scars of an operation might also grow.

Count the Cost

The Bible advises us to count the cost before we start an important project. (Luke 14:28) For most young people, cosmetic surgery is out of the question because of the financial costs involved. And that price tag may not include the follow-up examinations—or the touch-ups that might be needed.

There are a number of people who have paid for surgery not only with money but also with their health. According to the American

* Cosmetic (or aesthetic) surgery is performed on healthy body parts to improve their appearance. Reconstructive surgery aims to restore body parts that are disfigured because of injuries, diseases, or congenital deformities. Both are types of plastic surgery.

Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, health risks include temporary swelling, permanent scars, loss of sensation and breast-feeding abilities, and even heavy blood loss. Anna, for example, almost died during liposuction. She complains: "I now have horrible scars and a dent in my belly." Regarding liposuction operations, a German newspaper notes: "Reports of serious complications, even deaths, are piling up." Do not forget: "Surgery remains surgery, with all its risks," as the health newsletter *Apotheken Umschau* puts it. Therefore, carefully weigh the risks before you opt for any operation—especially one that is not medically necessary.

You might also ask yourself: 'What sort of signal would I be sending? That physical appearance is my top priority? How might my choice influence my peers or younger siblings?'"*

Your Motives

Your motives too are worth some serious thought. And it may not be easy to figure them out. You might, for example, want to ask yourself: 'Do I want to put a stop to constant teasing about an awkward feature? Or has vanity come into play? Is my desire to change my looks influenced by peer pressure, slick advertisements, or some entertainment star? Am I trying to attain the extreme beauty ideal promoted so heavily in today's media?'

Some think that physical enhancement might improve their chances of finding a marriage mate or a good job. But honestly, is every married person you know physically attractive? What about every person with a job? No, such attainments do not hinge entirely on personal appearance. Besides, would a potential mate or an employer who puts more emphasis on your looks than on your inner qualities really be worth the cost and risk of surgery?

As you analyze your motives carefully, discuss your feelings with your parents or a

mature friend. If you think that one part of your body really is a problem, ask them for their honest opinion. Do not simply trust the mirror. Regarding the way we see our own physical shortcomings, Nana says: "You take it more seriously than others do because you simply see yourself through different eyes." Researchers at the Landau University, in Germany, explained that in many cases cosmetic surgery is contemplated, "not because a part of the body is really disfigured, but rather because it *appears* to be disfigured to the person concerned."

Do not decide on the spur of the moment, but evaluate all factors carefully. View any surgery as irreversible. At any rate, you will likely have to live with the results for some time.

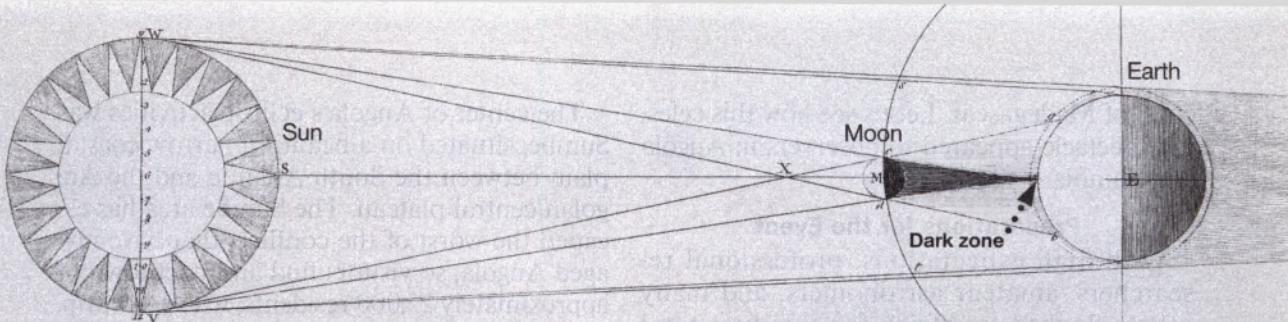
Your Most Important Beauty

Happiness does not come from your looks. While looks can either enhance or hinder self-respect, what really counts are your personality and attitude. After her life-threatening experience, Anna concluded: "Beauty, I have learned, has nothing to do with your outer appearance."

While speaking positively about physical beauty, the Bible shows that it is of secondary importance compared with spiritual beauty: "Charm may be false, and prettiness may be vain; but the woman that fears Jehovah is the one that procures praise for herself." (Proverbs 31:30; 1 Samuel 16:7) Adopting this view could help you find inner peace, despite some body feature you dislike.

Whatever you decide, remember that perfect looks and perfect happiness are simply out of reach for now. Everyone is imperfect in one way or another. (Romans 3:23) You cannot change that. What you can change is the person you are on the inside—what the Bible calls "the secret person of the heart." (1 Peter 3:3, 4) Refine who you are by building qualities that are beautiful in the eyes of God. There is neither risk nor financial cost, and the rewards are immeasurable!

* See also the chapter "How Important Are Looks?" in the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



When Night Falls at Midday

BY AWAKE! WRITERS IN ANGOLA AND ZAMBIA

NIIGHTFALL at midday? Impossible! some might say. It is not only possible but happens several times every decade—whenever there is a total solar eclipse. What causes a solar eclipse, and why is it such a spectacular sight? The answer starts with the moon.

Are you familiar with the way the moon changes in appearance as it orbits the earth? When the moon and the sun are at opposite ends of the sky, we see what we call a full moon rising in the east as the sun sets in the west. As the days pass, the moon rises later each night, gradually making its way across the sky toward the rising sun. The illuminated portion of the moon gets progressively smaller, eventually becoming a mere crescent. When the moon shares the sky with the sun all day, even that crescent vanishes and the moon, with its dark side facing the earth, is virtually invisible. This is called a new moon. Then the process reverses, with the moon drawing away from the sun and finally returning to full. This cycle repeats approximately every 28 days.

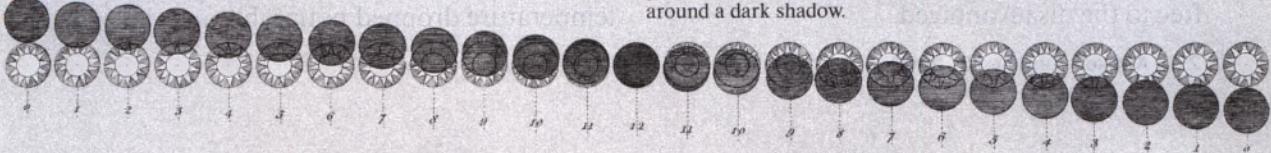
The key to a solar eclipse is the new moon. Usually it simply passes by the sun in the daylight sky without our knowledge because the orbits are not in the same plane. On occasion, though, the sun, moon, and earth line up just right. Then, the shadow of the moon falls across the surface of the earth, causing an eclipse.

Solar eclipses result from a unique relationship between the sun, the moon, and the earth. The sun is tremendous in size, with a diameter about 400 times that of the moon. Remarkably, though, the sun is about 400 times farther away from us than the moon is. As a result, from our viewpoint the sun and the moon appear to be nearly identical in size. Thus, the moon can at times appear to fit perfectly over the sun.

In order for such a total solar eclipse to occur, the sun, the moon, and the earth must not only align precisely but they must also do so when the moon is at that part of its orbit that is close to the earth.* On these occasions the tip of the moon's cone-shaped shadow produces darkness along a narrow strip of the earth's surface.

In the case of the total eclipse of June 21, 2001, the shadow was to be as much as 120 miles wide. The path of darkness was to begin at sunrise off the eastern coast of South America and pass across the South Atlantic, where its maximum duration of nearly five minutes would be reached. After traversing Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique, it would end at sunset off the east

* Since the orbits of the moon and the earth are elliptic, the apparent size of the sun and the moon vary a little according to where they are in their orbits. When the moon is at the point in its orbit farthest from the earth, the darkest part of the moon's shadow may not quite reach the surface of the earth. When this occurs, observers on earth who are in line with that shadow experience an annular eclipse, with the sun visible as a bright ring around a dark shadow.



coast of Madagascar. Let us see how this celestial spectacle appeared to observers in Angola and Zambia.

Preparations for the Event

With high expectations, professional researchers, amateur astronomers, and many others flocked to Africa for this first total eclipse of the new millennium. As Lusaka, Zambia, was the only capital city in the path of the eclipse, many visitors headed there to observe it.

This was perhaps the biggest tourist attraction Zambia has ever enjoyed. Just a few days prior to the eclipse, Lusaka was flooded with thousands of visitors. Preparations for the event had been made months in advance. Hotels, lodges, campsites, and private homes were all fully booked, accommodating the hordes of visitors.

Public viewing sites included the Lusaka airport, where visitors could arrive in the morning, observe the event, and then depart in the evening. For weeks television and radio stations announced the forthcoming spectacle, repeatedly warning of the dangers of looking directly at the sun. Sales of special viewing glasses exceeded all expectations, and many shops sold out.

However, the eclipse was to touch the African continent first in Angola, at the coastal town of Sumbe. It was here that observers would experience a total eclipse of four and a half minutes, the longest duration over land.

Months prior to the eclipse, billboards announcing the eclipse and warning of its dangers were put up in Angola's capital city, Luanda, and in other major towns. The moon's shadow was to pass through the middle of the country, so all of Angola would see at least a deep partial eclipse. Luanda would see 96 percent of the sun's disk covered. The government, in cooperation with private companies, arranged to import millions of special solar glasses for distribution. Many were given free to the disadvantaged.

The center of Angola's eclipse activities was Sumbe, situated on a beautiful narrow coastal plain between the South Atlantic and the Angolan central plateau. The Sumbe area has escaped the worst of the conflicts that have ravaged Angola, so visitors find an intact town of approximately 25,000 residents, who are warm, friendly, and outgoing. To accommodate all the visitors, additional tourist facilities were prepared, and improvements were made to the local power system. A special eclipse workshop was arranged for scientists, government ministers, and humanitarian workers from Angola and other countries. A large stage was erected on the beach for an entertainment program on a scale never before seen in Sumbe.

The Big Day Arrives

One of the benefits of observing the eclipse from Angola was that in June the weather is quite dry. But imagine the dismay when, the day before the eclipse, clouds rolled into the Sumbe area! All evening and into the next morning, the town was shrouded in a thick cloud blanket. Would all the hopes of witnessing the eclipse be disappointed? By midmorning the clouds began to part, and by late morning the sky was blue and cloudless. What a relief! Similarly, there was concern in Zambia, as the dawn light revealed a hazy, clouded sky. But there too the view cleared just in time. Listen as eyewitnesses describe the events as they unfold.

Angola: "We chose to observe the eclipse from a prominent spot overlooking the sea. As the hour approached, throngs gathered on the town beach and in the viewing areas set aside for watching the event. At noon, when the eclipse was about to start, many donned their protective glasses and began looking for the moon's first 'bite' from the solar disk. Shortly after noon the eclipse began. Through binoculars or a telescope, several sunspots—dark splotches on the sun's surface—were visible. Watchers saw these spots engulfed in shadow one by one. As the eclipse progressed, the temperature dropped noticeably and the light

Baily's beads

Totality

Diamond ring

began to take on an eerie color. Finally, as the last crescent of sun yielded to the advancing shadow, darkness fell."

Zambia: "Located in Makeni, Lusaka, the Zambia branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses was almost ideally placed for viewing the total eclipse of the sun. At 3:07 p.m., the moon began to block out the sun. Shadow bands swept across building walls, giving the effect of ripples of light. The wind subsided, and birds fell silent. The wildlife started to prepare for a night's sleep. At 3:09 p.m., a few seconds before totality, the sun's vanishing disk was reduced to a few glittering points of light, then just one. These phenomena are known as Baily's beads and the diamond ring respectively.* Next followed a view of the chromosphere, a pinkish-red flash, leading to totality and darkness!"

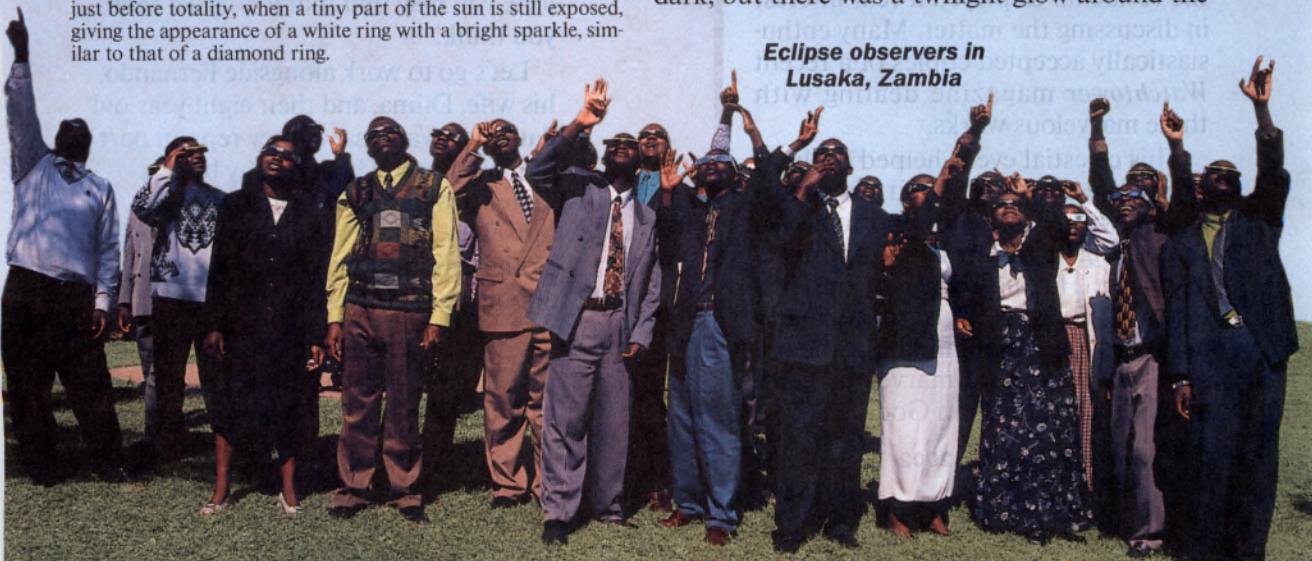
* The effect known as Baily's beads is caused by the sunlight passing through the lunar valleys just before totality. The expression "diamond ring" describes the appearance of the sun just before totality, when a tiny part of the sun is still exposed, giving the appearance of a white ring with a bright sparkle, similar to that of a diamond ring.

Angola: "The dazzling diamond ring effect raised gasps and shouts. Then, at 1:48 p.m. local time, totality began. Reactions were quite varied. Some were engrossed in taking pictures. Others started shouting in unison, 'Total! Total! Total!' Still others began whistling and crying out in amazement as night fell at midday. Streamers of the sun's million-degree atmosphere appeared to flow out in all directions to form the corona. We could see arches of flaming gas around the moon's dark perimeter. Suddenly, as though time had leapt forward, the totality was over and a ray of sunlight blazed from the other side of the shadow.

"As the solar disk started to emerge, we saw the sunspots, previously devoured, emerging one by one from the darkness as the familiar circular shape of the sun was slowly restored."

Zambia: "The period of the total eclipse here lasted for 3 minutes and 14 seconds, so there was time to absorb the awe of the event. It was dark, but there was a twilight glow around the

**Eclipse observers in
Lusaka, Zambia**



horizon. Though still blue, the sky revealed planets usually obscured by the sun—Jupiter and Saturn, for example, were clearly visible points of light. Perhaps the most spectacular aspect of the eclipse was the sun's corona. It appeared as a pinkish-white glow around a black disk. Mesmerized, observers described it as 'simply amazing, magnificent.' Gradually the disk of the moon slid aside, baring more and more of the sun's face and allowing the sun's rays to reach the earth unimpeded. By 4:28 p.m., the eclipse was over!"

Lessons From the Eclipse

Afterward, many remarked about the soul-stirring effect the experience had on them. In Angola one woman said that she was nearly moved to tears. Another reflected on the beautiful gift God had provided. Yet another noted that only a loving Creator would provide this spectacle so that people could appreciate the incredible beauty of earth's power source.

It was clear that many people in Africa have great respect for the Creator and the Bible. As Jehovah's Witnesses in the town of Sumbe spoke to others about the eclipse and noted that this was but one of the marvelous works of Jehovah, our Creator, the residents displayed a real interest in discussing the matter. Many enthusiastically accepted copies of a recent *Watchtower* magazine dealing with these marvelous works.

This celestial event helped millions of people to forget their problems for a few brief minutes and focus on something truly uplifting and awe-inspiring. Having seen glorious features of the sun that are normally invisible, some thought about the unseen but even more marvelous glory of its Creator, Jehovah God.



Add a Splash of COLOR

THERE is something very satisfying about the effect of a fresh coat of paint. In a room that looks dingy or faded, a splash of color can make all the difference. Would you like to brighten up a room or two in your home? If you have never tried to do your own painting before, you may find that it is easier than you think!

Let's go to work alongside Fernando, his wife, Dilma, and their eight-year-old daughter, Vanessa, as they repaint part of their home. Then we may be in a better position to do some painting ourselves. Before we put on our work clothes, though, let's learn something about choosing colors.

Choosing Colors

It is important to choose paint colors carefully. Color can do more than add



Color wheel

beauty to your home. It may even have an effect on your mood. Bright, shiny colors are more exciting, whereas pastels with nonreflective finishes are more likely to relax you.

A certain color may appear to be dark when applied to a wall inside a building, but the same color may look lighter outdoors. Fernando and Dilma have chosen wattle-blossom yellow and warm white for their home. Later we will see where they use them.

Notice the color wheel above. Colors that are directly opposite each other on the wheel are called complementary colors. They appear to gain in intensity when placed side by side. For a color scheme that is more conservative than adventuresome, choose various shades of the same color. This is called a monochromatic color scheme.

Before they get to work, our friends have some questions. Fernando would like to know what types of paint they will need, and Vanessa wonders how paint is made. So it seems a good idea to pay a visit to a local paint factory to see what we can find out.

How Paint Is Made

Gerard, the owner of the factory, has agreed to be our tour guide. One of the first things we see when we enter the paint factory is an enormous mixer churning away at the sticky paste contained in a 200-gallon bowl. Gerard shouts above the din: "Making paint is just like making a cake—all the ingredients are weighed out and blended."

"But what is the recipe for producing a modern paint?" we ask.



A paint maker's "kitchen"

"There are four basic ingredients," Gerard replies. "Pigments, binders, liquids, and special additives. This batch you see

being mixed has titanium dioxide as its base. This white pigment is dug from the earth and is now used in modern paints instead of lead." The mixture looks like flour used in baking.

Gerard continues: "The mixture is being sheared or ground to a fine paste along with a small amount of the binder—in this case, acrylic resin. When the paint maker is happy with the consistency, he will add the remaining resin, then liquids such as water or mineral spirits, and finally any special additives."

We want to know what sort of paint we will need for home maintenance. Our guide explains: "There are two basic types of house paint. Oil-based paints use such oils as linseed or a modified soybean oil as a binder, while water-based paints use vinyl or acrylic resins as a binder. Oil-based paints will dry very hard, so they are suitable for high-traffic areas, such as doors and wood trim. However, oil-based paints tend to yellow and become brittle with age. On the other hand, good-quality vinyls and acrylics hold their color well and have a less-offensive odor. Exterior 100-percent acrylics will also endure better in the heat of an Australian summer or the cold of a Canadian winter."

We hope to remember what Gerard has taught us. But he still has a little more to tell: "There are four basic sheen levels in both types of paint: gloss, satin, low sheen, and flat. Gloss is better where a hard-wearing surface is needed. Satin is

Wear protective gear for safety

good for bathrooms and hallways. A low-sheen or flat finish suits living areas well, and flat paint is most practical on ceilings." We thank Gerard for the enlightening tour and return to the house to begin the hard part of our project—preparing the surfaces to be painted.

Thorough Preparation Essential

The success of attractive and lasting paintwork depends to a great degree on how thoroughly the prepainting preparation is done. So it is time to roll up our sleeves and get ready for some hard work. Perhaps we'll pick up more helpful tips along the way. Fernando has two projects in mind—painting the dining room and the front fence. Let's tackle the inside job first.

After clearing the room of furniture, we put some old bedsheets on the floor. First, we need to scrape the old flaky paint from the window frame, the wood trim, and the ceiling. We will help Fernando with that job. Notice that he places his ladder on a level place on the floor. Additionally, he will take care never to stand on the very top rung of the ladder, which would greatly increase his chances of falling. The plaster walls are in quite good condition, but they will need to be washed down with water and detergent before they can be painted.

Next, we use a scraper to remove loose material from any cracks, which will then need to be filled. We'll use an acrylic gap sealant in the cracks around the window and skirting because this filler stays flexible and can cope with the movement between wood and plaster. Later, while Vanessa washes off the plastering tools, the rest of us will vigorously sand the surfaces of the woodwork and



Hints for Overcoming Some Common Problems

■ **MOLD:** Wash down with a solution of one part bleach and four parts water. Wear gloves and goggles. Recoat with a good acrylic paint, as mold grows more easily on oil-based paints. If available, use a fungicidal additive.

■ **WATER AND OTHER STAINS:** Repair leaks or remove the cause of the stain. Wash down with detergent and water. Coat with a stain-blocking primer or shellac, then undercoat.

■ **POWDERY SURFACES:** Dust off thoroughly. Apply a coat of a slow-drying sealer. Oil-based coatings tend to soak in and bind the particles down better than water-based sealers.

walls, using medium-grade sandpaper. This will remove any small lumps and also roughen the surface so that subsequent coats of paint will stick firmly.

Why are we wearing these funny-looking masks, you ask? As a safety precaution, to prevent paint and plaster dust from irritating our throats. Our goggles may not look very fashionable either, but when we are doing overhead work, they will protect our eyes from falling debris. Special care must be taken



when removing lead-based paints. (See the box "The Lead Menace" on this page.)

Finally, we dust the entire area down with a soft broom. Bare wood as well as patches on the plaster walls now need to be either undercoated or primed before the actual painting begins. This is to allow the top coats of paint to dry with an even sheen rather than sink into any patches in the wood caused by the sanding or previous painting. Once this is done, our room is prepared and ready for the actual painting to begin.

The fence, we notice, is made of bare wood. After giving the fence a thorough cleaning, we will need to cover all the nail heads with metal primer. This will prevent rust spots from bleeding through. Since the fence will be exposed to the elements, we will apply two or three coats of acrylic fence paint.

Well, that's enough for one day. With all our preparations complete, tomorrow we'll tackle the actual painting.

Out Come the Brushes

Today we will begin to reap the rewards of yesterday's hard preparatory work. First of all, we must make sure that the paint is well stirred before we start applying it. We have already thinned the acrylic wall paint with just a little water, about 5 percent of the volume. This helps the paint flow off the brush more easily. But we have to be careful not to add too much water. Otherwise, the paint will be too thin and the old color will show through the finished coats. For the edges of the walls and ceiling, we plan to use a broad paint brush. Then, we will use rollers to paint the big surfaces. This will speed up the work.*

We must remember to wipe excess paint off the brush on only one side of the paint can and to rest the handle on the clean side so that the handle and our hands will not be covered with paint. Finally, we must apply the rule, "Work from the top down." This means that we

The Lead Menace

The Environment Protection Agency of Australia has the following to say in the booklet *Lead Alert—Painting Your Home?*

- Even relatively low levels of lead in the blood can adversely affect the intellectual development and the behavior of young children.
- The risk to children under five is particularly acute, since their nervous system is still in the developing stage. Young children absorb up to 50 percent of the lead that enters their bodies, whereas adults absorb about 10 percent.
- If a child eats a lead-paint flake the size of a thumbnail, the level of lead in his blood will remain significantly elevated for several weeks.

will finish off the ceiling before starting on the walls. Then all we will need to do is wipe any spots of paint off the wood trim with a damp rag and coat the trim with the gloss oil-based paint we've chosen. Well done, everyone! The soft-yellow walls and warm-white wood trim look beautiful.

Now for the front fence. For this we plan to use a large brush to apply water-based paint to the fence palings. Three coats of paint should do a good job. An hour or so will be needed between coats for each to dry thoroughly, so we should be finished just before dark. Let's get started.

First, we thoroughly moisten the bristles of the brush and shake off any excess water. This improves the brush's ability to soak up the paint and prevents the paint from drying on the brush. We put plenty of paint on the brush and use good, long strokes. Rather than dab at the palings, we will concentrate on "pushing" the paint well into the grain of the wood.

Look at that! Our third coat is finished just as the sun is setting. The fence looks brand-new! We survey our work. Those two days of labor have been well worth the trouble. What a transformation! It certainly feels good to dress up the family home with a splash of color.

* Many use masking tape to help make straight lines when painting the edges around doorways, window frames, and other edges and corners.

Watching the World

What Makes a "Real Man"?

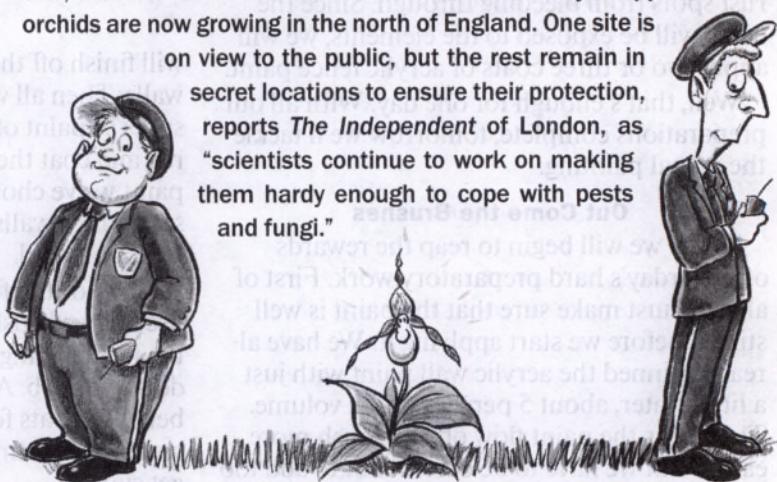
"Boys . . . still believe being good at sport, wearing the right labels and avoiding close friendships are signs of being a 'real man,' while working hard is 'unmasculine,'" reports the *Independent* newspaper of London. "Boys respect classmates who are dominant, in control and who swear a lot. Teenagers who failed to conform to the stereotype risked being bullied or labelled as gay." The survey of boys aged 11 to 14, conducted at 12 London schools by London University's Birkbeck College, revealed that the boys "admitted their 'macho act' often left them feeling isolated and afraid to express themselves," says the paper. Professor Stephen Frosh, who led the research, said: "Boys need positive messages that being a man doesn't have to mean being hard and bottling up your feelings."

Red Cross Called to Task

Shortly following the September 11 attacks, the American Red Cross was on the scene, soliciting donations of cash and blood. Some \$850 million in cash was given, and 400,000 units of blood collected. While collections were quick, disbursements were not. "The American Red Cross was slow to distribute relief funds to the families affected by the attacks," states *The Washington Times*. "Relief funds were being used for programs unrelated to September 11," and a large share was slated for "long-term needs, such as [a] blood-freezing program, counseling, and future attacks." With little need for the blood collected and its 42-day shelf life over,

Rare Orchid Saved From Extinction

For 50 years the only lady's-slipper orchid (*Cypripedium calceolus*) growing wild in Britain was kept under 24-hour guard to prevent its extinction. The beautiful maroon-and-yellow orchid was so highly prized by the Victorians and succeeding generations that by the 1950's, it had been "picked to death," and just one plant remained. Botanists tried to produce seedlings from this North Yorkshire plant, but its infrequent flowering made natural pollination impossible. However, in the early 1990's, scientists at Kew Gardens, London, discovered a method called micropropagation, which enabled them to cultivate new plants from seeds obtained by hand-pollinating the flowers. These plants were then transferred to their natural limestone habitats, with the result that between 200 and 300 lady's-slipper orchids are now growing in the north of England. One site is on view to the public, but the rest remain in secret locations to ensure their protection, reports *The Independent* of London, as "scientists continue to work on making them hardy enough to cope with pests and fungi."



the blood "is useless and must be burned," the article says. The news media reported that the Red Cross board, beset by heavy criticism, forced out its president and announced at the end of January 2002 that 90 percent of the funds gathered will go to victims of the disaster by September 11, 2002.

Deadly Natural Disasters

"Natural disasters caused at least 25,000 deaths worldwide in 2001, more than double the pre-

vious year," states a Reuters report. According to Munich Re, the world's largest reinsurer, the economic losses totaled \$36 billion—far more than those arising from the September 11 attacks in the United States. Two thirds of the 700 major disasters involved storms and floods. The extreme weather conditions are blamed on the continued change in global climate. "Forest fires in Australia, floods in Brazil and in Turkey, snow chaos in central and southern

Europe and a typhoon in Singapore, which was meteorologically seen as impossible, are all indications for a link between climate changes and a rise in weather catastrophes," the company said. It noted that 2001 was the second-warmest year since records started being kept 160 years ago. Earthquakes caused the most deaths—over 14,000 of them in January alone, which were the result of an earthquake that occurred in India. In all, 80 major earthquakes were counted during the year.

Rear Seat Belts Save Lives

"Passengers who fail to belt up in the back of cars are putting strapped-in front seat travellers at a fivefold greater risk of being killed in a crash," reports *The Guardian* of London. In a study of the records of more than 100,

000 car accidents over a five-year period in Japan, researchers at the University of Tokyo discovered that nearly 80 percent of the deaths of belted front-seat car occupants could have been avoided if rear-seat passengers had used seat belts. In a collision, unrestrained passengers are projected forward with such force that front-seat occupants are at much greater risk of being seriously injured or even crushed to death. Although wearing rear seat belts has been compulsory in Britain since 1991, surveys show that approximately 40 percent of adults there still fail to use them.

Air Pollution Hazard in Asia

"In India, over 40,000 people die every year due to air pollution," states the environmental magazine *Down to Earth*. Research conducted by the World

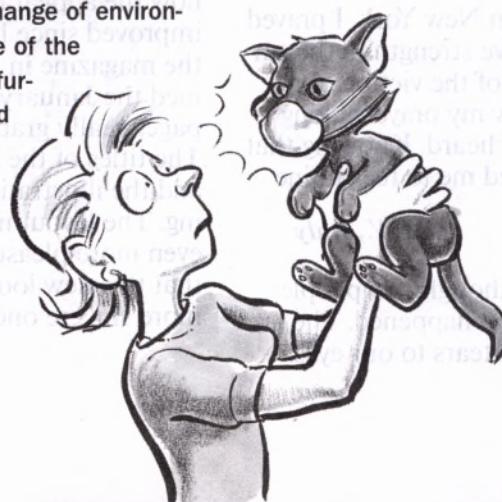
Bank and the Stockholm Environment Institute showed that air pollution in Asia far surpasses that of Europe and America combined and is responsible for thousands of deaths in Seoul, Beijing, Bangkok, Jakarta, and Manila. In Manila, for example, more than 4,000 people die each year of respiratory illnesses, while 90,000 suffer from severe chronic bronchitis. The mortality rate is even higher in Beijing and Jakarta. The problem is attributed to "the use of low quality fuel, inefficient methods of energy production, use of vehicles in poor condition and traffic congestion," says the magazine.

Capitalizing on the Change to Euros

With the changeover to the euro, the Italian Catholic Church has taken "advantage of the occasion offered by the funeral of the lira to remedy the shortfall in alms" by "rounding up its prices," says *Corriere della Sera*. The vicariate of Rome sent a circular to all its parishes to "touch up the 'price list.' The offering to have a mass held, which before was just 15,000 lire, goes up to 10 euros (19,363 lire). The maximum offering for a wedding, which before was 450,000 lire, goes up to 270 euros (523,000 lire)." The circular specifies, however, that "this figure refers to weddings performed for 'non-parishioners,' while for parishioners the size of the offering is discretionary, as it is for baptisms and funerals." Even so, parish priests in Rome still face the problem of often finding the collection boxes depressingly empty, perhaps as a result of "a certain avarice among the faithful, together with a fall in attendances," says the newspaper.

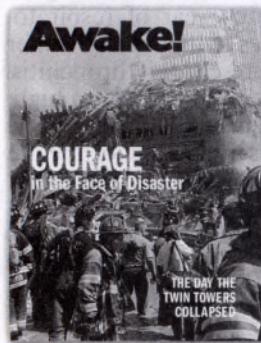
Allergic to Humans

"Many animals are allergic to humans," states the German newspaper *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. As reported there, the German Allergy and Asthma Association (DAAB) recently announced that "human company causes typical allergy symptoms, such as skin rashes or constant sneezing, in 1 pet out of 20." The causes, in most cases, are said to be fallen human skin scales and the excreta of the dust mites that feed on them. If a pet keeps scratching or licking itself or plucking its fur out when it does not have fleas, its owner has an indication that the pet is allergic to humans, and improvement in symptoms after a change of environment or in the absence of the pet's owner would be further evidence. Food and pollen were also said to trigger allergies in animals. DAAB noted, for example, an increase in the number of horses with hay fever in recent years.



From Our Readers

Courage Amid Disaster Thank you for the cover series "Courage in the Face of Disaster—The Day the Twin Towers Collapsed." (January 8, 2002) I was deeply moved by these articles, and they made me realize how time and unforeseen occurrence can affect any of us. I grieve when I think of the many lives that were lost.



S.B.R., Denmark

Thank you for publishing "Tatiana's Prayer." I had already been weeping while reading the cover series, but when I read this box, I cried out loud. I want to pray for the spiritual growth of the children who lost a parent in the terrorist attacks so that they will meet again with their parent in the new world. Also, by means of this article, I was able to deepen my appreciation that as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I have a bright hope for the future.

T.A., Japan

Even though I live in Germany, the events of September 11 were shocking to me and my family. Three months later, my nine-year-old daughter was still drawing pictures of a plane flying into a high-rise building. We are looking forward to the day when such tragedies will be a thing of the past.

E.G., Germany

When I saw what happened in New York, I prayed to Jehovah and asked him to give strength to the survivors and hope to the families of the victims. On reading these articles, I saw how my prayers along with those of many others were heard. Knowing that tragedy can come at any time led me to reexamine my life.

M.V., Italy

We especially appreciate the thoughts of people who personally experienced what happened. The statements of survivors brought tears to our eyes.

We ask Jehovah to help all who are afflicted and pray that by means of *Awake!* they might find consolation. Being young, we are encouraged by the questions that cause us to reflect on our way of life and on our priorities. Our wish is that you never stop publishing this magazine.

T.M. and A.P., Slovenia

I am a 14-year-old student in my third year of intermediate school. When I read this series, I understood the fear associated with the incident. I saw how people gave their lives to save others. I knew from listening to the news that many firemen had lost their lives, but I had never felt it so personally before. I cried when I read the box "Tatiana's Prayer." During my first year of intermediate school, I too lost my father, on account of sickness. The box made me think, 'Is the new world as real to me as it is to Tatiana?' I want to give this magazine to my teachers at school and many of my friends. Please continue to print these wonderful magazines!

H.T., Japan

New Design It is a pleasure to see how the appearance of *Awake!* has improved since I first began to read the magazine in 1978. When I examined the January 8, 2002, issue, the pages really grabbed my attention. The titles of the articles stand out, and the illustrations are breathtaking. The layout makes the reading even more pleasurable. I feel sure that this new look will attract many more sincere ones to Jehovah.

V.P.L., Brazil

Beloved Pet or Vicious Killer?

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN POLAND

A JOGGER is attacked by an aggressive dog and thereafter bleeds to death. A girl is killed by her own Rottweiler. Before his parents' eyes, a nine-year-old boy is fatally injured by a stray German shepherd. These are just a few of the tragedies that have been caused by purebred dogs in Poland.

To prevent such tragedies, some authorities permit people to keep certain dogs only after obtaining a certificate. Barbara Zaleska, a member of the Polish Kennel Association, argues that the certificate should be issued for the owner rather than for the dog "because it is the owner that decides whether mastiffs, Rottweilers, and bullterriers will turn into beasts or remain friends of humans."

In some cases dogs are deliberately trained to be killers. The methods of the trainers allegedly include beating, starvation, and even "killing practice," which involves training the dog to attack and tear apart dummies. Next, the dog is made to attack weaker dogs that are certain to be killed. When training is finished, the dog is ready to take part in actual dogfights, to the delight of gamblers and blood-thirsty fans.



The Bible plainly states God's view of cruelty to animals. It says: "The righteous one is caring for the soul of his domestic animal, but the mercies of the wicked ones are cruel." (Proverbs 12:10) Those who want to please God do not subject animals to sadistic mistreatment. We can be happy that in God's new world, the practice of training animals to be killers—for sport or for any other reason—will end.—Psalm 37:9-11.



THEY ALL ACCEPTED IT

At a school in Basel, Switzerland, a teacher announced that students had to prepare a talk of 10 to 15 minutes in length on any subject of their choice. Fifteen-year-old Rosi chose as her subject "Your Youth—Getting the Best Out of It."

"What kind of a subject is this?" classmates asked.

"Are you going to talk about drugs?"

"You will see," she replied.

At the conclusion of her talk, the students applauded. Then Rosi observed: "Fifteen minutes is really not enough time to tell about how to get the best out of one's youth." So she said: "I have a gift for all of you." She handed each student a copy of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, 20 books in all. They were wrapped neatly and marked with the name of each classmate.

All gratefully accepted the book and were later observed examining its contents, which include such chapters as: "How Can I Get My Folks to Give Me More Freedom?," "How Can I Make Real Friends?," "What Career Should I Choose?," "What About Sex Before Marriage?," and "How Do I Know If It's Real Love?"

