

# Awake!

APRIL 2012



**ALSO: WHY COMMEND  
OTHERS? PAGE 28**

## **SECRETS OF** **Successful** **Stepfamilies**



## THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF STEPFAMILIES

● According to stepfamily expert Dr. Patricia Papernow, trying to address stepfamily issues using a first-time family as a model is like “trying to navigate the streets of New York City using a map of Boston.”

The fact is, stepfamily challenges are not only unique but also greater than those faced by first-time families. In fact, psychologist William Merkel describes the stepfamily as “the most complex, unnatural and difficult set of relationships known to humankind.”

If it is that hard, how can a stepfamily ever succeed? The relationships in a stepfamily can be likened to the seams in a patchwork quilt. Even though the seams are weak when the stitching begins, when completed they can be as strong as the original fabric—if they are sewn carefully.

Let us consider some common challenges that stepfamilies face and the steps that have helped many to “stitch” their lives together. Then, we will meet four stepfamilies who have found success.

# Awake!

AVERAGE PRINTING 41,042,000  
PUBLISHED IN 84 LANGUAGES

## SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL STEPFAMILIES

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*"I expected to win my stepchildren's approval with lots of love and attention, but after eight years I'm still waiting."—Gloria.\**

## CHALLENGE 1: FAILED EXPECTATIONS

**S**TEPFAMILY marriages often begin with high expectations. Parents hope to avoid or to fix the mistakes made in a previous marriage and to find the love or security that has been missing. Some hopes may be little more than fantasies, but any that go unfulfilled cause stress. As the Bible says: "An expectation that drags on and on makes you sick at heart." (Proverbs 13:12, *Beck*) What if unmet expectations are making you heartsick?

\* Some names in this series have been changed.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Do not bottle up your feelings, hoping that the disappointment will go away. Instead, identify an unmet expectation that frustrates you. Next, determine why you hope for this, so you can understand why you cling to it. Finally, try to find a more realistic expectation for now. Here are some examples:

**1.** From the start, I will love my stepchildren and they will love me.

*Why?* I've always dreamed of being in a warm, close family.

*More realistic:* In time, our love for one another can grow. What matters now is that we can feel safe and respected in our family.

**2.** Everyone in the new family will adjust quickly.

*Why?* We're ready for a fresh start.

*More realistic:* Stepfamilies usually take between four and seven years to stabilize. Our issues are completely normal.

**3.** We won't argue about money.

*Why?* Our love will help us to avoid petty disputes.

*More realistic:* Financial issues related to our previous marriages are complex. We may not yet be ready to pool together all our money.



***A united stepfamily may seem like an impossible dream***



*"We adjusted quickly—everyone in the new stepfamily was comfortable right away."—Yoshito.*

*"It took about ten years before I was fully committed to the success of our stepfamily."  
—Tatsuki, stepson of Yoshito.*

## CHALLENGE 2:

# HOW TO UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER

**L**IKE Yoshito and Tatsuki, stepfamily members may not really understand each other. Why is this significant? As problems arise, you may want to act quickly to solve them. But to act *effectively*, you must first understand your family.

It is important to consider how you communicate, since speech can tear down as well as build up. As the Bible says: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." (Proverbs 18: 21) How can you use your tongue to build understanding rather than stifle it?

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Be curious and empathetic about one another's feelings rather than judgmental. For example:

If your son says, "I miss Dad," acknowledge his loss. Instead of saying, "But your stepdad loves you and is better to you than your father," try this: "It really must be hard. Tell me, what do you miss the most about your dad?"

Instead of accusing your new spouse by saying, "Your son wouldn't be so rude if you had been a better parent," share how you feel. Try this: "Could you please remind Luke to say hello to me when he comes home? It would really help me."

- Use time together for meals, recreation, and worship to learn about one another.

- Have regular family meetings with everyone present. Allow each member to speak without interruptions, starting with something good about the new family, followed by a concern. Show respect even if you disagree, and let anyone offer a solution.



***Listen carefully in order to understand each one's feelings and concerns***

**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.

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

*Awake!* (ISSN 0005-237X) is published monthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299. © 2012 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Printed in Canada.



*"My wife and her children huddle together and then gang up on me. I'm the outsider, an intruder."  
—Walt.*

## CHALLENGE 3: HOW TO BRING "OUTSIDERS" IN

**T**HE fear of being an outsider in your own family can be at the root of seemingly unrelated problems. For example:

- Children who got along fine with a prospective stepparent before the marriage tend to struggle afterward.
- A stepparent feels jealous of a six-year-old child.
- Big arguments erupt about apparently trivial household matters.

This issue affects biological parents too, since they can feel pressured if the stepfamily appears to be coming apart at the seams. As Carmen put it, "Being stuck in the middle between my husband and my two children is very hard."

The Golden Rule provides the key to meeting this challenge. Jesus said: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matthew 7:12) How can stepfamilies bring everyone inside without pushing anyone out?

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Put your marriage first. (Genesis 2:24) Spend time with your new spouse, and make his or her status in the family clear to your children. For instance, fathers could say something like this to their children even before they remarry: "I love Anna, and she will be my wife. I know you will be polite to her."
- Schedule time alone with each of your children. Setting aside a specific time shows how important they are to you and will reassure them of your love.
- Spend time alone with each stepchild so you can build your relationship without the parent serving as a referee.
- Allow children to "join" the family without renouncing their previous family. It is usually best not to require stepchildren to use terms of endearment such as "Mom" or "Dad." Older children may at first be uncomfortable using words like "family" or "we" for the stepfamily.
- Give each child household chores, a seat at the table, and a space of their own in the home. This includes those who stay with you only part-time.
- Consider either moving into a new residence or adjusting the existing home, so that new members do not feel like intruders.

**LANGUAGES:** Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional)<sup>°</sup> (audio Mandarin only), Chitonga, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech,<sup>°</sup> Danish,<sup>°</sup> Dutch,<sup>°</sup> English,<sup>°</sup> Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,<sup>°</sup> French,<sup>°</sup> Georgian, German,<sup>°</sup> Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,<sup>°</sup> Japanese,<sup>°</sup> Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Korean,<sup>°</sup> Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,<sup>°</sup> Polish,<sup>°</sup> Portuguese,<sup>°</sup> Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian,<sup>°</sup> Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,<sup>°</sup> Swahili, Swedish,<sup>°</sup> Tagalog,<sup>°</sup> Tamil, Thai, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

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*"When I try to discipline Carmen's children, she consoles them instead of supporting me."—Pablo.*

*"I feel cut to the heart when Pablo treats my children harshly."  
—Carmen.*

## CHALLENGE 4: DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN

**W**HY might childrearing cause conflict in a stepfamily? Discipline may have become lax in a single-parent family. When a step-parent joins the family, the emotional attachment to the children may not be fully formed. The result? The step-parent may think the parent is too soft on the children, while the biological parent thinks the stepparent is too hard on them.

The Bible recommends balance in rearing children: "Do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah [God]." (Ephesians 6:4) The focus here is on training your child's thinking rather than on merely controlling his behavior. At the same time, parents are encouraged to be kind and loving so that their discipline does not become a source of irritation.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Establish house rules, starting with those you already have. Consider the benefit of such rules in the following scenario:

*Stepmother: Jennifer, the house rule is no texting until your homework is finished.*

*Jennifer: You're not my mother.*

*Stepmother: That's right, Jen, but I am the parent in charge tonight, and the rule is no texting until your homework is finished.*

- Avoid creating many rules or changing routines too quickly. What seems like a simple request to a stepparent can be a burden to a child who feels that his entire world has already been turned upside down. Of course, some new rules may be essential, such as a household privacy policy and a dress code, especially if there are older children in the stepfamily.

- Discuss disagreements in private, not in front of the children. Focus on the child's specific behavior rather than on some supposed flaw in earlier training.

***If there is a disagreement,  
parents should resolve the  
matter in private***



## STEPFAMILY SUCCESS PROFILES

### NO LONGER JUST HOUSEMATES

*Philip's 20-year-old daughter, Elise, was living at home and had taken on many household duties. After Philip married Louise, could stepmother and stepdaughter build a good relationship?*

**Louise:** We had a very hard time at first. I am quite a homebody and wanted to ensure that I was the housewife.

**Elise:** Louise reorganized the house and threw out a lot of our stuff. I tidied up once but put some things in the wrong place, since I didn't know where they went anymore. This upset Louise, she and I said some angry words, and I couldn't speak to her for a week.

**Louise:** At one point, I told Elise, "I don't know where we go from here, but I can't live in this atmosphere." She came to me later that evening and apologized. I gave her a hug, and we both cried.

**Elise:** Louise left some pictures of mine hanging on the wall, and Dad did not remove the lights that I put in the living room. It may sound petty, but their leaving these things really helped me to feel that my home had not completely disappeared. I am also grateful for the way Louise looks after my little brother when he's with us. It's been two years now, and I am starting to think of her as a real member of the family.

**Louise:** I feel that rather than being just housemates, Elise and I are now also good friends.





## STEPFAMILY SUCCESS PROFILES

### “UNITY IS MORE IMPORTANT”

*Anton and Marelize each brought three children into their stepfamily when they married six years ago.*

**Anton:** We do things like camping trips as a family, and we spend time with each child individually. It took us a few years to really settle in, but most of our family issues are sorted out now.

**Marelize:** We feel that it's important to view the children as “ours,” not “yours and mine.” I remember once making a fuss when I felt that Anton unfairly disciplined one of my boys and gave his daughter the preferred seat in the car. I learned that family unity is more important than sitting in the front seat. We try to be fair even though we cannot treat everyone exactly the same.

I also avoid talking about exciting times from our previous family, since those who weren't there will feel like outsiders. Instead, I express gratitude for the family we now have.



### “COMMENDATION FIRST”

*Francis married Cecelia four years ago. Their household includes her three adult children and his teenage son.*

**Francis:** I try to be approachable and to avoid taking offense easily. We regularly share meals together and use this time for family discussion. I also encourage everyone to care for some household chores, since these benefit the entire family.

**Cecelia:** I spend time with each of our children and listen to their fears and frustrations. In our family meetings, we try to give commendation first and then encouragement for improvement. And when I make mistakes, I acknowledge these and make a sincere apology.





## RAISED BY TWO STEPPARENTS

*Yuki, aged 20, has not seen his father since he was five years old. His mother later married Tomonori, but she died when Yuki was ten years old. Five years later, after his stepfather Tomonori married Mihoko, Yuki found himself living with two stepparents.*

**Yuki:** When my stepfather decided to remarry, I thought, “I don’t need a stepmother. I’ve already had enough changes in my family.” I refused to accept the situation and treated her coldly.

**Mihoko:** Even though my husband did not pressure me to love his stepson as he did, I resolved to try to build a relationship with Yuki. We did our best to maintain his routine, including spiritual activities, recreation, and a meal each evening with conversation afterward. I also understood him much better after we talked about his losing his mother in death.

When I became pregnant, we were concerned about Yuki and wanted him to feel secure about his place in the family. We had Yuki feed and bathe the baby and change his diaper, and we commended Yuki in front of others for his help. Little Itsuki is quite attached to Yuki. Before he learned the words for “papa” or “mom,” he knew how to say *niinii*—big brother.

**Yuki:** As a stepchild, it is natural to feel alone and left out. You can try to explain your situation to others, but they can’t seem to understand. I am happy to say, though, that fellow Christians have been a true support. Now the wariness I felt toward my stepmother is gone. She gives me good advice, and I can speak to her from my heart.



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**Be patient! Stepfamilies can be happy and successful**

# Curious Creatures

## OF TASMANIA'S WILDERNESS

**B**Y DAY, the wilderness is tranquil and quiet. But at night, spine-chilling growls and screams echo through the forest. The source of the screeching? A feisty marsupial with an unfortunate name—the **Tasmanian devil**. These sturdy animals can look and sound incredibly fierce, especially when dining on a carcass. Yet their rowdy bickering is mostly bluff.

These devils can clear the forest of carrion with amazing speed. Their powerful jaws and teeth can devour almost any carcass—skin, bones, and all. In fact, a devil can eat up to 40 percent of its body weight in half an hour—a feat comparable to a human devouring a 55-pound (25 kg) steak at one sitting!

Far more endearing is the gentle **common wombat**, a stocky animal with a cuddly appearance. Like all marsupials, female wombats have pouches and suckle their young. Yet, unlike their relatives' pouches, those of the wombat face backward, doubtless to keep baby clean while mother scoops out their burrows. Wombats also have teeth that never stop growing—a boon for them, since they use their teeth to gnaw through underground obstacles. Despite their ponderous appearance, common wombats are surprisingly dexterous and can delicately pick up vegetation with their front feet and place it in their mouth.

© J & C Sohns/age fotostock





**Common wombat**

Another strange creature is the **platypus**. This odd-looking creature has a bill and webbed feet like a duck, a body and fur like an otter, and a tail like a beaver. It lays eggs like a chicken, burrows like a wombat, and suckles its young like a mother bear. Little wonder that the first scientist to examine one suspected that it was a hoax!

Why do such encounters delight us so? Surely it is because our Creator wants them to. The Bible reveals that he told the first human couple to “have in subjection . . . every living creature that is moving upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28) When we observe such animals in the wild, does it not stimulate our desire to live up to that assignment?

**Platypus**



## IN THE SHADOW OF GIANTS

When it comes to size, few living things are as impressive as Tasmania's big trees. The tallest are the mountain ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*), flowering plants that typically grow to about 250 feet (75 m). The tallest living specimen is 326.8 feet (99.6 m) in height, just 52.5 feet (16 m) shorter than the world's tallest tree, a redwood in California, U.S.A.

Another wilderness native, the Huon pine, is only half the size of the average mountain ash, but it can live up to six times longer. Some scientists estimate that Huon pines can live for over 3,000 years, making them one of the longest-living trees on earth. This “prince” of Tasmanian timber is highly prized by furniture makers and boat builders. Its creamy yellow wood is easy to work with and contains an essential oil that is a natural preservative and insect repellent. Some logs salvaged from forest floors are still usable after lying there for hundreds of years.

Wombat and platypus: Tourism Tasmania; giant tree: Tourism Tasmania and George Apostolides



# THE TITANIC

## “THE MOST FAMOUS SHIP IN HISTORY”

**W**HAT kind of ship was the *Titanic*? What caused it to sink? A visit to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, near Belfast in Northern Ireland, helps to provide answers to those questions.

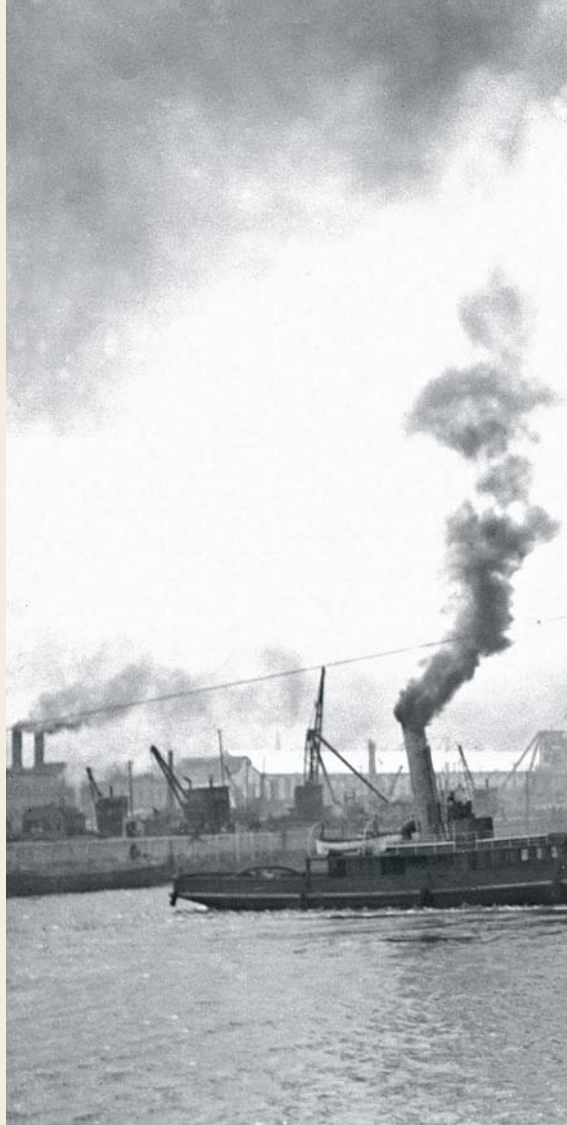
### The *Titanic*—Why Special?

According to Michael McCaughan, former curator of the Folk and Transport Museum, the *Titanic* is “the most famous ship in history.” But the *Titanic* was not unique. It was the second of three huge vessels constructed in the shipbuilding yards of Harland and Wolff in Belfast.\* The *Titanic* was one of the largest ships of its day, measuring 882.8 feet (269 m) in length and 92.5 feet (28 m) in width.

The White Star shipping line commissioned those huge liners to gain dominance in the lucrative North Atlantic shipping routes. The White Star Line could not compete with its rival, the Cunard Line, for speed. So it concentrated on building bigger and more luxurious vessels to attract the rich and famous.

But the *Titanic* had potential to serve another purpose as well. “Nearly 900,000 immigrants entered the United States each year between 1900 and 1914,” says William Blair, head of National Museums Northern Ireland. Carrying them from Europe to the United States provided transatlantic shipping companies with their largest source of income, and the *Titanic* was to be used for that purpose.

\* The *Titanic* was preceded by the *Olympic* and followed by the *Britannic*.



The “*Titanic*” under construction





**APRIL 10, 1912:** The *Titanic* leaves Southampton, England, bound for New York, U.S.A.



**The “Titanic’s” propellers**



**Workers leaving the shipyards of Harland and Wolff in Belfast, Ireland**



**E. J. Smith, captain of the “Titanic” (right), along with chief purser Herbert McElroy**

© Courtesy CSU Archive/age fotostock

## The Tragedy

The captain of the *Titanic*, E. J. Smith, knew the dangers posed by ice in the North Atlantic. He had often sailed this route in the *Olympic*. Several warnings of icebergs were sent by other ships, but some of these were overlooked or apparently not received.

Suddenly the *Titanic*’s lookouts warned of an iceberg ahead—but too late! The officer on duty managed to avoid a head-on collision but could not prevent the *Titanic* from scraping along the edge of the iceberg. That damaged the ship’s hull—and the sea flooded into a number of its forward compartments. Captain Smith soon learned that his ship was doomed. He sent out SOS messages and ordered that the lifeboats be lowered.

The *Titanic* had 16 lifeboats and four other collapsible boats. At full capacity, they could hold about 1,170 people. But there were some 2,200 passengers and crew on board! To make



**APRIL 11:** After picking up passengers in Cherbourg, France, and in Queenstown (now called Cobh), Ireland, the *Titanic* heads out into the Atlantic.





matters worse, many of the boats pulled away before being fully loaded. And most of them made no attempt to search for possible survivors who had leaped into the sea. In the end, only 705 people were saved!

### The Aftermath

After the *Titanic* disaster, maritime authorities enacted regulations that improved safety



**APRIL 14:** At about 11:40 p.m., the *Titanic* collides with an iceberg.



**APRIL 15:** At 2:20 a.m., the *Titanic* sinks, resulting in the loss of some 1,500 lives.

at sea. One such regulation ensured that there would be enough lifeboats on future voyages for everyone on board a ship.

For years people believed that the *Titanic* sank so quickly because it sustained a huge gash in its hull at the time of its ill-fated collision. In 1985, however, after the discovery of the *Titanic* on the ocean floor, investigators reached a different conclusion—that the icy waters had compromised the ship's steel, causing it to become brittle and to fracture. Less than three hours after the collision, the ship broke in two and sank, earning its place as one of the greatest disasters in nautical history.\*

\* Read a *Titanic* survivor's account in *Awake!* of October 22, 1981, pages 3-8.



# MEDIEVAL MASTERS of Astronomy

**T**HROUGHOUT history people have been struck with awe as they gazed at the sun, the moon, and the stars. By studying the positions and movements of those celestial bodies, man has been able to mark the passing of days, months, and years.

The Arabs were one of many peoples who studied the night sky. The golden age of science in the Middle East began in the ninth century C.E., and Arabic-speaking astronomers of that era were regarded as masters of astronomy. Their achievements played a crucial role in the development of this fascinating science. Let us see how.

## Pioneers of Astronomy

During the seventh and eighth centuries C.E., Islam expanded west from Arabia across North Africa and into Spain and east as far as Afghanistan. Scholars in this vast area drew on a legacy of scientific research from Persia and Greece, which was largely influenced by Babylon and Egypt.

*A 16th-century illustration depicting Ottoman astronomers using methods established by Arab scholars*





Then, during the ninth century, important scientific texts were translated into Arabic, including the works of Greek astronomer Ptolemy.\* The Abbasid, whose dynasty stretched from Afghanistan to the Atlantic Ocean, acquired Sanskrit texts from India, which contained a wealth of information about mathematics, astronomy, and the other sciences.

Islam prized knowledge of astronomy. Why? One reason was related to their worship. Muslims believe that they should face Mecca when they pray, and astronomers could pinpoint the direction of Mecca from any location. By the 13th century, some mosques even employed a professional astronomer, or *muwaqqit*, who helped worshippers pray in what they considered to be the proper manner. With their data, astronomers could also determine the dates of religious events and practices, such as the period of fasting during the month of Ramadan. Additionally, they could help pilgrims traveling to Mecca ascertain the length of their journey and plan the most efficient route.

### Government Funding

By the early ninth century, in Baghdad, the study of astronomy was part of every scholar's education. Caliph al-Ma'mūn established an observatory there, and then another near Damascus. His staff of geographers and mathematicians analyzed, compared, and reconciled data received from the Persian, Indian, and Greek astronomical traditions. Observatories were also built in a number of other Middle Eastern cities.†

The scholars who worked in those centers achieved remarkable results for their day. For example, as early as 1031, Abu Rayhan al-Bīrūnī mentioned the possibility that planets revolve in elliptical orbits rather than circular ones.

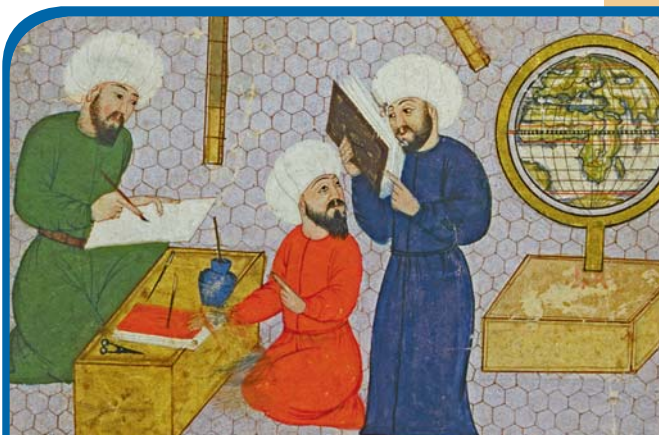
\* The Greeks had already determined that the earth is spherical. How else, they reasoned, could the North Star appear lower in the sky as a person traveled south?

† The establishment of those observatories was often prompted by a ruler's interest in astrology.

### Measuring the Earth

The expansion of Islam stimulated interest in mapmaking and navigation. Cartographers strove for great accuracy in their measurements, and they often achieved it. With the goal of precision and to establish degrees of latitude for the world map he was producing, caliph al-Ma'mūn sent two teams of surveyors into the Syrian desert. Armed with astrolabes, measuring rods, and cords, the teams walked in opposite directions until they observed a one-degree change in the elevation of the North Star. They reckoned that the distance traveled corresponded to one degree of latitude, or 1/360 of the earth's circumference. They calculated the polar circumference to be 23,220 miles (37,369 km)—quite close to the true figure of 24,860 miles (40,008 km)!

Middle Eastern observatories possessed an impressive array of sophisticated equipment—astrolabes, quadrants, sextants, sundials, and other instruments that were used



**Astronomers kept records of planetary motion in an increasing number of almanacs compiled throughout Islamic lands**

to study and track celestial bodies. Some of these devices were huge. The builders reasoned that the greater the size of the instrument, the better the precision.

**The Legacy of Medieval Astronomers**

The achievements of these medieval masters of astronomy were impressive. They cataloged and illustrated the constellations, named the stars, designed more-accurate calendars, measured eclipses, and continued to refine tables to chart celestial movements. They could pinpoint the positions of the sun, moon, and five visible planets at any time of the day or night—an invaluable aid in navigation. They could also tell time and maintain a calendar by observing the positions of heavenly bodies.

The theories that Arabic-speaking astronomers developed to explain planetary movement came close to resolving the inconsistencies they found in Ptolemy’s model of the universe. What they lacked was the understanding that the sun, not the earth, lay at the center of planetary orbits. Even so, they charted star movements with unprecedented accuracy, and their findings proved invaluable to successive generations of astronomers the world over.

Celestial globe, 1285 C.E.



Pages from an Arabic manuscript of constellations, written by astronomer ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Sufi, about 965 C.E.

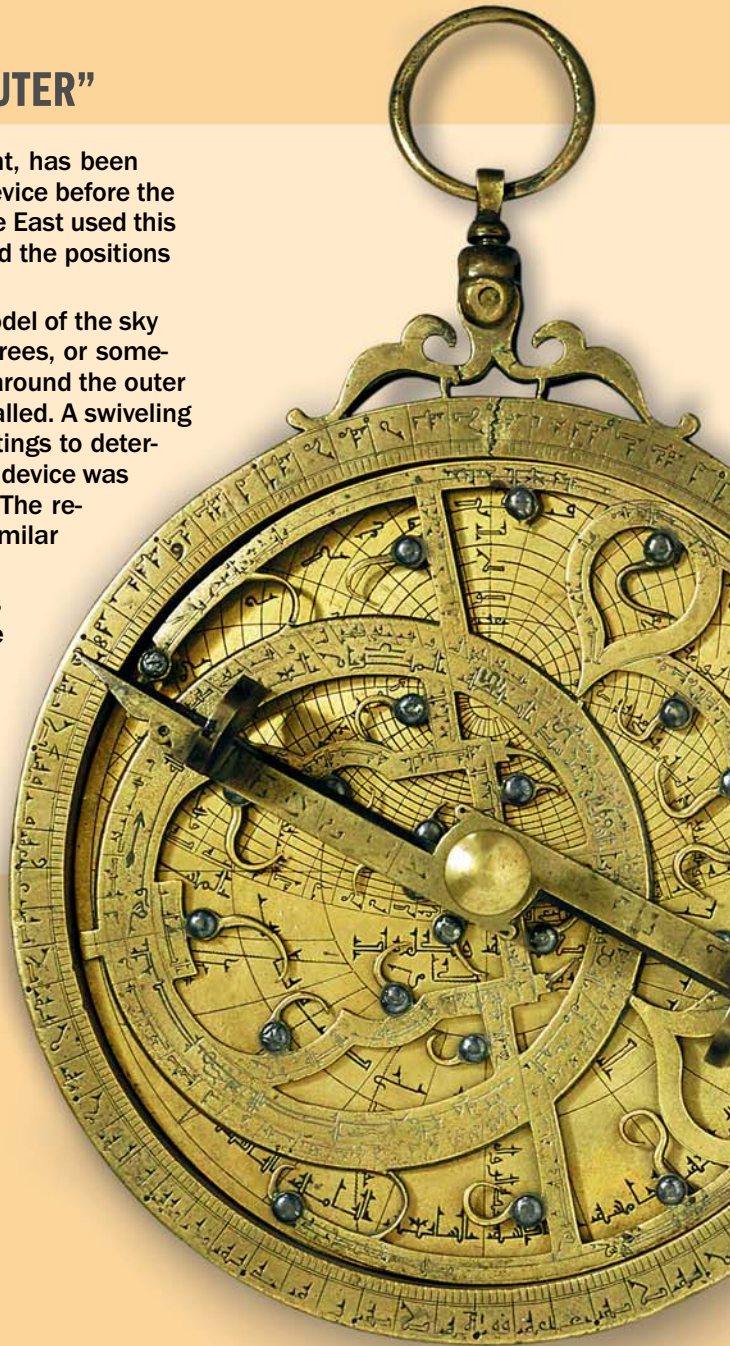


## AN ANCIENT “POCKET COMPUTER”

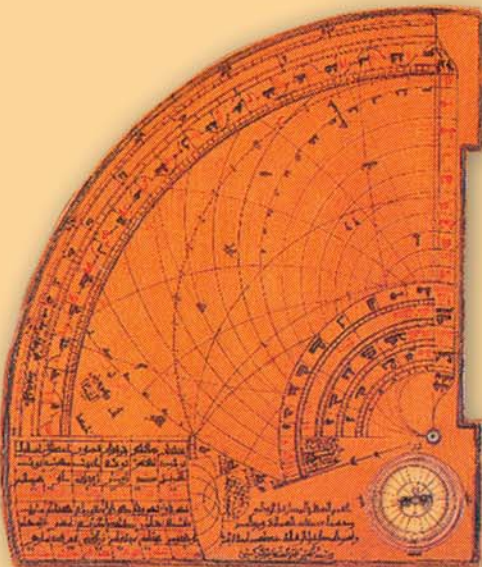
The astrolabe, predecessor of the sextant, has been called “the most important astronomical device before the telescope.” Medieval scientists in the Middle East used this device to solve problems related to time and the positions of heavenly bodies.

The astrolabe consisted of an elegant model of the sky projected onto a polished metal plate. Degrees, or sometimes the hours of the day, were inscribed around the outer rim of the base on which the plate was installed. A swiveling pointer (the alidade) was used to take sightings to determine the elevation of a given star when the device was held aloft and suspended at arm’s length. The results were then read off scaled markings, similar to those on a slide rule.

The versatile astrolabe enabled its users to identify stars, predict the times of sunrise and sunset for any given day, determine the direction of Mecca, survey land, calculate the height of objects, and navigate. It was the “pocket computer” of its day.

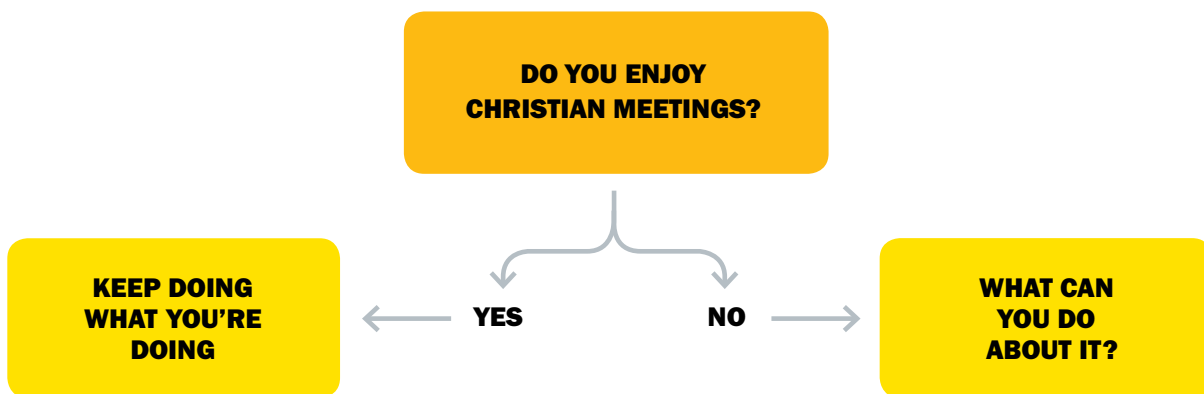


▶ A 13th-century astrolabe



◀ A 14th-century astrolabe quadrant

# Why go to Christian meetings?



**T**HE Bible commands Christians to gather together for worship. (Hebrews 10:25) But what if you just don't enjoy being there? What if you find yourself daydreaming about what you *could* be doing if you were somewhere else—*anywhere* else? Make adjustments by trying out one or more of the suggestions on the following pages.

## 1. BE REGULAR

**Key scripture:** “Some people have gotten out of the habit of meeting for worship, but we must not do that.”—Hebrews 10:25, *Contemporary English Version*.

Why would you want to be regular at something that you don't seem to enjoy? Simply put, because that's how you'll learn to enjoy it! Think of it this way: How good could you become at a sport—and how much would you enjoy it—if you showed up for practice only *occasionally*? The same principle applies

to Christian meetings. The more you attend, the more in shape you'll feel spiritually. That, in turn, will make you want to keep coming back!—Matthew 5:3.

**Tips:** After each meeting, tell at least one speaker what you appreciated about his presentation. Write in a journal one benefit you received by attending the meeting. And since much of the material at meetings is about the Christian ministry, make it your goal to improve in talking to others about your faith. It will make the information discussed at meetings more relevant to you.

*“I was trained from a young age that meetings are not optional. Even when I was a child, it never occurred to me that I could just miss them. This attitude has stayed with me even until now.”—Kelsey.*

**The bottom line:** Those who are regular in attendance enjoy meetings more—and get more out of them!



## 2. PAY ATTENTION

**Key scripture:** “Pay attention to how you listen.”—Luke 8:18.

Researchers say that by the end of the day, the typical listener at a presentation forgets about 60 percent of what he or she has heard. If your money disappeared as quickly as that, wouldn't you do something to try to hold on to it?

**Tips:** Sit with your parents near the front of the auditorium, where you are less likely to be distracted. Take notes. While not everyone

has the same learning style, taking notes can keep your attention focused on the speaker—and they're great for later review.

*“I used to have a hard time paying attention at meetings, but I've improved. I try to remember why I'm there. It's not just a ritual, like going to church. I go to meetings to worship and to learn—to take away something that I can apply in my life.”—Kathleen.*

**The bottom line:** Going to a meeting and not paying attention is like going to a banquet and not eating.

## YOU ARE INVITED!

Would you like to

- Learn the truth about God?
- Become a better person?
- Find the best type of friends?

The meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses can help you to do those things—and more! Twice each week, Jehovah's Witnesses gather for worship at their Kingdom Halls. No collections are taken, and visitors are always welcome.

Don't miss out! The Kingdom Halls aren't like any church you've been to. At the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses, emphasis is placed on Bible education, and you will learn how God's Word can help you to have the best life ever!—Deuteronomy 31:12; Isaiah 48:17.



**Sai**—*When I first walked into the Kingdom Hall, I was surprised that there were no idols, that no one was dressed as a priest, and that no one asked me to give money. Everyone welcomed me, and I felt safe. What was discussed at the meeting was easy to understand, and it made sense. This was the truth that I had been looking for!*

**Deyanira**—*I was 14 years old when I first went to a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses. I was welcomed by everyone immediately. It seemed it really mattered to them that I was there, and they were genuinely interested in me. Because of that positive first experience, I wasn't shy about going back!*



### 3. GET INVOLVED

**Key scripture:** “People learn from one another, just as iron sharpens iron.”—Proverbs 27:17, *Good News Translation*.

As a young person, you play a vital role at congregation meetings. Never underestimate the value of your presence and your participation, whether by offering a comment during a question-and-answer segment or by associating with fellow believers.

**Tips:** Make it a goal to offer at least one comment during a question-and-answer presentation. Volunteer to help out with cleanup or other work that needs to be done before, during, or after the meeting. Strike up a conversation with someone you don’t usually get a chance to talk to.

*“During my mid-teens, I made myself available to carry microphones and set up the platform at the meetings. Having those responsibilities made me feel needed, and it compelled me to be there and to be on time. That helped me to take a deeper interest in spiritual things.”*  
—Miles.

**The bottom line:** Don’t just sit there—do something! Being a participant is always more rewarding than being merely a spectator.

More articles from the “Young People Ask” series can be found at the Web site [www.watchtower.org/ype](http://www.watchtower.org/ype)

Find out what material will be covered at the next congregation meeting. Choose one part of the program that interests you and . . .

 CUT AND COPY

Complete the following **before** attending the meeting.



**Name of part:**



**What I would like to know about this topic:**

Complete the following **after** the part has been presented.

**What I learned:**



**What I can tell the speaker that I enjoyed about his presentation:**





## Primping for Childbirth

Social media are affecting how mothers announce that they have given birth. While their grandmothers sent telegrams, “new moms are sharing the happy news over the Internet,” says a report by the American TV channel ABC. The announcement often includes photographs of mother and child soon after childbirth. The new generation of appearance-conscious women are thus having prenatal beauty treatments, including facials, manicures, and pedicures. “Some will even arrange to have a hairdresser accompany them to the hospital,” says the report. Why? To look good for their delivery, explains Toni Golen, medical director of labor and delivery at Boston’s Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

## Stay Active, Stay Healthy

Prolonged physical inactivity at work, at school, or in front of the TV is linked to chronic disease, say researchers. “As you sit, the activity of lipoprotein lipase, the enzyme that allows muscles to draw fat circulating in the blood and burn it off, drops precipitously,” says the *Vancouver Sun*. According to that newspaper, “we need more than heart-pounding bouts” of cardiovascular exercise to stay healthy. “We need regular, constant light to moderate activity in order to keep the metabolism functioning.”



“Before computers, it was nearly impossible [for botanists] to exhaustively search the literature before naming a new species, so **duplicates started to pile up.**” It has now been determined that of the million or so names listed, at least 477,601 are synonyms.

—SCIENCE, U.S.A.

“**Only 6 percent of Chinese people see themselves as happy.**” In a survey, some 39 percent of respondents believe that “the principal factor affecting happiness” is “wealth.”—CHINA DAILY, CHINA.

“**A probe . . . into the authenticity of Russia’s crime statistics found ‘mass falsification’ of figures across the country.**” Law enforcement agencies stand accused of seeking to “embellish the real crime picture” and of presenting inflated resolution rates.—RIA NOVOSTI, RUSSIA.

“**One in three university students in the German capital [Berlin] would consider sex work** [which includes prostitution and erotic dancing] as a means to finance their education.”—REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, GERMANY.

## The Elephant's Trunk



● Researchers are developing a robotic arm with improved dexterity and flexibility. The head of corporate design at the company developing the device says that the new arm “goes far beyond anything currently available in industrial automation.” What was the source of inspiration? “The nature of the elephant’s trunk,” he says.

**Consider:** Weighing some 300 pounds (140 kg), the elephant’s trunk has been called “the most versatile and useful appendage on the planet.” The multi-purpose tool can serve as a nose, a straw, an arm, or a hand. With it, the elephant can breathe, smell, drink, grab, or even trumpet a deafening blast!

But that is not all. The elephant’s trunk has some 40,000 muscle fibers that allow it to move in any direction. Using the tip of its trunk, the elephant can pick up a small coin. At the same time, the elephant can use its trunk to lift loads of up to some 600 pounds (270 kg)!

Researchers hope that imitating the dexterous properties of the elephant’s trunk will help them develop superior robots for both domestic and industrial use. “We have created a completely new assistance system compared to conventional robots,” says a representative from the company mentioned earlier, “which for the first time enables humans and machines to work together efficiently and without danger.”

**What do you think?** Did the elephant’s trunk develop by means of evolution? Or was it designed?







# Can They Be Saved From **EXTINCTION?**

*Brown kiwi*

**I**N 2002, the United Nations announced the goal that by the end of the decade, the rate at which species are becoming extinct and ecosystems are being damaged would be reduced. In conjunction with that goal, 2010 would be the International Year of Biodiversity.

Sadly, when that year arrived, the goal was nowhere near to being reached. “As a direct result of human activity,” reported the BBC, “species are becoming extinct at a rate 1,000 times greater than the natural average.” The *New Zealand Herald* was even more specific, stating: “One in five plants, one in five mammals, one in seven birds and one in three amphibians are now globally threatened with extinction.” An aspect of the problem becomes evident when we examine what happened over the centuries in New Zealand.

## **Biodiversity in New Zealand**

Before New Zealand was inhabited by humans, its ecosystem flourished. Early settlers, however, introduced species that had a devastating effect on native wildlife. For example, the Maori brought dogs across the Pacific and perhaps the kiore (or Polynesian rat), which was used as food.

Then, in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Europeans arrived, and they brought with them ship rats, mice, and

**Currently, 9 out of 10  
kiwi chicks do not  
survive one year**

**ANSWERS TO  
PAGES 30 AND 31**

**1.** Jesus used a whip, not a sword. **2.** Men were selling cattle and sheep, not pigs. **3.** Men were selling doves, not owls. **4.** The money changers had coins, not paper bills. **5.** 720,000. **6.** C.



cats—the latter of which quickly became feral. The Europeans also released goats, pigs, and deer to provide food. During the 19th century, they imported the brush-tailed possum and the rabbit—for meat and fur—with no thought of how these creatures would affect the trees, birds, and vegetation.

By the 1860's, the rabbit population was getting out of control, so the stoat was brought in. However, the stoats preferred to feast on the much slower and more vulnerable native birds. As a result, the rabbit population continued to flourish.

Today, as a result of the cumulative effects of mammal pests, New Zealand's Department of Conservation reports that currently 9 out of 10 brown kiwi chicks born in the wild will die before they are a year old. Already many species have been completely lost: birds, more than 40; frogs, 3; bats, 1; and lizards, at least 3—as well as numerous insect species. More than half the 5,819 native plants and animals of New Zealand are classified as at risk, making the country's wildlife among the most threatened on the planet.

#### Positive Efforts

Government agencies are now keenly vigilant to prevent harmful plant and animal species from entering New Zealand. Additionally, the Department of Conservation has completed scores of pest-eradication schemes, especially on islands, and it has also created wildlife sanctuaries.

One of the restored islands is Tiritiri Matangi, off the coast of Auckland's Whangaparaoa Peninsula. Cleared of rats in 1993 and replanted with some 280,000 native trees, the area is now a controlled open sanctuary where visitors can listen to and see native bird species that have been reintro-

## MAKING WISE USE OF RESOURCES

A challenge faced by conservationists globally is the growing list of species facing extinction versus the limited resources available to tackle the problem. One approach has been dubbed conservation triage, which draws on the established principle of

prioritization practiced in hospital emergency wards the world over. Also called ecological triage, this approach attempts to direct resources toward the best outcomes, considering such factors as **(1)** the perceived value of a species or habitat,

**(2)** the chances of success of the action proposed, and **(3)** the costs involved. While not everyone agrees with this approach, proponents say it helps make the best use of limited resources, putting the attention where the best results will be achieved.



duced, including the rare saddleback, takahe, kokako, rifleman, and stitchbird. Thriving in a predator-free environment, these beautiful creatures often allow visitors to enjoy a close-up view.

In 2003, sub-Antarctic Campbell Island was declared rat free after a two-year program of eradication. Since then, native flora are recovering and seabirds are returning. Even the Campbell Island teal—a rare species of duck—has been reintroduced.

More recently, a major restoration project has commenced on the islands of Rangitoto and Motutapu as well as in Auckland's Hauraki Gulf. The aim of this project is to protect the world's largest Pohutukawa forest and to support reintroduced native wildlife. After several pests—including rabbits, stoats, hedgehogs, feral cats, Norway rats, ship rats, and mice—were eradicated, red-crowned parakeets and bellbirds were discovered on the islands, ending a century-long absence!

These examples show what can be done to restore threatened species and address the shortsighted environmental mistakes of the past. Lovers of the natural world everywhere can especially look forward to the Bible's promise that Jehovah God, "the Maker of heaven and earth," will put an end to the harmful practices that threaten the natural world, including its wildlife.—Psalm 115:15; Revelation 21:5.



**An adult takahe on  
Tiritiri Matangi Island**

**Campbell Island**



## Why Commend Others?

**M**ANY people feel that their efforts go unnoticed by others. For example, workers often feel unappreciated by their employers. Many married people believe that their mate takes them for granted. And some children think that they can never meet the expectations of their parents. Surely, such feelings could be alleviated if we were all willing to commend one another from time to time.

Sincere words of commendation are not the norm in today's world. This is hardly surprising, for the Bible foretold: "In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, . . . unthankful, disloyal."—2 Timothy 3:1, 2.

Have you been given sincere commendation? Then you know how it can warm the heart and lift the spirit. "A word at its right time is O how good!" says the Bible. (Proverbs 15:23) The Holy Scriptures can help us to treat one another with kindness.

### **Look for the Good in Others**

Because he is deeply interested in us, God notices and appreciates our fine qualities and deeds. The Bible assures us: "[God's] eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him." (2 Chronicles 16:9) When we show our love for God by obeying his laws, he is sure to notice it.

Jehovah God does not look for our faults. If he did, none of us could stand. (Psalm 130:3) Instead, Jehovah is like a miner who

patiently sifts through piles of stones looking for precious gems. When the miner finds a gem, he rejoices. The rough stone may not look precious, but the miner sees its potential value. Similarly, when God searches our heart, he is looking for precious qualities, not faults. When he finds them, he rejoices. He knows that those qualities, when shaped and polished, can produce something truly valuable—a faithful and devoted worshipper of Jehovah.

We can learn from God's example. When we look at others, we might be prone to focus on their faults. Yet, if we look at people as Jehovah does, we will search out their fine attributes. (Psalm 103:8-11, 17, 18) When we find their precious qualities, we can commend them. With what result? Our words will surely refresh them, and they may try even harder to do what is right! In turn, we will experience the joy that comes from giving to others.—Acts 20:35.

### **Acknowledge Fine Deeds**

Jesus often noticed and acknowledged the fine deeds of others. Once when a frightened, sick woman discreetly touched his outer garment in order to be healed, Jesus commended her, saying: "Daughter, your faith has made you well."—Mark 5:34.

On another occasion, while Jesus was teaching in Jerusalem's temple, he saw many rich people dropping money into the treasury chests. Then he saw a needy widow drop in "two small coins of very little value." Oth-



*Do you notice and acknowledge the fine deeds of others?*



ers had donated more money than she. Yet, Jesus publicly commended the widow's sincerity, by saying: "I tell you truthfully, This widow, although poor, dropped in more than they all did. For all these dropped in gifts out of their surplus, but this woman out of her want dropped in all the means of living she had."—Luke 21:1-4.

How can we imitate Jesus? The Bible says: "Do not hold back good from those to whom it is owing, when it happens to be in the power of your hand to do it."—Proverbs 3:27.

### **Commendation Is Powerful**

In today's ungrateful world, we all need to feel appreciated and loved. When we sincerely commend others, we strengthen and uplift them. Our heartfelt praise prompts them to keep on doing their best.—Proverbs 31:28, 29.

The Bible urges all Christians: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works." (Hebrews 10:24) The world would be a different place if everyone showed personal interest in others, searched out their good qualities, and acknowledged their fine deeds. Truly, commendation is powerful!

### **HAVE YOU WONDERED?**

- Why should we commend others for their fine deeds?—Proverbs 15:23.
- When Jehovah examines us, what does he look for?—2 Chronicles 16:9.
- When should we commend others?—Proverbs 3:27.

## What Is Wrong With This Picture?

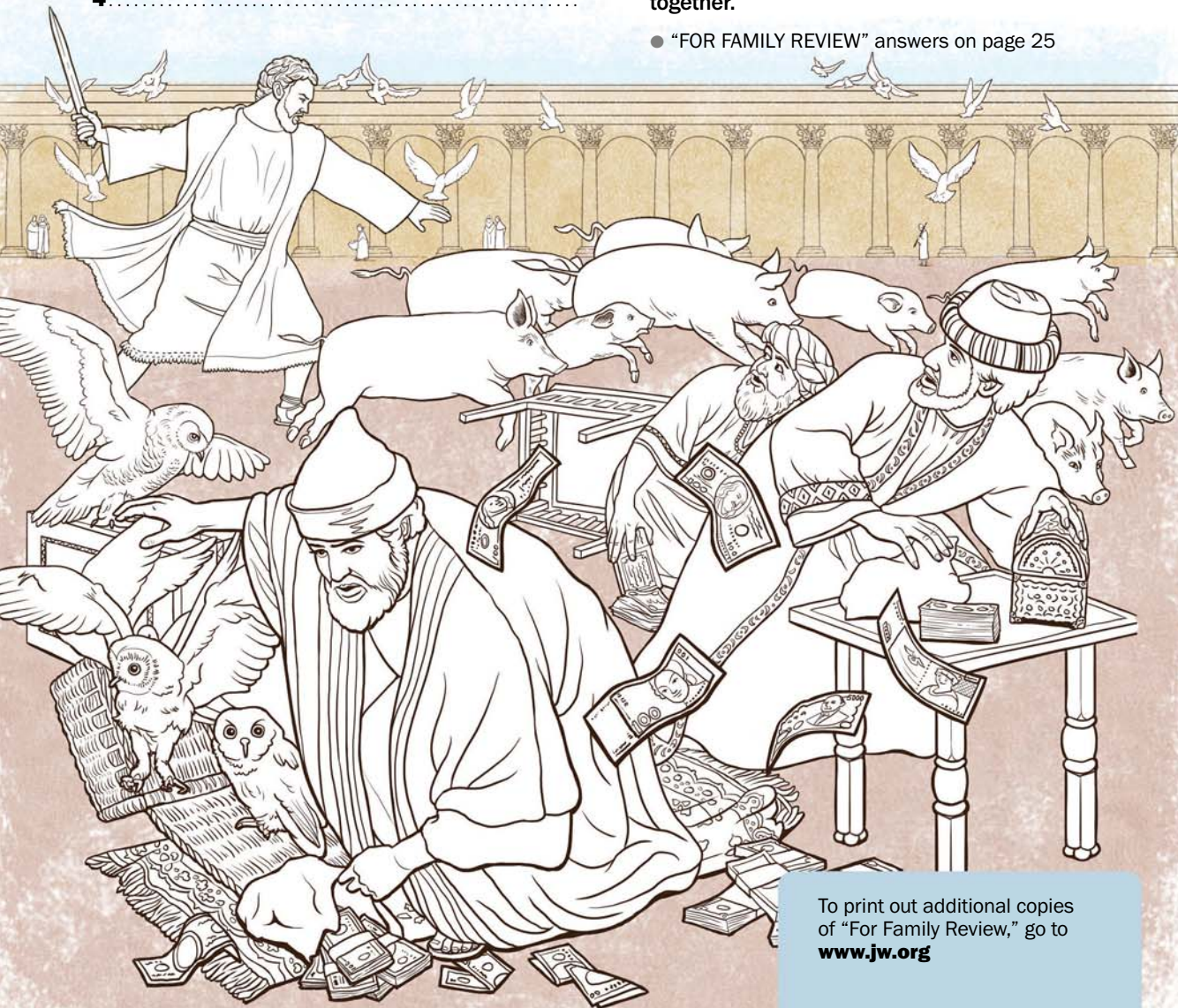
**Read John 2:13-17.** What four features of this drawing are incorrect? Write your answers on the lines below, and complete the picture by coloring it.

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....

**FOR DISCUSSION:** Why did Jesus throw these men out of the temple? **CLUE:** Read Mark 11:17. Why was it wrong for them to be buying and selling in the temple? **CLUE:** Read 2 Corinthians 2:17. To please Jehovah, what must be our motive for serving him? **CLUE:** Read Matthew 22:36-40; 1 Peter 5:2.

**FAMILY ACTIVITY:** On a piece of paper, write about or draw a picture of an activity you could do that would show unselfish love for Jehovah and others. Show your paper to your family, and plan a time when you can all share in that activity together.

● “FOR FAMILY REVIEW” answers on page 25



To print out additional copies of “For Family Review,” go to [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org)



## Collect and Learn

Cut out, fold in half, and save



TIMOTHY

BIBLE  
CARD

16



### QUESTIONS

- Fill in the blanks. Timothy's mother, \_\_\_\_\_, and grandmother \_\_\_\_\_ taught him "the holy writings" from \_\_\_\_\_.
- Young Timothy accepted what special invitation?
- Paul said of Timothy: "Like a child with a father . . ."

1 C.E. 98 C.E.

Lived during the first century C.E.

Adam created

4026 B.C.E.

Last Bible book written



Lived in Lystra but was also well reported on by the brothers in Iconium

### TIMOTHY

**PROFILE** Despite having an unbelieving father, he became "an example to the faithful ones in speaking, in conduct, in love, in faith, in chasteness." (1 Timothy 4:12) He applied the Bible's advice: "Be training yourself with godly devotion as your aim." (1 Timothy 4:7) Timothy assisted the apostle Paul for some 15 years.

### ANSWERS

- Eunice, Lois, infancy.—2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15.
- To travel and serve with the apostle Paul.—Acts 16:1-5.
- " . . . he slaved with me in furtherance of the good news."—Philippians 2:22.

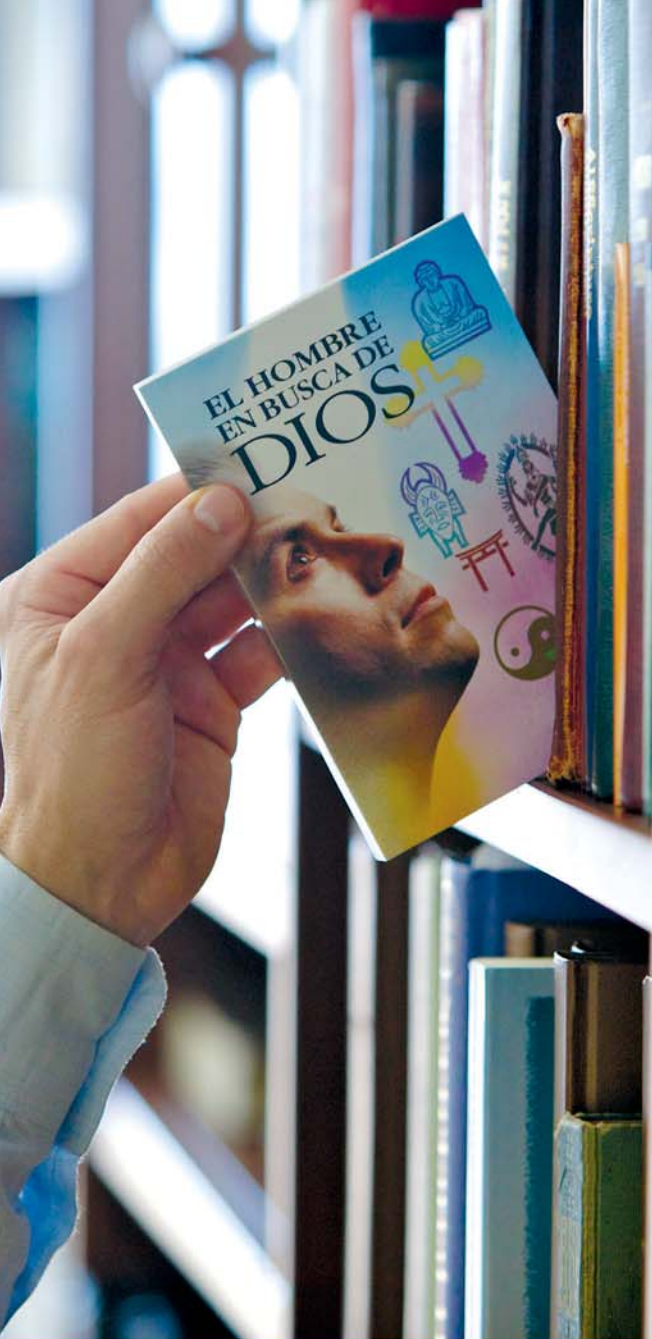
## Peoples and Lands

- Our names are Gabriela, aged 6, and Raul, aged 9. We live in Brazil. About how many of Jehovah's Witnesses live in Brazil? Is it 467,000, 607,000, or 720,000?
- Which dot shows where we live? Circle it, draw a dot where you live, and see how close you are to Brazil.

## Children's Picture Search

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





# Can the True God Be Found?

● Throughout history, many people have sought the true God. Their search for him has led them down thousands of pathways, as evidenced by the diversity of religions, sects, and cults in the world today. But how can you find the true God?

The book *Mankind's Search for God* can help you. One well-known writer in Mexico noted: "As books go, it is tiny, but it is immeasurably great in its essence. It can be carried in one's pocket, but if it were found in a library of 90,000 different books, it would probably turn out to be the most important one of them all."

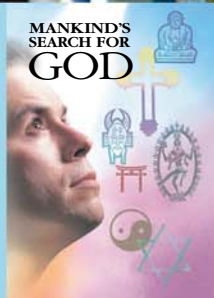
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