

## Immigration Dreams and Realities



## IMMIGRATION Dreams and Realities

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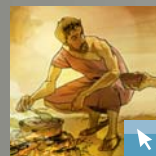


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### UNITED STATES

Almost 40 percent of food nationwide is wasted, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council. It is estimated, for example, that 7 percent of food crops are never harvested, that 17 percent of meals served in restaurants and cafeterias remain uneaten, and that families throw out some 25 percent of the food they purchase.

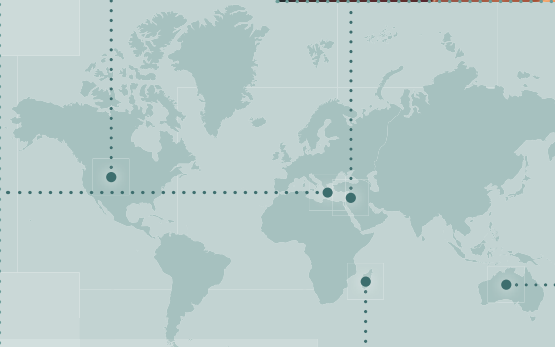
### ISRAEL

Children “born with a defect that could have been detected during prenatal screening” can no longer sue medical authorities for “wrongful life,” reports *Haaretz.com*. Parents, however, can sue for “wrongful birth” in order to seek compensation for “the extra expenses of raising a disabled child and meeting [his] needs for the rest of his life.”



### GREECE

Statistics released by the Greek Ministry of Health showed a 40 percent increase in suicides in Greece during the first five months of 2011, compared with the same period in 2010. The rise coincided with the onset of the latest financial crisis.



### AUSTRALIA

In Australia, 8 out of 10 couples live together before getting married.

### MADAGASCAR

The world’s smallest chameleon was recently discovered in Madagascar. Growing to a length of 1.1 inches (29 mm), some of these tiny brown lizards can perch on a fingernail. Because of threats to its habitat, the animal may be at risk of extinction.





# How to Stop Arguing

## THE CHALLENGE

Are you and your spouse unable to discuss things calmly? Does it feel as if you are always walking through a minefield in which any step could set off an explosive dispute?

If so, be assured that things *can* improve. But first you need to find out why you and your spouse argue so much.



## WHY IT HAPPENS

**Misunderstandings.** A wife named Jillian\* admits: “Sometimes I say something to my husband and it doesn’t come out as I intended. Or I am convinced that I told him something, when I really only *dreamed* that I told him. That’s actually happened!”

**Differences.** No matter how compatible you and your spouse may seem to be, your views on some matters will differ. Why? Because no two people are exactly alike—a fact that can add either variety or tension to marriage. For many couples, the result is tension.

**Poor role models.** “My parents argued a lot and made disrespectful comments to each other,” says a wife named Rachel, “so when I got married I talked to my husband the way my mother talked to my father. I had not learned how to show respect.”

**Deeper concerns.** Often, a fiery argument is really about something other than the event that ignited it. For example, a dispute that starts with “You’re always late!” may not be about the need for punctuality but about one spouse feeling that he or she has been treated inconsiderately.

Whatever the cause, frequent arguing can adversely affect your health and can even be a predictor of eventual divorce. How, then, can you stop arguing?

\*Names have been changed.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

A key to preventing arguments is identifying the underlying issues that fuel them. When things are calm, try the following exercise with your spouse.

**1.** On separate sheets of paper, each of you should write down the topic of a recent argument. For example, a husband might write, “You spent the whole day with your friends and didn’t call me to tell me where you were.” A wife might write, “You got upset because I spent time with my friends.”

**2.** With an open mind, discuss the following: Was the matter really that serious? Could it have been overlooked? In some cases, for the sake of peace, it may suffice to agree to disagree and to cover over the matter with love.—*Bible principle: Proverbs 17:9.*

If you and your spouse conclude that the matter was trivial, apologize to each other and consider it settled.—*Bible principle: Colossians 3:13, 14.*

If the matter seems more serious to one or both of you, proceed to the next step.

**3.** Write down how you felt during the argument, and have your spouse do the same. For example, a husband might write, “I felt that you preferred the company of your friends over my company.” A wife might write, “I felt that you were treating me as if I were a child who had to check in with her father.”

**4.** Swap papers with your spouse, and read each other’s comments. What was your spouse’s deeper concern during the argument? Discuss what each of you could have done differently to address the underlying issues without arguing.—*Bible principle: Proverbs 29:11.*

**5.** Discuss what you learned from this exercise. How can you use what you learned to solve or prevent a future argument? ■

## KEY SCRIPTURES

“The one covering over transgression is seeking love.”—Proverbs 17:9.

“Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely.”—Colossians 3:13.

“All his spirit is what a stupid one lets out, but he that is wise keeps it calm to the last.”—Proverbs 29:11.

## IF YOU HAVE ARGUED . . .

**Dig deeper:** What did each of you really need from the other during the dispute? Get to the underlying issues.

**“Replay” the event:** Instead of arguing, what could each of you have done differently to address those underlying issues?

If the matter was trivial, apologize to each other and consider it settled



# Immigration

## Dreams and Realities

### IN SEARCH OF A BETTER LIFE

**G**EORGE felt desperate. He could not get enough food for his family. At the same time, neighbors were getting sick, and some appeared to be starving. A few hundred miles to the south, however, lay a richer country. 'I'll move abroad, find a job, and then have my family join me,' he thought.

Patricia also dreamed of a new life abroad. She had no work and few opportunities. She and her boyfriend decided to travel from Nigeria to Algeria, on their way to Spain, unaware of how harsh the journey across the Sahara Desert would be. "I was pregnant," she said, "and I was determined to give my child a better life."

Rachel wanted a new start in Europe. She had lost her job in the Philippines,

and relatives assured her that domestic work was plentiful abroad. So she borrowed money for the plane fare and said farewell to her husband and daughter, promising them, "We won't be separated for long."

It is estimated that more than 200 million people like George, Patricia, and Rachel have moved abroad in recent decades. Although some have fled from wars, natural disasters, or persecution, most have moved for economic reasons. What problems have migrants faced in their new land? Do all find the better life they seek? How do children fare when a parent leaves in search of a better income? Consider the following answers to these questions.

## GETTING THERE AND GETTING ESTABLISHED

The first challenge of moving abroad is often the journey itself. George, mentioned in the first article, traveled hundreds of miles (km) with little food. “The journey was a nightmare,” he recalls. Many immigrants never even arrive at their destination.

Patricia’s goal was to reach Spain. She traveled in an open truck across the Sahara Desert. “The journey from Nigeria to Algeria took us a week, and 25 people were crammed into the truck. En route, we saw many corpses, as well as people just wandering about in the desert waiting to die. Apparently, some truck drivers heartlessly abandon passengers along the way.”

Unlike George and Patricia, Rachel was able to fly to Europe, where domestic work awaited her. But she never imagined how much she would miss her two-year-old daughter. “Every time I saw a mother caring for her young child, I felt sick inside,” she recalls.

George struggled to adapt to his new country. Months passed before he could send money home. “Many nights, I cried because of loneliness and frustration,” he admits.

After several months in Algeria, Patricia reached the Moroccan border. “There,” she says, “I gave birth to my baby daughter. I had to hide from traffickers who abduct migrant women and force them into prostitution. Finally, I got enough money for the risky sea crossing to Spain. The boat was in bad shape and ill-equipped for the large number of passengers. We had to bail water out of the boat with our shoes! When we beached at Spain, I did not have the strength to walk ashore.”

Of course, would-be migrants should take into account more than the possible risks associated with travel. They should also consider potential language and cultural barriers in the new land, as well as the cost and legal complications of trying to become citizens or permanent residents there. Those who fail to obtain legal status often find it hard to obtain good employment, quality housing, education, or health care. They may also find it difficult to obtain a driver’s license or a bank account. And all too often, undocumented immigrants are exploited, perhaps as a source of cheap labor.

Another factor to consider is money itself. Really, how secure is it? The Bible gives this sound advice: “Be wise enough not to wear yourself out trying to get rich. Your money can be gone in a flash, as if it had grown wings and flown away like an eagle.” (Proverbs 23:4, 5, *Good News Translation*) Keep in mind, too, that our greatest needs are for things that money

### AN ANCIENT MIGRANT

“Migration . . . is the oldest action against poverty,” wrote economist J. K. Galbraith. Such action was taken by the patriarch Jacob, the founding father of the nation of Israel. Because of a famine in Canaan, Jacob and his extended family of nearly 70 individuals moved to Egypt, where they stayed for a very long time. (Genesis 42:1-5; 45:9-11; 46:26, 27) In fact, Jacob died there, and his descendants remained in Egypt for about 200 years before returning to Canaan.

cannot buy—namely, love, emotional security, and family unity. How sad when parents allow the desire for money to override their love for each other or any “natural affection” they have for their children!—2 Timothy 3:1-3.

As humans, we also have a spiritual need. (Matthew 5:3) Hence, responsible parents do everything in their power to fulfill their God-given responsibility to teach their children about God, his purpose, and his standards.—Ephesians 6:4.

## “WE WISH THEY HAD MADE A DIFFERENT DECISION”

“The eldest of three girls, I was nine years old when Mother left for Europe,” says Airen, who lived in the Philippines. “She promised us better food, better schooling, and a better home. I still remember the day she left. She hugged me and told me to take care of my sisters, Rhea and Shullamite. I cried for a long time.

“Four years later, Father left to join Mother. When he was with us, I tried to follow him wherever he went. When he said good-bye, my sisters and I clung to him until he boarded the bus. Once more I wept inconsolably for a long time.”

Shullamite, the youngest of the three girls, recalls: “When Airen was nine years old, she became my mother, so to speak. I took my problems to her, and she taught me how to

wash my clothes, make my bed, and so on. When our parents phoned us, I sometimes tried to explain my feelings to them, but I couldn’t express myself clearly. I don’t think they always understood.

“People often asked me if I missed my parents. ‘Well, yes,’ I would reply. But quite frankly, I didn’t really remember my mother. She left when I was four, and I got used to being without her.”

“When I was 16,” says Airen, “my sisters and I finally set off to be reunited with our parents. I felt so excited! But when we arrived, I found that we had grown apart from them.”

Rhea adds: “I kept my problems to myself. I was timid by nature and found it hard to show affection. In the Philippines, we lived with our uncle and aunt, who had three children of their own. Although our relatives cared for us, they were not like real parents.”

In conclusion, Airen states: “We did not suffer when we were a poor family—we never went hungry. But my sisters and I did suffer when we were left behind. Our family has been reunited for nearly five years now, but the years of separation have left their mark. We know that our parents love us, but we wish they had made a different decision.”





## A UNITED FAMILY—MORE IMPORTANT THAN MONEY

The stories of immigrants may vary, but many have a common thread, as can be seen in the examples of George, Rachel, and Patricia, mentioned earlier in this series of articles. The family suffers when a parent departs or a spouse leaves his or her mate, and years may go by before the family is reunited. In the case of George's family, that took over four years.

Rachel finally flew back to the Philippines to get her daughter after being separated from her for nearly five years. Patricia reached Spain with her baby daughter in her arms. "She is all the family I have, so I try to take good care of her," Patricia says.

Many immigrants stick it out in their new country despite loneliness, economic setbacks, and a prolonged separation from their family. They have invested so much in the move that when things do not work out, few have the courage to cut their losses and go home to face possible disgrace and humiliation.

One who did have such courage was Allan, from the Philippines. He found a good job in Spain, but 18 months later, he returned home. "I missed my wife and my young daughter too much," he says. "I decided I would never work abroad again unless we could emigrate as a family. And this is what we eventually did. Family is far more important than money."

Something else is also more important than money, as Patricia discovered. She

arrived in Spain with a copy of the "New Testament," or Christian Greek Scriptures. "I viewed the book as a charm," she said. "Then I came in contact with a woman who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Previously, I was not interested in talking to representatives of this religion. So I asked the Witness many questions in order to expose her beliefs as wrong. But, contrary to what I thought, she was able to defend her beliefs and answer my questions right from the Bible."

What Patricia learned taught her that having lasting happiness and a sure hope for the future depend not on location or money but on having insight into God and his purpose for us. (John 17:3) Among other things, Patricia learned that the true God has a name—Jehovah. (Psalm 83:18) She also read in the Bible that God will soon eliminate all poverty by means of his Kingdom government in the hands of Jesus Christ. (Daniel 7:13, 14) "[Jesus] will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul," says Psalm 72:12, 14.

Why not take the time to examine the Bible? This book of divine wisdom can help you set sound priorities, make wise decisions, and endure any present trials with joy and hope.—Proverbs 2:6-9, 20, 21. ■



## A Designer of Robots Explains His Faith

Professor Massimo Tistarelli is a scientist at the University of Sassari in Italy. He is an associate editor of three international science magazines and has coauthored more than a hundred scientific papers. He studies how humans recognize faces and do such seemingly simple things as catching a ball. He then designs visual systems for robots—systems that imitate what we do. *Awake!* asked him about his faith and his work as a scientist.

### What is your religious background?

My parents were nonpracticing Catholics. As a young man, I leaned toward atheism. I was taught that life originated by means of evolution, and I accepted that as fact. Yet, even though I did not believe in a personal Creator, I felt that there must be something high-

er than us. In order to find out what, I explored Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism, but I found their teachings to be unsatisfactory.

### What led to your interest in science?

From childhood, I was fascinated with machines. I even used to take my electric toys

apart and reassemble them. And I would ply my father, a telecommunications engineer, with endless questions about how radios and telephones work.

### What has your career as a scientist involved?

I studied electronic engineering at the University of Genoa, and then I did doctoral research in robot design. I specialized in studying the human visual system and in devising ways to imitate it for the design of robots.

### Why did our visual system interest you?

It is incredibly sophisticated, encompassing much more than the eyes—it even includes

## I thought about my work with robots. Whose designs was I imitating?

the means to interpret what we see. For example, consider what happens when you catch a ball. As you run to make the catch, the lens of your eye focuses an image of the ball onto your retina. That image will move across your retina in a way that depends on the movement of both the ball and your eye. Normally, of course, you keep your eye fixed on the ball. Its image then becomes stationary on your retina while the background “moves.”

At the same time, your visual system calculates the speed of the ball and its trajectory. Amazingly, the calculations start right there in the retina as your eye estimates the movement of the ball in relation to its background. Your optic nerve then transmits the impulses formed by the retina to your brain, which further analyzes the information and directs you to intercept the ball. The whole process is breathtaking in its complexity.

### What persuaded you to believe in a Creator?

In 1990, I spent a few months in Dublin, Ireland, doing research at Trinity College. As I was traveling home with my wife, Barbara, we considered the future of our children. We also decided to visit my sister who was one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. My sister gave me a

copy of the book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* published by the Witnesses. The careful research that had gone into this work impressed me. It then dawned on me that I had accepted evolution without really questioning it. For example, I had assumed that evolution was well supported by the fossil record. But it is not. Indeed, the more I examined evolution, the more I became convinced that the theory is more bluster than fact.

Then I thought about my work with robots. Whose designs was I imitating? I could never design a robot capable of catching a ball as we can. A robot can be programmed to catch a ball, but only in precisely controlled conditions. It cannot do so in circumstances for which it has not been programmed. Our ability to learn is vastly superior to that of a machine—and mere machines have makers! This fact is just one of many that led me to conclude that we must have had a Designer.

### Why did you become one of Jehovah’s Witnesses?

In part, it was because Barbara and I liked their thorough study methods. I was

especially impressed with the research that goes into their publications. Solid research appeals to people like me, who want to probe into the details of things. For example, I became deeply interested in the many prophecies, or predictions, in the Bible. My study of those convinced me that the Bible really is from God. In 1992, Barbara and I were baptized as Jehovah’s Witnesses.

### Has your study of science weakened your faith?

On the contrary, science has strengthened my faith. For example, consider how we recognize faces. A baby can do this within hours after birth. You and I can instantly recognize someone we know, even if he is in a crowd. We may even discern his emotional state. Yet, we may be completely unaware that this recognition involves the processing of a phenomenal amount of information at an incredible speed.

Yes, I am fully convinced that our visual system is a precious gift from Jehovah God. His gifts, which include the Bible, move me to thank him and to talk about him to others. After all, my sense of justice tells me that he should get the credit for his productions. ■



# PLATO

Plato (c. 427-347 B.C.E.) was a pagan Greek philosopher. He was born in Athens to an aristocratic family and received the customary education of a well-to-do Greek youth. He was greatly influenced by the celebrated philosopher Socrates and by the followers of Pythagoras, a philosopher and mathematician.

## QUICK FACTS

- ▶ Plato is considered one of the most influential thinkers in the history of Western culture.
- ▶ As a young man, he took an interest in politics but became deeply disillusioned.
- ▶ He later wrote on such topics as ethics, justice, knowledge, moderation, piety, the soul, and valor.
- ▶ Plato's most distinguished pupil was Aristotle, who became an educator, philosopher, and scientist.

**A**FTER traveling about in the Mediterranean basin and engaging in the politics of Syracuse, a Greek city in Sicily, Plato returned to Athens, where he founded the Academy. Often referred to as Europe's first university, the Academy became a focal point for mathematical and philosophical research.

## WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

The teachings of Plato have profoundly influenced the religious beliefs of millions of people, including professed Christians, many of whom wrongly assume that these beliefs are based on the Bible. Foremost among Plato's teachings is the concept that humans have an immortal soul that survives the death of the physical body.

Plato had a deep interest in life after death. The book *Body and Soul in Ancient Philosophy* says that "the immortality of the soul is one of Plato's favourite topics." He was firmly convinced that "the soul outlives its present incarnation, to be duly rewarded or punished" in the afterlife, based on how the person lived while on earth.\*

\* Although Plato popularized the notion of the immortal soul, he was not the first to adopt it. In its various forms, the concept had long permeated pagan religion, including that of Egypt and Babylon.

“The immortality of the soul is one of Plato’s favourite topics.”

—*Body and Soul in Ancient Philosophy*

## HOW DID PLATO’S TEACHINGS SPREAD?

During the nine centuries that Plato’s Academy functioned, from 387 B.C.E. to 529 C.E., it was highly influential. Platonic thought became popular in lands dominated by Greece and Rome. The Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria adopted Platonism, as did many religious leaders within Christendom. As a result, pagan philosophical concepts, including the immortality of the soul, crept into the teachings of Judaism and Christianity.

“All Christian theology is dependent, to an extent at least, on contemporary Greek philosophy, primarily Platonism,” says *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, “but some Christian thinkers . . . merit the title of Christian Platonists.” Compare what the following sources say.

**What Plato said:** “[At death,] that which is the real self of each of us, and which we term the immortal soul, departs to the presence of other gods, there . . . to render its account,—a prospect to be faced with courage by the good, but with uttermost dread by the evil.”  
—*Plato—Laws*, Book XII.

**What the Bible says:** The soul is the person himself or the life that he enjoys. Even animals are souls. At death, the soul ceases to exist.\* Consider the following scriptures:

- “The first man Adam *became* a living soul.”  
—1 Corinthians 15:45.
- “God went on to say: ‘Let the earth put forth living souls according to their kinds, domestic animal and moving animal and wild beast of the earth.’ ”  
—Genesis 1:24.
- “Let my soul die.”—Numbers 23:10.
- “The soul that is sinning—it itself will die.”—Ezekiel 18:4.

Clearly, the Bible does not teach that the soul survives the death of the physical body. So ask yourself, ‘Are my beliefs based on the Bible or the philosophy of Plato?’ ■

\* The Bible teaches that the dead are asleep, as it were, awaiting a resurrection. (Ecclesiastes 9:5; John 11:11-14; Acts 24:15) In contrast, so-called immortal souls cannot die and would need no resurrection.

“The notion of the soul surviving after death is not readily discernible in the Bible.”—*New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

“Only in the post-biblical period did a clear and firm belief in the immortality of the soul take hold . . . and become one of the cornerstones of the Jewish and Christian faiths.” (Italics ours.)—*Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

“The belief that the soul continues its existence after the dissolution of the body is a matter of philosophical or theological speculation . . . and is accordingly nowhere expressly taught in Holy Scripture.”—*The Jewish Encyclopedia*.





# THE NEEDY

## Does God care about the needy?

*“Let your manner of life be free of the love of money . . . For [God] has said: ‘I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you.’”*  
—Hebrews 13:5.

**HOW GOD SHOWS HIS CARE** When a worshipper of Jehovah God comes into hard times, God’s care may be evident in various ways. One of those ways is the loving support rendered by fellow Christians.\* Says James 1:27: “The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation.”

The early Christians came to the aid of one another. For instance, when it was foretold that a famine would severely affect the land of Judea, the Christians in the Syrian city of Antioch determined “to send a relief ministration to the brothers dwelling in Judea.” (Acts 11:28-30) As a result, their needy fellow Christians received essential provisions. This voluntary giving demonstrated Christian love in action.—1 John 3:18.

\* In some lands, the government provides welfare for the needy. Where this is not available, the responsibility falls primarily on the needy ones’ relatives.—1 Timothy 5:3, 4, 16.



## How can the needy benefit themselves?

**GOD HELPS US TO HELP OURSELVES** As millions of people have discovered, the wisdom found in the Bible is practical and is unsurpassed. Proverbs 2:6, 7 says: “Jehovah himself gives wisdom; out of his mouth there are knowledge and discernment. And for the upright ones he will treasure up practical wisdom.” When people tap into that wisdom, they benefit themselves.

For example, they avoid harmful and costly habits, such as drug or alcohol abuse. (2 Corinthians 7:1) They also become honest and more conscientious and responsible, thus improving their job prospects or making themselves even more valued as employees. Says Ephesians 4:28: “Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, . . . that he may have something to distribute to someone in need.”

*“I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself.”*

—Isaiah 48:17, 18.

## Is there evidence that the Bible’s wisdom helps the needy?

**RESULTS THAT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES** Wilson, a temporary worker who lives in Ghana, was about to finish his term of employment. On his last day, while washing the managing director’s car, Wilson found money in the trunk. His supervisor told him to keep the money. But Wilson, who is one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, refused to steal. Instead, he returned the money to its owner. Rather than being laid off, Wilson received full-time employment and was later made a senior officer.

In Europe, Géraldine lost her job because her employer disliked Jehovah’s Witnesses. The employer’s mother, however, told her daughter that she had made a big mistake. She said, “If you want an employee who is trustworthy and will take her job seriously, you could not find a better worker than one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.” Her daughter did research on the Witnesses, and Géraldine got her job back.

When Sarah, a single mom in South Africa, went through hard times, she experienced Christian love in action when members of her congregation gave her family needed food and transportation. Later, her children said, “We have many parents in the congregation.”

Numerous similar experiences could be related. These call to mind Proverbs 1:33, which reads: “As for the one listening to me [Jehovah], he will reside in security.” How true that is! ■

*“God’s wisdom is proved right by its results.”*

—Matthew 11:19,

*The New English Bible.*



## The Tail of the Agama Lizard

© Ariadne Van Zandbergen



**T**HE agama jumps from a horizontal surface onto a vertical wall with ease. But if that surface is slippery, the lizard loses its footing, yet it still makes a successful landing on the wall. How? The secret is in the lizard's tail.

**Consider:** When agamas jump from a coarse surface—which provides grip—they first stabilize their body and keep their tail downward. This helps them to jump at the correct angle. When on a slippery surface, though, the lizards tend to stumble and jump at the wrong angle. However, in midair, they correct the angle of their body by flicking their tail upward. The process is intricate. “Lizards must actively adjust the angle of their tails just right to remain upright,” says a report released by the University of California, Berkeley. The more slippery the platform, the more the lizard must raise its tail to ensure a safe landing.

The agama's tail may help engineers design more-agile robotic vehicles that can be used to search for survivors in the aftermath of an earthquake or other catastrophe. “Robots are not nearly as agile as animals,” says researcher Thomas Libby, “so anything that can make a robot more stable is an advancement.”

**What do you think?** Did the agama's tail come about by evolution? Or was it designed? ■

