**Maya creation myth**

NOTE: The Mayas were an advanced people who lived in the area now known as Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, and the Mexican state of Yucatan, where their descendants now live. This story is from the Popol Vuh, the Mayan epic. It is both a Creation myth and a beau-tiful morality tale.

There were four gods in heaven and each of them sat on his chair, observing the world below. Then the yellow lord suggested that they make a man to enjoy the earth and offer praise to the gods. The other three agreed.

So the yellow god took a lump of yellow clay and made a man from it. But his creation was weak; it dissolved in water and could not stand upright.

Then the red god suggested that they make a man out of wood, and the others agreed. So the red god took a branch from a tree and carved it into a human shape. When they tested it in water, it floated; it stood upright without any problem whatsoever. However, when they tested it with fire, it burned.

The four lords decided to try again. This time the black god suggested making a man out of gold. The gold man was beautiful and shone like the sun. He survived the tests of fire and water, looking even more handsome after these tests. However, the gold man was cold to the touch; he was unable to speak, feel, move, or worship the gods. But they left him on earth anyway.

The fourth god, the colorless lord, decided to make humans out of his own flesh. He cut the fingers off his left hand and they jumped and fell to earth. The four gods could hardly see what the men of flesh looked like as they were so far away. From the seat of the four lords, they looked like busy little ants.

But the men of flesh worshipped the gods and made offerings to them. They filled the hearts of the four lords with joy. One day the men of flesh found the man of gold. When they touched him, he was as cold as a stone. When they spoke to him, he was silent. But the kindness of the men of flesh warmed the heart of the man of gold and he came to life, offering praise to the gods for the kindness of the men of flesh.

The word of praise from the previously silent creature woke the four gods from their sleep and they looked down on earth in delight. They called the man of gold "rich" and the men of flesh "poor," ordaining that the rich should look after the poor. The rich man will be judged at his death on the basis of how he cared for the poor. From that day onward, no rich man can enter heaven unless he is brought there by a poor man.