



## An Orthopedic Surgeon Explains Her Faith

Dr. Irène Hof Laurenceau practices orthopedic surgery in Switzerland. At one time she doubted God's existence. But some years later she came to the conclusion that God exists and that he is the Creator of life. *Awake!* asked her about her work and her faith.

### What aroused your interest in science?

As a child, I was fascinated by nature. I grew up in Richterswil, a beautiful Swiss village on the shore of Lake Zurich. My parents and older siblings would take me for walks and tell me about the creatures and plants we saw along the way.

### Why did you study orthopedic surgery?

For a short time, my father worked as an attendant in an

operating room at a local hospital. What he saw moved him to speak enthusiastically about surgery. His enthusiasm excited me so much that I later chose surgery as a profession. I specialized in orthopedic surgery because I like the mechanical aspects of it. Orthopedic surgeons have to think like an engineer in order to repair the bones, muscles, and tendons that enable us to move about.

Most of all, I enjoy seeing my patients' health improve.

I really like working closely with people.

### Why did you doubt God's existence?

My doubts began in my youth, and two factors in particular influenced me. First, I discovered that certain religious instructors at church were immoral, and this disturbed me considerably. Second, at school, some of my biology teachers believed in evolution—a teaching I came to accept, especially when I went to a university.

### Why did you accept evolution?

I believed my professors. Additionally, I thought that the similarity in anatomy between

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certain kinds of animals pointed to a common ancestry and supported the notion that genetic mutations lead to new species.

### Yet, in time you changed your mind. Why?

A friend invited me to a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses. I was impressed by the friendly congregation and the informative talks. Later, a pleasant lady from the congregation visited me, and I asked her, "How can I be sure that the Bible is true?"

She showed me Bible prophecies about many events that characterize our times. An example is Jesus' prophecy that the last days of the present world would be marked by international warfare, "great earthquakes," and rampant "pestilences and food shortages."<sup>1</sup> She also pointed out prophecies that foretold the social breakdown and increase in greed and other badness that we see so much of today.<sup>2</sup> Before long, I began to study the Bible in earnest and soon realized that its predictions *always* come true. I also began to reexamine my views on the origin of life.

### Did your medical research help you to reason on the origin of life?

Yes. When I started studying the Bible, I was researching

knee surgery. Beginning in the late 1960's, scientists began to understand the knee's intricate mechanism more clearly. They found that our knee does not only bend on a single axis like a hinge. Rather, it both rolls and glides—an ingenious combination that gives the knee a greater range of movement, enabling us to walk, dance, skate, and do a host of other things.

For some 40 years, researchers have tried to design an artificial knee. But the complexity of the human knee makes it difficult to duplicate. Moreover, compared with our knee, artificial products have a relatively short life span. Even with improved materials at their disposal, those designers are pleased if their products last 20 years. Our knee, of course, is made of living cells that are constantly renewed. To me, the knee testifies, not to the blind processes of evolution, but to the wisdom of God.

### What about mutations and the similarity in anatomy between certain species?

That similarity points to the same Designer. Moreover, mutations do not improve the designs in living organisms by el-

evating them to a higher kind. Rather, mutations tend to damage genes. Of course, it is possible that an accident can serve a beneficial purpose—such as when, say, a train crashes into a bridge and wrecks it, thus protecting the city from an invading army. But that accident did not improve the city. Likewise, mutations do not improve organisms. And they could never produce something so brilliantly designed as the human knee—not to mention other parts of the human body.

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

When I began to apply Bible principles, the quality of my life improved markedly. Additionally, in 2003, I went to an international convention of Jehovah's Witnesses and saw extraordinary family-like unity there, even among delegates who had never met one another before. That was love in action, and I wanted to be a part of it. ■

1. Luke 21:10, 11.

2. 2 Timothy 3:1-5.