



## A Consultant Surgeon Explains His Faith

Dr. Guillermo Perez recently retired as head of surgery at a 700-bed hospital in South Africa. For many years he believed in evolution. But later he became convinced that the human body was designed by God. *Awake!* asked him about his faith.

### Please tell us why you once believed in evolution.

Although I was raised as a Catholic, I had doubts about God. For example, I could not believe in a God who burns people in hell. So when my university professors taught me that living things evolved and were not created by God, I accepted that view, assuming it was supported by evidence. My church, by the way, did not reject evolution but held that it was directed by God.

### What aroused your interest in the Bible?

My wife, Susana, began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, who showed her from the Bible that God does not torture people in a fiery hell.<sup>1</sup> They also showed her God's promise to make our planet into a paradise home.<sup>2</sup> At last we found teachings that made sense! In 1989, a Witness named Nick began visiting me. During a discussion about the human body and its origin, I was impressed with the simple logic of the

words found in the Bible at [Hebrews 3:4](#), which says that "every house is constructed by someone, but the one who constructed all things is God."

### Did your study of the human body help you to accept creation?

Yes. For example, the way our body repairs itself was carefully designed. Wound healing, for instance, involves four overlapping phases, all of which reminded me that as a surgeon, I merely worked with the body's built-in repair system.

### Tell us, what happens when our body is wounded?

Within seconds, the first phase of a series of processes designed to stop bleeding goes into action. These processes are extremely complex

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and efficient. I might add that our circulatory system, which has some 60,000 miles (100,000 km) of blood vessels, must be the envy of plumbing engineers, for it has the means to plug leaks and repair itself.

### What is involved in the second phase of repair?

The bleeding stops within hours and inflammation starts. Inflammation involves an amazing sequence of events. First, blood vessels that had initially constricted to *reduce* blood loss now do the opposite. They dilate to *increase* blood flow in the wounded region. Next, protein-rich fluid makes the whole injured area swell. This fluid is vital for fighting infection, diluting poisons, and removing damaged tissue. Each step requires the production of millions of specialized molecules and cells in a cascade of events. Some of these events, by the way, serve as stimulants for the following phase, after which they shut down.

### How does healing continue?

Within a couple of days, our body starts generating repair materials, a process that marks the beginning of phase

three and that reaches a peak in about two weeks. Cells that form fibers across the wound migrate to the injured area and multiply. Also, tiny blood vessels sprout and grow toward the injured area, where they remove waste and supply extra nutrients during demolition and repair. In another complex series of events, special cells are generated that draw the edges of the wound together.

### That's a lot of activity! How long before repair is complete?

The final stage, remodeling, can take months. Broken bones are restored to their original strength, and the fibers that were initially laid across a soft-tissue wound are replaced with stronger materials. Altogether, wound repair is an amazing example of highly programmed coordination.

### Can you recall a case that especially impressed you?

Yes. I remember treating a 16-year-old victim of a terrible car accident. The girl was in critical condition with a lacerated spleen and internal bleeding. Years ago, we would have operated to repair or remove the spleen. Today, doc-

tors rely more on the body's power to repair itself. I merely treated her infection, fluid loss, anemia, and pain. A few weeks later, a scan showed that her spleen had healed! When I see how the body repairs itself, I'm left in awe. And I'm even more convinced that we were designed by God.

### What drew you to Jehovah's Witnesses?

I found them to be friendly, and they always answered my questions from the Bible. I also admired the courageous way they shared their beliefs and helped others to learn about God.

### Did becoming one of Jehovah's Witnesses help you in your work?

Yes. For one thing, it helped me to cope with compassion fatigue, a form of emotional burnout that often affects doctors and nurses who constantly deal with people who are diseased or injured. Also, when patients wanted to talk, I was able to explain our Creator's promise to end sickness and suffering<sup>3</sup> and bring about a world in which no one will say, "I am sick."<sup>4</sup> ■

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1. Ecclesiastes 9:5.

2. Isaiah 11:6-9.

3. Revelation 21:3, 4.

4. Isaiah 33:24.