

Awake!

January 8, 1996



OUR THREATENED PLANET CAN IT BE SAVED?

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Our Threatened Planet

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Our planet is being suffocated by pollution, denuded by deforestation, and exhausted by greedy exploitation. Does our threatened planet have a future?

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Cover: Child in garbage: Photo: Casas, Godo-Foto



THE FIGHT TO SAVE OUR PLANET

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN SPAIN

YURY, who lives in the Russian city of Karabash, has two children, and they are both sick. He is worried but not surprised. "There are no healthy kids here," he explains. The people of Karabash are being poisoned. Every year a local factory spews out 162,000 tons of pollutants into the air—9 tons for every man, woman, and child living there. At Nikel and Monchegorsk on the Kola Peninsula, north of the Arctic Circle, "two of the world's biggest and most antiquated nickel smelters . . . spew more heavy metals and sulfur dioxide into the air each year than any other such factories in Russia."—*The New York Times*.

The air is no healthier in Mexico City. A survey by Dr. Margarita Castillejos found that even in a wealthy area of the city, the

children were sick 4 days out of 5. "To be sick has for them become normal," she observed. One of the main culprits, she says, is the pervasive smog produced by the thousands of vehicles that clog city streets. Ozone concentrations are four times the maximum guideline of the World Health Organization.

In Australia the danger is invisible—but just as deadly. Children now have to wear hats when romping in the school playground. The decimation of the protective shield of ozone in the Southern Hemisphere has made Australians begin to view the sun as an enemy rather than a friend. They have already seen a threefold increase in skin cancers.

In other parts of the world, finding sufficient water is a daily battle. When Amalia

was 13 years old, the drought came to Mozambique. There was barely enough water for the first year and hardly any the following year. Vegetable crops withered and died. Amalia and her family were reduced to eating wild fruit and digging in sandy riverbeds for whatever precious water they could find.

In the Indian state of Rajasthan, it is grazing land that is fast disappearing. Phagu, a nomadic tribesman, frequently has arguments with local farmers. He cannot find pasture for his flock of sheep and goats. Because of the acute shortage of fertile land, centuries-long peaceful coexistence between farmers and nomads has broken down.

The situation is even worse in the Sahel, a wide belt of semiarid land on the southern edge of the Sahara in Africa. As a result of deforestation and subsequent drought, entire herds have been wiped out and countless smallholdings buried in the sands of the advancing desert. "I will not plant again," vowed a Fulani farmer from Niger after seeing his millet crop fail for the seventh time. His cattle had already died from lack of pasture.

The Growing Threat

There is an ominous pattern behind the recent droughts, the failed harvests, and the polluted air that suffocates city after city. They are symptoms of a sick planet, a planet that can no longer cope with all the demands man is heaping upon it.

Why Awake! Is Published *Awake!* is 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.

Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address on page 5. Publication of *Awake!* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

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Nothing on earth is more important to our survival than the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink. Inexorably, these life-sustaining essentials are being either contaminated or whittled away—by man himself. In some countries the state of the environment is already life-threatening. As former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev graphically put it, "ecology has caught us by the throat."

The threat is not one to be taken lightly. World population is increasing steadily, and demands on limited resources are multiplying. Lester Brown, president of the Worldwatch Institute, stated recently that "the overwhelming threat to our future is not military aggression but the environmental degradation of the planet." Is enough being done to avert a tragedy?

The Fight to Protect the Planet

It is hard to help an alcoholic who is convinced he does not have a drinking problem. Likewise, the first step in improving the health of the planet is to recognize the extent of the malady. Possibly, education is the outstanding environmental success in recent years. Most people today are keenly aware that our earth is being impoverished and polluted—and that something must be done about it. The threat of environmental degradation now looms greater than the threat of nuclear war.

World leaders are not oblivious to the

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problems. Some 118 heads of state attended the Earth Summit in 1992, during which a few steps were taken toward protecting the atmosphere and the earth's dwindling resources. Most countries signed a climate treaty in which they agreed to set up a system for reporting changes in carbon emissions, with the goal of freezing the total output in the near future. They also considered ways of safeguarding our planet's biodiversity, the total number of plant and animal species. Agreement could not be reached on protecting the world's forests, but the summit did produce two documents—the "Rio Declaration" and "Agenda 21," which contains guidelines on how countries could achieve "sustainable development."

As environmentalist Allen Hammond points out, "the crucial test will be whether the commitments made in Rio are kept—whether the bold words lead to actions in the months and years ahead."

A significant step forward, however, was the 1987 Montreal Protocol, which involved an international agreement to phase out chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) within a set time limit.* Why the concern? Because CFCs are said to be contributing to the rapid depletion of the earth's protective ozone layer. The ozone in the earth's upper atmo-

* CFCs have been widely used in aerosol sprays, refrigeration, air-conditioning units, cleaning agents, and the manufacture of foam insulation. See *Awake!* of December 22, 1994, "When Our Atmosphere Is Damaged."

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sphere plays a vital role in filtering the sun's ultraviolet rays, which can cause skin cancer and cataracts. This is a problem not just in Australia. Recently, scientists have detected an 8-percent decrease in winter ozone concentration above some temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere. Twenty million tons of CFCs have already drifted up toward the stratosphere.

In the face of this disastrous contamination of the atmosphere, nations of the world put aside their differences and took decisive action. Other international action has also been forthcoming to protect endangered species, conserve Antarctica, and control the traffic of toxic wastes.

Many countries are taking steps to clean up their rivers (salmon have now returned to England's Thames River), to control air pollution (it has declined 10 percent in the cities of the United States with the worst smog), to tap environment-friendly energy sources (80 percent of the homes in Iceland are heated with geothermal energy), and to conserve their natural heritage (Costa Rica and Namibia have converted about 12 percent of their total land area into national parks).

Are these positive signs proof that mankind is taking the danger seriously? Will it just be a matter of time before our planet is in good health once again? The following articles will seek to answer those questions.

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IS THE BATTLE BEING WON?

LOOK after this planet, it's the only one we have." This was the dramatic appeal of Prince Philip of Britain, president of the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Thousands of years earlier, the psalmist wrote: "As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong, but the earth he has given to the sons of men." (Psalm 115:16) God has given us the earth as our home, and we must look after it. That is what ecology is all about.

Literally the word "ecology" means "a study of home."* One definition given by *The American Heritage Dictionary* is "the study of the detrimental effects of modern civilization on the environment, with a view toward prevention or reversal through conservation." Simply put, ecology means discovering what damage man has done and then finding ways to fix it. Neither is an easy task.

Three Home Truths of Ecology

Barry Commoner, biologist, in his book *Making Peace With the Planet*, suggests three simple laws of ecology that help explain why the earth is so vulnerable to abuse.

Everything is connected to everything else. Just as a bad tooth can affect our whole

body, so damage to one particular natural resource can trigger a whole chain of environmental problems.

For example, during the last 40 years, 50 percent of Nepal's Himalayan forests have been cut down either for firewood or for timber products. Once stripped of trees, the soil of the mountain slopes was soon washed away when the monsoon rains arrived. Without topsoil, new trees could not easily take hold, and many mountains became barren. Because of deforestation, Nepal is now losing millions of tons of topsoil every year. And the problems are not confined to Nepal.

In Bangladesh the torrential rains, which were once soaked up by the trees, rush unimpeded down the denuded mountains and on toward the coast, where they produce catastrophic floods. In times past, Bangladesh had serious flooding once every 50 years; now it is every 4 years or less.

In other parts of the world, deforestation has led to desertification and changes in local climate. Forests are only one natural resource that man is exploiting. As ecologists still know relatively little about the interlocking parts of our vast ecosystem, a problem may not be noticed until severe damage has already been done. This is true in the

* From the Greek *oikos* (house, home) and *lo-gia* (study).

case of waste disposal, which well illustrates the second law of ecology.

Everything has to go somewhere. Imagine what a typical home would look like if there were no disposal of garbage. Our planet is just such a closed system—all our waste must end up somewhere around the earthly home. The partial destruction of the ozone layer shows that even apparently harmless gases, such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), do not merely disappear into thin air. CFCs are just one of hundreds of potentially hazardous substances that are being released into the sky, the rivers, and the oceans.

True, some products—termed “biodegrad-

able”—can in time be broken down and absorbed by natural processes, but others cannot. The beaches of the world are littered with plastic containers that will be lying around for decades to come. Less visible is industry's toxic waste, which is usually buried somewhere. Although out of sight, there is no guarantee that it will always be out of mind. It can still seep into underground water supplies and pose grave health risks to man and animals. “We don't know what to do with all the chemicals produced by modern industry,” admitted a Hungarian scientist at Budapest's Institute of Hydrology. “We can't even keep track of them.”

The Search for Renewable Energy Sources

Most of us take energy for granted—until there is a blackout or an increase in oil prices. Energy consumption, however, is one of the greatest causes of pollution. Most of the energy used comes from the burning of wood or fossil fuels, a process that dumps millions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and decimates the world's forests.

Nuclear energy, another option, is becoming more and more unpopular because of the danger of accidents and the difficulty of storing radioactive waste. Other alternatives are known as renewable energy sources, since they harness naturally occurring energy sources that are freely available. There are five principal types.

Solar energy. This can easily be tapped for heating, and in some countries, such as Israel, many houses have solar panels for heating water. Using the sun to produce electricity is more difficult, but modern photovoltaic cells are already providing electricity in rural areas and are becoming more economical.

Wind power. Gigantic windmills now dot the horizon in several windy parts of the world. The electricity supplied by this eolian energy,

as it is called, has steadily fallen in price and now costs less in some areas than traditional energy supplies.

Hydroelectricity. Already 20 percent of the world's electricity comes from hydroelectric plants, but unfortunately most of the promising sites in developed countries are already exploited. Enormous dams can also do considerable ecological damage. A better prospect, especially in developing countries, seems to be that of building many smaller hydroelectric plants.

Geothermal energy. Some countries, particularly Iceland and New Zealand, have been able to plug into the “hot-water system” beneath their feet. Underground volcanic activity heats water, which can be used to heat houses and generate electricity. Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Philippines, and the United States have also developed this natural energy source to some extent.

Tidal power. The ocean tides are being used in some countries, such as Britain, France, and Russia, to generate electricity. However, there are few sites around the world that lend themselves to providing this supply of energy at an economical cost.

Some of the World's Major Environmental Problems

Destruction of forests. Three quarters of the temperate forests and half of the tropical forests of the world have already been lost, and the rate of deforestation has increased alarmingly during the past decade. Latest estimates put the destruction of tropical forests at between 60,000 and 80,000 square miles every year, about the size of Uruguay.

Toxic wastes. Half the 70,000 chemicals currently manufactured are classified as toxic. The United States alone produces 240 million tons of toxic wastes every year. Lack of data makes it impossible to calculate the worldwide total. Additionally, by the year 2000, there will be nearly 200,000 tons of radioactive waste stored in temporary sites.

Land degradation. A third of the world's surface area is threatened by desertification. In some parts of Africa, the Sahara Desert has advanced 200 miles in just 20 years. Already the livelihood of millions of people is being threatened.

Deforestation



Toxic wastes



Atmospheric pollution



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Water scarcity. About two billion people live in areas where there is a chronic shortage of water. Aggravating the shortage is the drying up of thousands of wells due to the sinking levels of the aquifers on which they depend.

Species in danger of extinction. Although the figures are somewhat conjectural, scientists estimate that between 500,000 and 1,000,000 species of animals, plants, and insects will have been exterminated by the year 2000.

Atmospheric contamination. A United Nations study in the early 1980's found that one billion people live in urban areas that are exposed daily to health-threatening levels of soot particles or poisonous gases, such as sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and carbon monoxide. The rapid growth of cities in the last decade has undoubtedly made this problem worse. Furthermore, 24 billion tons of carbon dioxide is being pumped into the atmosphere annually, and it is feared that this "greenhouse gas" may produce a global warming.

Water scarcity



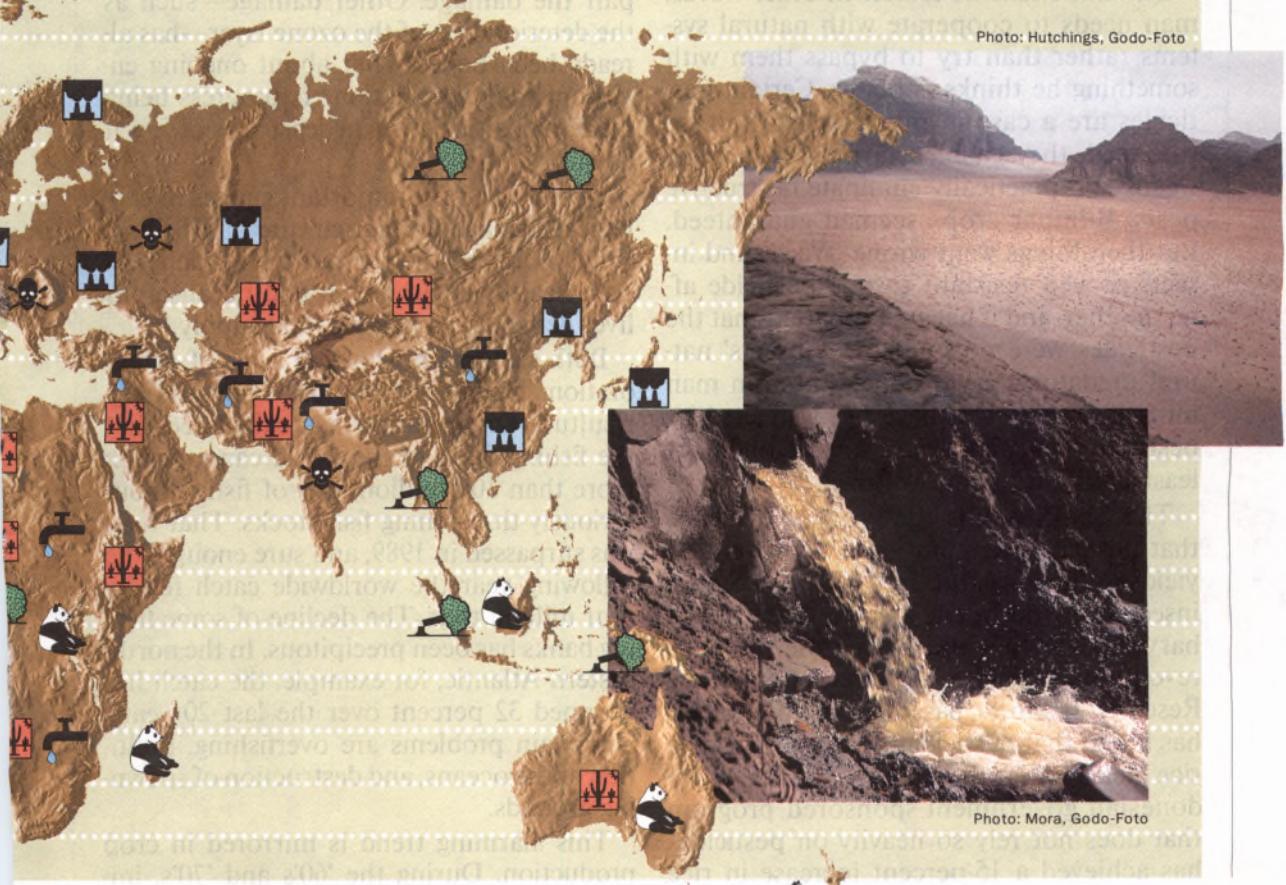
Species endangered



Land degradation



Photo: Hutchings, Godo-Foto



The most menacing garbage of all is radioactive waste, a by-product of nuclear power stations. Thousands of tons of nuclear waste is stored in temporary sites, although some has already been dumped in the oceans. Despite years of scientific research, no solution has yet been found for safe, permanent storage or disposal, and none is in the offing. No one knows when these ecological time bombs might explode. The problem will certainly not go away—the waste will be radioactive for centuries or millenniums to come, or until God takes action. (Revelation 11:18) Man's disregard for the matter of waste disposal is also a reminder of the third law of ecology.

Let nature take its course. In other words, man needs to cooperate with natural systems rather than try to bypass them with something he thinks is better. Certain pesticides are a case in point. When first introduced, they enabled farmers to control weeds and practically eliminate destructive pests. Bumper crops seemed guaranteed. But then things went wrong. Weeds and insects proved resistant to one pesticide after another, and it became apparent that the pesticides were poisoning the insects' natural predators, the wildlife, and even man himself. Maybe you have been affected by pesticide poisoning. Then you are one of at least a million victims worldwide.

The final irony is the growing evidence that pesticides may not even improve crop yields in the long run. In the United States, insects now devour a greater share of the harvest than they did before the pesticide revolution. Likewise, the International Rice Research Institute, based in the Philippines, has found that pesticides no longer improve rice yields in Southeast Asia. In fact, an Indonesian government-sponsored program that does not rely so heavily on pesticides has achieved a 15-percent increase in rice

production since 1987 despite a 65-percent decrease in the use of pesticides. Notwithstanding, every year the world's farmers still use pesticides extensively.

The three laws of ecology outlined above help explain why things are going wrong. Other important questions are, How much damage has already been done, and can it be fixed?

How Much Damage Has Been Done?

The accompanying world map (see pages 8-9) highlights some principal environmental problems and where they are most critical. Obviously, when loss of habitat or other factors cause the extermination of a plant or an animal species, man cannot repair the damage. Other damage—such as the deterioration of the ozone layer—has already been done. What about ongoing environmental degradation? Is progress being made in halting it or at least in slowing it down?

Two of the most important gauges of ecological damage are agriculture and fishing. Why? Because their productivity depends on a healthy environment and because our lives depend on a reliable food supply.

Both sectors are showing signs of deterioration. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has calculated that the fishing fleets of the world cannot catch more than 100 million tons of fish without seriously threatening fish stocks. That total was surpassed in 1989, and sure enough, the following year the worldwide catch fell by four million tons. The decline of some fishing banks has been precipitous. In the north-eastern Atlantic, for example, the catch has dropped 32 percent over the last 20 years. The main problems are overfishing, pollution of the oceans, and destruction of spawning grounds.

This alarming trend is mirrored in crop production. During the '60's and '70's, im-

proved strains of crops as well as irrigation and the extensive use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers boosted world grain production considerably. Now, pesticides and fertilizers are losing their effectiveness, and water shortages and pollution also contribute to leaner harvests.

Although there are nearly 100 million extra mouths to feed each year, during the last decade there has been a decrease in the total amount of cultivated land. And this arable land is losing its fertility. The Worldwatch Institute estimates that erosion has deprived farmers of 500 billion tons of topsoil during the last 20 years. Inevitably, food production has begun to decline. The report *State of the World 1993* comments that "the 6-percent decline in grain output per person between 1984 and 1992 [is] perhaps the most disturbing economic trend in the world today."

Clearly, the lives of millions of people are already at risk as a result of man's neglect of the environment.

Can Man Handle the Problems?

Even though man now understands something about what is going wrong, it is not easy to fix. The first difficulty is that it would require big money—at least \$600 billion a year—to implement the comprehensive proposals put forward at the Earth Summit in 1992. Real sacrifices would also be necessary—sacrifices such as wasting less and recycling more, conserving water and energy, using public rather than private transport, and, most difficult of all, thinking in terms of the planet rather than one's own backyard. John Cairns, Jr., chairman of a U.S. committee for restoring the aquatic ecosystems, put the problem in a nutshell: "I'm optimistic about what we can do. I'm pessimistic about what we will do."

The sheer cost of a wholesale cleanup is such that most countries prefer to put off the day of reckoning. At a time of economic cri-

sis, environmental measures are viewed as a threat to jobs or a brake on the economy. Lip service is cheaper than action. The book *Caring for the Earth* describes the response so far as being like "thunderstorms of rhetoric followed by droughts of inaction." But despite this foot-dragging, couldn't new technology—if given time—find a painless cure for the planet's ills? Apparently not.

In a joint statement, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society of London frankly admitted: "If current predictions of population growth prove accurate and patterns of human activity on the planet remain unchanged, science and technology may not be able to prevent either irreversible degradation of the environment or continued poverty for much of the world."

The scary problem of nuclear waste with nowhere to go is a reminder that science is not omnipotent. For 40 years scientists have been searching for safe sites to store high-level radioactive waste permanently. The quest is proving so difficult that some countries, such as Italy and Argentina, have concluded that they won't have a site ready until the year 2040 *at the earliest*. Germany, the most optimistic country in this field, hopes to finalize plans by the year 2008.

Why is nuclear waste such a problem? "No scientist or engineer can give an absolute guarantee that radioactive waste will not someday leak in dangerous quantities from even the best of repositories," explains geologist Konrad Krauskopf. But despite early warnings about the difficulty of waste disposal, governments and the nuclear industry blithely pressed forward, assuming that the technology of tomorrow would come up with a solution. That tomorrow never came.

If technology doesn't have a quick fix for the environmental crisis, what other options are left? Will necessity finally force the nations to work together to protect the planet?



OUR FRAGILE PLANET WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

TWO hundred years ago, American statesman Patrick Henry said: "I know of no way of judging the future but by the past." In the past, man has trampled on the environment. Will he turn over a new leaf in the future? So far, the signs are not encouraging.

Although some laudable progress has been made, it has mainly been cosmetic, addressing symptoms rather than causes. If a house has dry rot, painting the woodwork will not prevent its collapse. Only a major structural reform can save it. Similarly, there must be a restructuring of the way man uses this planet. Mere damage control will not suffice.

Analyzing the results of 20 years of environmental controls in the United States, one expert concludes that "the assault on the environment cannot be effectively controlled, but must be prevented." Obviously, preventing pollution is much better than curing its ill effects. But achieving such a goal would require nothing less than a fundamental change in human society and in the focus of big business. The book *Caring for the Earth* acknowledges that caring for the earth requires "values, economies and societies different from most that prevail today." What

are some of these values that need to be changed for the sake of saving the planet?

Ingrained Causes of the Crisis

Selfishness. Putting the interests of the planet before those of exploiting humans is the first necessary step toward protecting the environment. Nevertheless, few are willing to relinquish an affluent life-style, even though it may be ruining the planet for future generations. When the government of the Netherlands—one of the most polluted countries of Western Europe—tried to limit car travel as part of an antipollution campaign, widespread opposition sabotaged the plan. Although Dutch roads are the most congested in the world, motorists just weren't willing to give up their freedom.

Self-interest affects decision makers as well as the general public. Politicians are reluctant to implement environmental policies that might cost them votes, and industrialists balk at any proposals that may threaten profits and economic growth.

Greed. When it comes down to a choice between profits and conservation, money usually talks louder. Powerful industries lobby to minimize pollution control or to avoid government regulations altogether. The damage to the ozone layer exemplifies this

problem. As late as March 1988, the chairman of a major U.S. chemical company stated: "At the moment, scientific evidence does not point to the need for dramatic CFC emission reductions."

The same company, however, recommended phasing out chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) altogether. A change of heart? "It had nothing to do with whether the environment was being damaged or not," explained Mostafa Tolba, director-general of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). "It was all [about] who was going to gain an [economic] edge over who." Now many scientists realize that the destruction of the ozone layer is one of the worst man-made environmental catastrophes in history.

Ignorance. What we know is dwarfed by what we don't know. "We still know relatively little about the abundance of life in tropical rain forests," explains Peter H. Raven, director of the Missouri Botanical Garden. "Amazingly, we know more—much more—about the surface of the moon." The same is true regarding the atmosphere. How much carbon dioxide can we keep on pumping into the sky without affecting the global climate? Nobody knows. But as *Time* magazine said, "it is reckless to subject nature to such giant experiments when the outcome is unknown and the possible consequences are too frightening to contemplate."

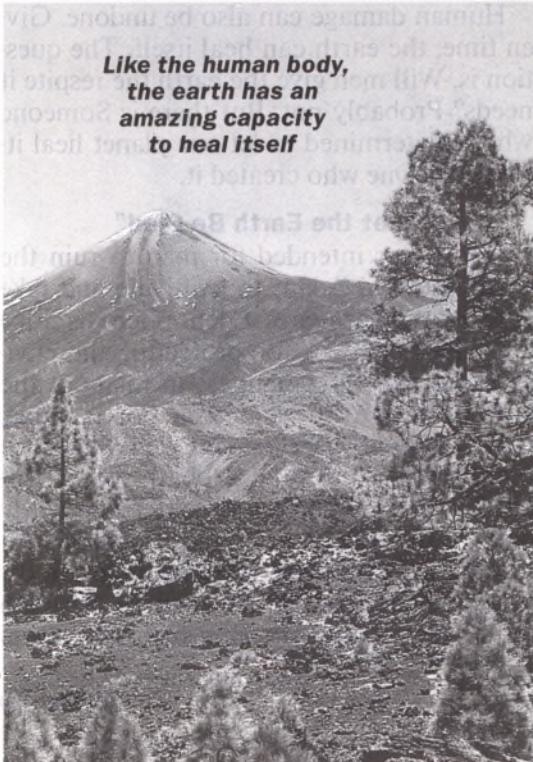
According to UNEP estimates, it is possible that the ozone loss by the end of this decade will eventually cause hundreds of thousands of new cases of skin cancer every year. The effect on crops and fisheries is still unknown, but it is expected to be substantial.

Shortsighted viewpoints. Unlike other catastrophes, environmental problems creep up on us insidiously. This hampers attempts to drum up concerted action before lasting damage is done. The book *Saving the Planet* compares our present situation to that of

the doomed passengers on the crippled *Titanic* in 1912: "Few are aware of the proportions of the potential tragedy." The authors believe that the planet can only be saved if politicians and businessmen face up to reality and think in terms of long-term viability instead of short-term benefits.

Self-centered attitudes. At the Earth Summit in 1992, Spanish prime minister Felipe González pointed out that "the problem is global, and the solution cannot be other than global." True enough, but finding solutions that are globally acceptable is a daunting task. A U.S. delegate to the Earth Summit said bluntly: "The American life-style is not up for negotiation." Indian environmentalist Maneka Gandhi, on the other hand, complained that "one child in the West consumes as much as 125 in the East." She claimed that "nearly all the environmental degradation in the East is due to consumption in the West." Time and again, international attempts to improve the environment

**Like the human body,
the earth has an
amazing capacity
to heal itself**



have foundered on the rocks of self-centered national interests.

Despite all these fundamental problems, there are reasons to look to the future with confidence. One of them is the resilience of our planet's defense system.

The Healing of the Earth

Like the human body, the earth has an amazing capacity to heal itself. An outstanding example of this occurred last century. In 1883 the Indonesian volcanic island of Krakatau (Krakatoa) erupted in a gigantic explosion that was heard almost 3,000 miles away. Nearly five cubic miles of matter was hurled into the sky, and two thirds of the island disappeared under the sea. Nine months later the only sign of life was a microscopic spider. Today the whole island is covered by exuberant tropical vegetation, which is host to hundreds of species of birds, mammals, snakes, and insects. No doubt this recovery has been abetted by the protection the island enjoys as part of Ujung Kulon National Park.

Human damage can also be undone. Given time, the earth can heal itself. The question is, Will men give the earth the respite it needs? Probably not. But there is Someone who is determined to let our planet heal itself—the One who created it.

"Let the Earth Be Glad"

God never intended for man to ruin the earth. He told Adam to 'cultivate and take care' of the garden of Eden. (Genesis 2:15) Jehovah's concern for protecting the environment was also manifest in many of the laws he gave to the Israelites. For example, they were told to let the land lie fallow once every seven years—the Sabbath year. (Exodus 23:10, 11) When the Israelites frequently ignored this and other divine commands, Jehovah finally allowed the Babylonians to depopulate the land, which then lay desolate for 70 years "until the land had paid off its

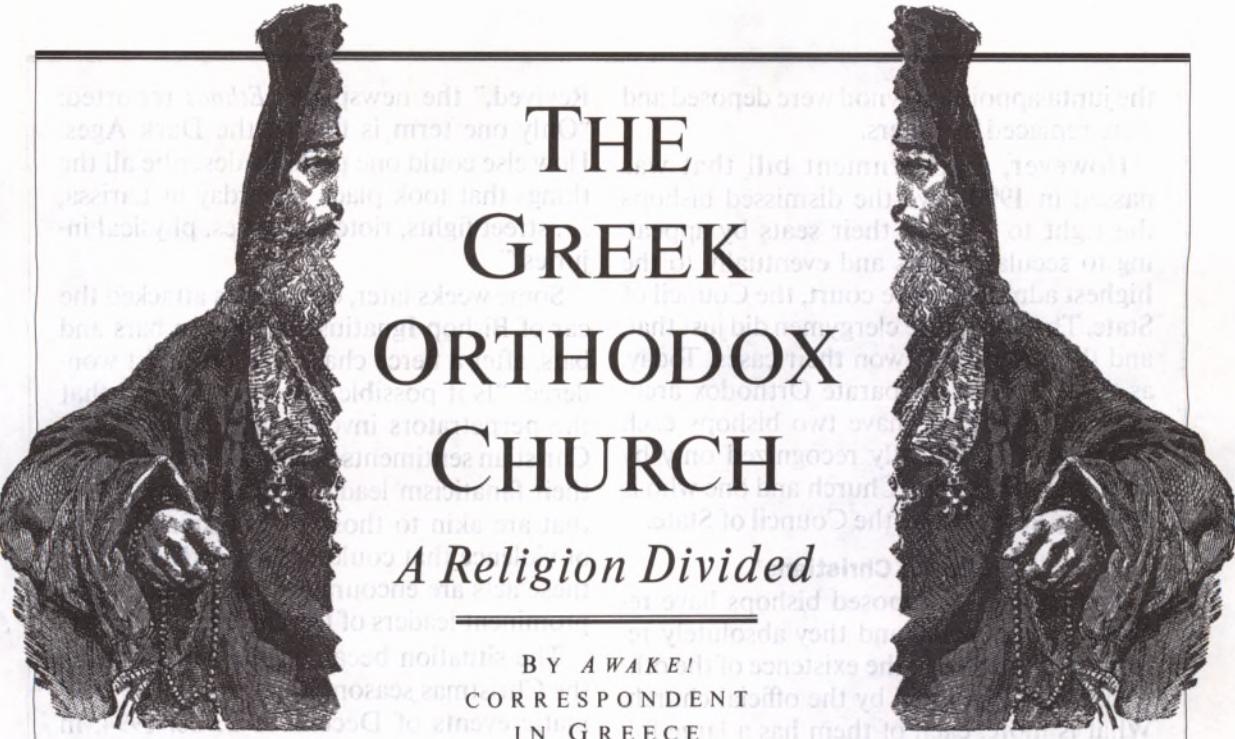
sabbaths." (2 Chronicles 36:21) In view of this historical precedent, it is not surprising that the Bible says that God will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth" so that the earth can recuperate from man's environmental assault.—Revelation 11:18.

That action, however, will only be the first step. The planet's survival, as biologist Barry Commoner rightly points out, "depends equally on ending the war with nature and on ending the wars among ourselves." To achieve that goal, the people of the earth must be "taught by Jehovah" to care for one another and to care for their earthly home. As a result, their peace will be "abundant."—Isaiah 54:13.

God assures us that there will be a renovation of the earth's ecosystems. Instead of advancing relentlessly, the deserts will "blossom as the saffron." (Isaiah 35:1) In place of food shortages, there will be "plenty of grain on the earth." (Psalm 72:16) Rather than die from pollution, the earth's rivers will "clap their hands."—Psalm 98:8.

When will such a transformation be possible? When "Jehovah himself has become king." (Psalm 96:10) God's rule will guarantee a blessing for every living thing on earth. "Let the earth be glad," says the psalmist. "Let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy."—Psalm 96:11, 12, *New International Version*.

An earth blessed by its Creator and ruled in righteousness has a glorious future. The Bible describes the results: "Righteousness and peace—they have kissed each other. Trueness itself will sprout out of the very earth, and righteousness itself will look down from the very heavens. Also, Jehovah, for his part, will give what is good, and our own land will give its yield." (Psalm 85:10-12) When that day dawns, our planet will be out of danger forever.



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IN GREECE

FOR sincere people who love God and the truth and who have deep respect for his worship, the present situation in the Greek Orthodox Church in Greece is, to say the least, appalling. The deplorable lack of unity, the violent confrontations between fighting factions of the church, a torrent of shameful moral scandals, and the inability of a religion—which describes itself as “the only true church of God”—to provide spiritual guidance are causing many Greeks to become disappointed and disgusted.

The common people are frustrated, even enraged, by this state of affairs. A university professor, writing in a leading Greek newspaper, laments: “The Church of Greece is being torn apart by a crisis unprecedented in its intensity and duration, which puts into question [the church’s] authority and erodes the inherent value of its institutions. Unfortunately the harm continues.”

How did this situation develop? Have the

close ties enjoyed by the Greek Orthodox Church with the State been truly beneficial? What is the future of these Church and State relations? What alternative exists for people seeking the true, united congregation of Christ? Let us examine the facts and see what the Bible has to say on the matter.

A Struggle for Power

When a military dictatorship ruled over Greece during the years 1967-74, it intervened actively in the affairs of the Greek Orthodox Church in order to consolidate its own power. In its effort to take over complete control, the military junta dissolved the previously elected Holy Synod—the highest executive body of the Greek Orthodox Church—and appointed a synod of its own, “according to merit,” as it was termed. When democracy was restored in 1974, the ruling body of the church was again elected according to its canonical charter. Consequently, the bishops who had formed part of

From the book *The Pictorial History of the World*

the junta-appointed synod were deposed and were replaced by others.

However, a government bill that was passed in 1990 gave the dismissed bishops the right to reclaim their seats by appealing to secular courts and eventually to the highest administrative court, the Council of State. Three of those clergymen did just that, and they eventually won their cases. Today, as a result, three separate Orthodox archdioceses in Greece have two bishops each—one who is officially recognized only by the Greek Orthodox Church and one who is officially accepted by the Council of State.

"Fighting Christians"

The previously deposed bishops have reclaimed their seats, and they absolutely refuse to acknowledge the existence of the other bishops appointed by the official church. What is more, each of them has a large following of "religious fanatics"—as one newspaper described them—who are fervently vocal in supporting their bishop's cause. This situation thus sparked heated and intense reactions as television screens throughout the country flashed scenes of violence, showing masses of such "fighting Christians" forcibly breaking into churches, smashing religious icons, and attacking clergymen and laymen of the opposite factions. In most of these cases, riot police had to intervene in order to restore calm. Events reached a climax in October and November 1993 in churches located in the well-to-do Athens suburb of Kifisia, and later in July and December 1994 in the city of Larissa, as riotous episodes of blind religious fanaticism shocked the public in Greece.

The most violent clashes took place on July 28, 1994, during the enthronement of Ignatius, the bishop in Larissa appointed by the Holy Synod. Bearing the front-page banner headline, "Larissa Becomes a Battlefield for the New Bishop—The Dark Ages

Revived," the newspaper *Ethnos* reported: "Only one term is fitting: the Dark Ages. How else could one possibly describe all the things that took place yesterday in Larissa, . . . street fights, riotous clashes, physical injuries?"

Some weeks later, opponents attacked the car of Bishop Ignatius "using iron bars and bats, after a fierce chase." A journalist wondered: "Is it possible for one to accept that the perpetrators involved are infused with Christian sentiments when, at the same time, their fanaticism leads them to commit acts that are akin to those of gangsters, to acts of violence that could cause death? . . . And these acts are encouraged and condoned by prominent leaders of the church."

The situation became even worse during the Christmas season. Referring to the traumatic events of December 23-26, 1994, in Larissa, the newspaper *Eleftherotipia* wrote: "It was a Christmas of shame in Larissa, where, once again, the long, drawn-out conflict marred the [celebration]. . . . While church bells announced the birth of Christ, police clubs were falling over the heads of the 'righteous and unrighteous.' Riots, clashes, tirades of curses, and arrests replaced the bestowing of Christmas good wishes and benedictions in the courtyard of the Church of Saint Constantine in Larissa. . . . The demonstrations [against Ignatius] quickly turned into verbal insults and then clashes with police. . . . They turned the church courtyard into a battlefield."

How did people react to this? An Orthodox man commented: "I cannot understand how people who call themselves Christians can perpetrate such acts of violence during sacred religious holidays. How can I go to church when I am faced with the risk of being beaten up there?" And one devout Orthodox woman stated: "I am afraid to go to church now after all these events."

As if this were not enough, there is also a torrent of disclosures about moral scandals involving the Greek Orthodox Church. The media have repeatedly brought to light revelations with regard to the decadent morals of certain members of the clergy—homosexual and pedophile priests, the embezzlement of finances, and the illicit trade in antiquities. The latter is possible because many clergymen have uncontrolled free access to treasures of precious icons and other valuable artifacts.

How flagrantly this situation violates the strong admonition given by the apostle Paul to Christians that they not be followers of men because this results in “dissensions” and “divisions”—1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-4.

Church-State Relations—What Future?

Ever since the inception of the Greek State, the Greek Orthodox Church has enjoyed the privileged status of being the dominant religion. In Greece, as yet, there is no such thing as Church-State separation. The Constitution itself guarantees the position of the Greek Orthodox Church as the “prevailing religion” of Greece. This means that the Greek Orthodox Church permeates all sectors of public life, including the public administration, the judicial system, the police, public education, and practically every other aspect of society. This all-encompassing presence of the church has meant oppression and indescribable difficulties for religious minorities in Greece. Although the Constitution does guarantee religious freedom, whenever a religious minority attempts to claim its rights, it almost always finds itself enmeshed in an impenetrable web of religious bias, prejudice, and opposition that this Church-State relationship has woven.

A revision of the Constitution seems to be a distinct possibility in the near future, and

therefore a strong demand for the separation of Church and State is already being heard. Influential Greek constitutional experts and analysts are calling attention to the problems created by this close association between Church and State. They point out that the only viable solution would be a strict separation of these two entities.

Church leaders, meanwhile, are voicing their objections to such an eventual separation. Touching upon a sensitive issue, which would be adversely affected by such a development in Church-State relations, an Orthodox bishop wrote: “As a consequence, will the State stop paying the salary of the clergymen? . . . That would mean that many parishes will be left without priests.”—Compare Matthew 6:33.

Another result of the close relationship between Church and State in Greece is that Greek law—in direct conflict with European Union regulations and the Articles of the European Convention of Human Rights, which are binding for Greece—requires that the personal identity card of all Greek citizens must indicate the religion to which each citizen belongs. Open-minded people strongly object to this because members of religious minorities usually become victims of discrimination. One journalist stated: “This fact can very likely have negative consequences as far as the rights of a religious minority to be able to exercise their religious freedom are concerned.” Commenting on this, the newspaper *Ta Nea* wrote: “The State should make its decisions and pass laws without any regard for the domineering ways and reactions of the church in such matters as the obligatory registering of one’s religion on his or her personal identity card.”

Stressing the urgent need for such a separation, Dimitris Tsatsos, professor of constitutional law and also a member of the



Priests clashed with the police

European Parliament, stated: "The Church [of Greece] must stop its domineering of social, political, and educational life. The manner by which the Greek Church is operating is oppressive. It is a despot ruling over our educational system and our society." In another interview this same professor said: "The church has terrifying power in Greece, which unfortunately is not limited to its natural habitat of ruthless conservatism, but it has even managed to infiltrate the progressive sector of Greek society as well. Personally, I demand the separation of Church and State. I demand that Orthodox Greeks be put on the same level as and be equal to the adherents of other religions in Greece."

True Christians Are United

It is indeed difficult to find the mark of true Christianity in the Greek Orthodox Church. Jesus did not intend for divisions and schisms to develop within Christianity. In praying to his Father, he asked that his disciples might "all be one." (John 17:21) And these disciples were to 'have love among themselves,' this love being the distinguishing mark of genuine followers of Christ.—John 13:35.

Unity seems to elude the Greek Orthodox Church. However, this is far from being a unique case within organized religion today. Rather, it is representative of the divisiveness that plagues the religions of Christendom.

Sincere lovers of God find this sad state of affairs difficult to reconcile with the apostle Paul's words to true Christians at 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I exhort you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you should all speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among you, but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought."

Yes, true disciples of Jesus enjoy unbreakable unity among themselves. Because they are united by the bond of Christian love, they have no political, sectarian, or doctrinal differences. Jesus clearly explained that everyone would be able to recognize his followers by "their fruits," or activities. (Matthew 7:16) The publishers of this magazine invite you to investigate the "fruits" of Jehovah's Witnesses, who enjoy true Christian unity in Greece as well as everywhere else in the world.

I Was Aimless but Found a Purpose in Life

IMAGINE my dismay and discomfort very early one morning when I was awakened unexpectedly by two burly men searching the bedroom. My mother stood by, pale and helpless, obviously in a state of shock. The men were detectives.

Immediately I knew what they were looking for. Although I put on a bold, defiant front, deep inside I was afraid. I realized that a police dragnet was closing in on our gang of juvenile thieves in New Jersey, U.S.A. The detectives gruffly told me to get dressed and then bundled me off to police headquarters for questioning.

How did I get into this miserable situation? It began quite early in life. While still in my mid-teens, I already considered myself a hardened juvenile delinquent. During the 1960's, many youths thought it "cool" to be a rebel without a cause, and I agreed wholeheartedly. Thus, at 16 years of age, I found myself hanging out at a neighborhood poolroom, having been expelled from high school. Here I became involved with a gang of youths that were committing burglaries. After joining them in some relatively minor jobs, I began to enjoy the excitement and suspense and actually found each experience quite thrilling.

So began a nine-month spree of breaking and entering. As a gang, we mainly concentrated on professional offices where large sums of cash were often held. The more burglaries we committed without getting

caught, the bolder we became. Finally, we decided to rob a branch of the county bank.

For the first time, things started to go wrong. Although we gained entry into the bank without any difficulty, we spent a frustrating night inside because we were only able to break into the cashiers' drawers. A more serious problem was that our bank break-in brought the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) into the case. With the FBI on our trail, it was not long before we were all arrested.

The Sad Effects of Wrongdoing

I was personally charged with 78 burglaries and suffered the embarrassment of having the details of each one read aloud to the court. This, added to all the publicity about our crimes in the local newspaper, had a devastating effect on my parents. But the humiliation and embarrassment I was causing them did not concern me much at that time. I was sentenced to an indefinite term in a state reformatory, which could have meant my being in custody until I turned 21 years of age. However, largely as a result of the efforts of a skilled lawyer, I was transferred to a special reform school.

Although I had avoided a prison term, a stipulation was that I had to be removed from the community and from all my former associates. To this end, I was enrolled in a private school in Newark, one concentrating on problem kids like me. Additionally, I

was required to have weekly sessions with a psychologist in order to receive professional help. All these conditions were met by my parents—at heavy financial sacrifice to themselves.

Efforts to Reform

No doubt as a result of our well-publicized trial, an editorial appeared in our hometown newspaper entitled, "On Spar ing the Rod." This article was critical of the seemingly soft treatment the gang had received. The comments of this editorial, for the first time, got through to my conscience. So I cut out that clipping from the newspaper and vowed to myself that someday, in some way, I would make up for all the suffering, embarrassment, and expense I had caused my parents.

One way, I thought, to prove to my parents that I could change would be to graduate from high school with my original class. I began to study as I had never studied before in my life. The result was that at the end of the school year, when, in the presence of my probation officer, I appeared again before the judge who had sentenced me, his stern face broke into a smile as he noted that I had achieved a B-plus average each term. So now the way was open for me to return to my old high school, and I graduated the following year.

My Aimlessness Continues

By now it was 1966, and while many of my classmates headed off to the war in Vietnam, I went off to Concord College in West Virginia. At college I was introduced to drugs, peace rallies, and a whole new culture that had me questioning traditional values. I was looking for something, but I did not know what. When the Thanksgiving holidays arrived, instead of going home, I hitchhiked south across the Blue Ridge Mountains to Florida.

I had never traveled much before, and I was having a wonderful time seeing so many new and different places—that is, until Thanksgiving Day, when I ended up in the Daytona Beach jail for vagrancy. I was too ashamed to contact my parents, but the prison authorities did. Once again, my father made arrangements to pay a stiff fine rather than let me serve a prison sentence.

I did not stay at college after that. Instead, with one lone suitcase and a newly awakened yearning for travel, I took off on the road again, hitchhiking aimlessly up and down the eastern seaboard of the United States and working at odd jobs to support myself. My parents hardly ever knew where I was, although from time to time I would visit them. To my surprise they always seemed pleased to see me, but I could not settle down.

Now that I was no longer at college, I lost my student classification, which granted deferment from military service. My draft status now became I-A, and it was just a matter of time until I would be called up for induction into the military. The thought of regimentation and the loss of my new freedom was unthinkable. So I decided to leave the country by ship. In the process a new career opportunity opened up for me. Could this be my life's real purpose at last?

Life at Sea as a Mercenary

An old friend of our family was a captain in the United States merchant marine. He told me about a recently instituted training program for marine engineers. I was readily accepted into a condensed two-year program, which had the dual benefits of deferment from military duty and prospects of a marine engineering degree. I graduated with a diploma in 1969 and signed on as a third-class engineering officer on my first ship in San Francisco. We immediately sailed for

Vietnam with a cargo of ammunition. The trip was uneventful, and I signed off that ship when we reached Singapore.

In Singapore I signed on with a runaway flagship, so called because it hired all non-union labor off the docks. This ship was used to run coastwise in Vietnam, from Cam Ranh Bay in the south to Da Nang to the north, near the demilitarized zone. Here the echoing boom of relentless bombing never ceased. However, financially this route was beneficial, and with war-risk and occasional attack bonuses whenever under direct fire, I found myself earning more than \$35,000 a year as a war mercenary. In spite of this new affluence, I still felt aimless and wondered what life was all about—where was I heading?

A Glimmer of Meaning to Life

After one particularly frightening attack from enemy fire, Albert, my boiler attendant, began telling me how God was going to bring peace to the earth one day soon. I pricked up my ears at this unusual information. When we next sailed back to Singapore, Albert informed me that he had been one of Jehovah's Witnesses but was no longer active. So together we tried to locate the local Witnesses in Singapore. No one seemed to be able to help us, but the night just before we sailed, Albert found a *Watchtower* magazine in the lobby of a hotel. It had an address stamped on it. We did not have time to check it out, however, for the next morning we sailed for Sasebo, Japan, where the ship was scheduled to go into dry dock for two weeks.

There we paid off the crew, and Albert went his way. But only a week later, I was surprised to receive a telegram from him telling me that a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses was being held in Sasebo that coming weekend. I decided to go and see what this convention was all about.

That day—August 8, 1970—will always stick in my mind. I arrived at the convention site by taxi, stepping out into the midst of hundreds of Japanese, all immaculately dressed. Though most of them could not speak any English, it seemed they all wanted to shake my hand. I had never seen anything like this before, and despite not understanding a word of the program in Japanese, I decided that I would go again the next day—just to see if I would experience the same greeting again. I did!

We signed on a new crew and a week later were back at sea again, steaming for Singapore. The first thing I did on arrival was to take a taxi to the address stamped on the *Watchtower* magazine. A friendly woman came out of the house and asked if she could be of any help. I showed her the address on *The Watchtower*, and she immediately invited me in. I then met her husband and learned that they were missionaries from Australia, Norman and Gladys Bellotti. I explained how I had got their address. They made me extremely welcome and answered many of my questions, and I left with a shopping bag full of Bible literature. Over the next few months, sailing coastwise in Vietnam, I read many of those books, including *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*.

Now, for the first time in my life, I felt a sense of real purpose and direction. On the next trip back to Singapore, I resigned from the ship.

A Disappointing Homecoming

For the first time also, I really felt like going home. And so a few weeks later, I arrived back home very excited, wanting to tell my folks all about Jehovah's Witnesses. They did not share my enthusiasm. This was understandable, for my behavior did not help. I had only been home for a few weeks when, in a fit of temper, I smashed up a

local nightclub. I recovered consciousness in a jail cell.

By now I was beginning to believe that there was no real hope of my ever reforming and getting control of my violent temper. Maybe I was always going to be a rebel without a cause. I did not feel that I could stay at home any longer. I had to get away. So within a few days, I booked passage on a Norwegian cargo vessel bound for England.

England and Drama School

I enjoyed being in England, but employment was the problem. So I decided to audition for various drama schools, and to my surprise I was accepted at The London School of Dramatic Art. My two years in London were spent drinking heavily, socializing, and, of course, taking drugs of all kinds.

I suddenly decided I would like to make another visit to see my family back in the United States. But can you imagine how my dramatic appearance must have startled them this time? I wore a black cape with two golden lion heads joined by a gold chain at the neck, a red velvet waistcoat, and black velvet trousers with leather trim tucked into knee-high boots. Was it any wonder that my parents were obviously not impressed and that I felt completely out of place in their conservative surroundings! So I returned to England, where in 1972 I received a diploma

in dramatic art. Now I had achieved another goal. But still the nagging, recurring question, Where do I go from here? I still felt the need for a real purpose in life.

Aimlessness Finally Ending

Not long after this, I at last began to feel some stability coming into my life. It began with a friendship with my neighbor Caroline. She was a schoolteacher from Australia and was a conventional, steady person—just the opposite of my personality. We had been friends for two years without any romantic attachment. Caroline then left for America for three months, and because of our good friendship, I arranged for her to stay with my parents for several weeks. They probably wondered why she would have anything to do with a character like me.

Soon after Caroline left, I told my friends I was also going home, and they gave me a big send-off. But instead of going back to America, I went only as far as South Kensington, London, where I rented a basement apartment and telephoned the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in London. I had come to realize what course my life should take. Within a week a delightful married couple visited me and immediately arranged for a regular Bible study with me. Because of the Witness publications I had already read, I was now quite keen and asked for two studies each week. Seeing my enthusiasm, Bob soon invited me to the Kingdom Hall, and it was not long before I was attending all the weekly meetings.

When I found out that Jehovah's Witnesses do not smoke, I decided to quit the habit immediately. But what about my appearance? I did not want to feel out of place anymore, so I bought a dress shirt, a tie, and a suit. I soon qualified to share in the house-to-house preaching activity—and although quite nervous at first, I came to enjoy it.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Tobacco Companies Caught in a Firestorm

What Should I Do If a Friend Gets Into Trouble?

Beware of the 'Eyes of the River'!

Caroline was in for a big surprise when she got back, I thought. This turned out to be quite an understatement! She could not believe the change in me over such a short time—in my grooming and appearance and in so many other ways. I explained how my Bible studies had helped me and invited her also to have a Bible study. Apprehensive at first, she finally agreed, stipulating that she would only study with me. I was delighted to see how quickly she responded, and it was not long before she began to appreciate the truth of the Bible.

After a few months, Caroline decided to return to Australia, and she resumed her Bible study in Sydney. I remained in London until I could get baptized, which I did seven months later. Now I wanted to go home to the United States again and see all my family. But this time I was determined to get it right!

Homecoming With a Difference

My bewildered folks wanted to know what was going on this time—I looked too respectable! But I was glad now to feel *really* at home. Although my parents naturally wondered about my dramatic change, they were tactful and responded with their usual kindness and tolerance. In the months that followed, I had the privilege of sharing a study of the Bible with them. I started a study with my two older sisters, who doubtless had also been influenced by my changed life-style. Yes, this was a *real* homecoming!

In August 1973, I followed Caroline to Australia, where I was happy to see her baptized at the 1973 international convention of Jehovah's Witnesses along with 1,200 others. We were married the following weekend in Canberra, Australia's national capital. Here I have served in the full-time preaching work for the past 20 years and as an elder in the local congregation for 14 years.



David and his wife, Caroline

Thanks to my wife's cooperation, we have reared three children—Toby, Amber, and Jonathan. Although we face the normal family problems, I still manage to share in the preaching activity full-time as a pioneer and at the same time care for the material needs of our family.

Today, back in the United States, my parents are dedicated servants of Jehovah, and although both are now in their 80's, they still share in the public preaching of the Kingdom. My father serves as a ministerial servant in the local congregation. My two older sisters are also zealous for Jehovah's service.

How deeply I thank Jehovah God that my many years of aimless wandering are now well in the past! Not only has he helped me learn the best way to use my life but he has also blessed me with a united and caring family.—*As told by David Zug Partrick.*



"KANKU" AIRPORT SEEN BUT NOT HEARD

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN JAPAN

APPROACHING the Kansai International Airport from the air, you will see an island with a logo "Kansai" in English.* This Japanese island lies some three miles off the coast in Osaka Bay. Nothing but the airport and related facilities can be seen. In fact, the island has been tailor-made for use as an airport. Opened in September 1994, the airport is nicknamed Kanku, an abbreviation of its Japanese name, Kansai Kokusai Kuko.

An expressway bridge, 2.3 miles in length, connects the airport island with the mainland, making it accessible by road and rail. The island is equipped with port facilities for ships and ferry services. But why build a whole new island for an airport?

An Airport Not Heard

A growing number of tourists and visitors to the Kansai area caused the number of airplanes booming over the residential area around the Osaka International Airport to increase. To relieve people living there of the noise nuisance, a curfew from 9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. was imposed. No permission has been given to add more international flights since 1974. Thus, an airport to handle the increased passengers and freight without being heard on the mainland became an urgent need.

An airport that could be used around the clock without causing nuisance—that was a big challenge for those who were involved in the project. The only solution that presented itself was to

build an island far away from where people live and make it an airport. A mammoth project indeed!

National and local governments together with the local business world financed the \$15-billion project, setting up a private company to build and operate the new airport. Mr. Keisuke Kimura, the executive vice president of the Kansai International Airport Company, told *Awake!*: "Being a private company, we could not afford to spend a lot of time in creating the island. The work had to be done quickly."

Creating the Island

Reclaiming land along the coast is one thing, but creating an island three miles off the coast is another. In order to create the 1,260-acre airport island, 6.4 billion cubic feet of sand and soil was used as landfill. "That is the equivalent of 73 pyramids—I mean the biggest one made by King Khufu," explains Mr. Kimura.

On the seabed, at an average depth of 60 feet, lay a soft clay layer from which water had to be drained. "One million sand piles, 40 centimeters [16 inches] in diameter, were driven into that layer to drain water from it and consolidate the foundation. With the weight of the landfill, water was squeezed from the 20-meter [66 feet] soft layer of soil, shrinking it to 14 meters [46 feet]," explains Mr. Kenichiro Minami, who was in charge of the landfill project. "What we feared most was an unequal settling of the subsoil. We used computers to calculate exactly where the landfill should be made so that the settling would be even."

Altogether, the depth of the landfill reached 110 feet, the equivalent of a 10-story build-

* Kansai is the general area in western Japan that includes the commercial cities of Osaka and Kobe and the historical cities of Kyoto and Nara. Kokusai kuko means "international airport."

ing. However, under the weight of the landfill, the seabed has sunk and continues to sink. It is calculated that the seabed will sink a further five feet in 50 years, leaving the island ten feet above sea level.

In 1991, even before the entire island had been created, work on the passenger terminal building and control tower was started. After more than seven years of rigorous work, construction of the island, airport, and related facilities was completed.

Huge but Compact

Arriving passengers are in for a pleasant surprise. "By the time we got to the baggage claim area, our suitcases were there," says a traveler from the United States. What accounts for the smooth flow? "The passenger terminal building is huge but compact," says Mr. Kazuhito Arao, who is in charge of the passenger terminal building. "Passengers don't have to go through a maze, typical of international airports."

The structure of the passenger terminal building is simple but unique. The main building is designed to save passengers unnecessary movement. Domestic passengers can proceed from the train station straight to their check-in counter and then on to the boarding gate without going up or down any stairs.

From the main building, where check-in counters, immigration offices, and customs are located, two 2,300-foot wing buildings extend north and south, leading to 33 boarding gates. Passengers using gates away from the main building can take the automated guideway transit system, called the Wing Shuttle. It takes passengers to the desired gate within five minutes—including the time spent waiting for the shuttle.

Airport to Be Seen

"Being an airport totally on the sea, it is clear of any obstacles," says Mr. Arao. "Yes, we hear that pilots are saying it is an easy airport to land on," agrees Mr. Kimura.

Others also appreciate how it looks. The sophisticated design of the terminal building in the shape of airplane wings has attracted many tourists to the Kanku. They also enjoy watching airplanes taking off and landing on the unusual island airport. "We had to build an observation deck on top of the maintenance center for the tourists to the airport, although we did not intend to do so at first," says Mr. Kimura. An average of 30,000 people a day visit the airport just to look around.

If you visit Japan near the Kansai area, why not fly in or out of the Kanku—an airport that can be seen but not heard by its neighbors.

Kansai International Airport Co., Ltd.



Is Mary the “Mother of God”?

“WE SEEK REFUGE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF YOUR MERCIES, OH MOTHER OF GOD; DO NOT REJECT OUR SUPPLICATION IN NEED BUT SAVE US FROM PERDITION, OH YOU WHO ALONE ARE BLESSED.”

SUCH a prayer sums up the feelings of millions of men and women devoted to Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. In their eyes she is a kindly mother figure who can intercede for them with God and in some way temper his judgments toward them.

However, is Mary really the “Mother of God”?

Mary—“Highly Favored” by God

Mary was without doubt “highly favored”—more favored, in fact, than any other woman who has ever lived. (Luke 1:

28, *The Jerusalem Bible*) The angel Gabriel appeared to her and explained just how privileged she would be. “Listen!” he said. “You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High.” How was this miraculous event possible? Gabriel continued: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, . . . and the power of the Most High will cov-

er you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God.” —Luke 1:31, 32, 35, *JB*.

“I am the handmaid of the Lord,” said Mary, “let what you have said be done to me.” (Luke 1:38, *JB*) Thus Mary humbly acceded to this divine direction and in time gave birth to Jesus.

During the following several centuries, however, her devotees elevated her from being a lowly “handmaid of the Lord” to the position of “queen mother” with immense influence in the heavens. Church leaders officially proclaimed her “Mother of God” in 431 C.E. at the Council of Ephesus. What triggered this transformation? Pope John Paul II explains one factor: “True devotion to the Mother of God . . . is very profoundly rooted in the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity.” —*Crossing the Threshold of Hope*.

Therefore, accepting Mary as the “Mother of



God" hinges on believing in the Trinity. However, is the Trinity a Bible teaching?* Examine, please, what the apostle Peter wrote in the Bible. He warned that "false teachers . . . will subtly introduce dangerous heresies [and] will try to exploit you too with their bogus arguments." (2 Peter 2: 1, 3, *The New Testament in Modern English*, by J. B. Phillips) One such heresy was the teaching of the Trinity. Once that was accepted, the idea that Mary was the "Mother of God" (Greek: *Theotokos*, meaning "God-bearer") was quite logical. In his book *The Virgin*, Geoffrey Ashe states that "if Christ was God, the Second Person of the Trinity," as the Trinitarians reasoned, "then his mother in his human manifestation was the Mother of God."

If Jesus were "God whole and entire," as the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, then Mary rightly could be called the "Mother of God." It must be said, though, that many early Trinitarians found it hard to accept this teaching when it was first proposed—as do Trinitarian Protestants today. It has been called a "devotional paradox, 'he whom the heavens could not contain was contained in her womb.'" (*The Virgin*)—Compare 1 Kings 8:27.

But is Jesus Christ really "God whole and entire"? No, he never made that claim. Instead, he always acknowledged his subordinate position to his Father.—See Matthew 26:39; Mark 13:32; John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 15:27, 28.

'Worship in a Way That Is Worthy of Thinking Beings'

The Bible, however, encourages Christians to use their power of reason in worship. We are not asked to put blind faith in what is clothed as a mystery. Rather, says

the apostle Paul, we should 'worship in a way that is worthy of thinking beings.'—Romans 12:1, *JB*.

"We were never encouraged to think about it," says Anne, who was brought up as a Catholic. "We never questioned it. We just believed Jesus was God, so Mary was the 'Mother of God'—it was the strangest thing!" Remember, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that each member of the "divine Unity" is "God whole and entire." It states that there are not three separate gods. Should we believe, then, that as the living cells in Mary's womb divided and re-divided, "God whole and entire" was contained within an embryo that during the first month of her pregnancy grew to less than one quarter of an inch in length and had only rudimentary eyes and ears?

Keep in mind that the angel Gabriel told Mary her child was to be called "Son of the Most High" and "Son of God," not "God the Son." If, in fact, Jesus were Almighty God, why did the angel Gabriel not use the same term used by Trinitarians today—"God the Son"? Gabriel did not use the term because the teaching is not found in the Bible.

We are limited, of course, in our understanding of the works of God. But proper understanding of the Scriptures helps us to believe that Almighty God, the Creator of all life, had the power miraculously to transfer the life of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, into the womb of Mary and then to protect its development by means of His active force, or holy spirit, until Mary became the mother of Jesus—the Son of God.

Yes, Mary was greatly blessed as the mother of the one who became the Christ. It is no disrespect to her to accept that the clear teaching of the Bible—including the record of Mary's own humility—rules out giving her the title "Mother of God."

* Please see *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

WATCHING THE WORLD

More of Saturn's Moons Discovered

Photos taken by the Hubble Space Telescope have revealed at least two previously unknown moons orbiting Saturn. The pictures were taken during an "Earth-ring crossing," a rare occasion when Earth has an edge-on view of Saturn's rings. Under these conditions the rings' bright reflected light is reduced and the moons are more easily discernible. Astronomers estimate the moons to be between 7 and 40 miles in diameter. The newly discovered moons orbit Saturn at a distance of 85,000 to 91,000 miles from the center of the planet. This is much closer than the 250,000 miles between Earth and its moon. Saturn is about one billion miles from Earth.

Apology—After 50 Years

"We hereby confess, above all in the presence of God, the sin of the Meiji Gakuin [University] in having a part in the past war and at the same time apologize to the people of foreign countries, especially those of Korea and China," said the university's superintendent, Hiromasa Nakayama, in his lecture at the university's chapel in Tokyo last June. Meiji Gakuin University is a "Christian" mission school. According to the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper, it was the first time the school's representative openly admitted that the school shared in the war effort. During the war the chairman of the university's board of directors organized the United Church of Christ in Japan to unify the churches for the war effort. The United Church

raised funds to produce fighter planes and encouraged Christians to submit themselves unconditionally to their country, Nakayama said.

Mormon Church Did Not Resist Nazis

Faced with reports of violence toward Jews in Nazi Germany, "the Mormon Church did almost nothing," says *The Salt Lake Tribune*. Some Mormons, along with members of other churches, "were entranced by Hitler and his message of racial purity, and there



were those who thought they were obeying their church's teaching to honor state leaders." During the Holocaust the German sector of the Mormons "did what most of the churches did; the leaders went along," said Professor Franklin Littell of Temple University, Philadelphia. Douglas Tobler, professor of history at Brigham Young University, wants to examine "the church's failure to take an institutional stand against Nazism," the paper said. Interestingly, the *Tribune* observed that historian John S. Conway, of the University of British Columbia, Canada, said that the only religious organization that absolutely refused to follow the Nazis was Jehovah's Witnesses. He

added that for this more than half were sent to concentration camps.

Unattended Children

An Australian national survey revealed that children as young as six years old are being left home alone while both parents are at work or out socializing, reports *The Canberra Times*. According to Wendy Reid, spokeswoman for Boys Town National Community Projects, "over half the children said they were lonely and missed their parents' company, while a large percentage of those under 12 were frightened—of the dark, of storms, of intruders, or kidnapping." Additionally, Reid said that "71 percent of [the] children had no strategy to follow if trouble arose and that half of the kids under 12 didn't even know how to make contact with their parents," the *Times* reported.

"Power Napping"

"Napping can improve mood, alertness and job performance," reports *The Wall Street Journal*. The rejuvenating effects of a good snooze have prompted some industries to seek ways to incorporate naps into the regular workday. This is especially true where safety concerns are tied to the alertness of employees—such as truckers, airline pilots, and nuclear power plant operators. "We've found that you get tremendous recovery of alertness—several hours worth—out of a 15-minute nap," says sleep researcher Claudio Stampi. Napping on the job has a long way to go, though, before it will be em-

braced by most employers. The *Journal* says that in order "to make sleeping on the job more palatable, proponents now refer to it as 'power napping.'"

Garden Chemicals—A Threat?

Lawn and garden chemicals may be endangering your children's health, reports the French nature magazine *Terre Sauvage*. It warns that "children under fourteen years of age living in a home where the garden is treated with herbicides or pesticides have a risk four times greater of contracting sarcoma, a form of cancer," than children not exposed to such chemicals. The report adds that the use of insecticides in a child's environment increases the risk of developing leukemia by one and a half to three times. Since over half of all French households use garden chemicals, many may inadvertently be creating an environment for their children that is much more toxic than that of a large, polluted city.

Hot Ants

Two researchers in Switzerland have discovered why certain ants in the Sahara Desert can withstand scorching temperatures of 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Rüdiger Wehner of the Zoological Institute of the University of Zurich and geneticist Walter Gehring of the University of Basel have found that ants produce "substances known as heat shock proteins (HSPs), which help protect body proteins from heat damage," reports *Science* magazine. When subjected to extreme temperatures, "all animals make some HSPs after the damage [from heat shock] begins," the maga-

zine says, but "ants make a pre-emptive strike." In what way? The researchers found that the ants mimic heat shock and produce HSPs even before they leave their nest. Adds Gehring: "We were not clever enough to think of this, but the ants were." Or was it their Creator?

Stop the Noise

"Please Stop That Noise," pleads a headline in *The Toronto Star* newspaper. Relentless city noise from gas lawn mowers, leaf blowers, jackhammers, car horns and alarms, boom boxes, barking dogs, crying babies, and late-night parties has



antinoise lobbyists campaigning for peace and quiet. Prolonged exposure to such noise "can increase fatigue and anxiety," says the *Star*. It adds: "Medical research shows blood pressure can rise, the heart rate can change and the body produces adrenaline and other hormones that affect blood vessels." According to health authorities, exposure to any sound over 85 decibels, such as a noisy lawn mower or a motorbike, for more than eight hours is dangerous to your hearing.

Fighting Osteoporosis

Physical activity can help to restore bone mass lost to osteoporosis, says the newspaper *Jornal do Brasil*. Specialists at the Cotrauma Clinic

in Rio de Janeiro offer exercise treatments but also teach patients how "to walk properly and adopt correct posture." After two years of working with a group of women from 45 to 77 years of age, 80 percent of the group had experienced a considerable increase in bone mass. During that time, the women had less rheumatic back pain, and none suffered bone fractures. Dr. Theo Cohen, director of the clinic, also recommends a diet that is rich in calcium and low in fat. Moreover, he encourages finding a purpose in life. "We do not want to see elderly ones sitting and knitting," observes Dr. Cohen. "Going out to walk around is just as important as doing crossword puzzles to exercise the brain cells."

Concern Over Blood-Borne Diseases

Better safety strategies are needed to protect the blood supply, according to a report by the Institute of Medicine of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. As evidence, the report points to the spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) through blood transfusions in the early years of the AIDS epidemic. Reviewing the report, *The New York Times* stated: "More than half of the 16,000 hemophiliacs in the United States and more than 12,000 patients who received transfusions of blood and blood products became infected with H.I.V." The institute's report expresses concern that unknown, dangerous infectious agents like HIV could again catch the national health system unprepared. It recommended establishing a system to "detect, monitor, and warn of adverse effects in the recipients of blood and blood products."

FROM OUR READERS

Alpine Iceman I just finished reading "The Mystery of the Alpine Iceman." (May 8, 1995) I must admit that when I first received it, I really did not think I'd like the subject. But I found the article to be unbelievably fascinating! I appreciate the way it showed that the traditional view of "primitive" man is not correct.

J. S., United States

The eye-catching title helped me place the magazine with a man I met on the train. The next week I met him again, and he said he had found the article to be of "high quality" and well developed. He accepted the latest issue of *The Watchtower*.

G. C., Japan

Menopause In your series "A Better Understanding of Menopause" (February 22, 1995), you mentioned using "vegetable or fruit oils, vitamin-E oil, and lubricant gels" as remedies for feminine dryness. As a senior nursing student, I feel impelled to mention that oil-based and fruit-based lubrication provide a medium for bacterial growth. Water-soluble lubricants are thus preferable.

H. W., United States

We appreciate receiving this updated information.—ED.

At the age of 45, I began suffering from hot flashes. I endured them for years without medication. I therefore cried as I felt the loving care evidenced in your article. It helped me to understand menopause better, and it answered many of my questions.

S. T. B. A., Brazil

Computer Games I was thrilled to see the article "Is This the Game for You?" (May 8, 1995) As a parent, I am appalled at the relaxed attitude of some who think these games are harmless fun. There are many educational and nonviolent games available.

K. G., United States

I am a computer software evaluator, and I was recently given a copy of the game Doom II for evaluation. I found that the game utilizes demonic symbols, such as inverted crosses and pentagrams. I hope people realize how bad these games are.

R. B., United States

Young Marriage Thank you for the article "Young People Ask . . . Married Too Soon—Can We Succeed?" (April 22, 1995) As congregation overseers, we had arranged to make a counseling visit on a young couple who were having a marital crisis. What a surprise for me when this issue arrived! It was just what we needed to help that young couple. We considered the entire article as well as all the Bible texts cited.

M. C., Brazil

Undersea Exploration We greatly appreciated the article "Safely Exploring the World Beneath the Waves." (May 8, 1995) We have just returned home from a trip to the Red Sea and found that your advice was very useful. Not only did we explore a magnificent seabed but we also saved a lot of money!

V. C. and K. B., Italy

My husband and I occasionally have problems concerning the leisure activities of our two sons. My husband is interested in diving, and a new diving school recently opened in our area. After reading your article, I am pleased that I can have a good conscience when they participate.

C. P., Germany

Surviving Communism Thank you so much for the article "Over 40 Years Under Communist Ban." (April 22, 1995) My heart was touched deeply as I read it. It showed me how Jehovah gives the needed support at the appropriate time so that a person can maintain integrity.

S. A. A., Ghana

Jessica's Report

JESSICA, a 13-year-old girl from the United States, was assigned along with her classmates to give a speech on the theme "God, Flag, and Country." Knowing that her fellow students were curious about why she as one of Jehovah's Witnesses did not salute the flag, Jessica courageously took advantage of this opportunity to explain her beliefs. The following are excerpts from her report.

"At the beginning of each school day, students are asked to say the pledge of allegiance, but because of my beliefs and my religion, I do not. Many people wonder why. Now, I'll tell you.

"The first words of the flag salute are: 'I pledge allegiance to the flag.' Well, what is allegiance? It is the obligation of support, loyalty, and devotion. Since I have already pledged my allegiance to God, I cannot and will not pledge my allegiance to the flag. That I do not worship or pledge my allegiance to the flag, though, does not mean that I disrespect it.

"God is most important in my life. I try the best I can to follow his commandments as set out in the Bible. Every day I pray to him, and I also pray when I need extra help or encouragement. I always receive that help and encouragement at the right time. I have found that when I put God first and when I do the things he has commanded us to do, I am happier.

"So although I don't salute the flag, I do respect it and would not dishonor it in any way. But my allegiance is to God, and rightly so, because he created me and I owe that allegiance to him."

The students in Jessica's class were asked to evaluate the reports they heard. How happy Jessica was that as a result of her effort, fellow classmates said they had gained a better understanding of her beliefs. More important, youths who boldly speak up on behalf of Bible principles make Jehovah God's heart rejoice!—Proverbs 27:11.



"Out Of the Mouth of Babes"

A woman from Ballito, Natal, South Africa, expressed warm appreciation for the book *My Book of Bible Stories* and wrote:

"I have a nephew, Rudi Naidoo, who is only one-and-a-half years old, and he names almost every character in the book by simply seeing their pictures. He even tells you what certain Bible characters are doing in the pictures. For example, story 11 shows Noah offering sacrifices. Rudi tells us, 'Noah—praying Jehovah.'

"When asked what Joshua is doing in story 49, Rudi poses like Joshua in the picture, while he says, 'Sun stand still!' He cannot pronounce the

words properly but says it in his own funny, sweet way.

"Again, I want to thank you for this excellent publication. Little children are able to relate what some adults don't know. Jesus' words at Matthew 21:16 are certainly true: 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have furnished praise.' "

