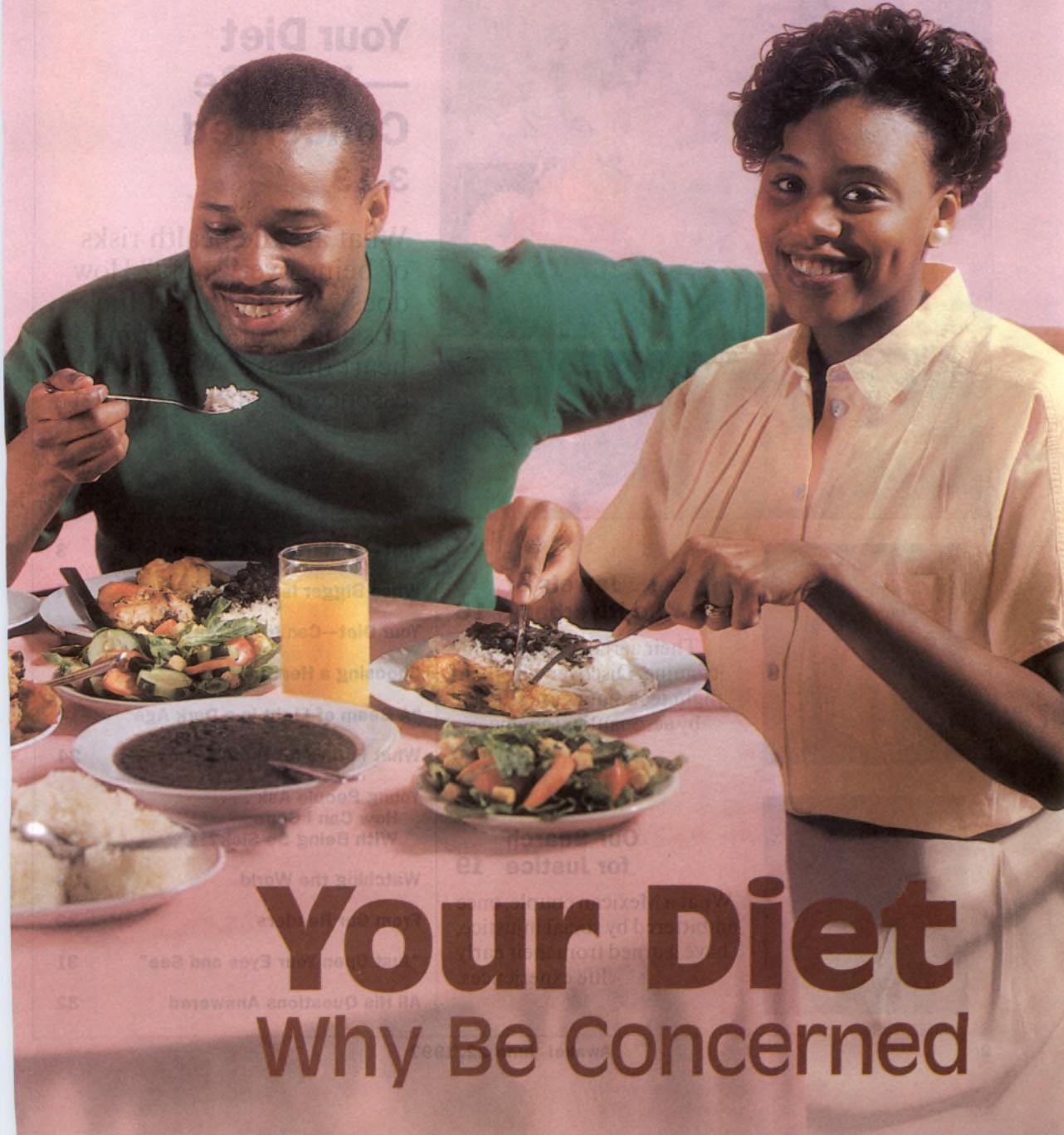


Awake!

June 22, 1997



Your Diet Why Be Concerned



Average Printing 18,350,000
Published in 81 Languages

Your Diet —Why Be Concerned

3-13

What are the health risks of being overweight? How does your diet affect the possibility of developing heart disease? What is the essence of a healthful diet?



Jewels of the Riverbank **16**

Their aerial dances are intriguing. Discover why their flight techniques are studied by aeronautical engineers.



Our Search for Justice **19**

What a Mexican couple, once embittered by social injustice, have learned from their early life experiences.

Diet—A Matter of Concern	3
When Bigger Is Not Better	4
Your Diet—Can It Kill You?	7
Choosing a Healthful Diet	11
"A Beam of Light in a Dark Age"	14
What Future for the Albatross?	24
Young People Ask . . . How Can I Cope With Being So Sick?	25
Watching the World	28
From Our Readers	30
"Just Open Your Eyes and See"	31
All His Questions Answered	32

Diet A Matter of Concern

GO, EAT your food with rejoicing," says the Bible at Ecclesiastes 9:7. Eating, indeed, is not only a necessity but also one of the greatest pleasures in life.

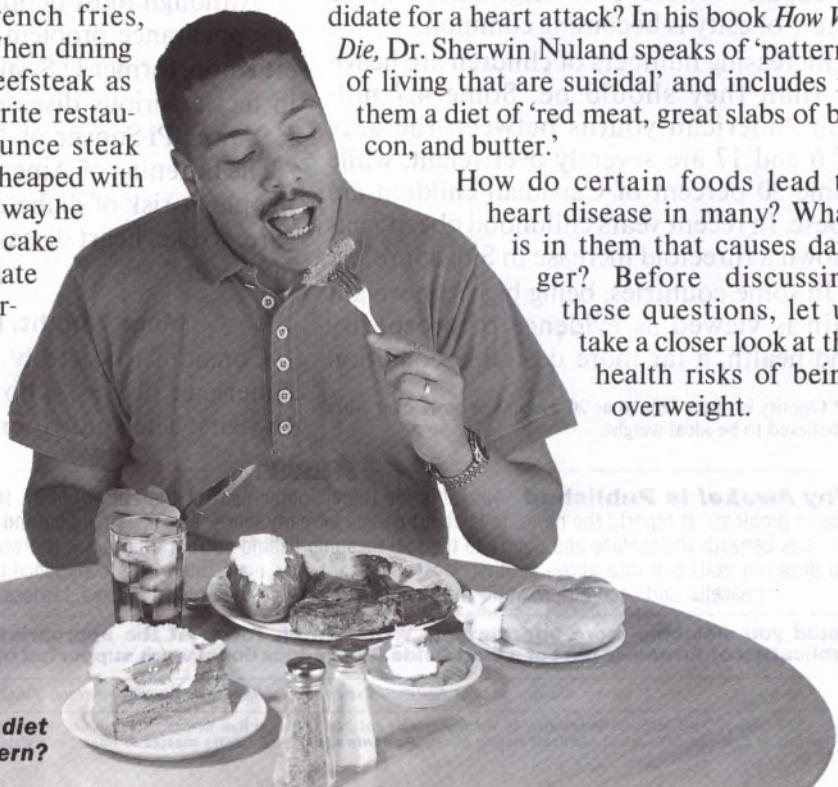
Consider 34-year-old Thomas. He enjoys his meat. And he has it every day—often several times a day. His typical breakfast includes milk, several eggs, bread or toast smothered with butter, and sausage or bacon. At fast-food places, he orders cheeseburgers, French fries, and milk shakes. When dining out, he chooses beefsteak as an entrée. His favorite restaurant serves a 24-ounce steak and a baked potato heaped with sour cream, just the way he likes it. Chocolate cake topped with chocolate ice cream is his favorite dessert.

Thomas is five feet ten inches tall

and weighs 196 pounds; he is 20 pounds overweight, according to the 1995 U.S. government dietary guidelines. "I am not uncomfortable with my weight," says Thomas. "My health is excellent. I haven't missed a day of work in the last 12 years. Most of the time, I feel good and energetic—except, of course, after eating a 24-ounce steak."

Could Thomas's diet, though, be affecting him for the worse, slowly making him a candidate for a heart attack? In his book *How We Die*, Dr. Sherwin Nuland speaks of 'patterns of living that are suicidal' and includes in them a diet of 'red meat, great slabs of bacon, and butter.'

How do certain foods lead to heart disease in many? What is in them that causes danger? Before discussing these questions, let us take a closer look at the health risks of being overweight.



Why is such a diet a matter of concern?

When Bigger Is Not Better

"I can't fit into my clothes anymore," bemoaned Rosa, age 35.

"I am up to 190 pounds now, and I never imagined
I would become so big!"

ROSA is not alone in worrying about her increasing weight. In the United States, where she resides, nearly a third of the nation is obese.* The proportion of obese adults in Britain doubled in ten years. And in Japan—where overweight used to be rare—obesity is becoming common.

Increasing numbers of children are heavier than they should be. Some 4.7 million American youths between the ages of 6 and 17 are severely overweight, while some 20 percent of Canadian children are obese. In recent years childhood obesity has shown a threefold increase in Singapore.

In some countries, being big from weight gain is viewed as evidence of prosperity and health, a far more desirable condition

* Obesity is often defined as 20 percent or more over what is believed to be ideal weight.

than poverty and undernourishment. But in Western lands, where food is often readily available, gaining weight is usually not considered desirable. On the contrary, it is generally a cause for serious concern. Why?

"Although most people believe obesity is an appearance problem," says Dr. C. Everett Koop, former U.S. surgeon general, "it is in fact a serious disease." Endocrinologist F. Xavier Pi-Sunyer of New York explains: "[The fattening of America is] putting more people at risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, even some forms of cancer."

More Weight, More Risk

Consider one study of 115,000 female American nurses, who were followed for 16 years. The study found that when adults

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.

Unless otherwise indicated, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References* is used.

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, c/o Watchtower, **Wallkill, NY 12589**. Printed in U.S.A.

gain even 11 to 18 pounds, it results in a higher risk of heart disease. This study, published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* of September 14, 1995, indicated that one third of cancer deaths and one half of cardiovascular deaths were due to overweight. According to a report in *The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* of May 22/29, 1996, "78% of hypertension in men and 65% in women can be directly attributable to obesity." The American Cancer Society says that those who are "significantly overweight" (40 percent or more above ideal weight) "have a higher cancer risk."

But it's not just putting on extra weight that is a danger; the distribution of body fat also affects the risk of disease. Those who carry excess fat in the abdomen are actually at higher risk than those who carry more weight in their hips and thighs. Fat in the stomach area is associated with increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, breast cancer, and uterine cancer.

Similarly, overweight youths suffer from high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol levels, and prediabetic conditions. And they often become obese adults. *The New York Times*, using data published in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, reported that "people who were fat as children died earlier and suffered far more diseases at far younger ages than the general public."

Semimonthly Languages Available by Mail:

Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish,² Dutch, English,² Finnish,² French, German,² Greek, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,² Japanese,² Korean, Malayalam, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swahili,² Swedish,² Tagalog, Tamil, Ukrainian, Yoruba, Zulu

Monthly Languages Available by Mail:

Chichewa, Cibemba, Estonian, Ewe, Gujarati, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Igbo, Kannada, Macedonian, Malagasy, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Papiamento, Sepedi, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Tahitian, Telugu, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Xhosa

² Audiocassettes also available.

© 1997 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

New Weight Guidelines

The U.S. government, convinced of a serious weight crisis, toughened its recommended weight guidelines in 1995. (See the box on the next page.) The updated guidelines identify "healthy weight," "moderate overweight," and "severe overweight." The guidelines apply to both adult men and women, irrespective of age.

The 1990 guidelines made allowance for middle-body growth in middle age, often called middle-age spread. The new guidelines do not make this allowance, since indications are that adults should not gain weight over time.* Thus, a person who was formerly considered of normal weight may now find himself in the overweight category. For example, a five-foot-six-inch person between the ages of 35 and 65 who weighed 165 pounds would have been within the healthy weight range under the 1990 guidelines. But under the new guidelines, he or she would be ten pounds overweight!

How Did We Get So Big?

Genetic traits can influence a person's tendency toward obesity, but they do not account for the weight gain in Western countries. Something else is responsible for the problem.

* The 1995 guidelines apply to most age groups but not all. "There is general agreement that the new weight guidelines are probably not applicable to people older than 65 years," says Dr. Robert M. Russell in *JAMA* of June 19, 1996. "A little excess weight in the older person may even be of benefit by providing an energy reserve for periods of illness and by helping to preserve muscle and bone mass."

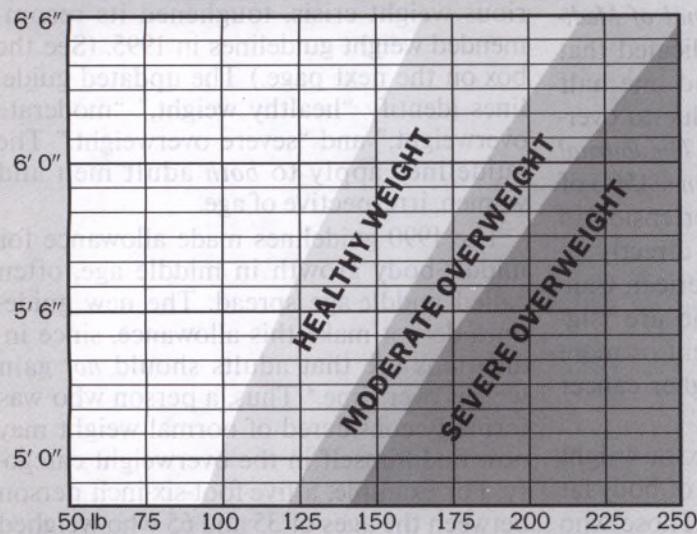
Offices of the Watch Tower Society in selected countries

America, United States of, Walkill, NY 12589	New Zealand, P.O. Box 142, Manurewa
Australia, Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565	Nigeria, P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Edo State
Canada, Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4	South Africa, Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740
England, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	Zambia, Box 33459, Lusaka 10101
Ghana, Box 760, Accra	Zimbabwe, P. Bag A-6113, Avondale
Jamaica, Box 103, Old Harbour P.O., St. Catherine	

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

Height *

1995 Weight Guidelines for Both Men and Women



Statistics based on: U.S. Department of Agriculture,
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

* Without shoes.

† Without clothes. The higher weights apply to people with more muscle and bone, such as many men.

Are you in the "healthy weight," "moderate overweight," or "severe overweight" range? The graph shown here will help you answer that question

Yet, some who believe that they have decreased their fat intake find that their bodies are still widening. Why? One reason is that they are eating large quantities of food. A nutritionist in the United States says: "We overeat because too much is served. When it's there, we eat it." People also tend to overconsume low-fat or fat-free foods. But an expert with a U.S. food-industry consulting firm explains: "Reduced-fat products often make up taste by increasing the [high-in-calories] sugar content." Thus, *The New York Times* reported: "Two trends of the 90's—getting value for money and eating low-fat, or fat-free, foods—have become invitations to gluttony," hence to gaining weight.

The couch-potato life-style also promotes weight gain. A study in Britain found that more than a third of the adults in that land do less than 20 minutes of moderate exercise each week. Fewer than half ever engage in active sports. Car travel has replaced walking in many Western countries, and increased television viewing encourages both sloth and gluttony. In the United States, children sit and watch an estimated 26 hours of television each week, not to mention time spent with video games. Meanwhile, only some 36 percent of the schools still have physical education.

There are also psychological reasons for being overweight. "We eat out of emotional

Health professionals agree that eating fat can make us fat. Much meat and many dairy products, baked goods, fast foods, snack foods, fried foods, sauces, gravies, and oils are loaded with fat, and eating them can lead to obesity. How so?

Well, consuming more calories in the food we eat than our body expends causes us to put on weight. Fat has nine calories per gram, compared to four calories in a gram of protein or a gram of carbohydrate. So we take in more calories when we eat fat. But there is another important factor—the way the human body uses the energy supplied by carbohydrates, protein, and fat. The body burns carbohydrates and protein first, then fat. The unused fat calories are converted into body fat. So cutting down on fatty foods is an important way to reduce weight.

needs," says Dr. Lawrence Cheskin, of the Johns Hopkins Weight Management Center. "We eat when we're happy, we eat when we're sad. We've grown up in a way that food is a substitute for many other things."

Can We Succeed?

The issues of overweight are complex. Each year an estimated 80 million Americans go on a diet. But nearly all return to their former way of eating soon after losing some weight. Within five years, 95 percent regain the weight they have lost.

What are needed to lose weight and to keep it off are life-style changes. Such changes require effort and commitment, along with assistance from family and friends. In some cases the assistance of health profes-

sionals may also be needed.* For your efforts to succeed, however, positive motivation is a must. It is good to ask yourself, 'Why do I want to lose weight?' Your efforts to lose weight are more likely to succeed if the desire to avoid health dangers is accompanied by a desire to feel better and look better and to improve the quality of your life.

You can eat plenty of delicious and satisfying food that is both nutritious and low in calories. But before considering the foods that can help you lose weight, let us examine how certain elements of diet can become health risks.

* For suggestions on losing weight, see *Awake!* of May 8, 1994, pages 20-2; January 22, 1993, pages 12-14; and December 8, 1989, pages 3-12.

Your Diet Can It Kill You?

"You have a severely blocked coronary artery, about a 95% obstruction . . . At this moment you are a heart attack statistic just waiting to happen."

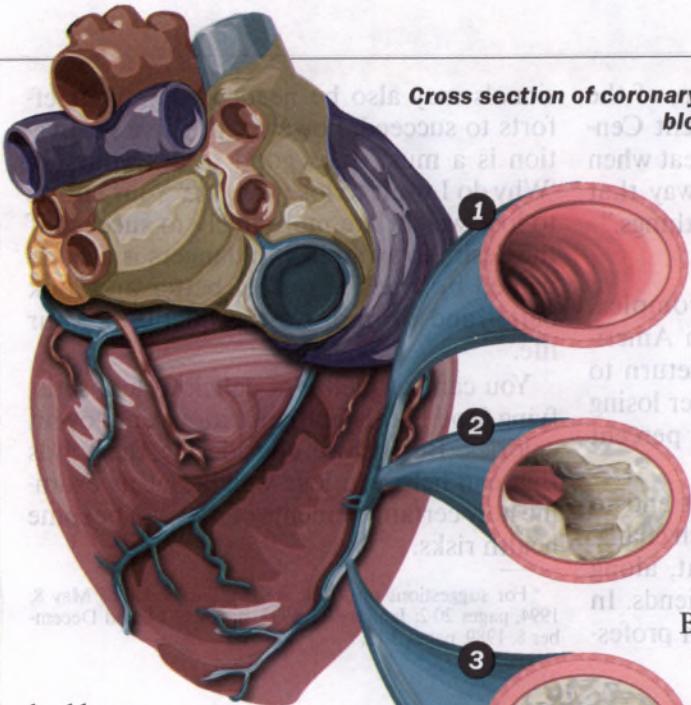
THIRTY-TWO-YEAR-OLD Joe could hardly believe these words of a cardiologist who examined him to determine the cause of his chest pain. Almost half of those who will die of heart disease are not even aware that they have it.

But what led up to Joe's condition? 'For 32 years I ate the typical American "meat

and milk" diet,' laments Joe. 'Somehow the fact that the American diet is hazardous to my health fell through the cracks.'

Your Diet and Heart Disease

What was wrong with Joe's diet? Basically, it contained too much cholesterol and fat, especially saturated fat. From his youth, Joe



Cross section of coronary arteries: (1) fully open, (2) partially blocked, (3) almost completely blocked

had been setting himself up for coronary heart disease with nearly every forkful of food. A high-fat diet is, in fact, linked to five of the ten leading causes of death in the United States. At the top of the list is coronary disease.

The connection between diet and heart disease is seen in a study conducted in seven countries on some 12,000 men aged 40 to 49. The extremes are particularly revealing. The study showed that Finnish men—eating 20 percent of their calories as saturated fat—had elevated blood-cholesterol levels, while Japanese men—eating only 5 percent of their calories as saturated fat—had low blood-cholesterol levels. And the Finnish men had a rate of heart attack six times greater than the Japanese men!

Coronary heart disease, however, is no longer rare in Japan. In the past several years, as Western-style fast foods have become popular there, the consumption of animal fats has gone up 800 percent. Now, Japanese boys have even higher blood-cholesterol

levels than American boys of the same age! Clearly, dietary fat and cholesterol are implicated in life-threatening conditions, particularly heart disease.

The Role of Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a white, waxy substance that is essential to life. It is found in the cells of all humans and animals. Our liver produces cholesterol, and it is also found in varying amounts in foods we eat. Blood carries cholesterol to the cells in molecules called lipoproteins, which are composed of cholesterol, fats, and proteins. The two types of lipoproteins that carry most of the blood cholesterol are low-density lipoproteins (LDL) and high-density lipoproteins (HDL).

LDLs are rich in cholesterol. As they circulate in the bloodstream, they enter cells through LDL receptors on cell walls and are broken down for use by the cell. Most cells in the body have such receptors, and they take up some LDL. But the liver is designed so that 70 percent of the removal of LDL from the bloodstream by LDL receptors occurs there.

HDLs, on the other hand, are cholesterol-thirsty molecules. When traveling through the bloodstream, they soak up surplus cholesterol and transport it to the liver. The liver breaks down cholesterol and eliminates it from the body. The body is thus marvelously designed to utilize the cholesterol it needs and to discard the rest.

The problem occurs when there is excessive LDL in the blood. This increases the possibility of a buildup of plaque on artery

walls. When plaque buildup occurs, the arteries become narrow and the amount of oxygen-carrying blood that can pass through them decreases. This condition is called atherosclerosis. The process continues slowly and silently, taking decades to manifest discernable symptoms. One symptom is angina pectoris, or chest pain, like Joe experienced.

When a coronary artery is completely blocked, often by a blood clot, the part of the heart that receives blood from that artery dies. The result is a sudden, often deadly, myocardial infarction—better known as a heart attack. Even partial blockage of a coronary artery can lead to death of heart tissue, which may not be manifest by pronounced physical discomfort. Blockage of arteries in other parts of the body can cause strokes, gangrene of the legs, and even loss of kidney function.

Not surprisingly, LDL is called bad cholesterol, and HDL good cholesterol. If LDL tests high or HDL low, the risk of heart disease is high.* A simple blood test will often indicate impending danger long before a person experiences noticeable symptoms, such as angina. It is important, then, to keep your blood-cholesterol level in check. Let us now see how your diet can affect this level.

Blood Cholesterol and Diet

Cholesterol is a natural part of foods derived from animals. Meat, eggs, fish, poultry, and dairy products all contain cholesterol. Foods from plants, on the other hand, are free of cholesterol.

The body produces all the cholesterol it needs, so cholesterol consumed in food is extra. Most of our dietary cholesterol ends up in the liver. Ordinarily, as dietary cholesterol enters the liver, the liver processes it and

* Cholesterol is measured in milligrams per deciliter. A desirable level of total cholesterol—the sum of LDL, HDL, and cholesterol in other lipoproteins in the blood—is less than 200 milligrams per deciliter. An HDL level of 45 milligrams per deciliter or higher is considered good.

decreases its own production of cholesterol. This keeps the total amount of cholesterol in the blood regulated.

What happens, though, if the diet is so abundant in cholesterol that it cannot be quickly processed by the liver? The likelihood of cholesterol directly entering the cells of the artery wall is increased. When it does, the process of atherosclerosis occurs. The situation is especially dangerous when the body continues to make the same amount of cholesterol regardless of the amount of dietary cholesterol consumed. In the United States, 1 in 5 persons has this problem.

Cutting down on your intake of dietary cholesterol, then, is a course of wisdom. But another component of our diet has an even greater effect on the level of blood cholesterol—saturated fats.

Fats and Cholesterol

Fats fall into two categories: saturated and unsaturated. Unsaturated fats can be either monounsaturated or polyunsaturated. Unsaturated fats are better for you than their saturated counterparts, since consuming saturated fats raises the level of cholesterol in the blood. Saturated fats do this in two ways: They help create more cholesterol in the liver, and they suppress LDL receptors on liver cells, reducing the speed of removal of LDL from the blood.

Saturated fats are primarily found in foods of animal origin, such as butter, egg yolks, lard, milk, ice cream, meat, and poultry. They are also prevalent in chocolate, coconut and its oils, vegetable shortening, and palm oil. Saturated fats are solid at room temperature.

Unsaturated fats, on the other hand, are liquid at room temperature. Foods that contain monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats may help to decrease your blood-cholesterol level if substituted for foods

containing saturated fats.* While polyunsaturated fats, common in corn oil and sunflower-seed oil, reduce both good and bad cholesterol, monounsaturated fats, plentiful in olive oil and canola oil, reduce only the bad cholesterol without affecting the good cholesterol.

Fats, of course, are a necessary part of our diet. Without them, for instance, there would be no absorption of vitamins A, D, E, and K. The fat requirements of the body, however, are very small. They are easily met through the consumption of vegetables, beans, grains, and fruits. So minimizing the intake of saturated fats does not deprive the body of needed nutrients.

Why Reduce Fats and Cholesterol

Will a diet rich in fats and cholesterol always increase blood cholesterol? Not necessarily. Thomas, mentioned in the opening article, decided to take a blood test after his interview with *Awake!* The results revealed that his cholesterol levels were within the desired limits. His liver was evidently able to keep the cholesterol level regulated.

This, however, does not mean that Thomas is risk free. Recent studies indicate that dietary cholesterol may affect the risk of coronary heart disease independently of its effect on blood cholesterol. "Cholesterol-rich foods promote heart disease even in people with low blood cholesterol," says Dr. Jeremiah Stamler, of Northwestern University. "And that's why eating less cholesterol must be of concern to all people, irrespective of their blood cholesterol level."

There is also the matter of fat in the diet. Too much fat in the blood, be it from saturated or unsaturated fat in the food, causes red blood cells to clump together. Such

thickened blood does not pass through the narrow capillaries, causing the tissues to be deprived of needed nutrients. Clumped cells moving along the arteries also disrupt the oxygen distribution to artery walls, causing surface damage, where plaque can easily begin to form. But there is another danger in consuming excessive amounts of fat.

Cancer and Diet

"All fats—saturated and unsaturated—are involved in the growth of certain kinds of cancer cells," says Dr. John A. McDougall. One survey of the international incidence of colorectal cancer and breast cancer showed alarming differences between Western nations, where diets are high in fat, and developing nations. In the United States, for example, colorectal cancer is the second most common cancer for men and women combined, while breast cancer is the most common for women.

According to the American Cancer Society, groups of people who relocate to a country with high incidences of cancer eventually develop the cancer rate of that land, depending on the length of time it takes for them to switch to the new life-style and diet. "Japanese immigrants to Hawaii," notes the cancer society's cookbook, "are developing a Western cancer pattern: high for colon and breast cancer, low for stomach cancer—the reverse of the Japanese pattern." Evidently, cancer is linked to diet.

If your diet is high in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and calories, you need to make some changes. A good diet can lead to good health and can even reverse many ill effects of a bad diet. In view of such options as painful bypass surgery, which often costs \$40,000 or more, this is surely desirable.

By sensibly choosing what you eat, you can lose weight, improve how you feel, and help yourself avoid or reverse some diseases. Hints along this line are discussed in the next article.

* The 1995 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends a total fat intake of no more than 30 percent of daily calories and recommends reducing saturated fat to less than 10 percent of calories. A 1-percent decrease in caloric intake of saturated fats ordinarily leads to a drop of 3 milligrams per deciliter in the blood-cholesterol level.

Choosing a Healthful Diet

ALTHOUGH doctors today are trained to treat disease, one physician said: "Health, strangely enough, is not our field. Health is the responsibility of each person."

Joe, mentioned in the previous article, accepted this responsibility after undergoing surgery for a severely blocked coronary artery. He made needed changes in his eating and reaped wonderful benefits. "You've experienced coronary regression, Joe," his doctor happily reported. "The diet you've practiced has worked."

What kind of adjustments can we make in our diet? How can we take responsibility for our health and eat in a way that is likely to improve it?

Essence of a Healthful Diet

The essence of a healthful diet is simply making good choices from the foods that are available. For help in making healthy choices, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends the use of a four-tiered food guide pyramid.—See the chart on page 12.

At the base of the pyramid are complex carbohydrates, which include grain foods, such as bread, cereal, rice, and pasta. These foods are the foundation of a healthful diet. On the second tier are two equal sections; one is vegetables, and the other is fruits. These foods are also complex carbohydrates. Most of your daily diet should be selected from these three food groups.

The third tier has two smaller sections.

One section has such foods as milk, yogurt, and cheese; and the other includes meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, and nuts.* Only moderate amounts of foods should be eaten from these groups. Why? Because most of these foods are rich in cholesterol and saturated fat, which can increase the risk of coronary disease and cancer.

Finally, at the very top of the pyramid is a small area that includes fats, oils, and sweets. These foods provide very few nutrients and should be eaten sparingly. More foods should be chosen from the bottom part of the pyramid, and fewer from the top.

Rather than sticking to the same food items from each section toward the bottom of the pyramid, it is wise to experiment with a variety of foods within those sections. This is because each food has a different combination of nutrients and fiber. Some vegetables and fruits, for example, are good sources of vitamins A and C, while others are high in folic acid, calcium, and iron.

Not surprisingly, vegetarian diets are becoming increasingly popular. "Data are strong that vegetarians are at lesser risk for obesity, . . . constipation, lung cancer, and alcoholism," says dietitian Johanna Dwyer in *FDA Consumer*. And, contrary to what some may believe, with careful, proper planning, even meatless diets "can meet

* Some foods can belong to more than one group. Dry beans and lentils, for example, can be counted as servings in either the vegetable group or the meat and beans group.

Recommended Dietary Allowances for nutrients," according to the 1995 dietary guidelines.

An important factor for everyone is keeping dietary-fat intake below 30 percent of total calories and saturated fat below 10 percent. You can do this without becoming a vegetarian and without unduly sacrificing your enjoyment of eating. How?

An Important Key

"Substitution is the key," says Dr. Peter O. Kwiterovich, of The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "Substitute foods low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol for foods high in these fats." Use vegetable oil and soft margarine in place of animal fat,

solid shortening, or ghee—a clarified butter commonly used in India. Avoid the use of such vegetable oils as palm oil and coconut oil, which are high in saturated fats. And drastically limit your consumption of commercially made bakery products—doughnuts, cakes, cookies, and pies—since they commonly contain saturated fats.

In addition, substitute skim or low-fat (1 percent) milk for whole milk, margarine for butter, and low-fat cheeses for regular cheeses. Also, replace ice cream with ice milk, sherbet, or low-fat frozen yogurt. Another way to decrease cholesterol in your diet is to reduce your consumption of egg yolks to one or two per week; use egg whites or egg substitutes in cooking and baking.

FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID

Fats, oils, and sweets

Use sparingly



Milk, yogurt, and cheese group

2-3 servings per day



Meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, and nuts group

2-3 servings per day

Vegetable group

3-5 servings per day



Fruit group

2-4 servings per day

Bread, cereal, rice, and pasta group

6-11 servings per day



Source:
U.S. Department
of Agriculture,

U.S. Department
of Health and
Human Services

Meat is listed in the same section of the Food Guide Pyramid as poultry and fish. However, fish, chicken, and turkey often contain less fat per serving than such meats as beef, lamb, and pork, depending on the cuts used and the method of preparation. Regular hamburger, hot dogs, bacon, and sausage are usually especially high in saturated fat. Many dietitians recommend limiting the amount of lean meat, fish, and poultry consumed per day to no more than six ounces. Although organ meats, such as liver, may have dietary benefits, it should be remembered that they are frequently high in cholesterol.

Between regular meals many people enjoy snacks, which often consist of potato chips, peanuts, cashews, cookies, candy bars, and so forth. Those who recognize the value of a healthful diet will replace these with low-fat snacks that include homemade popcorn without added butter or salt, fresh fruit, and raw vegetables like carrots, celery, and broccoli.

Keeping Count of Calories

When you center your diet on complex carbohydrates instead of high-fat foods, there are positive benefits. You may also lose weight if you are overweight. The more grains, vegetables, and beans you can substitute for meat, the less fat you'll be accumulating on your body.

Rosa, mentioned in the second article, wanted to lose 50 pounds in a year. To lose one pound, she must consume about 3,500 fewer calories than her body needs. She can do this either by eating less or by being more physically active. Rosa decided to do both. She reduced her daily intake of dietary calories by 300. And she started walking about 20 miles a week, thereby expending some 1,500 calories. By sticking to this plan, she has been able to lose about one pound a week.

When Eating Out

Fast-food restaurants have become popular. But caution is needed because the foods they offer are usually high in saturated fat and calories. A large or double hamburger, for example, contains between 525 and 980 calories—many of them from fat. Often, fast foods are fried or served with fattening cheeses, toppings, or dressings. Eating such meals will likely take its toll on your health.

If you live in a country where restaurants serve large portions, you need to watch the amount of food you consume. If you do not eat the full meal, you can ask to take what you do not eat home. Some diet-conscious people order only an appetizer, which is smaller than a regular entrée. Some couples order one entrée and share it, but they also order an extra salad. Wisely, you will beware of restaurants that offer unlimited food for one moderate price. These places can be a temptation to overeat!

A Healthful Diet for All

While those in Western countries battle obesity and undergo bypass surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, and expensive medical treatments, vast numbers of mankind do without sufficient nourishment or even starve to death. In God's promised new world, however, the problems of food and nutrition will be things of the past. The Bible promises: "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow." (Psalm 72:16) Mankind will then know how to enjoy abundant food in a beneficial way, since the Bible also assures us: "No resident will say: 'I am sick.'”—Isaiah 33:24.

That time of perfect health is near at hand. Meanwhile, we can try to maintain a measure of good health by making healthy choices from the foods that are available to us.

"A BEAM OF LIGHT IN A DARK AGE"

By *Awake!* correspondent in Germany

THIS is how one historian described the history of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Nazi era. The occasion was the world premiere of the documentary video *Jehovah's Witnesses Stand Firm Against Nazi Assault*, held at the Ravensbrück Memorial, in Germany. This video relates a moving account of courage and faith as told by 24 survivors of the Nazi era, along with 10 scholars of history and religion.

The Ravensbrück concentration camp once held hundreds of Jehovah's Witnesses. Some surviving Witnesses, imprisoned more than 50 years ago by the Nazis, were present for the premiere. They, as well as historians and government officials, recalled the dark days when the Nazi regime swept across Europe in a reign of terror. The audience of some 350 listened to inspiring accounts of the Christian integrity of hundreds of Witnesses who went bravely to their deaths rather than deny their faith.

The News Media Take Note

A press conference was held at a Berlin hotel on the morning of the premiere, November 6, 1996. Journalists viewed clips of the video and then listened to speeches by scholars who commented on the importance of the new documentary in telling a little-known but important aspect of history. Dr. Detlef Garbe, director of the Neuengamme Memorial, explained: "We—Jehovah's Witnesses and non-Witnesses—should not be allowed to forget the history of the prisoners with the purple triangle [the symbol worn by Wit-

ness inmates]. This was a beam of light in a dark age."

Several Witness survivors who appeared in *Stand Firm* were on hand to speak about their experiences. Were they bitter about their sufferings? Their serene and radiant faces indicated that they were not.

After a period of questions and answers, the reporters were invited to the premiere showing of the *Stand Firm* documentary at the Ravensbrück Memorial, about 40 miles away. Virtually all accepted the invitation.

The Premiere

The gray skies and fine drizzle on this chilly autumn day gave way to the excited atmosphere inside the newly refurbished hall next to the Ravensbrück Memorial. Professor Jürgen Dittberner, then director of the Foundation for the Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen, and Brandenburg memorials, said: "The moral courage shown by Jehovah's Witnesses under national socialism must be respected.... We hold in all honor the memory of these people who did not betray their faith and who had to suffer or even die as a result."

Angelika Peter, the minister for education, youth, and sport for Brandenburg, Germany, sent a message, which was read. It proclaimed: "It is important that we recall today the exemplary steadfastness of Jehovah's Witnesses." Dr. Sigrid Jacobbeit, director of the Ravensbrück Memorial, said: "I am looking forward to this premiere with anticipation and joy. This is a special day, I believe, for all of us."

Then the lights were dimmed for the start of the video. For 78 minutes not only the survivors present from eight countries but also all in the audience relived the tragedy and triumph of this painful chapter of German history. Many found it difficult to hold back tears as these ordinary people told of extraordinary deeds of love and faith under the most horrible conditions.

After the thunderous applause subsided, historian Joachim Görlitz read the final words of a Witness who had been executed at Brandenburg. Görlitz had found the note just two weeks earlier while doing research at the Brandenburg Memorial and Archive, of which he is director. His voice cracked with emotion as he read the words of this faithful Christian man encouraging his fellow believers to hold true to their Lord. Then Görlitz concluded: "Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe that the film about Jehovah's Witnesses will make an important contribution to our educational work."

Historian Wulff Brebeck declared that "by means of this film an important new treasure has been added—the voice of survivors who have been heard far too infrequently, and . . . the voice of nonsurvivors." Dr. Garbe added: "These are important experiences of humans whose faith in God

and trust in the promises of the Bible gave them the strength to resist during that horrible time."

As an appropriate conclusion to the program, once again several Witness survivors addressed the audience. It was clear to all that these stalwart Christians still have the same strong faith that sustained them during their many trials.

Since the premiere, more than 340 articles about Jehovah's Witnesses and the *Stand Firm* documentary have appeared in newspapers across Germany. Several radio programs, one on a national radio station, carried fine reports as well.

The *Stand Firm* documentary will ultimately be made available in at least 24 languages. An edited classroom version will also be produced in time. Since the video's release, a growing number of educators have begun using the *Stand Firm* documentary as part of their curriculum to help young people consider important issues, such as prejudice, peer pressure, and the voice of conscience.

In this world so divided by hatred and betrayal, how timely that this story of integrity should be made known to the public! Truly the sufferings of these faithful Christians have not been in vain.—Hebrews 6:10.

The Berlin press conference.

From left: Dr. Detlef Garbe, Holocaust survivors Simone Liebster and Franz Wohlfahrt, and historian Wulff Brebeck



Jewels of the Riverbank

By *Awake!* correspondent in Spain

WHENEVER I stroll alongside a river or a pond, I invariably search for one of my favorite jewels—it may be red, blue, or green. I sometimes spot one lying motionlessly on a leaf; I may see another hovering over the water or even darting in front of me. The jewel I seek is the dragonfly—the flashy “helicopter” of the insect world.

These flying gems first caught my attention many years ago when I stumbled upon a lazy stream running through the woods. Flitting in and out of the sunlight were several dragonflies—some a bright metallic blue and others a resplendent greenish-yellow. I spent an hour observing their aerial dances, which transformed the forest glade into a miniature ballroom. They have intrigued me ever since.

The more I learned about dragonflies, the more I came to appreciate their beauty and their worth. My first discovery was that there is a difference between dragonflies and damselflies. The dragonflies are powerful fliers and are usually larger, whereas the damselflies—as their name implies—are daintier, with a much more timid flight. A principal difference has to do with the way they hold their wings. A dragonfly at rest



usually holds out both pairs of wings horizontally, while a damselfly folds them together above its body.*

I began to wonder how dragonflies can pluck mosquitoes out of the air with such apparent ease. Personally, I find it almost

* Occasionally, dragonflies angle their wings downward and point their body upward toward the sun. This is a posture they adopt to cool down, since it minimizes the body area exposed to the sun.



impossible to swat a large fly that is basking on the kitchen wall. 'What,' I asked myself, 'has a dragonfly got that I haven't?' Two things: total mastery of the air and eyes that would make a watchman turn green with envy.

The Flight of the Dragonfly

To call a dragonfly a helicopter—a common nickname in Spain—is really a dis-

Dragonflies, which rest their wings horizontally, are usually larger than damselflies, which fold their wings above their bodies

paraging analogy. Their aerial acrobatics are so fast that it is sometimes impossible for the eye to follow them. In short bursts, some species can reach a top speed of up to 60 miles an hour. They can also hover or fly backward, forward, or sideways at a moment's notice. Furthermore, when a dragonfly makes a tight turn in the air, scientists calculate, it must withstand a force of up to 2.5 G's.

Dragonflies have two pairs of flexible, lacelike wings. Although these wings look delicate, they can beat up to 40 times a second and take knocks with a minimal amount of damage. Biologist Robin J. Wootton describes them as "small masterpieces of ingenious design."

"The better we understand the functioning of insect wings," he adds, "the more subtle and beautiful their designs appear. . . . They have few if any technological parallels." Not surprisingly, the dragonfly's flight techniques are currently being studied by aeronautical engineers.

A Head Full of Eyes

If the flight of the dragonfly is extraordinary, no less can be said of its eyesight. Two huge compound eyes almost cover the dragonfly's head. Each of these eyes has up to 30,000 hexagonal units that are like tiny eyes within an eye, since each one transmits a separate image to the brain. That doesn't mean, however, that a dragonfly sees thousands of different pictures, all at the same time. Rather than seeing a complete picture, as we do, it senses movement, patterns, contrasts, and shapes.

All those images need analyzing. Thus, 80 percent of a dragonfly's brain is dedicated to assessing visual information. Few optical systems are as sensitive—a dragonfly can spot a mosquito some 60 feet away. Even at dusk, when the light is so dim that a human observer can barely spot tiny flies, tropical dragonflies easily capture them.

A dragonfly's rapid, darting flight through riverside vegetation requires hundreds of split-second decisions. It can handle this formidable task because it can see up to a hundred distinct images a second, over five times more than we can. Thus, a movie, which projects 24 images a second, would just look like a series of still photos to a dragonfly.

A Change of Life-Style

When a dragonfly starts its life, there is no indication of the glossy highflier it will eventually become. After hatching, the aquatic larva stays more or less motionless in a pond or a stream, waiting to grab whatever food comes within reach. Many changes of skin later—several months or even years in the case of some species—the larva climbs out onto a reed. There, an extraordinary metamorphosis occurs.

The skin splits open along the thorax, and a fully formed dragonfly crawls out. Like a butterfly, the newly emerged adult has to wait a few hours before its wings become rigid and a new life begins. In a matter of days, its instinctive wisdom enables it to hunt successfully and master the intricacies of flight.

Soon the young dragonfly becomes an expert at catching flies and mosquitoes on the wing. Devouring its own weight in insects each day, it performs an invaluable service. To ensure a reliable food supply, many male dragonflies stake claims to small territories, which they jealously patrol.

Some species of dragonflies hunt aphids or beetles, others capture tiny frogs, and one tropical damselfly even feeds on spiders. It hovers around the web of a large orb-spider and grabs the smaller spiders that visit the web to scavenge food morsels that the web's owner leaves behind.

Evidence Against Evolution

Many evolutionary scientists consider dragonflies to be the earliest flying insects. One fossil discovered in France is the impression of wings of a dragonfly that had a wingspan of two and a half feet! It is the largest insect known, being more than three times the size of any living dragonfly.

'How would it be possible,' I asked myself, 'for one of the most complex flight mechanisms known to man to simply appear, perfectly developed?' "There are no fossils of insects which are intermediate between the wingless and winged state," admits the book *Alien Empire—An Exploration of the Lives of Insects*. It is evident that dragonflies are the handiwork of an intelligent Master Designer.

Dragonflies have successfully colonized almost every part of the globe. They will make themselves at home alongside an alpine lake, an equatorial swamp, or even a suburban swimming pool.

I have watched swarms of dragonflies on a tropical beach in Africa as well as lone emperor dragonflies relentlessly patrolling their favorite European pond. And when I traveled by canoe through a leafy canyon in the Philippines, brilliant damselflies served as an escort, even alighting on my bare arms.

While dragonflies may be among the most sophisticated flying machines on earth, I have always been more impressed by their grace and beauty than by their flying abilities. Their presence adds a special sparkle to our ponds and riverbanks. They are the ideal jewels—always there to be enjoyed.

Our Search for **JUSTICE**

AS TOLD BY ANTONIO VILLA

In 1836 all Texan defenders of The Alamo—numbering fewer than 200—were killed by a Mexican army of some 4,000 men. Afterward, the war cry “Remember the Alamo” was used to inflame the fight for independence, which was gained later that year. In 1845 what was once part of Mexico became part of the United States, and Mexicans found themselves in hostile territory. Ethnic differences are still remembered.

I WAS born in 1937, not far from San Antonio, Texas, where The Alamo is located. In those days bathrooms, water fountains, and other public facilities were marked “Whites Only” and “Others.” I quickly learned that “Others” included those of us who were of Mexican descent.

When watching a movie at the cinema, Mexicans and blacks were permitted to sit only in the balcony, not in the main auditorium. Many restaurants and businesses would not serve Mexicans. Once when my wife, Velia, and her sister entered a beauty shop, the proprietors didn’t even have the decency to say: “We don’t welcome Mexicans

here.” They simply laughed in their faces until Velia and her sister were shamed into leaving.

At times, white men—usually when drunk—would look for Mexican women, whom many considered inherently immoral. I thought, ‘They won’t share a bathroom or a water fountain with us, but they will share a bed with Mexican women.’ These injustices initially made me insecure, and later defiant.

Problems With the Churches

The hypocrisy of religion further embittered me. Whites, blacks, and Mexicans each had separate churches. When I was preparing for my first Communion as a Catholic, the priest handed me some predicated envelopes to give to my father. We were to return an envelope each week with a

contribution. Shortly thereafter, the priest told me: “You’d better tell your dad that those envelopes are not getting here.” My father’s angry words left an impression on me: “That’s all they are interested in—money!”

Commonly, there were scandals in which preachers ran off with women in their congregations. Experiences such as those led me to declare repeatedly: “Religion has only two aims—either to get your money or to take your woman.” Thus, when Jehovah’s Witnesses would come around, I’d dismiss them, saying: “If I want religion, I’ll look for it myself.”

The Military and Marriage

In 1955, I joined the U.S. Air Force, where I hoped that by excelling in my work, I could gain the respect that I had been denied as a Mexican. By applying myself, I gained recognition, eventually being put in charge of quality control. This involved evaluation of other departments of the armed services.

In 1959, I married Velia. Velia had always been religiously inclined. Yet, she was disappointed by the various churches that she attended. One day in 1960, when feeling very depressed, she prayed: "Please, God, if you exist, let me know. I want to know you." That same day one of Jehovah's Witnesses called at our home in Petaluma, California.

I quickly countered by banging my fist against the wall

Soon afterward, however, Velia lost contact with the Witnesses because of a change in my military assignment. It was not until 1966, while I was in Vietnam, that she renewed her Bible study with them in Seminole, Texas. Upon returning home from Vietnam early the following year, I was not happy to find her studying the Bible with the Witnesses.

My Stubborn Opposition

I felt that Velia would be deceived and disappointed by religion. So I sat in on the study and listened for an opportunity to expose the slightest trace of hypocrisy. When the woman said that the Witnesses are politically neutral, I interrupted: "What does your husband do for work?"

"He grows cotton," she replied.

"Ha!" I arrogantly retorted. "Military uniforms are made from cotton. So you *are* supporting the war effort!" I became loud and unreasonable.

Although in June 1967 a new military assignment took us far away, to Minot, North Dakota, the Witnesses there contacted Velia and renewed her Bible study. I began to oppose in childish ways. I'd intentionally arrive at the hour of the study and slam doors, stomp up the stairs, throw my boots noisily on the floor, and flush the toilet several times.

Velia was a soft-spoken and submissive wife who had never done anything without my permission. Although I begrudgingly allowed her to have a Bible study, she knew it would be a bigger problem to attend the meetings of the Witnesses. When urged to do so, she would always reply: "I'd better not. I don't want to upset Tony."

However, one day Velia read in the Bible: "Do not be grieving God's holy spirit." (Ephesians 4:30) "What does that mean?" she inquired. The Witness conducting the study explained: "Well, God's holy spirit inspired the writing of the Bible. So if we don't comply with what the Bible says, then we are grieving God's holy spirit. For example, some don't go to meetings, even though they know God's Word says we should." (Hebrews 10:24, 25) That's all Velia's humble heart needed. From then on she went to every meeting despite my opposition.

I would snap: "How can you leave the house when you don't have my supper on the table?" Velia quickly learned always to have my supper warm and ready. So I used other excuses: "You don't love me or our kids. You abandon us for those meetings." Or when I would attack the Witnesses' beliefs and Velia mildly tried to defend these, I used my *bocona*—"big mouth"—theme, call-

ing her a disrespectful, un-submissive *bocona*.

Still, Velia attended the meetings, often leaving home in tears because of my verbal abuse. I did abide by some principles though. I never hit my wife or even thought of abandoning her because of her newfound faith. But I did worry that some good-looking guy at those meetings might be interested in her. I still thought that when it comes to religion, 'It's either the money or the woman.' I often complained as Velia dressed for the meetings: "You get all prettied up for somebody else but never for me." So when I first decided to attend a meeting, I said: "I'm going—but just to keep an eye on you!"

My real motive, however, was to find something against the Witnesses. At one of the first meetings I attended, a talk about marrying "only in the Lord" was given. (1 Corinthians 7:39) When we arrived home, I bitterly complained: "You see! They are just the same as everyone else—prejudiced against anyone who isn't of their faith." Velia meekly commented: "But it's not what they say, it's what the Bible says." I quickly countered by banging my fist against the wall and shouting: "There goes the *bocona* again!" Actually, I was frustrated because I knew she was right.

I continued to attend meetings and to read Witness literature, but my motive was to try



With Velia, when I joined the air force

to find fault with it. I even started to comment at the meetings—but only to show people that I wasn't a "dumb Mexican."

My Search for Justice Satisfied

By 1971 my military career had taken us to Arkansas. I continued to attend meetings with Velia, who in December 1969 had been baptized in symbol of her dedication to Jehovah. I no longer opposed her, but neither would I let anyone study the Bible with me.

My knowledge as a result of reading Bible literature had increased tremendously. Yet, it was all head knowledge—a product of my desire to be the best in anything I did. However, little by little, association with Jehovah's Witnesses began to affect my heart.

For example, I noticed that blacks had a share in teaching at congregation meetings. But at first I said to myself, 'Yeah, they only do that here behind closed doors.' When we attended a convention in a large baseball stadium, however, I was shocked to see that blacks had parts on the program there also. I had to admit that there is no discrimination among the Witnesses. They practice true justice.

I also came to appreciate that Jehovah's Witnesses have genuine love for one another. (John 13:34, 35) And when I worked with them on the construction of their Kingdom Hall, I could see that they are just ordinary people. I saw them get tired, make mistakes, and even exchange a few words when things went wrong. Instead of being alienated by these imperfections, I came to feel more secure among them. Perhaps I recognized that there was hope for me in spite of my many shortcomings.

My Heart Was Finally Reached

I first realized that I was developing a relationship with Jehovah when in 1973, *The Watchtower* explained that smoking is a 'de-

filement of the flesh' and constitutes a disfellowshipping offense. (2 Corinthians 7:1) I was then smoking between one and two packs of cigarettes a day. I had tried to stop many times before but without success. Now, however, every time I felt the urge to smoke, I'd say a silent prayer for Jehovah's help to quit the filthy habit. To everyone's surprise, I never smoked again. don't give in

My military retirement was due July 1, 1975. I realized that if I wanted to do what the Bible teaches, I would have to dedicate my life to Jehovah. I had never had a personal Bible study, so it was quite a shock to the congregation elders when, in June 1975, I told them that I wanted to be baptized as soon as my military career ended. They explained that first I would have to fulfill Jesus' command to share in the preaching work. (Matthew 28:19, 20) This I did on the first Saturday in July. That same day I met with an elder and answered the Bible questions required of baptism candidates. Three weeks later I was baptized.

Upon seeing me get baptized, our three children—Vito, Venelda, and Veronica—began to make rapid spiritual progress. Within the next two years, the two oldest ones were baptized, followed by the youngest child four years later. When I talk to men who know Bible truth but don't do anything about it, I often tell them about the consequences of their failing to act. I tell them that even though their children may not say it, they are thinking, 'If the truth isn't important enough for Daddy, then it's not important enough for me.'

Pursuing the Full-Time Ministry

Our whole family began the full-time ministry as pioneers in Marshall, Arkansas. Velia and I started in 1979, and the children joined us in the work during the following years as each graduated from high school. it's good

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Who Will Save Our Animals?

Why Do Diamonds Cost So Much?

Are Children Safe With Your Dog?

In the early 1980's, we heard reports about the thirst for Bible knowledge among the people of Ecuador, South America, and we made it our goal to move there. By 1989 our children were grown and able to care for themselves. So in that year we made a short visit to Ecuador to "spy out the land."—Compare Numbers 13:1, 2.

In April 1990 we arrived in Ecuador, our new home. Since we had limited finances—we lived on my military pension—we had to budget our funds carefully. But the joys of the full-time ministry in this spiritually productive territory have far outweighed any financial sacrifices. At first, we worked in the port city of Manta, where each of us conducted anywhere from 10 to 12 weekly Bible studies. Then, in 1992, I began serving as a traveling minister, accompanied by my wife. We visit a different congregation each week.

When Justice Is Fully Realized

In retrospect, Velia and I can see that the injustices we experienced when growing up now help us in our ministry. We are especially conscious never to look down on anyone who might be poorer or less educated than we are or who is of an ethnic background that is different from ours. We see, too, that many of our Christian brothers and sisters experience social injustices worse than we experienced. Yet, they do not complain. They keep their eyes fixed on God's incoming Kingdom, and that's what we've learned to do. We have long since ceased trying to find justice in this system; but rather, we spend our lives pointing people to the only



With Velia, in 1996

true solution to injustice, God's Kingdom.—Matthew 24:14.

We've also learned that those of us who have been very sensitive to injustices must be careful not to expect perfect justice among God's people. This is because all of us are imperfect and prone to do what is bad. (Romans 7:18-20) Yet, we can honestly say that we have found a loving, multinational association of brothers who strive to do what is right to the best of their abilities. It is our hope that together with God's people everywhere, we will enter into God's new world in which righteousness is to dwell.—2 Peter 3:13.

What Future for the Albatross?

By Awake! correspondent in Britain



What is the future of the albatross, the world's largest seabird?

"Pretty grim," reports *The Times* of London. Tens of thousands of them—Australian researchers estimate as many as 44,000—are being killed every year. In fact, some authorities feel that the wandering albatross, with its magnificent ten-foot wingspan, will soon become extinct.

After albatross are ready for flight, they spend seven years continuously at sea, soaring and gliding for thousands of miles and even sleeping on the wing. Some believe that the birds may circumnavigate the globe several times before returning to their place of birth to breed.

Albatross raise only one chick every other year. But during the past 20 years, the population of the wandering albatross on South Georgia in the South Atlantic and on Crozet in the Indian Ocean has been reduced almost by half. What is thought by some to be the reason for this? Longline fishing.

To catch bluefin tuna, fishermen use long-

lines, each carrying hundreds of hooks. The lines are set off the stern of the fishing vessel. Each hook is baited with squid—the main food of the albatross. When the bird swoops down to take the squid, it occasionally swallows the hook as well. The hooked albatross then sinks with the heavy line and drowns.

To protect the albatross, some tuna fishermen have been successfully encouraged to set their lines at night, when the bird does not fish. Fishermen are also seeking ways to spread their lines from beneath their boats so that the albatross cannot see the bait. Other techniques that have been used include weighted lines that sink faster and a kind of scarecrow to frighten off the birds.

In the open seas of the South Atlantic, however, there is no monitoring of methods used by fishing boats. According to seabird specialist Sandy Bartle, of the Museum of New Zealand, boats there "do nothing to stop albatrosses being killed." Truly, the possible demise of the majestic albatross is a commentary on human negligence and indifference.



**Young
People
Ask...**

How Can I Cope With Being So Sick?

JASON was only 18, but it looked as if all his life's goals were now unattainable. He had hoped to serve full-time as a Christian minister, but then he learned that he had Crohn's disease—a painful and debilitating bowel disorder. Today, however, Jason is successfully coping with his circumstances.

Perhaps you too are dealing with a serious illness. In a previous issue, *Awake!* considered the challenges faced by young people like you.* Let's now look at how you can make the best of your situation.

* See *Awake!* of April 22, 1997, pages 17-19.

A Positive Mental Attitude

Coping successfully with any illness involves a positive mental attitude. The Bible says: "The spirit of a man can put up with his malady; but as for a stricken spirit, who can bear it?" (Proverbs 18:14) Dark, pessimistic thoughts and feelings make healing more difficult. Jason found this to be true.

At first, Jason had to fight negative feelings, such as anger, which were dragging him down. What helped? He explains: "The articles in *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* on depression really helped me to maintain a positive attitude. Now I try to take just one day at a time."*

Seventeen-year-old Carmen likewise learned to look on the bright side of things. Although she suffers from sickle-cell anemia, she counts her blessings. "I think about the others who are worse off than I am and who can't do the things I can do," she says. "And I feel grateful and not so sorry for myself."

Proverbs 17:22 says: "A heart that is joyful does good as a curer." Some might feel that laughter is inappropriate in the face of serious illness. But good-natured humor and pleasant company refresh your mind and increase your will to live. In fact, joy is a godly quality, one of the fruits of God's spirit. (Galatians 5:22) That spirit can help you feel joy even though you are fighting an illness. —Psalm 41:3.

Finding an Understanding Doctor

Having a doctor who understands young people is very helpful. A young person's mental and emotional needs are usually different from those of an adult. Ashley was only ten when she had to go to the hospital for treatment of a malignant brain tumor.

* See *The Watchtower*, October 1, 1991, page 15; March 1, 1990, pages 3-9; and *Awake!*, October 22, 1987, pages 2-16; November 8, 1987, pages 12-16.

Ashley's doctor dealt with her compassionately and in terms she could understand. He told her how his own childhood illness had motivated him to become a doctor. He gently but clearly explained the proposed treatment to her, so she knew what to expect.

You and your parents will want to seek out medical personnel who respect you and who understand your needs. If for some reason you do not feel reasonably comfortable with the care you are receiving, feel free to express your concerns to your parents.

Fight for Your Health!

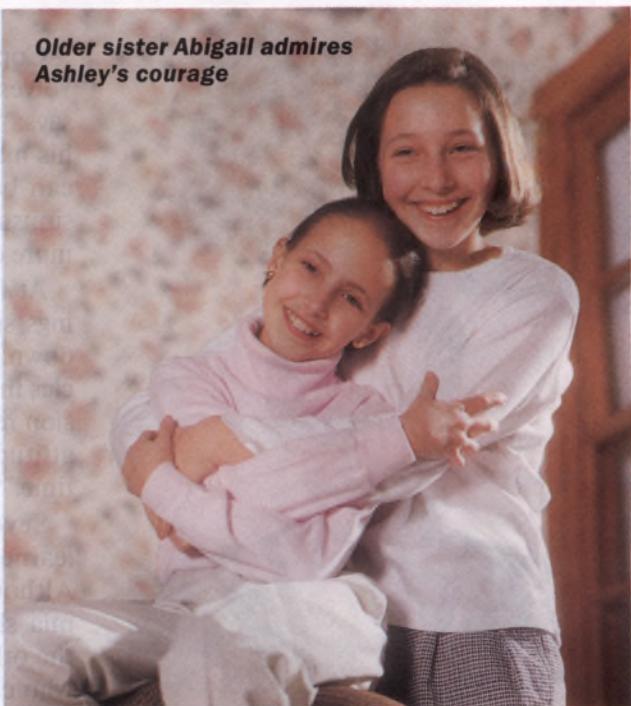
It is also essential that you fight your illness in every way you can. For instance, learn as much as you can about your condition. "A man of knowledge is reinforcing power," a Bible proverb observes. (Proverbs 24:5) Knowledge removes fear of the unknown.

In addition, an informed young person can be more involved in his treatment and is in a better position to cooperate with it. He may learn, for example, that he should not stop taking a prescribed medication without his doctor's recommendation. Carmen, mentioned above, read books on sickle-cell anemia, as did her parents. What they learned helped them obtain medical treatment that could help Carmen the most.

Ask your doctor specific questions—more than once if necessary—if you're not clear on some matter. Rather than saying what you think the doctor wants to hear, explain honestly what you are thinking and feeling. As the Bible says, "there is a frustrating of plans where there is no confidential talk." —Proverbs 15:22.

At one point Ashley seemed quite uncommunicative regarding her illness. She would

Older sister Abigail admires Ashley's courage



talk only to her mother about it. A wise social worker asked her privately: "Do you feel that maybe you are not being told everything?" Ashley confided that she did. So the woman showed Ashley her medical records and explained them to her. She also asked the doctors to spend more time talking with Ashley directly, rather than just about her. By finally expressing herself, Ashley was able to get the help she needed.

Support From Those Around You

When any member of a family is seriously sick, it becomes a family affair, requiring united effort. Ashley's family and the Christian congregation rallied to support her. The congregation was periodically reminded that she was in the hospital. Members of the congregation visited her regularly, and they helped the family with housework and the preparation of meals until the family could get back into a routine. Children in the

congregation visited Ashley in the hospital when she wasn't too sick for company. This was good not only for Ashley but also for her young friends.

Before others can give you help, though, they have to know that you need it. Carmen looks to her parents and to the congregation elders for emotional and spiritual support. She also counts on those in school who share her Christian beliefs to be supportive. "They keep an eye on me," Carmen says, "and I feel cared for."

Your school may be able to provide helpful medical and financial advice and may even offer some personal support. For instance, Ashley's teacher encouraged her class to write to Ashley and to visit her. If your teachers do not understand the difficulties you face, it may be necessary for your parents to discuss your situation respectfully with school authorities.

Use Mind and Body Wisely

When you are very sick, you may not be able to do anything but focus what energy you have on getting better. If you are not totally debilitated, there are many constructive things you can do. Author Jill Kremetz commented on what she noted while researching her book *How It Feels to Fight for Your Life*: "It has been sad for me to spend two years walking down hospital corridors and to have seen so many children staring at TV sets. We need to encourage these youngsters to read more. A hospital bed is an excellent place to exercise one's brain."

Whether you are at home or in the hospital, exercising your mental faculties can often help you feel better. Have you tried writing letters or poems? Drawing or painting? How about learning to play a musical instrument if your condition permits it? Even with health limitations, there are many possibilities. Surely, the best thing you can do is de-

velop the habit of praying to God and reading his Word, the Bible.—Psalm 63:6.

If your condition permits it, appropriate physical activity can also help you feel better. For this reason medical facilities often have physical therapy programs for young patients. In many cases proper exercise not only promotes physical healing but also helps to keep your spirits up.

Do Not Give Up!

In the face of great suffering, Jesus prayed to God, trusted in Him, and concentrated on his own joyful future rather than on the pain. (Hebrews 12:2) He learned from his hard experiences. (Hebrews 4:15, 16; 5:7-9) He accepted help and encouragement. (Luke 22:43) He focused on the welfare of others rather than on his own discomfort. —Luke 23:39-43; John 19:26, 27.

Although you may be very sick, you too may serve as an inspiration to others. For a school report, Ashley's sister, Abigail, wrote: "The person I most admire is my sister. Even though she has to go to the hospital and have IVs and get poked with needles, she still comes out smiling!"*

Jason has not given up his goals, just adjusted them somewhat. Now his goal is to serve where there is a greater need for preachers of God's Kingdom. As in Jason's case, you may not be able to do all that you desire. The important thing is to learn to live according to your own limitations, being neither overprotective nor reckless. Count on Jehovah to give you the wisdom and the strength to do the best you can. (2 Corinthians 4:16; James 1:5) And remember, the time will come when this earth will be a paradise, where "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'" (Isaiah 33:24) Yes, one day you will be healthy again!

* See also *The Secret of Family Happiness*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., pages 116-27.

WATCHING THE WORLD

Church Membership Declining

It is thought that in the United States, fewer than half of those raised in mainline Protestant churches over the past 30 years remain in their denomination as adults. An estimated 78 million people in the United States are "marginal" Protestants. This means that they identify themselves as Baptists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, or members of some other Protestant church, but they don't belong to or attend a local church.

Bone Merchants

"Desperate residents of war-torn Kabul are digging up human bones to sell for use in chicken feed," reports Reuters news service. Bone, which is rich in calcium, phosphate, and carbonate, is used to make animal feed, soap, and cooking oil. A skeleton weighing about 13 pounds can fetch up to 50 cents, which is a relatively large sum of money in that very poor city. "It's good business," says 14-year-old Faizdeen. "Though I often pick animal bones, the human ones are easier to find here." Sadly, years of civil war in Afghanistan have made this mineral-rich commodity readily available.

Watches That Tell More Than Time

In Rio de Janeiro, 77 students were disqualified after being found with digital watches used to cheat on a university entrance exam, reports the newspaper *O Globo*. The watches worked much like a telephone pager; but instead of receiving

telephone numbers, they provided the correct answers to test questions. The newspaper says that students paid as much as \$14,000 each for the watches. Interestingly, as far back as 1987, school examining boards in England and Wales warned teachers to be on the lookout for cheaters using computerized wristwatches.

Distorted Vision

Most people who look into a mirror accept the reflected image that they see—themselves. But people suffering from a



condition known as body dysmorphic disorder gaze into a mirror and see a distorted image of themselves. "It's a condition in which people dwell on one feature, imagining it to be hideously ugly, when it is, in fact, normal," states *The Province*, of British Columbia, Canada. New York psychiatrist Eric Hollander says that agony over imagined flaws can be so great that about 25 percent of those suffering from the disorder attempt suicide.

E-Mail Prayers

Pious Jews have long gathered at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem in order to cry and offer prayers. Oftentimes, worshipers write prayers on a small piece of pa-

per and place them in the crevices of the wall. Now, however, Jews from around the world can send E-mail prayers via the Internet. According to *Computerworld* magazine, staff members from the Virtual Jerusalem Web site gather the prayers, print them out, and take them to the Wailing Wall, where, "according to Jewish tradition, God can retrieve them."

Income Gap Widens

According to a recent United Nations social development report, 83 percent of the world's income goes to the richest 20 percent of the population. To put it another way, the collective wealth of the world's 358 billionaires equals the combined incomes of the poorest 2,400,000,000 people. In 1960 the average annual income of people living in industrial countries was \$5,700 more than that of people living in developing countries. In 1993, however, the difference in the average annual per-capita income between industrial nations and developing nations had grown to \$15,400.

Historic Harvest

"Machines have out-performed man in China's wheat fields for the first time in the country's history," Reuters news service reported. It said that more than 800,000 mechanical harvesters were used. Wheat was first introduced to China sometime before 1300 B.C.E. and has been successfully cultivated on small family farms—mostly by hand—since that time. But with China representing more than 20 percent of the world's population, yet pos-

sessing just 7 percent of the arable land, "agricultural officials are eager to boost mechanization in the nation's fields," said the report.

Clergy Insurance Difficulties

Most churches carry general liability insurance to protect them against personal-injury claims. However, some insurance companies in the United States have started withdrawing coverage for "sexual misconduct" of clergy, reports the *National Underwriter*. John Cleary, general counsel of Church Mutual Insurance Company, said: "Many . . . liability policies will exclude sexual misconduct because it's an intentional act, it's really a crime." Moreover, Donald Clark, Jr., a lawyer who represents various religious groups, said that these insurance changes suggest that "the potential threat of adverse economic consequences for these types of man-made disasters are perhaps more devastating than the consequences from natural disasters." Since 1984, Church Mutual, one of the leading church insurers in the United States, has had between 1,500 and 2,000 sexual misconduct claims, according to Mr. Cleary.

Singapore Students Excel

Over half a million students from 41 different countries took a 90-minute test to compare the standards of education around the world. The results? Test scores suggest that Singapore is producing the world's best students in both math and science. Following Singapore, the remaining top ten countries in math scores were South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Belgium, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, the Neth-

erlands, and Slovenia. The best science scores were posted by Singapore, Czech Republic, Japan, South Korea, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Austria, Hungary, and England. How did a nation of only about 3,400,000 people apparently outsmart the rest of the world? Perhaps through hard work. Singapore's students spend an average of 4.6 hours a day doing homework, while the international average is 2 to 3 hours, reports *Asiaweek*.

Money From Heaven?

Residents of Overtown, an impoverished neighborhood in Miami, Florida, were delighted when money appeared to fall out of the sky. As it turned out, however, it was not manna from heaven but part of a \$3.7-million load of cash that fell onto the streets below when



an armored truck crashed on an overpass above the neighborhood. Police estimate that at least 100 people rushed to scoop up money, but it is likely there were many more. According to *The New York Times*, "Miami police gave holders of the money 48 hours to turn it in without being charged with theft." But by the time the amnesty expired, only three people had returned any money, and some \$500,000 was still missing. One 18-year-old youth reportedly said: "It landed in people's yards, man. What do you expect them to do?"

Patients Kept Warm During Surgery

Hospital operating rooms kept cold to retard the growth of airborne bacteria triple the risk of infection, claims a new study by University of California anesthesiologist Daniel Sessler. "What causes wound infection is not really bacteria floating around in the air," says Dr. Sessler, "but the patient's decreased resistance to bacteria on the skin or inside the body." Cold operating rooms can drop a patient's body temperature by as much as 4 degrees Fahrenheit. And low body temperature reduces the flow of oxygenated blood, which is essential in fighting infection. Sessler says that "the cells and enzymes responsible for immunity simply don't work well when the body is cold." Sessler and his colleagues found that in addition to a reduced rate of infection, patients whose body temperature was kept normal during surgery stayed in the hospital nearly three days less than unwarmed patients.

Not for the Public Good

In Japan, 49 percent of the people polled said that their government officials work mainly for themselves, reports *Mainichi Daily News*. Only 7 percent of the respondents thought that bureaucrats work for "the public good," and just 3 percent said that they work for the country. Very few Japanese described their bureaucrats as diligent or sincere. The survey was conducted last December, following a year in which a number of scandals involving some of Japan's highest-ranking civil servants came to light.

FROM OUR READERS

Good Times I agree that there are many safe ways for young people to enjoy themselves, as mentioned in the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Have a Good Time?" (September 22, 1996) We can go to a museum or a zoo or have a picnic or even a get-together. Even those of us with little financial means can enjoy ourselves by inviting other youths to our home to play games or for a meal.

V. A., Brazil

Heroic Cat I must let you know just how much I appreciated the article "A Mother's Bonding With Her Babies," which appeared in the September 22, 1996, issue. I live in a country where sexual practices are unrestrained and where many young girls do not hesitate to have an abortion. I believe that the mother cat dubbed Scarlett is a fine example of a conscientious mother.

E. B., Mali

I was thrilled to read the story of Scarlett, who showed utter fearlessness in saving her kittens from a burning garage. She impressed me as a cat from which many humans could learn a lot. I think it's terrific that you publish such articles.

D. W., Germany

Your heartwarming story about Scarlett and her kittens was the most powerful article on abortion that I have ever read.

J. G., United States

I couldn't help but cry when I read the article. I have always loved animals of all sorts and appreciate the lessons Jehovah teaches us through them. It makes me sick at heart to know that "intelligent" humans do not show the same care and attention to their offspring.

C. C., United States

Tinnitus Thank you so much for the article "Tinnitus—A Noise to Live With?" (September 22, 1996) I have been suffering from it for six years. I feared that I had an incurable disease because no doctor had been able to tell me exactly what my condition was called. Reading your article has had a calming effect on me. Now I am trying to put up with it as I await God's new world, where no one will be sick.—Isaiah 33:24.

C. F., Italy

I began experiencing this problem nearly ten years ago. It was terrible to imagine that I would hear this noise constantly! But today, I am learning to live with my noisy ear. I am looking forward to the time when, thanks to Jehovah, I will again hear SILENCE!

J. S., Czech Republic

I have been suffering from tinnitus for the last two and a half years and have undergone all kinds of medical tests, including a CT scan of the brain. Anxiety and tension were frustrating problems in my life. Having read your article, I am learning to live with the ailment.

M. G. T. F., Sri Lanka

My husband suffers from tinnitus. He also suffers from major depression. This information has helped me to have more empathy for him. At times, the noise is very troublesome to him, and I must admit that I have not been as compassionate as I should have been. I sincerely appreciate the logical way in which this article was written. I am sure that it will help many mates of those with tinnitus to be more understanding.

L. F., United States

WHAT do your children see? War? Crime? Pollution? Poverty? Sickness? True, these are ever-present realities. But have you taught them to look beyond these things to the wonderful future promised in the Bible? The parents of nine-year-old Joel Pierson have done this. With what result?

Consider what Joel wrote on the subject "Just Open Your Eyes and See." This topic was given as a writing assignment for youths in a school district in Virginia, U.S.A. Note how Joel's essay, published in the newspaper *The Central Virginian*, August 22, 1996, reveals that his hope is based on what he has learned from God's Word. He wrote:

"Just open your eyes and see, all the beauty that was meant to be.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful to wake up one morning and hear that there was no more pollution? Instead of killing and crime being on the news, peace and happiness are what is in people's lives.

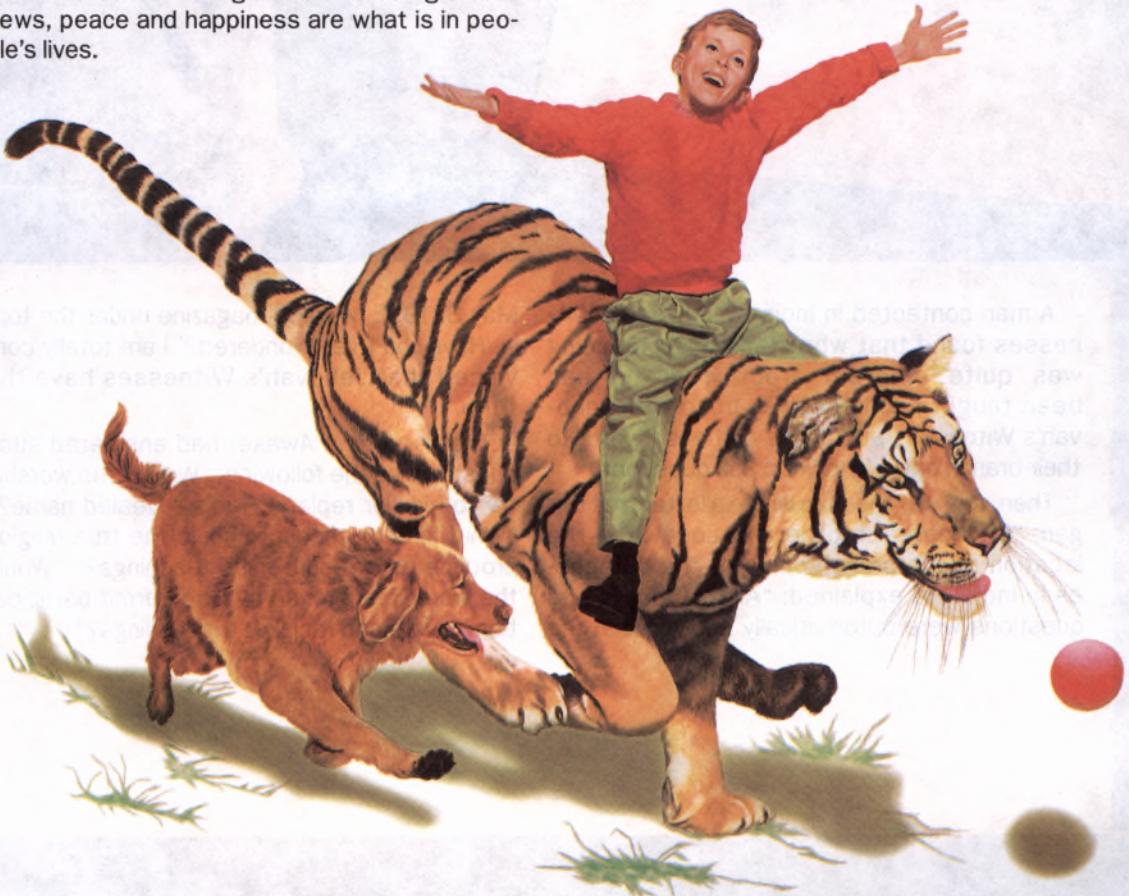
"Just Open Your Eyes and See"

"Neighbors are working together to help a friend build his home. Close by, we see others planting a garden. It's not just this, but their motives are pure. Everyone is joining together to help one another. There will be no more poor

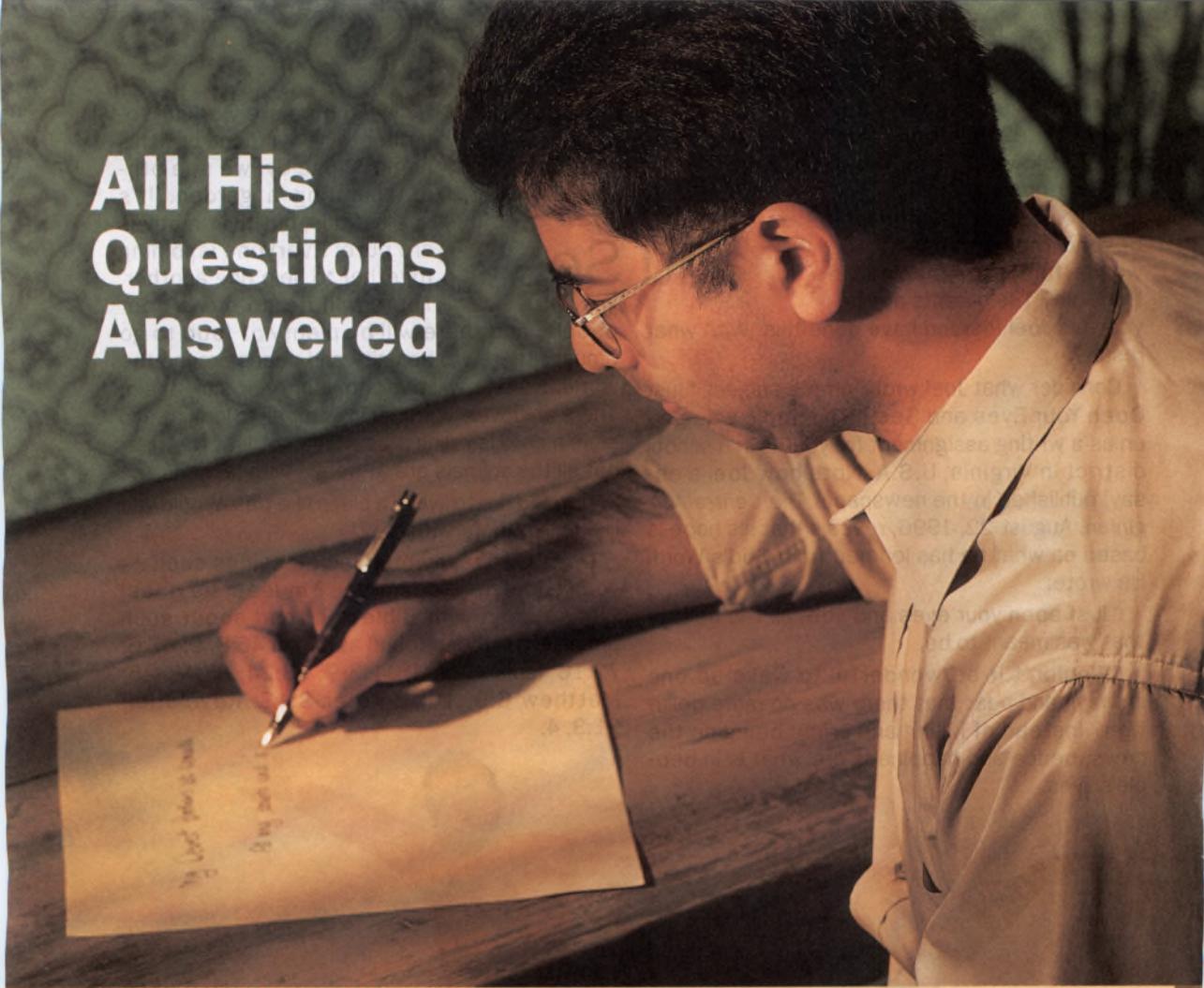
people, and there will be plenty of food to go around. There will be unity and peace around the world. No one will ever go hungry or sick again. There are lovely surroundings for all to look at and look, a child is riding a tiger! It's not just the tiger but all the animals are at peace with humans.

"I would like to live in a place like this. Would you like to live there with me?"

Does God really promise blessings such as young Joel here describes? Indeed, he does! Please open your Bible and read about such promises as those found at Psalm 46:8, 9; 67:6; 72:16; Isaiah 2:3, 4; 11:6-9; 33:24; 65:17-25; Matthew 6:9, 10; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3, 4.



All His Questions Answered



A man contacted in India by Jehovah's Witnesses found that what they were teaching was quite different from what he had been taught in church. He spoke with Jehovah's Witnesses about this and even wrote to their branch office in India to ask questions.

Then, one day the man wrote a letter that began: "My dearest brothers at Lonavla"—the location of the branch office of the Witnesses in India. He explained: "All my doubts and questions were automatically answered in the

May 8, 1995, *Awake!* magazine under the topic 'Have You Ever Wondered?' I am totally convinced that Jehovah's Witnesses have the truth."

That article in *Awake!* had answered such questions as the following: "Would true worship try to hide or replace God's revealed name?" "What kind of conduct should the true religion produce as a result of its teachings?" "Would the worship approved by God permit participation in wars and racial or tribal killings?"