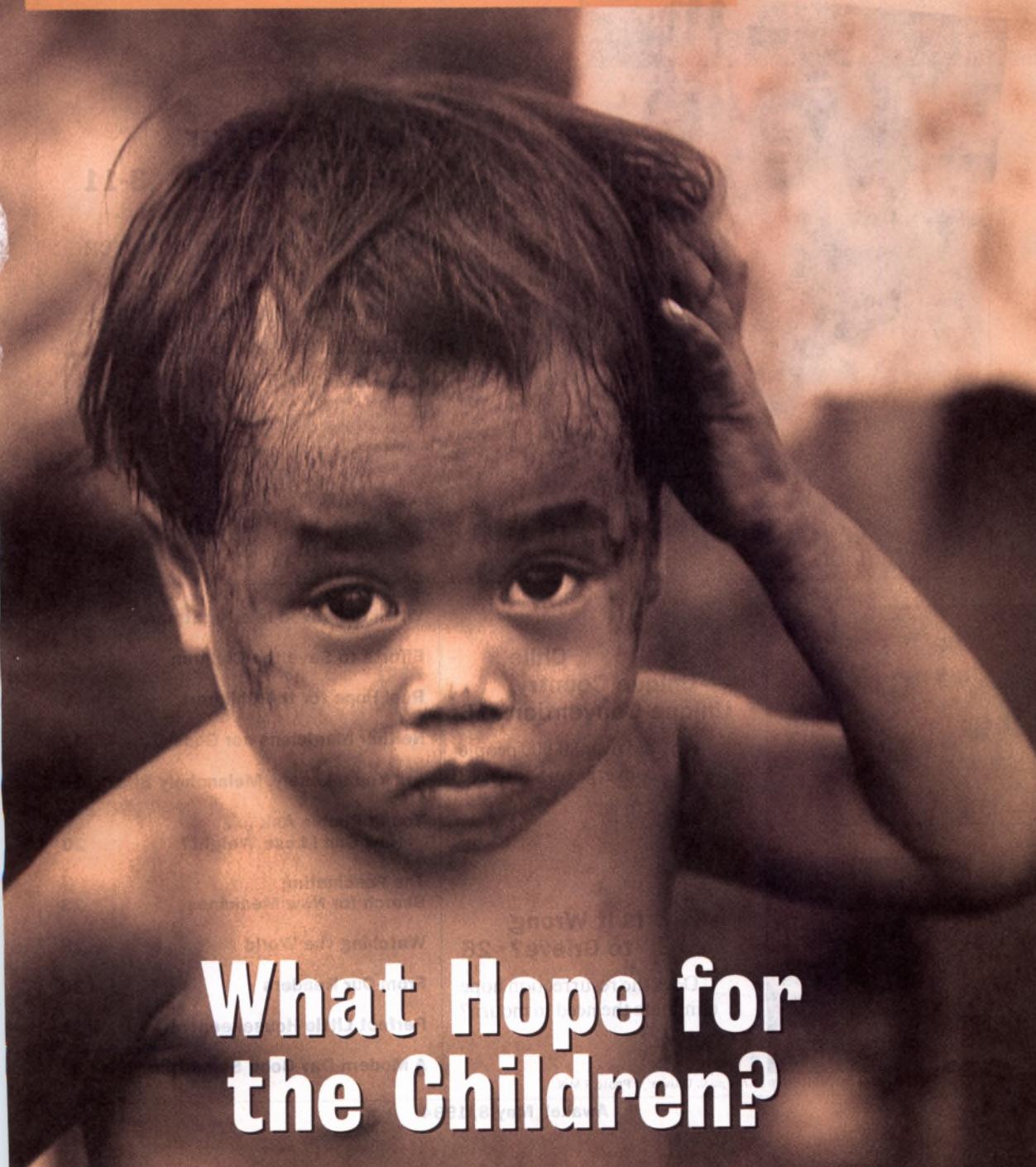


Awake!

May 8, 1994



**What Hope for
the Children?**



What Hope for the Children? 3-11

Every day 380,000 children are born into a world of poverty, hunger, disease, violence, and war. What hope is there for a child today?



Chile —Unique Country, Unique Convention 16

Why did over 80,000 people converge on Santiago?



Is It Wrong to Grieve? 26

Does the resurrection hope eliminate the need to mourn?

Jean-Baptiste Greuze, detail from *Le fils puni*, Louvre; © Photo R.M.N.

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When Childhood Is a Nightmare



Photo: Godo-Foto

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN SPAIN

Today—a typical day in the 1990's—200 thousand children will fight in guerrilla wars, 100 million school-age children will not attend school, 150 million children will go to bed hungry, 30 million children will sleep on the streets, and 40 thousand children will die.

IF THE above figures seem frightening, the faces behind the figures are heartrending. Below are the brief stories of five children whose desperate plights help us to understand the meaning of these grim statistics.

A child soldier. Mohammad is only 13 years old, but he is already a seasoned soldier in southwestern Asia, a veteran of seven battles. He used to tend goats before he went to war—at the age of ten. Now, Mohammad wields a lightweight AK-47 assault rifle, which he does not hesitate to use. In one skirmish he killed two enemy soldiers at short range. When asked how he felt about killing, he replied: "I was happy because I killed them." Children make better soldiers, his officer explains, "because they are not afraid."

A child worker. Four-year-old Woodcaby lives in a cinder-block house on a Caribbean island. He rises at 6:00 a.m. in order to attend to his daily household chores: cooking, fetching water, and cleaning his master's house. He gets no wages and will probably never go to school. Woodcaby says he misses his parents, but he doesn't know where they are. His day finishes at 9:30 p.m., and if he is fortunate, he will not go to bed hungry.

A hungry child. In the African village of Comosawha, an 11-year-old girl spends each

weary day grubbing for weeds. The onion-weed bulbs—practically all that can grow in the parched soil—serve to keep her and her family alive. The bulbs are either boiled or mashed and then fried. A deadly combination of drought and civil war has brought the villagers to the verge of starvation.

A child of the streets. Edison is just one of the thousands of street children in a large South American city. He makes a little money cleaning shoes, and he sleeps on the pavement near the bus station, along with other children who huddle close to one another during the cold nights. Sometimes he turns to petty crime to bolster his earnings as a shoeshine boy. Twice he has been beaten up by the police, and he has spent three months in jail. Edison insists that he has now "almost" given up drugs and glue sniffing. He dreams of being a mechanic, of learning a trade.

The death of a child. It is a cold, wet morning on Dugen mountain in the Middle East. An infant, wrapped in a burial cloth, is placed in a shallow grave. The baby died of diarrhea—a common cause of infant mortality. The mother is a refugee and her milk dried up during their exhausting trek to safety. In desperation she fed her child sugar and water, but the water was infected, and the baby died.

Like 25,000 other children who were buried that same day, he never reached his first birthday.

Multiplied thousands of times, these tragic accounts illustrate what life is like for many of the world's children. Childhood, a time to learn and mature in the shelter of a loving family, has for these children become

a nightmare from which many will never wake up.

Peter Adamson, editor of the report *The State of the World's Children*, declared in 1990: "Death and suffering on this scale are simply no longer necessary; they are therefore no longer acceptable. Morality must march with capacity."

Photo: Godo-Foto



Efforts to Save the Children



"We have gathered at the World Summit for Children to undertake a joint commitment and to make an urgent universal appeal—to give every child a better future."—United Nations Conference, 1990.

PRESIDENTS and prime ministers from over 70 countries gathered in New York City on September 29 and 30, 1990, to discuss the plight of the world's children.

The conference focused international attention on the deplorable suffering of children, a global tragedy that has been swept under the rug. United States delegate Peter Teeley pointed out: "If 40,000 spotted owls were dying every day, there would be outrage. But 40,000 children are dying, and it's hardly noticed."

All the assembled heads of government agreed that something must be done—urgently. They made a "solemn commitment to give high priority to the rights of children, to their survival and to their protection and development." What concrete proposals did they make?

Over 50 Million Young Lives in the Balance

The primary objective was to rescue over 50 million children who would likely die during the 1990's. Many of these young lives

Awake!

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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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could be saved by implementing the following health measures.

- If all mothers in developing countries were persuaded to breast-feed their babies for at least four to six months, a million children would be saved annually.
- The extensive use of oral rehydration therapy (ORT) could halve the death rate due to diarrhea, which kills four million children every year.*
- Widespread vaccination and the use of inexpensive antibiotics could prevent millions of other deaths due to diseases such as measles, tetanus, and pneumonia.

Is that type of health program feasible? The cost would probably reach \$2.5 billion a year by the end of the decade. In global terms this outlay would be minimal. American tobacco companies spend that amount each year—just on cigarette advertising. Every day the nations of the world lavish that same amount on military expenditure. Could such funds be better spent on the health of endangered children? The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child pointedly states that “mankind owes the child the best it has to give.”

Of course, giving “every child a better fu-

* ORT provides children with the liquid, salt, and glucose needed to counteract the fatal dehydrating effects of diarrhea. The World Health Organization reported in 1990 that already more than one million lives a year are being saved by this technique. For more details, see the September 22, 1985, issue of *Awake!*, pages 23-5.

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ture” involves a lot more than saving them from a premature death. Sandra Huffman, president of the Center to Prevent Childhood Malnutrition, explains in *Time* magazine that “ORT doesn’t prevent diarrhea, it only saves children from dying from it. . . . What we need to do now,” she adds, “is focus on how we can prevent the illness, not just the death.”

In order to improve—besides save—the lives of millions of children, several ambitious programs have been launched. (See box on page 6.) None will be easy to fulfill.

Clean Water Within Walking Distance

Felicia Onu used to spend five hours every day fetching water for her family. The water she carried home was often contaminated. (Such water brings with it an annual scourge of guinea worm infection and contributes to outbreaks of diarrhea.) But in 1984, in her village of Ugwulangwu in eastern Nigeria, a well was dug and a hand pump installed.

Now she has to walk only a few hundred yards to get clean water. Her children are healthier, and her life has become much easier. More than a billion people like Felicia gained access to clean water during the 1980's. But millions of women and children still spend many hours each day lugging pails that contain less water than the amount that is casually flushed away by an average Western toilet.

If you would like more information about Jehovah's Witnesses or their publications, please send your request to Watch Tower at the appropriate address below.

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Goals for the '90's —The Challenge to Save the Children

The nations attending the World Summit for Children made several concrete commitments. This is what they hope to achieve by the year 2000.

Vaccination. The present vaccination programs save three million children each year. But two million others are still dying. By immunizing 90 percent or more of the world's children against the most common diseases, the majority of these deaths could be avoided.

Education. During the 1980's, school enrollment actually declined in many of the poorest countries of the world. The goal is to reverse that trend and to ensure that by the end of the decade, every child has the chance to go to school.

Malnutrition. United Nations Children's Fund officials believe that "with the right policies, . . . the world is now in a position to feed all the world's children and to overcome the worst forms of malnutrition." Proposals were made to halve the number of malnour-

ished children during the present decade. Such an achievement would rescue 100 million children from the pangs of hunger.

Clean water and sanitation. In 1987, the Brundtland Report explained: "In the developing world, the number of water taps nearby is a better indication of the health of a community than is the number of hospital beds." At present over a billion people have no access to clean water, and twice as many are without sanitary waste disposal. The aim is to provide universal access to safe drinking water and sanitary means for human waste disposal.

Protection. In the last decade, wars have caused over five million child casualties. Five million other children have been made homeless. These refugees, as well as the millions of street children and child workers, urgently need protection. The Convention on the Rights of the Child—now ratified by over a hundred countries—seeks to protect all these children from violence and exploitation.

Ups and Downs in Education

Maximino is a bright 11-year-old boy who lives in a remote area of Colombia. Despite spending several hours a day helping his father tend their crops, he is doing well at school. He goes to an *Escuela Nueva*, or New School, that has a flexible program designed to help children to catch up if they have to miss a few days' school—a common occurrence, especially at harvest time. Teachers are a luxury in Maximino's school. Textbooks are in short supply. The children are encouraged to help one another with what they don't understand, and they themselves do most of the work involved in running the school. This innovative system—specially tailored to meet the needs of poor rural communities—is being tried in many other countries.

Thousands of miles from Colombia, in a large Asian city, lives another bright 11-year-old, named Melinda. She has recently left school in order to devote 12 hours a day to salvaging bits of metal and plastic from one of the city's huge garbage dumps. "I want to help my father so that we can have a meal every day," Melinda says. "If I didn't help him, we might not be able to afford to eat at all." Even on a good day, she brings home only about 35 cents (U.S.).

Child Health Workers

On the outskirts of the Indian city of Bombay is a shantytown called Malvani, where disease has long been endemic. At last things are improving, thanks to energetic health workers such as Neetu and Aziz. They visit

families to check whether the young children have been vaccinated or if they are suffering from diarrhea, scabies, or anemia. Neetu and Aziz are only 11 years old. They volunteered to work in a program in which older children are assigned to monitor the health of the children under five. Because of the efforts of Neetu and Aziz—and the efforts of dozens of other children like them—nearly all the youngsters of Malvani have been immunized, most parents know how to administer oral rehydration therapy, and general hygiene has improved.

All over the world, enormous strides are being made to vaccinate young children against the most common diseases. (See chart on page 8.) Bangladesh has now immunized over 70 percent of its infant population, and China has immunized well over 95 percent. If every developing country could achieve the 90 percent mark, health experts believe that a collective immunity would result. When the vast majority are immunized, it is much harder for the disease to be transmitted.

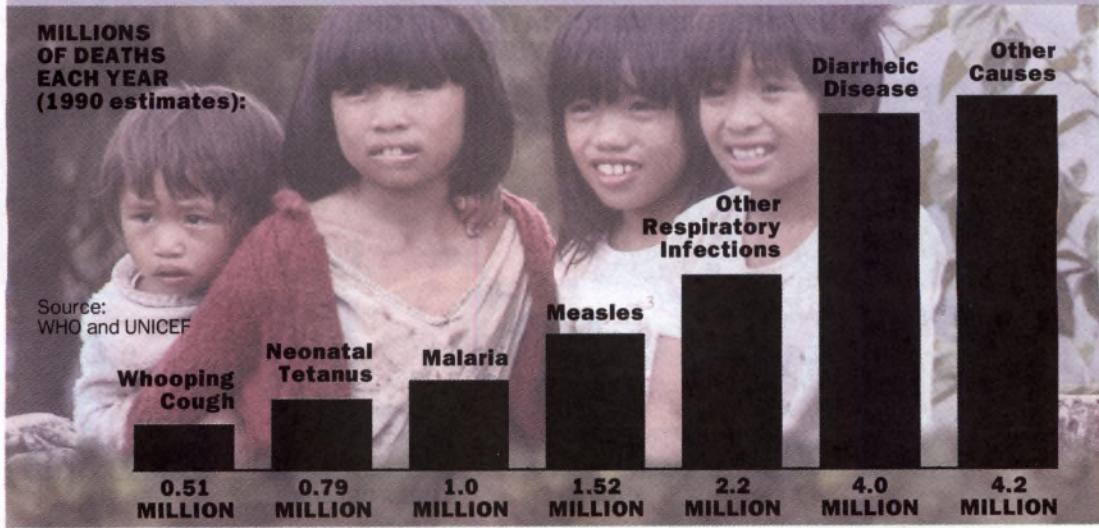
Poverty, War, and AIDS

Nevertheless, the sad reality is that while headway is being made in health care and education, other problems remain as entrenched as ever. Three of the most intractable are poverty, war, and AIDS.

In recent years the poor people of the world have been getting poorer. Real income in impoverished areas of Africa and Latin America has decreased 10 percent or more in the last decade. Parents in these lands—where 75 percent of the family's income is spent on food—just cannot afford to give their children a balanced diet.

'Give the children vegetables and bananas,' Grace was told at her local health clinic. But Grace, a mother of ten children, who lives in East Africa, has no money for food, and there is not enough water for her to grow those crops on the family's quarter-acre plot. They have no choice but to subsist on corn and beans and to go hungry at times. If present trends continue, prospects are not likely to improve for Grace's family or for millions of others like hers.

MAIN CAUSES OF CHILD DEATHS (Children Under Five)



Grace's children, poor as they are, fare better than eight-year-old Kim Seng of Southeast Asia, whose father was killed in a fratricidal civil war and whose mother subsequently died of starvation. Kim Seng, who also nearly died of malnutrition, eventually found sanctuary in a refugee camp. Many of the five million children who languish in refugee camps around the world have suffered similar hardships.

At the turn of the century, only 5 percent of war casualties were civilian. Now that figure has mushroomed to 80 percent, and the majority of these war victims are women or children. Those who may escape physical injury still suffer emotionally. "I can't forget how my mother was killed," says one child refugee from a country in south-central Africa. "They grabbed my mother and did bad things to her. Afterwards they tied her up and stabbed her. . . . Sometimes I dream about it."

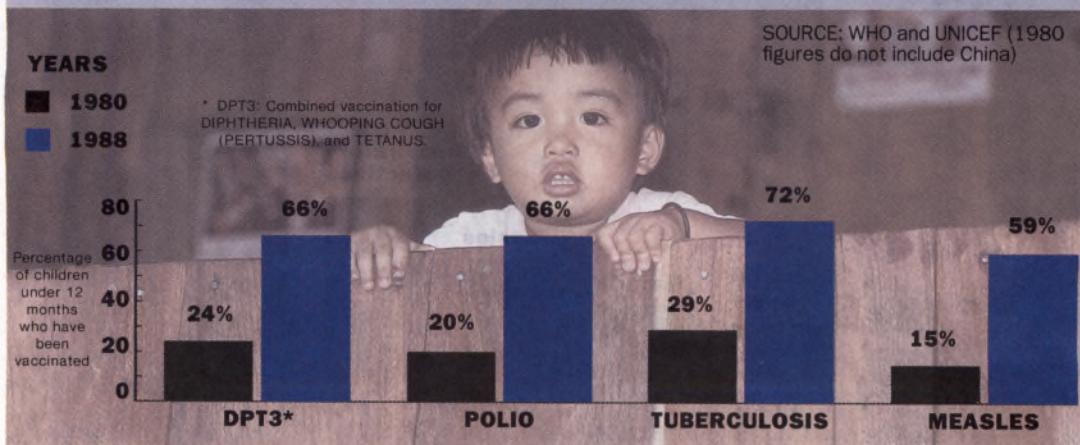
As violent conflicts keep on erupting in one country after another, it seems inevitable that innocent children will continue to suffer the ravages of war. Furthermore, international tension also harms children who are not directly involved in the conflicts. The military

gobbles up money that could be spent providing better education, sanitation, and health care. World military spending by industrial countries exceeds the combined yearly income of the poorest half of mankind. Even the 46 poorest countries of the world spend as much on their military machines as they do on health and education combined.

Apart from poverty and war, another killer stalks the children of the world. During the 1980's, while notable progress was being made in the fight against measles, tetanus, and diarrhea, a new health nightmare emerged: AIDS. The World Health Organization calculates that by the year 2000, ten million children will be infected. Most of these will never reach their second birthday, and hardly any will live for more than five years. "Unless something is done soon, AIDS threatens to wipe out all the progress we have made in child survival in the last 10 years," laments Dr. Reginald Boulos, a Haitian pediatrician.

From this brief review, it is evident that despite some praiseworthy achievements, the aim of 'giving every child a better future' remains a mammoth task. Is there any hope that one day the dream will be realized?

PROGRESS IN VACCINATION OF CHILDREN IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD 1980-1988





Real Hope for the Children



“Never again will there be . . . an infant who lives but a few days . . . They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD.”—Isaiah 65:20, 23, New International Version.

DESPITE man's laudable efforts to improve matters, millions of newborn children are still “doomed to misfortune.” It will not always be that way. The prophecy of Isaiah not only assures us that every child will one day have a secure future but also explains how such a goal can be realized.

At Isaiah 65:17, God says: “I am creating new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart.” In order to care properly for the world's children, both “new heavens” and “a new earth” are needed.

This “new earth” is a new society of people who adhere to the principles that Jesus Christ taught. One of those principles, Jesus explained, is that “whoever receives one of such young children on the basis of my name, receives me.” (Mark 9:37) A society that treated every young child as if he were Christ himself would indeed be “a new earth”! Already, millions of people are striving to do just that, and they have succeeded in giving hope to some of the world's children.

Children Who Now Have Hope

Tshepo, together with his four older brothers and sisters, lived in a shantytown in South Africa. When he was a year old, he already had the telltale swollen belly of a malnourished child. His parents squandered a substantial part of their meager income on beer in a

vain attempt to drown their sorrows. Tshepo rarely had a hot meal, and he was left to play among the litter and empty beer cans strewn around the home.

The future for Tshepo looked dismal until something happened to change his parents' way of thinking. A neighbor named George gave them a free course in Bible education. The results were impressive—the drinking problem disappeared, the home was cleaned up, the family got a hot meal every day, and Tshepo and his brothers and sisters began to look clean, well dressed, and happy.

George helped Tshepo's family because, as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, he feels a responsibility toward all, including the less fortunate. Of course, it took a lot of time and patience to help the family to change their life-style, to teach them new values based on God's Word. But George feels the effort was well worth it, especially when he sees what a difference it has made to the children.

In the Mexican town of San Salvador Atenco lived a peasant named José, the father of nine children. He was a heavy drinker, and his children were afraid of him because he was violent when he was drunk. Their home was always filthy, and the yard served as a corral for the family's donkeys and pigs, which wandered into the house at will. As a consequence, the children suffered from

gastrointestinal infections, and at times their bodies were covered with festering sores.

Things changed when José began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. He stopped drinking heavily and became a real father to his children. "Now we can even play with my dad!" one of the younger children proudly exclaims. Their home is now one of the cleanest—rather than one of the dirtiest—in town. The pigs and donkeys are kept in a field, and the family regularly boils the drinking water. Improved hygiene has meant that the children are much healthier and much happier.

As these two examples show, often the key to helping the children is helping the parents. The declaration of the World Summit for Children recognized that "the family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children." And whether families nurture and protect their children or

not may well depend as much on education as it does on income.

Transforming a Street Child

In Brazil, Domingos was just nine years old when his father died. When his mother remarried, he was packed off to an orphanage. The harsh treatment he received in the orphanage made him decide to join a group who were planning to escape. Although his mother took him back when she heard of his plans, several beatings from his stepfather convinced him to leave home. He became one of the thousands of São Paulo's street children who shine shoes, sell candies, or even deliver drugs in order to survive.

When Domingos first turned up at a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, he was distrustful and lacked manners—hardly surprising in view of his background. Nevertheless, adult Witnesses gained his confidence, and through a personal Bible study, they assisted him with acquiring a new set of values. Eventually he learned he could put his trust in God and in others. The Witnesses helped him ob-



A definitive solution to the problems of the world's children would require superhuman ability. Such a solution only God can provide

A Practical Program to Help the Children

The educational work of Jehovah's Witnesses offers practical and lasting help to children. Some aspects of this program are:

Adult education. This involves a literacy course for parents who cannot read or write, along with extensive Biblical instruction designed to instill values essential for the proper care of children.

Family guidance. The Bible exhorts parents—even those who are desperately poor—to care for *all* their children rather than send some to live with relatives. The book *Making Your Family Life Happy* has proved useful in helping families who have special problems.*

Child involvement and orientation. When

children themselves are involved in education, health care, and sanitation, the results are much better. Witnesses often study the Bible with children, using tailor-made publications such as *My Book of Bible Stories and Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* to assist them in handling problems at home and improving their personal hygiene.*

Instruction in hygiene and health care. Jehovah's Witnesses publish the *Awake!* journal in 74 languages, and this magazine regularly features articles on health care.

Relief work. In times of emergency, Jehovah's Witnesses organize speedy relief operations that provide aid directly at the disaster area.

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tain work, first as a bricklayer's assistant and then as an office boy. Now, several years later, he serves as a full-time Christian minister.

These examples show that a caring society of people can alleviate some of the suffering of the world's children. Of course, Jehovah's Witnesses realize that misfortune will never be entirely remedied by human efforts. A definitive solution to the problems of the world's children would require superhuman ability, limitless resources, and global authority.

"New Heavens" for a Better World

Only God can provide a complete solution. For this reason, Isaiah's prophecy explains that the "new earth" will be accompanied by "new heavens." Several times the Bible promises that "a new heaven" or "new heavens" will be established. (Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1) On each occasion the establishment of these "new heavens" is portrayed as a vital step toward eliminating suffering and bringing righteousness to the earth. What exactly are these "new heavens"?

The Bible often uses the word "heavens" as a synonym for rulership, either by God or by men. (Compare Daniel 4:25, 26.) This new government is a heavenly Kingdom, God's Kingdom—the one that Jesus taught his followers to pray for. (Matthew 6:10) God's Kingdom will have the power to eliminate any misfortune that may threaten the children of the world, and it will be determined to do so.

Why can we be so sure about that? Because a government reflects the personality of its rulers. God's Kingdom, therefore, will govern in harmony with God's standards and those of his Son, Jesus Christ, God's appointed King. Both have displayed a warm interest in the welfare of children.—Psalm 10:14; 68:5; Mark 10:14.

While we eagerly await this promised Kingdom, or "new heavens," we can work toward improving the lot of the children in our neighborhood. As the World Summit for Children rightly concluded: "There can be no task nobler than giving every child a better future."

Neither Magicians nor Gods

AS TOLD BY MERCY UWASI, NIGERIA



THE pain within me started on a sunny, West African afternoon in March 1992. I had gone with my family to our plot of land in order to harvest cassava. While there, the pain began to burn in my belly. By the time we returned home, the pain had become a raging fire. I was vomiting; I had difficulty breathing. Though the pain made it hard for me to stand or walk, my mum managed to put me into a taxi, which then sped to the nearby general hospital.

At the hospital the doctor on call happened to be a man I had once witnessed to about the Bible's hope. The doctor touched my belly; it was swollen. He asked if I had been passing blood, and my mother said yes that I was having my menstrual period.

"Your daughter is five months pregnant," the doctor said. "The reason she is bleeding is that she has attempted an abortion."

Mother countered: "No, Doctor! She is not that kind of girl."

"Don't say that. Girls nowadays deceive their parents. She is pregnant."

Then I spoke up. I said that I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses and had been brought up in a Christian household and that my Bible-trained conscience would not allow me to take part in an immoral act.

In reply the doctor said to my mother: "Madam, let's leave religion aside and be realistic. I tell you that this girl is five months pregnant."

"Get up," Mother said to me. "We're going to another hospital." As we left the building, I sat down on the grass crying because the pain was so bad. Mother rushed me home and told my dad what the doctor had said.

They decided to take me to a bigger and more modern hospital, a teaching hospital. On my way there, I prayed to Jehovah to save me so that people would not reproach his holy name by saying I died as a result of an unwanted pregnancy. I said that if I died, when that doctor would see Jehovah's Witnesses coming to preach to him, he would say: 'Was it not one of your people that came here pregnant some time ago?' I also prayed that I might be able to go back to that doctor and witness to him once more.

"She Is Still a Virgin!"

At the bigger hospital, the same argument that took place in the first hospital reoccurred; the doctors thought I was pregnant. The pain was terrible. I was crying. A doctor spoke harshly, saying: "That is what you girls always do. You get pregnant, then you start shouting."

They did some tests. Meanwhile they started throwing some questions at me. "Are you married?"

"No," I said.

"How old are you?"

"Eighteen."

"How many lovers do you have?"

"I don't have any lovers."

Then the senior doctor began shouting, "What do you mean? Are you telling me that at 18 years of age you don't have any lovers?" Once again, as at the first hospital, I explained my Christian stand. He then asked if I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I said yes. After that, he didn't ask another question.

The tests proved I was not pregnant. Mother heard one of the doctors say to the others: "She is still a virgin!" The doctors apologized, saying: "You can't blame us for thinking what we did. We experience that kind of thing with girls every day." However, that ordeal was only the beginning of my trials.

'You Will Take Blood'

An ultrasound test showed a large growth on one of my Fallopian tubes. It was the size of a small grapefruit. Surgery was needed.

Unhesitatingly I told them that I would not take a blood transfusion although I would agree to alternative fluids. They insisted that blood was a must.

One of the student doctors chided me, saying: "What you say is what one of your members said some time ago. But when his condition worsened, he accepted a blood transfusion."

"My case is different," I answered, "for my yes is yes and my no is no. I will never compromise my integrity."

Later, three doctors visited my bedside inquiring about my stand against blood. I explained that the Bible says Christians should "abstain . . . from blood."—Acts 15:20.

"But you are not going to take it through your mouth," they pleaded. "You will take it through a vein."

I said that it didn't matter whether you take it through the mouth or through a vein, it is still the same thing.

On Saturday, March 14, a week after the pain had started, the head surgeon examined me. He was scheduled to do my operation. By then the swelling extended up to my chest.

He asked, "Have they informed you that you will have to take blood?"

"They told me that, Doctor, but I will not take blood," I answered.

"Let me tell you something," he continued. "You *will* take it. If you don't take it, you will die. On Monday, when I come, if there is no blood ready for you, I will not do the operation. No blood, no operation."

He then saw a book beside my bed and asked, "Is this your Bible?" I said no; it was my copy of *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*.^{*} He said I should use the book to pray that I would not die. I explained that we don't read our prayers from books. Whenever we have a problem, we pray to Jehovah from our heart.

During the next two days, doctors and nurses kept coming to pressure me into submitting to a blood transfusion. They told me I was too young to die. "Take blood and live!" they said.

"Jehovah Is on My Side"

During those times of distress, I read Psalm 118, which says in part: "Out of the distressing circumstances I called upon Jah; Jah answered and put me into a roomy place. Jehovah is on my side; I shall not fear. What can earthling man do to me?"—Psalm 118:5, 6.

After I meditated on these verses, my faith in Jehovah was strengthened. That morning my parents came to the hospital. I showed

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them that psalm, and they felt strengthened in faith too.

Meanwhile, Mother and Daddy not only were supporting my decision not to take blood but were praying for me. Members from my congregation kept on praying and encouraging me from the Scriptures.

"We Are Not Magicians"

On Monday, March 16, the morning the operation was scheduled to take place, one of the doctors came into my room and saw me holding my Medical Directive card, which explains my position on blood transfusion. He said, "What is this? Do you really mean what you've been saying?"

"Yes, I am not going to take blood."

"Well," he said, "that means we are going to cancel your operation. No operation."

The doctor then telephoned my mother from my room. She said: "She's grown up enough to decide for herself. I cannot decide for her. She says her Bible-trained conscience will not allow her to take blood."

With that he threw my records on the table and stormed out of the room. For five hours we heard nothing more. I was in pain and couldn't eat. And there was no other hospital in the area.

Then, to my surprise, a stretcher was brought in to carry me into the operating theater. I was clutching my "No Blood" card. On the way to the theater I saw surgical instru-

ments along with packets of blood. I started weeping profusely, saying that I would not take blood. One of the nurses said that I should drop the card on the floor. She said I could not carry it into the theater. I said I would not enter without the card and that I wanted to show it to the chief surgeon. The nurse then snatched the card from me and took it into the theater and showed it to the surgeon. Immediately the head surgeon and five other doctors dressed in their surgical gowns came out to where I was.

The head surgeon was furious. He called for my mother, pointed to my belly, and said to her: "Look, Madam. We don't know what we will find inside her. If we have to do a lot of cutting, it will lead to severe bleeding. Do you want her to bleed to death?"

In reply Mother said to him: "Doctor, I know that Jehovah will be with the girl. And he will be with you too. Just do the best you can and leave the rest to Jehovah."

The doctor then said: "We are not magicians or herbalists. We live by what we have learned. I cannot do this operation without blood."

My mother again implored him to simply do the best he could. Finally, he agreed to operate without blood. He asked me if I was afraid. In reply I said: "I am not afraid of death. I know Jehovah is with me."

"Continue Serving Your God"

The surgery was performed within an hour. They opened me up and easily removed the tumor, astonishing the hospital staff.

Afterward one of the doctors told Mother that the student doctors talk about my case at night in their quarters. Now when Mother or I go to that hospital, they give us special treatment.

Two days after my operation, the surgeon came into my ward, asked how I was, then said: "You should continue serving your God. He really helped you."

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

He 'Remembered His Creator in the Days of His Youth'

Youths Who Have "Power Beyond What Is Normal"

Put Humor Into Your Life

Are You a Lonely, Melancholy Bird?

IT WOULD not win a beauty competition for birds—either for colors or for sleek design. I have seen the brown ones in Florida, U.S.A., diving to catch their fish like World War II German Stukas.* In Chile they were white, with black wings and bodies. (See photo.) They were resting in a melancholy pose on the rocks in the Pacific at Valparaiso—probably completing their digestion.

It may weigh up to 30 pounds, be over five feet long, and have a wingspan of ten feet. It is one of the largest birds. On land it is ungainly and comical; in flight it is a delight to see, flying with apparently minimal effort. When it feeds, it can scoop up over three gallons of water along with the fish! What is it? It is the pelican.

The pelican is found on lakes and rivers and along coasts in many parts of the world. Its long

beak and huge pouch are perfectly designed for its specialized form of fishing. It plunges into the water, filling its pouch with water and fish. Then it quickly drains out the water and, gulp, down goes the latest snack.

Pelicans are mentioned several times in the Bible. Because of the bird's fondness for lonely, desolate spots, it is used in the Bible as a symbol of utter desolation. (Isaiah 34:11; Zephaniah 2: 13, 14) The Bible encyclopedia *Insight on the Scriptures* states: "When the pelican is gorged with food, it often flies away to a lonely place, where it takes a melancholy posture, with its head sunk on its shoulders . . . The bird assumes this attitude for hours at a time, thus befitting the melancholy inactivity to which the psalmist refers when he illustrates the poignancy of his grief by writing: 'I do resemble the pelican of the wilderness.' (Psalm 102:6)" So if you are ever lonely and melancholy, remember you might also resemble a pelican!—Contributed.

* The Junkers Ju 87 dive bomber with a W-form cranked wing.

Pelicans in Chile.

Inset: Florida brown pelican



CHILE

Unique Country, Unique Convention



THEY came by the thousands and the tens of thousands to Santiago, Chile's capital city. Even in a population of over four million, this influx was clearly noticeable—these visitors all wore blue badges announcing the 1993 "Divine Teaching" Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Over 400 came from faraway Japan; more than 700 from the United States. Over a thousand flocked in by air and road from neighboring Argentina. The daily paper *La Tercera* stated in its postconvention report: "White, brown, 'yellow,' and black faces gave evidence of the distinct races and nations represented in the National Stadium. In addition, men and women from Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Spain, and Japan stood out in their typical dress." Delegates came from Australia, Belgium, Britain, Canada, France,

Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Paraguay, and most of the other South American countries. Over 4,500 foreign visitors streamed into Santiago the week of November 15, 1993. Then to cap it all, there were the 30,000 Chilean Witnesses who traveled great distances to get to Santiago. Why was that?

Chile—A Unique Country

You see, in the geographic sense, Chile is a very special country. What makes it distinctive and unique? Take a look at the map and you will see a country that is more than 2,680 miles long and yet less than 270 miles at its widest point. In fact its average width is just over 110 miles. The capital, Santiago, is about in the middle of the country. These factors mean that many Chilean Witnesses had to travel hundreds of miles with their families

to get to the international convention—and this with limited economic means in many cases. Yet they arrived by the thousands, their faces wreathed in smiles.

Chile is a land of rich variety, from the arid Atacama Desert in the north to the lush vineyards of the region around Santiago and on down to the south where the forested Andes decline into the Pacific. Finally, there are the glaciers and fjords that end at the Antarctica region.

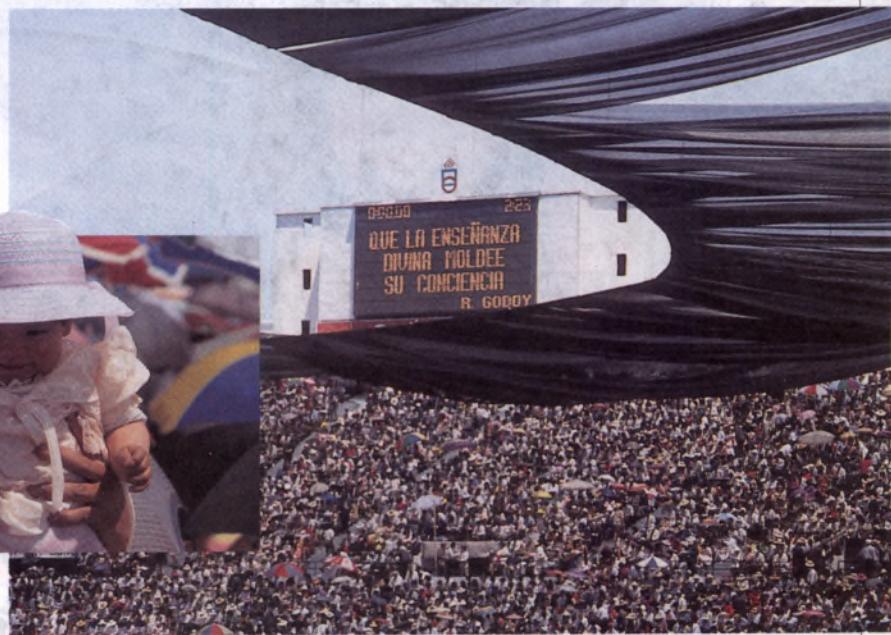
Foreign visitors were fascinated by the city of Santiago. One delegate put it this way: "The impression was one of constant hustle and bustle, and yet the people were kind and friendly. I had never in my life seen so many buses on a street. Dozens of bus companies vie for customers. Small taxis were hurrying everywhere. The one negative factor was the pollution. To alleviate it, Santiago has rules whereby cars take turns to be off the streets one day a week, rotating by the number of their car license plate." He added: "Another

interesting feature was the neatly dressed schoolchildren, all in school uniform, without exception. There was certainly no competition and peer pressure there to have the latest designer clothing and sneakers! And none looked sloppy."

Warm Welcome for Foreign Visitors

The "Divine Teaching" program opened on Thursday, November 18. The foreign delegates were in for a surprise when they arrived at the Estadio Nacional soccer stadium. For the 300-yard walk from their buses to the stadium, they threaded their way through a tightly packed avenue of Chilean Witnesses—men, women, and children—all wanting to welcome the visiting brothers and shake their hands. Many had even learned simple phrases in English in order to say: "Welcome to Chile!" Over the next four days, many friendships were formed in spite of language barriers. Cameras and video recorders were working overtime. Souvenirs, names, and addresses were exchanged by the thousand.

**Over 80,000
attended the
convention
in Santiago**





Overwhelming Numbers

The potential audience peak for this convention had seemed to be about 60,000—the 44,000 Chilean Witnesses, the 4,500 visitors, and then the interested ones. Imagine the surprise when the attendance for Thursday and for Friday was already well over 50,000. On Saturday the crowd swelled from 67,865 in the morning to 70,418 in the afternoon. On Sunday morning, when the program included a drama dealing with some of the problems facing Witnesses today, the attendance peaked at 80,981! The stadium was filled to capacity, and hundreds more were listening to loudspeakers outside. This was one of the factors that made the convention unique—the largest attendance of all the conventions held across the world in the “Divine Teaching” series. It was a surprise for the Chilean Witnesses and an indication of the potential for their congregations to grow and increase in the immediate future.

The electronic scoreboard was used to announce each talk in Spanish and English. It even indicated when the audience was applauding! At the conclusion it displayed farewell greetings in several languages, including Dutch, French, German, and Japanese.

Baptism Attracts the Media

Such a spectacular event could not be ignored by the Chilean media. The coverage each day by the press, radio, and television was excellent. This was especially so for the mass baptism that was held on Saturday. Twelve small pools had been set up at one end of the soccer field. During the baptism talk, hundreds of candidates stood up to signify their decision to follow the example of Christ by serving Jehovah God. After the talk, the prayer, and the song, 24 ministers in white shorts and T-shirts took their position, two at each pool. Female assistants also came out to help. Then the first candidates emerged from

the changing rooms and walked onto the field, men on one side, women on the other. It seemed like two endless lines wending their way toward the pools. Everything was orderly as press photographers also took up their positions. Within an hour the baptism was completed—1,282 new Witnesses, Christian ministers, had been immersed in water, following the example set by Jesus.

A Colorful Farewell

The weather had been excellent all through the week. This was, after all, the Chilean springtime, when no rain is expected. Sunday saw the temperature rise into the 80's. Nearly every family brought umbrellas and parasols as a protection against the blazing sun. The thousands of colorful parasols reminded one of a host of butterflies posing on flowers. The final talk concluded at about five o'clock. After the song and prayer, hardly anyone moved. Nobody wanted the convention to end. Groups broke into spontaneous singing of Kingdom songs; waves of applause spread from one end of the stadium to the other; handkerchiefs were waved and parasols twirled in unison. It was a moving scene—this stadium with its backdrop of the Andes Mountains—full of happy, loving Christians grateful for the “Divine Teaching” that had changed their lives.

During the Sunday program, two large Chilean birds, *queltehues*, or southern lapwings, wandered across the field, occasionally feeding on some insect or seed. From time to time they interrupted the program with their raucous calls. During the final talk, as if they sensed the program had concluded, they slowly lifted off, circled to gain altitude, and flew away. No doubt they will return, even as Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to return to that stadium another year to share their joy and faith—in Chile, *un país singular*, a unique country.

Young People Ask...



How Can I Lose Weight?

BEING fat is the single most horrible thing that could happen in a teenage boy's life." So lamented a teenage boy named Judd. If you are overweight, you may know just how he feels.

However, excess body fat can do you far more harm than simply detracting from your appearance. Obesity can put you at risk for a host of health hazards—joint problems, respiratory ailments, and diabetes, as well as killers such as heart disease and colon cancer that can afflict you later in life.*

Of course, if you are a bit on the stout side,

* About 80 percent of obese youths remain obese as adults.

this does not necessarily mean you need to lose weight. Some of us have simply inherited a stocky build; we look heavier than we'd prefer even at our ideal weight.* But if your doctor has determined that you have more body fat than is healthy, a number of other factors may be involved. Says the book *The Healthy Adolescent*: "Malfunction of endocrine glands such as the pancreas, thyroid, and adrenals has . . . been associated with obesity in some people."

Overeating, Underexercising

In many cases, obesity is simply the result of poor nutritional habits and a lack of exercise. Young Judd recalls: "Since my mother had to go to work to support us, my brother and I . . . fed ourselves. We ate packs of candy bars, washing them down with two-liter bottles of [soda]." Sound familiar?

For other youths, though, eating is not so much about hunger as it is about satisfying a need for nurturing and comfort. Such youths may overeat in a misguided attempt to alleviate stress, such as parental divorce, the death of a loved one, or some other trauma.

The problem of overeating is often aggravated by a lack of exercise. *A Parent's Guide to Eating Disorders and Obesity* observes: "Television not only requires physical inactivity, but its program content and advertisements also promote eating . . . and eating . . . and more eating."

The Snare of Starvation Dieting

Some claim that 1 out of every 4 Americans is on a diet of some sort. Yet, over 90 percent of the people who lose weight by dieting gain it back. What goes wrong?

Your body is like a furnace; your brain is the thermostat. When you eat, your metabolism burns the food to release its energy.

* See "Young People Ask . . . Why Am I So Fat?" in the April 22, 1994, issue of *Awake!*

When more fuel is taken in than the body needs, it is stored as fat. Now, if you starve yourself to shed pounds, you will lose weight—initially. But your body quickly shifts into ‘crisis mode’ and lowers your thermostat by slowing down your metabolism. You begin gaining weight again, even on a starvation diet, and much of what you eat is stored as fat. You gain back every pound you lost and then some. In frustration, you go on another diet. But the more you lose—the more you gain.

So you can see why diet gimmicks simply do not work. Diet pills may curb your appetite for a while, but the body quickly adjusts to them and your appetite returns. Or your metabolism slows down and you gain weight anyway. Not to mention the side effects some have experienced, such as dizziness, high blood pressure, anxiety attacks, and addiction. The same can be said for pills that eliminate water or that speed up your metabolism. Dr. Lawrence Lamb bluntly puts it this way: “There is no such thing as a safe, effective pill to cause you to lose body fat.”

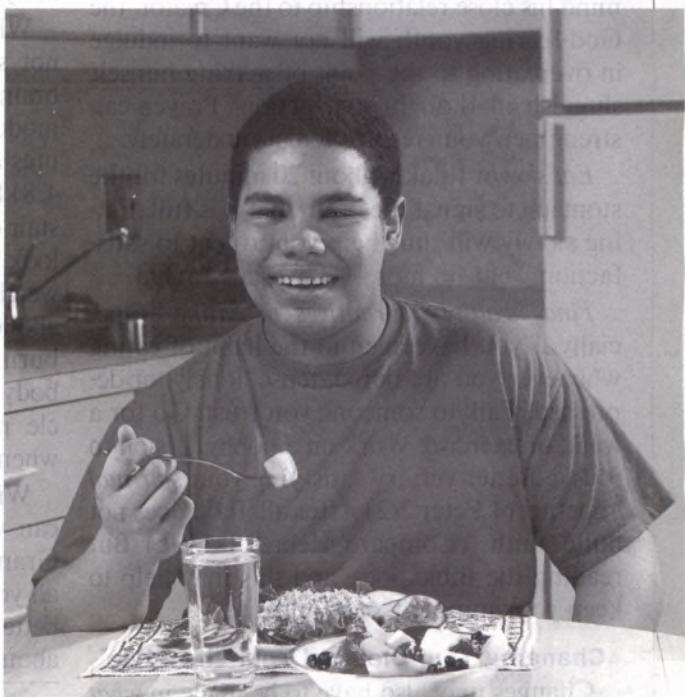
As a young person, your body needs a fairly hefty dose of calories and nutrients every day. A starvation diet can literally stunt your growth. Consider, too, what the Bible says about King Saul at 1 Samuel 28:20: “There happened to be no power in him, because he had not eaten food the whole day and the whole night.” Similarly, according to one physician, youths who try to starve themselves can suffer “fatigue, . . . depression,

chilliness, poorer performance in school, constipation, anxiety, amenorrhea [abnormal suppression or absence of menstruation], and mental sluggishness.”

Safe Weight Loss

The safe way to lose weight begins with a thorough checkup by your family physician. He can check for any health problems that might defeat a simple diet plan. He can also help you set a reasonable weight-loss goal and plan a strategy to meet that goal within a reasonable time frame.

The Bible says: “With a man there is nothing better than that he should eat and indeed drink and cause his soul to see good because of his hard work.” (Ecclesiastes 2:24) So a diet that deprives you of the joy of eating is not likely to work in the long run. Besides, it is *overeating* that the Bible condemns.



**Exercise and balanced,
nutritious meals are the key to
safe weight loss**

(Proverbs 23:20, 21) Here, then, are a few suggestions to help you to be "moderate in habits" in your eating.—1 Timothy 3:11.

Don't skip breakfast! "Hunger and a feeling of deprivation get the best of you," warns *The New Teenage Body Book*. "You'll tend to load up on food—and calories—late in the day."

Drink a large glass of water before each meal. This will fill your stomach. Drinking adequate amounts of water also appears to play a role in reducing body-fat deposits. Doctors therefore recommend drinking at least eight glasses of water a day.

Don't eat and watch TV. Says Dr. Seymour Isenberg: "If you are busy watching TV . . . , you [can] begin eating like a machine."

Pray before you eat. Remember: "God created [foods] to be partaken of with thanksgiving by those who have faith and accurately know the truth." (1 Timothy 4:3) Keeping in mind his close relationship to the Creator, the God-fearing youth will not want to indulge in overeating to the point of making himself sluggish in thought and action. Prayer can strengthen your resolve to eat moderately.

Eat slowly. It takes about 20 minutes for the stomach to signal the brain that it is full. Eating slowly will thus help you to "eat to satisfaction," but no more!—Leviticus 25:19.

Find healthy alternatives to eating—especially if you have been in the habit of eating whenever you are bored, tense, lonely, or depressed. Talk to someone you trust. Go for a walk, or exercise. Work on a hobby. Listen to music. Better yet, try satisfying your *spiritual* appetite. (1 Peter 2:2) After all, food does not build faith. (Compare Hebrews 13:9.) But reading the Bible does, and this may help to keep your mind off your appetite.

Changing Your Diet and Your Life-Style

Changes may also have to be made in *what* you have been eating. The Mosaic Law pro-

hibited the eating of fat. (Leviticus 3:16, 17) Although this was for religious reasons, avoiding fatty foods—such as cheeseburgers or foods fried in fat—makes good dietary sense. Sugary soft drinks and pastries are likewise low in nutrition and high in calories. And though a lot of salt on a lean piece of beef may taste great, it causes your body to retain water.

Most dietitians agree that enjoying a little of your favorite foods once in a while won't hurt you. But if you really want to lose weight, you must develop a taste for healthier foods such as fruits, nuts, whole grains, and vegetables. "Eat a variety of foods to keep from getting bored," recommends one dietitian. You don't do the cooking in your family? Then talk to your mom and see if she can help. Really, the whole family will benefit if healthy changes are made in the daily menu.

While eating right is important, you will not shed pounds unless you turn up your brain's "thermostat." How? By engaging in moderate aerobic exercise for about 20 minutes at least three times a week. (1 Timothy 4:8) Something as simple as a brisk walk or stair climbing may suffice. Exercise helps you look leaner and trimmer no matter what your weight or body type. As it turns up your metabolic furnace, you burn calories, and you burn fat. Through exercise you can alter your body chemistry. You can increase your muscle mass, and muscles burn calories even when you're sleeping!

With persistence and determination, you can win your battle against excess weight.* Granted, losing a few pounds will not solve all your problems, but you may look and feel better. You may even begin to feel better about yourself.

* Individuals with serious eating disorders may need professional help to cope with their distress.

The Fascinating Search for New Medicines



What do rubber, cocoa, cotton, and painkillers have in common? All may be obtained from plants. In addition to sugar and oxygen made by means of photosynthesis, green plants also produce an extraordinary array of substances from other basic chemical building blocks. These secondary chemicals are what give each plant its distinctive properties.

By Awake!
correspondent
in Britain

THE sting of a nettle, the sharp flavor of an apple, and the delicate fragrance of a rose are all due to different combinations of chemical substances manufactured by the plants themselves. Thus, what might seem

to be a single product is in fact often a very complex mixture.

Nature's Chemical Factories

Consider the characteristic smell of cocoa. Did you know that scientists have so far discovered 84 different volatile chemicals that combine to make up this unique aroma? The contents of cacao beans are extremely complex, and much effort has been expended in recent years to identify them. And that is just *one* natural product.

Cholesterol is a fatty substance, perhaps best known for its possible connection with human heart disease. Yet, in some plants it is the starting point for making a vital group of chemicals called steroids. Steroids include vitamin D, hormones (such as cortisone), and medicines such as the anti-inflammatory betamethasone. Diosgenin, a steroid used in the manufacture of oral contraceptives, is produced by certain types of wild yam. Cortisone, on the other hand, is manufactured from hecogenin, a natural steroid extracted from sisal leaf pulp after fiber making. Many of today's new drugs were first isolated from plant tissue.

Plants and Man

Although man's use of synthetic drugs is a modern medical development, plant extracts have been used as cures for common ills for thousands of years. Early Assyrian records describe the use of the common anemone to alleviate pain. And Egyptian medical papyri from the time of the Pharaohs reveal a widespread use of medicinal plants.

The World Health Organization has recorded the use of about 20,000 medicinal plants worldwide. In Britain alone an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 tons of herbs are used annually as ingredients in some 5,500 different herbal products, and in the United States, it has been reckoned that over half of all doctors' prescriptions are for medicines derived from plants.

Finding New Medicines

With as many as 250,000 known species of plants in the world, each possessing a potentially unique chemistry, scientists constantly look for clues to find useful medicines. One of the obvious ways is to study how people treat ailments using plants growing in their locality.

The discovery of cocaine started with the observation that chewing coca leaves deadened hunger pangs and eased fatigue. By isolating and modifying the structure of the cocaine molecule, chemists produced a synthetic derivative for use as a local anesthetic. If your dentist has given you an injection to "freeze" part of your jaw to save you from a painful experience, then you may well have benefited from this research.

Much valuable information on the use of plants is still filed away in botanical collections. Scientists who spent over four years examining 2.5 million specimens in the Gray

Ginger is being used as an antidote to motion sickness



Herbarium and Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University were able to pinpoint more than 5,000 plant species previously overlooked as potential sources of medicines.

Another line of inquiry compares the chemical contents of plants. If one species contains useful compounds, related species may also be valuable. When work on a north Australian tree, the Moreton Bay chestnut, isolated castanospermine, a poison displaying antiviral activity, botanists searching for related trees suggested looking at the South American *Alexa*.

Anticancer Research

Sometimes clues can be misleading and then yield unexpected results. It was claimed, for example, that extracts from the Madagascar periwinkle could treat diabetes. Canadian research workers began testing it, but to their surprise the periwinkle extract suppressed the immune system by lowering production of white blood cells. This gave doctors the idea of testing the extract against leukemia, a cancer of the white blood cells.

Eventually about 90 substances were isolated, of which two, known as vincristine and vinblastine, proved medically useful. They are present in the plant in such small amounts that about one ton of plant material is needed to produce .07 ounces of vincristine. Today these compounds and their derivatives provide a chemotherapy used worldwide in the treatment of childhood leukemia.

In the late 1950's, the U.S. National Cancer Institute initiated a 25-year screening program, during which 114,000 plant extracts from 40,000 species were tested for antitumor activity on cancer cultures. About 4,500 of these produced a noticeable effect, worthy of further study. But consultant pharmacognostist Dr. W. C. Evans points out: "It is highly unlikely that broad-spectrum anticancer drugs will actually be found" as a direct result of such research, important as it is. Cancers

vary enormously, and only a few fast-growing cancer-cell cultures were used in these tests.

New Medicines From Old Plants

Well-known plants are providing researchers with more food for thought. Ginger, for example, is now being used as an antiemetic, particularly effective against motion sickness.* More significantly, ginger could prove to be valuable in relieving sufferers of the tropical parasitic disease schistosomiasis (bilharzia). Tests on infected schoolchildren in Nigeria, using tablets of ginger powder, have stopped the occurrence of blood in their urine and lowered the schistosome egg count.

Researchers have hardly begun the task of examining the vegetable kingdom in the search for more medicines. Even those plants relatively well-known still retain many secrets. Licorice is now in demand since chemicals discovered in it are effective anti-inflammatory agents and their derivatives can give relief to some persons who suffer from arthritis. Scientists are also looking at the common garden pea for antifungal and antimicrobial effects.

The wanton destruction of plant species in certain areas of the world, before those plants have been recorded, means that the search for new medicines must continue on apace. Careful chemical analysis of plants and their genetic conservation remains a top priority, even for plants that are well-known. But there is one puzzle still to be solved: Of what use are many of these extraordinary chemicals to the plants themselves? Why, for example, does the purslane plant produce such a high concentration of noradrenaline, a hormone found to be essential to human welfare?

Really, our knowledge of the complexities of plant life is still extremely limited. But what we do know points to an overall design, with credit to a Grand Designer.

* See page 31 of the July 22, 1982, issue of *Awake!*

Is It Wrong to Grieve?

"I FIRMLY BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION HOPE, AND I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO EXPRESS MY GRIEF IN FRONT OF OTHERS AND THAT I WOULD THEREBY GIVE THEM REASON TO DOUBT THAT I HAD SUCH A FIRM HOPE. I THOUGHT THAT IF I REALLY BELIEVED IN THE RESURRECTION, I WOULDN'T FEEL THE LOSS SO DEEPLY."

—CHARLENE, A BAPTIZED CHRISTIAN FOR OVER 21 YEARS.

WHEN someone you love dies, feelings and attitudes may surface that you did not expect—fear, anger, guilt, and depression. For the Christian the Bible's heartwarming promise of a resurrection of the dead to life on a paradise earth under God's Kingdom rule can help to cushion the blow. (John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15; Revelation 21:1-4) But as Charlene's words indicate, when a loved one dies, some Christians carry an unnecessary burden—the feeling that it is wrong to mourn, that grieving somehow reveals a lack of faith in the Bible's promise of a resurrection.

What, though, does the Bible say about grieving? Is it wrong to mourn when a loved one dies?

They Grieved

The faith of Abraham is well-known. When put to the test, Abraham "as good as offered up [his son] Isaac." (Hebrews 11:17; Genesis 22:9-13) Evidently, no one had ever been resurrected before his time, but Abraham had faith

that, if need be, "God was able to raise [his son] up even from the dead." (Hebrews 11:19) About 12 years after Abraham's faith was tested, his wife, Sarah, died. How did that man of faith react? The Bible explains that he "came in to bewail Sarah and to weep over her."^{*} (Genesis 23:2) Yes, the man who had faith that God could resurrect the dead grieved openly. Still, Abraham is cited as an outstanding example of faith.—Hebrews 11:8-10.

One of the most touching examples of openly grieving the loss of a loved one was Jesus Christ himself. Concerning the death of Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus, we read: "Mary, when she arrived where Jesus was and caught sight of him, fell at his feet, saying to him:

* Regarding the Hebrew word rendered "bewail," the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* states: "All who sensed the loss of the departed would come to share their grief with the members of the family. . . . Shriek cries or loud wailing often accompanied the mourning." Concerning the Hebrew word for "weep," the same work explains: "Whereas tears are associated with the eyes, weeping is associated with the voice; Semites do not weep quietly, but aloud. . . . Throughout the O[ld] T[estament] weeping is the natural and spontaneous expression of strong emotion."



Jean-Baptiste Greuze, detail from *Le fils puni*, Louvre; © Photo R.M.N.

'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' Jesus, therefore, when he saw her weeping and the Jews that came with her weeping, groaned in the spirit and became troubled; and he said: 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him: 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus gave way to tears."—John 11:32-35.

It is truly heartwarming to note that the perfect Son of God was not ashamed to grieve openly. The original-language word rendered "gave way to tears" (*da-kry'o*) means "to shed tears quietly." What is so remarkable is that Jesus had previously resurrected two persons—the son of the widow of Nain and the daughter of Jairus—and he fully intended to resurrect Lazarus. (Luke 7:11-15; 8:41, 42, 49-55; compare John 11:11.) Moments earlier he had told Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life." (John 11:25) Yet, such deep emotion seized Jesus that his eyes brimmed over with tears.

There is something even more profoundly important. Jesus is "the exact representation of his [Jehovah's] very being." (Hebrews 1:3) Jesus' tender and deep feelings upon losing a loved one in death therefore paint a touching picture of our heavenly Father, Jehovah. They portray a God whose heart is wrung with anguish for the grief of his servants.—Compare Psalm 56:8.

Clearly, then, it is not wrong to grieve when someone you love dies. Abraham bewailed the death of Sarah. Jesus sorrowed openly when Lazarus died. Jehovah God understands our pain because "he cares" for us.—1 Peter 5:7.

What, though, about the Christian hope? Does it make a difference?

'Not Sorrowing as the Rest Do'

When some in the first-century Christian congregation in Thessalonica grieved over the loss of fellow believers, the apostle Paul sought to comfort them. He wrote: "Moreover, brothers, we do not want you to be igno-

rant concerning those who are sleeping in death; that you may not sorrow just as the rest also do who have no hope." (1 Thessalonians 4:13) Yes, those who have confidence in God's promise to raise the dead are far better off than those who do not have the resurrection hope.* How so?

In the face of death, those without the resurrection hope stand in despair. Even if they claim to believe in some kind of an afterlife, few draw any real consolation from this. For many others, their sorrow is caused not only by the fact that their loved ones are separated from them by death but from the fact that for them the separation is permanent. With no clear understanding of a resurrection, they bury their hopes when they bury their loved ones; as far as they are concerned, they will never see them again.—Compare 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 32.

It is different, however, for true Christians. Death, Paul explained, is like sleep—not only because it is an unconscious state that resembles a deep sleep but also because it is possible to be awakened from it by means of a resurrection. (Psalm 13:3; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) That Bible-based hope makes a difference.

When he loses a loved one in death, the Christian feels as keenly as unbelievers do the vanished fellowship, the loss of a familiar face, the absence of a beloved voice. The resurrection hope does not make the heart unfeeling. It does, however, temper or balance the mourning. No, that hope does not eliminate the need to grieve, but it can make the pain far easier to bear.

* The first-century Christians to whom Paul wrote had the hope of a resurrection to heaven where they would serve as corollers with Christ. (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; compare Luke 22:29, 30.) Paul thus encouraged them to comfort one another with the hope that at Christ's presence faithful ones among them who had died would be resurrected and would be united with Christ and with one another. For the vast majority of those who die, however, the Bible holds out the hope of a resurrection into a restored earthly paradise.—John 5:28, 29; Revelation 21:1-4.

WATCHING THE WORLD

High Court Rules In Favor of One of Jehovah's Witnesses

Four years ago one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Florida, U.S.A., lost a significant amount of blood while giving birth to a child by cesarean section. Her doctors felt that they had to transfuse blood in order to save her life. The patient refused to consent to the use of blood on the basis of her values and religious convictions. In an emergency hearing, a local trial court ruled that the patient could be transfused against her will as deemed necessary by her attending physicians. A principal argument was that in the event of the patient's death, her children would be deprived of her care and protection. This ruling was upheld by a Florida District Court of Appeal. Finally, the case reached the Supreme Court of Florida. That court ruled in favor of the Witness, setting aside the decisions made by the two previous courts, although too late to prevent the unwanted transfusions. The Florida high court stated that parenthood "in and of itself, does not deprive one of living in accord with one's own beliefs." Thus, the court strongly endorsed the patient's right of bodily self-determination and religious freedom.

A Growing Language

Over 330 million persons speak Spanish today. By the year 2000, the number of Hispanics in the United States alone will reach the 35 million mark. By that year Spanish will surpass English and become the most spoken language in the Western world. Thus states the Spanish magazine *Cambio16 América*. The Instituto Cervantes,

an organization for the spreading of the Spanish language, reported a 70-percent increase in the number of persons learning Spanish in the United States between 1986 and 1990, and an 80-percent increase in Japan. Why is there so much interest in this language? The director of the Instituto Cervantes says that people are realizing that Spanish is becoming more and more important in the Western world. Spanish has an additional advantage: It is spoken in many different countries.

Hot-Pepper Enthusiasts

More and more people are eating hot peppers. Many who dislike them believe that hot peppers only overwhelm the natural tastes of food. But hot-pepper enthusiasts claim that nothing could be further from the truth. According to *Reader's Digest* magazine, a recent book on peppers explains that hot



peppers contain an odorless chemical substance that blends in with the sensory cells in the mouth and sensitizes them to the flavor of the food. Some claim that hot peppers are also good for your health. A raw pepper contains more vitamin C than an orange. The hottest known pepper is the *habanero* from Yucatán, Mexico. It has been said that eating *habaneros* makes you feel like your head has been separated from the rest of

your body. But some would not have it any other way.

Sexually Active Children

A recent survey conducted among grade school students in Connecticut, U.S.A., revealed that 28 percent of sixth graders are sexually active. The ratio went up to 49 percent among eighth graders, and more than 60 percent among tenth graders. Some experts believe that a significant number of even younger children are engaging in sexual activity. To prevent pregnancies among teenage girls and the spread of AIDS, the U.S. Surgeon General recommends that "schools should hand out condoms" to students, according to *USA Weekend* magazine. Some 50 school districts in the United States have followed this recommendation. One school district in New Haven, Connecticut, is offering the condoms to children as young as ten years old. Opponents of this program maintain that the distribution of condoms to children encourages them to have sex.

Young Problem Drinkers

In a survey of some 14,000 high school students in Japan, 17.3 percent were considered problem drinkers, reports *Asahi Evening News*. Among the boys the ratio was higher, with 24.8 percent having drinking habits that cause psychological, physical, and social problems. More than half of these young problem drinkers said they drink because they like the taste. One out of 4 said he drinks because he is sad or lonely. "The time has come for those involved with the students to begin seriously addressing the problem," says Dr. Kenji Suzuki, who conducted

the survey. "The students must be taught properly at school and at home," he added. In Japan the law prohibits drinking by those under the age of 20.

Training Grounds for Criminals

Those who think that most prisoners start out as "extremely dangerous bandits" are fooling themselves, says Brazilian lawyer Noely Manfredini D'Almeida. Rather, she asserts, in Brazil the "typical prisoner is a very poor and very young person who went into crime without having a chance to begin a life of his own." These young offenders are thrown into prison to live with hardened criminals. According to *Veja* magazine, these prisons are in reality "machines that produce outlaws. Prisoners with minor offenses are transformed into professional criminals."

Casualties of Victory

Recently Colombia celebrated the victory of its soccer team as it qualified for the 1994 World Cup soccer tournament. Right after the victorious game in which the Colombian national team defeated the Argentinean team by a score of 5 to 0, Colombians took to the streets in a frenzy of festivities. Soon joy turned into tragedy. More than 70 persons were killed during the street parties, according to one report. Also, about 900 persons were injured because of car accidents, drunkenness, or fights. However, one official stated that although the number of casualties is considerable, it is still "quite normal in situations like this."

Little Concern for Health

"More than a third of all office workers in Germany show no in-

terest in their own health," reports the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. This was the conclusion reached by Claudia Pohle of the Ruhr University in Bochum after asking 343 office workers what they do for their physical, emotional, and social well-being. More than 36 percent of the participants showed little concern for their health; less than 20 percent showed keen, but only short-term interest in the latest trend in exercise. A mere 20 percent were aware of what they needed to do in order to stay healthy, and they behaved accordingly.

The Problem of Obesity

"America is the fattest country in the world," claims Dr. Robert Kushner, director of the University of Chicago's Nutrition and Weight Control Clinic. "The number of obese Americans over age 17 jumped to 28 per cent of the population in 1990 from 24 per cent in 1985," reports *The Toronto Star*. What is the cause? New research suggests overeating, lack of



exercise, and genetics to be the primary reasons. "People are getting heavier, and that is a matter of considerable concern," says Charlotte Schoenborn of the National Centre for Health Statistics. Obesity can trigger high blood pressure, diabetes, and other serious health problems. Finding answers is not easy. Doctors suggest a change in life-style. "Eat less and exercise more. Once weight is lost, the only thing that really helps to

keep it off is physical activity," adds the *Star*.

Abused Children

"Violence against children is reaching dramatic levels," reports Brazilian newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*. When it comes to nonsexual aggression, the percentage of victimized boys is about the same as that of girl victims. But this is not the case with sexual abuse. Among the young victims of sexual violence, about 23 percent are male while 77 percent are female. Not even small children escape domestic violence. According to Miriam Mesquita, professor at the University of São Paulo, "more than 30 percent of the homicide victims under 10 years old are murdered by family members." About 29 percent of the children murdered by a father, an uncle, a brother, or a stepfather were raped before dying. *O Estado de S. Paulo* reports that in Brazil about 90 percent of all cases of domestic violence against children go unreported.

Organized Crime

"Organized crime has expanded its influence in such an alarming way that a widespread network of criminal organizations is present all over the world," claims Gianni De Gennaro, the director of anti-Mafia activities for the Italian government. The expansion of criminal groups such as the Italian Mafia, Chinese triads, North American motorcycle gangs, and the criminal class of former Communist lands is a matter of real concern to society. Illegal profits permit the criminals to afford the best technology and expertise, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to cope with the problem.

FROM OUR READERS

Holidays Upon finishing the series "Holidays—Why Some Children Do Not Celebrate Them" in the November 22, 1993, *Awake!*, I found tears of joy streaming down my face. I was raised as one of Jehovah's Witnesses and had the same feelings as many of the children quoted. I want to commend our young ones for being such fine examples! As a parent, I am encouraged to know that many children want to please Jehovah at such young ages.

T. K., United States

I am nine, and I never knew that Halloween was so gross and disgusting. I don't feel I'm missing out.

A. C., United States

When I was a child, I used to long for Christmas and Easter. But I now understand that these are pagan festivals and that it would be useless simply to follow tradition. The explanation given was complete and comprehensive.

S. L. P., Germany

I was raised as a Witness from the time I was 6 years old, and now I'm in my early 30's. Many people thought that my brother, my sisters, and I were deprived. I explained to them that we received gifts all year round and that our parents freely gave of their time and of themselves. We did many things together. My father was also faithful in having our weekly family Bible study. That was the best spiritual gift! I never resented not celebrating the holidays.

D. Y., United States

I am 14 years old and I can relate to what was said. I am thankful this article was published. It strengthened me to know that other young people are taking a stand for the truth.

C. A., United States

I don't feel I am missing anything by not celebrating holidays. My family gives me gifts and gives me money as I need it. I have some of the same toys that other kids my age [12] enjoy.

L. C., United States

This article was an answer to many prayers. You don't really understand the joys and fears of child rearing until you have a pair of tear-filled eyes staring up at you that seem to ask why someone made fun of her. Our daughter started kindergarten this year, and although we looked up information about the holidays, it was still difficult for her. We prayed every night for her to be strong and courageous at school. Then the *Awake!* articles came. She can read at a seventh-grade level, so all I had to do was give it to her to read. Her heart became courageous as she read the expressions of other children and saw their pictures. The very next day she placed a copy with her teacher.

G. M., United States

Some of the kids at school were teasing me because I didn't celebrate the holidays, so I made copies of the magazine and gave some to them. I'm sure the teasing will stop because now they know I'm not deprived.

K. H., United States

Coach Safari When I'm feeling low, sometimes I sew and listen to my *Awake!* cassettes. I was truly amazed at how the article "A Coach Safari to the Center of Australia" lifted my spirits. (June 8, 1993) I seemed to be there, sharing the joys and excitement that these travelers were enjoying. Thank you so very much.

A. W., United States



Perfect Little Housekeepers

By Awake! correspondent in South Africa

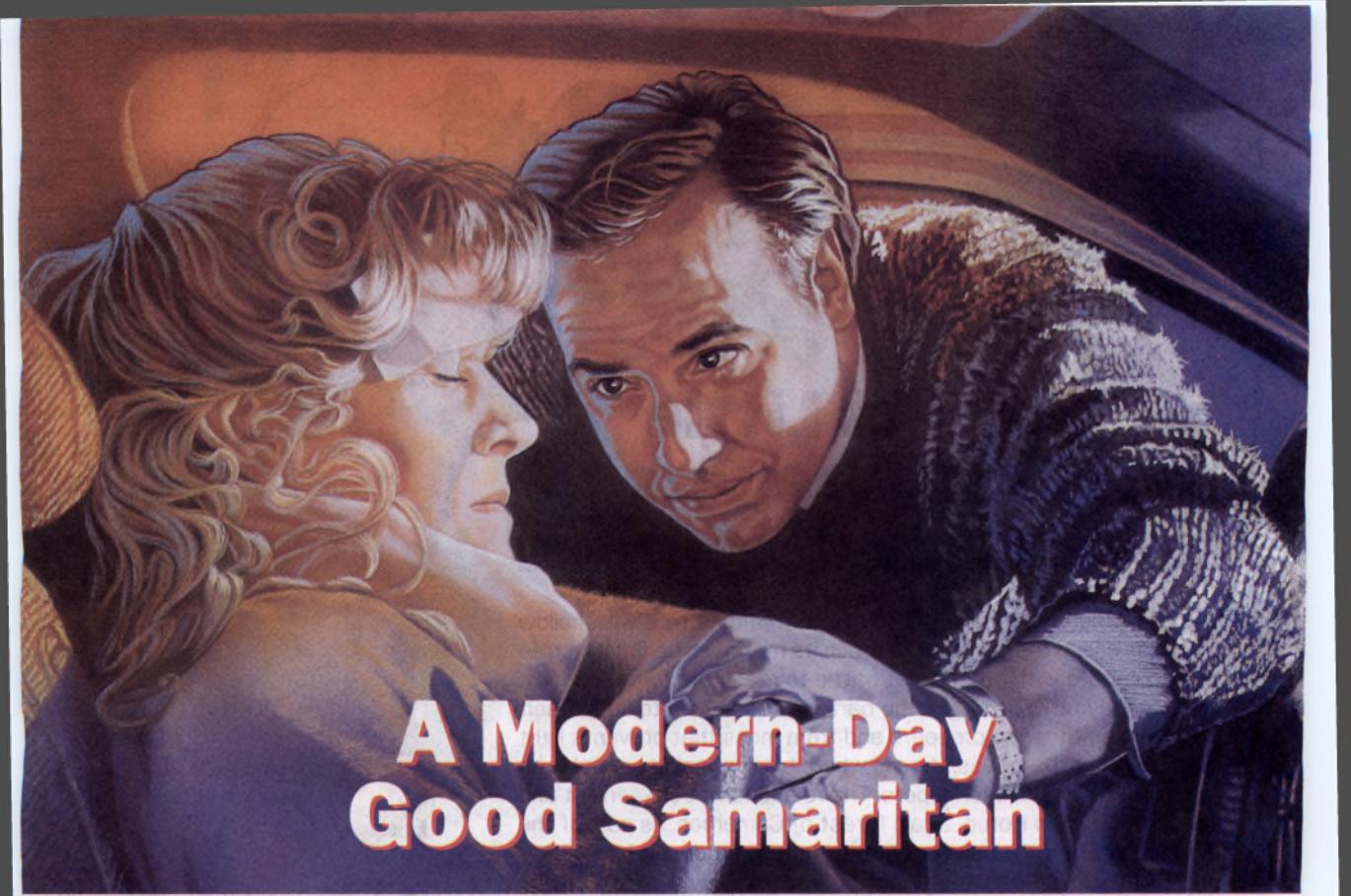
GAPS in African rain forests are often filled by a tree with hollow branches called the barteria. To reach its maximum height, the tree must compete with others that battle to reach the forest canopy. To succeed in this struggle, the barteria needs help to keep itself free from smothering creepers and from moss that prevents light from reaching the leaves. Here is where black stinging ants play an important role as housekeepers. The relationship between ant and tree was filmed in Korup, a rain forest of Cameroon, as part of the TV documentary *African Rainforest: Korup*, produced by Phil Agland and Michael Rosenberg.

The documentary shows a new queen ant seeking out a barteria tree. Instinctively, she knows that its hollow branches are the ideal place to establish her colony. After boring a hole in a branch, she lays her eggs inside. The hollow branches are also home to tiny scale insects that feed on the tree's sap. The ants care for these insects like livestock and milk them to obtain a nourishing drink.

As soon as the ant colony is large enough, it starts evicting other residents and cleaning up the tree. How fascinating to watch these brilliant little housekeepers! Some descend to the bottom of the tree and attack creepers that threaten to smother it. They gnaw right through the stems and thus kill the creepers. Other ants can be seen clearing the leaves of debris, moss, and lichen. Even a caterpillar found hidden underneath a leaf is evicted.

"Meticulously," explains the TV documentary, "the ants clean up every piece of debris. Cleared of all damaging insects and creepers, the barteria can now compete effectively with other trees, protected by its ants. In return, the ants can use barteria's hollow branches to tend their scale insects—their only source of food—and raise their young."

What industrious workers these ants are! An ancient proverb says: "Go to the ant, you lazy one; see its ways and become wise."—Proverbs 6:6.



A Modern-Day Good Samaritan

A WOMAN in Canada suffered an automobile accident. A modern-day Good Samaritan came to her aid. (Luke 10: 29-37) Moved by his kindness, she wrote the following to *The Georgetown Independent*:

'Dear Editor:

'I am writing for two reasons. First, I wish to thank a Georgetown resident who assisted me this past weekend after I lost control of my car and crashed into a ditch.

'Mr. John Saunders was driving by and stopped. He started first aid and was very reassuring. He stayed with me until the ambulance drivers and police took over. Your community is blessed in having a Good Samaritan like Mr. Saunders living in your community.

'Mr. Saunders came to visit my husband

and me in the hospital, just to make sure I was all right. I was shocked to find out that Mr. Saunders works at the head office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Georgetown. I always thought that those people did not believe in medicine, and here one of them had used first aid medical training in my behalf. This brings me to the second reason for writing.

'I would like to apologize to all of Jehovah's Witnesses for the rudeness that I have shown them when they have called at my door. I have always believed that you are fanatics. Mr. Saunders proved this terrible assumption wrong. You are all just normal people trying to do what you feel is right.

'Thank you again, Mr. Saunders, and keep the faith. God bless you.'

'T. M., Toronto'