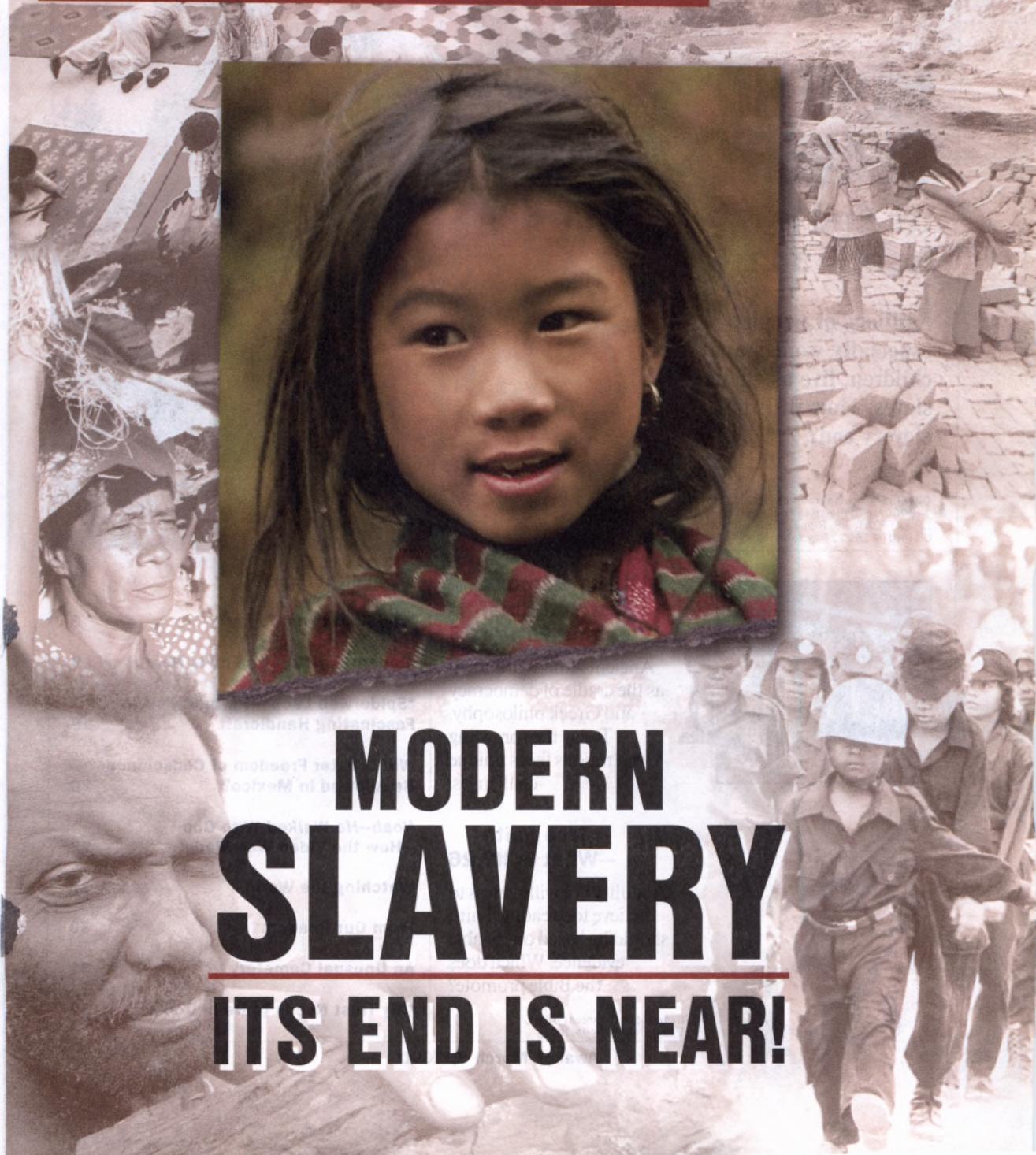


Awake!

March 8, 2000

MODERN SLAVERY

ITS END IS NEAR!



Average Printing 20,381,000
Published in 82 Languages

MODERN SLAVERY

Its End Is Near! 3-12

Millions of people,
especially women and
children, live as virtual
slaves. How will this
slavery end?

COVER: Clockwise from top right: UN PHOTO 148000/Jean Pierre Laffont; UNITED NATIONS/J.P. LAFFONT; J.R. Ripper/RF2; J.R. Ripper/RF2; UN PHOTO 152227 by John Isaac



Athens' Famous Past and Chal- lenging Future 13

Ancient Athens is known as the cradle of democracy and Greek philosophy. Today the sprawling metropolis faces unique challenges.

True Faith —What Is It? 26

Credulity is a willingness to believe too readily. Faith should be based on reliable evidence. Which does the Bible promote?

Drawings of Albrecht Dürer/
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Awake! March 8, 2000

UNITED NATIONS/J.P. LAFFONT



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A Well-Kept Secret

"No one shall be held in slavery or servitude: slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms."

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

THE next time you put sugar in your coffee, think of Prevot, a Haitian who was promised a good job in another Caribbean country. Instead, he was sold for eight dollars.

Prevot shared the lot of thousands of his enslaved countrymen who are forced to cut sugarcane for six or seven months for little or no money. These captives are held in crowded, filthy conditions. After their belongings are taken, they are handed machetes. To obtain food, they must work. If they attempt to escape, they may be beaten.

Consider the case of Lin-Lin, a girl from Southeast Asia. She was 13 when her mother died. A job placement agency bought her from her father for \$480, promising her a good job. The price paid for her was termed "an advance on her earnings"—a sure way to keep her tied to her new owners for good. Instead of being given a decent job, Lin-Lin was taken to a brothel, where clients pay the owner \$4 an hour for her. Lin-Lin is virtually a prisoner, for she cannot leave until her debt is paid. This includes her cost to the brothel owner in addition to interest and expenses. If Lin-Lin refuses to comply with her employer's wishes, she might be beaten or tortured. Worse still, if she tries to escape, she might be killed.

Liberty for All?

Most people think that slavery no longer exists. Indeed, after numerous conventions, declarations, and acts, it has been officially

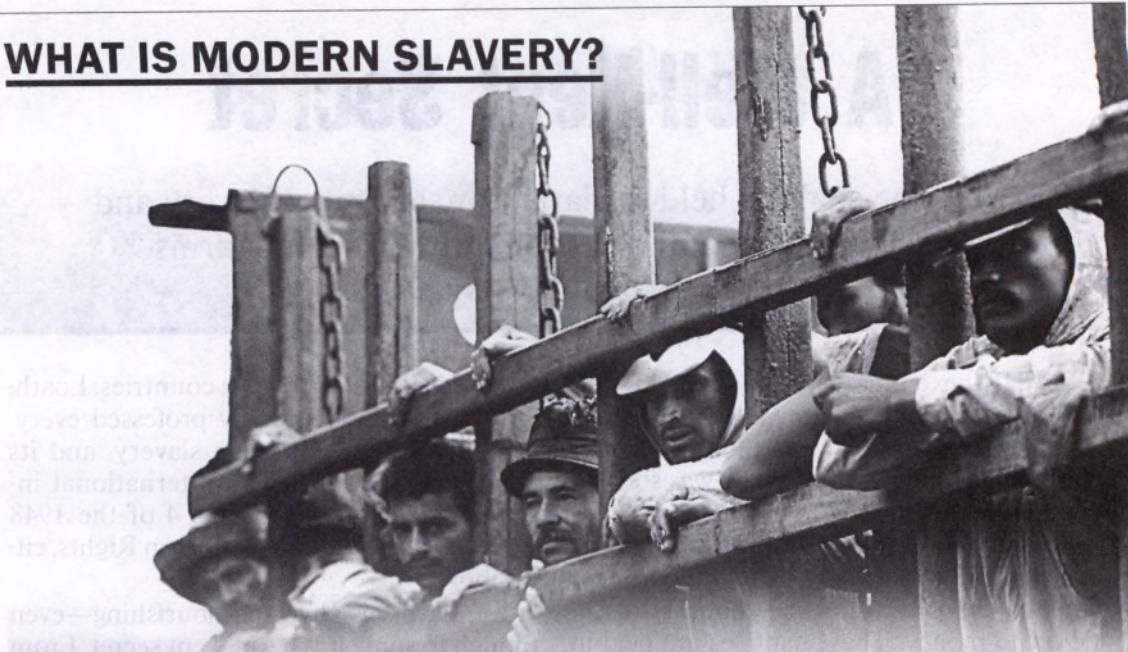
declared abolished in most countries. Loathing for slavery is strongly professed everywhere. National laws ban slavery, and its abolition is enshrined in international instruments—notably Article 4 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, cited above.

Yet, slavery is alive and flourishing—even though to some it is a well-kept secret. From Phnom Penh to Paris, from Mumbai to Brasília, millions of our fellow humans—men, women, and children—are forced to live and work as slaves or in slavelike conditions. London-based Anti-Slavery International, the world's oldest monitor of forced labor, puts the number of people in bondage in the hundreds of millions. Indeed, there may be more slaves in the world today than ever before!

Granted, the familiar images of shackles, whips, and auctions are not typical of modern-day slavery. Forced labor, servile marriage, debt bondage, child labor, and often prostitution are just some of the more pronounced contemporary forms of slavery. Slaves might be concubines, camel jockeys, cane cutters, carpet weavers, or builders of roads. True, the vast majority are not sold at a public auction, but they are really no better off than were their predecessors. In some cases their lives are even more tragic.

Who become slaves? How do they become slaves? What is being done to help them? Is the total abolition of slavery in sight?

WHAT IS MODERN SLAVERY?



Ricardo Funari

This is a question that even the United Nations has difficulty answering after years of effort. One definition of slavery is that formulated by the 1926 Slavery Convention, which stated: "Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised." Still, the term is open to interpretation. According to journalist Barbara Crossette, "slavery is a label applied to low-wage workers in the garment and sports-wear industries abroad and sweatshops in American cities. It is invoked to condemn the sex industry and prison labor."

Mike Dottridge, the director of Anti-Slavery International, believes that "as slavery seems to take new forms—or as the word is applied to more conditions—there is a danger that its meaning will be diluted or even diminished." He feels that "slavery is identified by an element of ownership or control over another's life." It includes coercion and restriction of movement—the fact that "someone is not free to leave, to change an employer."

A. M. Rosenthal, writing in *The New York Times*, notes: "The slaves live slave lives—murderous labor, rape, hunger, torture, the totality of degradation." He added: "Fifty dollars buys a slave, so it really does not matter [to the owners] how long they survive before their bodies are thrown into some river."

Awake![®]

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.

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

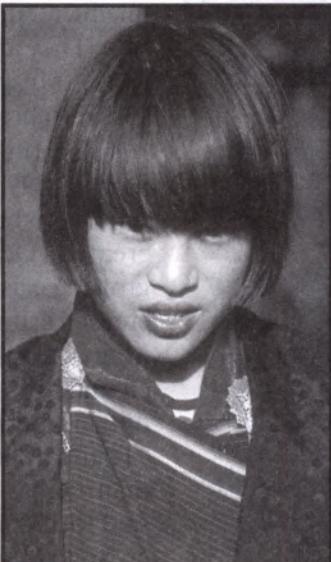
Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; Milton G. Henschel, President; Lyman A. Swingle, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **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). **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, c/o Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Vol. 81, No. 5 Printed in U.S.A. © 2000 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Semimonthly ENGLISH

Who Are Slaves Today?

JUST think of the numbers. It is estimated that between 200 and 250 million children under the age of 15 spend most of their waking hours at work. A quarter of a million children, some as young as seven, were drawn into armed combat during 1995 and 1996 alone, some of them thus becoming war slaves. The number of women and children sold as slaves each year is estimated to be more than a million.

But cold numbers cannot possibly reveal the desperation of these individuals. For example, in a northern African country, writer Elinor Burkett met Fatma, a young woman who managed to escape her cruel master. However, after speaking with her, Burkett realized that Fatma "will be a slave forever, in her own mind." Can Fatma even dream of a better future? "She cannot project beyond the dawn," says Burkett. "The future is one of the many abstract concepts she lacks."



Yes, at this very moment, millions of our fellow humans are hopeless slaves. Why and how do all these people become slaves? Into what forms of slavery are they thrown?

Merchants of Flesh

The tourist brochure circulating in the United States could not be more straightforward: "Sex tours to Thailand. Real girls. Real sex. Real cheap.... Did you know you can actually buy a virgin girl for as little as \$200?" What the brochure did not tell is that these "virgins" have likely been kidnapped or forcibly sold into brothels, where they average some 10 to 20 customers a day. If they do not provide sexual services, they are beaten. When a fire broke out in a brothel on Phuket Island, a resort in southern Thailand, five prostitutes burned to death. Why? Because their owners had chained them to their beds to keep them from escaping their bondage.

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

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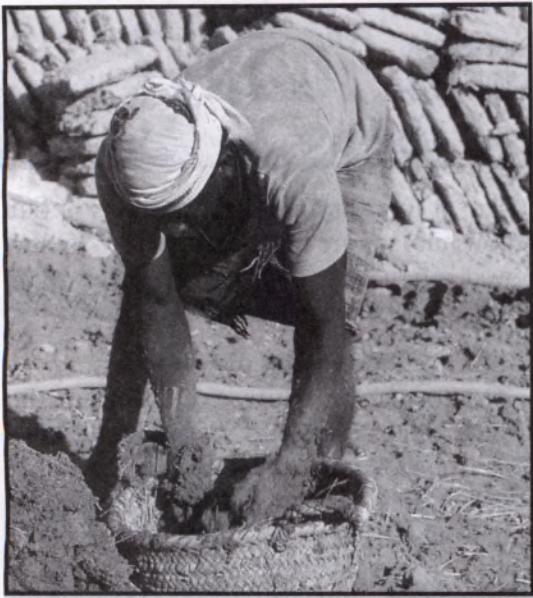
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WORKING FOR SOLUTIONS

Various official agencies, such as the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Labor Organization, are diligently instituting and implementing strategies for the elimination of modern slavery. In addition, a host of nongovernmental organizations, such as Anti-Slavery International and Human Rights Watch, have put forth an effort to increase public awareness of modern slavery and to emancipate its victims. Some of these organizations are pursuing the introduction of special labels that would indicate that items are produced without slave or child labor. So that people engaging in sex with children can be prosecuted upon their return to their home country, other agencies are calling for legislation in countries where "sex tours" originate. Some human rights activists have gone so far as to pay slave traders and masters large sums of money in order to redeem as many slaves as they can. This has caused some controversy, since such practices may create a lucrative market for slaves and inflate their price.

Where do these young women come from? Reportedly, this sector of the sex industry is being filled by millions of girls and women around the world who have been kidnapped, coerced, and sold into prostitution. The international sex trade flourishes because of a combination of poverty in developing countries, affluence in wealthy countries, and laws that wink at international trafficking and indentured servitude.

Women's organizations in Southeast Asia have estimated that from the mid-1970's to the early 1990's, 30 million women were sold worldwide. Traffickers in flesh scour train stations, poor villages, and urban streets looking for young girls and women who appear vulnerable. Usually the victims are uneducated, orphaned, abandoned, or destitute. They are given fraudulent promises of work, transported across borders, and then sold into brothels.

Since the breakup of the Communist bloc in 1991, a whole new population of impoverished girls and women has been created. Deregulation, privatization, and growing class inequality have resulted in increased crime, poverty, and unemployment. Many Russian and Eastern European women and girls have now become grist for the mill of international organized prostitution. "There are less risks when you traffic in human beings than when you traffic drugs," said former European Justice Commissioner Anita Gradin.

Childhood Lost

In one small carpet factory in Asia, children as young as five are working from 4 o'clock in the morning until 11 o'clock at night without pay. In many cases child laborers like these face grave health hazards: unsafe machinery, long hours in a poorly lit and poorly ventilated environment, and

exposure to dangerous chemicals used in manufacturing.*

Why are children so keenly sought as laborers? Because child labor is cheap and because by nature children are docile, easy to discipline, and too frightened to complain. Their small physique and nimble fingers are seen by unscrupulous employers as assets for doing certain kinds of work, such as carpet weaving. Often such children are given jobs, while their parents sit at home, unemployed.

* See "Child Labor—Its End in Sight!" in the May 22, 1999, issue of *Awake!*

**Many young girls
are forced into
marriage**



UNITED NATIONS/J.P. LAFFONT

To add to their misery, domestic child workers are particularly vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse. Many children are kidnapped, held in remote camps, and chained at night to prevent their escape. By day, they may be put to work building roads and quarrying stone.

Another way that childhood is lost is through servile marriage. Anti-Slavery International explains a typical case: "A 12-year-old girl is told that her family has arranged her marriage to a 60-year-old man. Ostensibly she has the right to refuse, but in practice she has no opportunity to exercise that right and is unaware that she can do so."

Slaves of Debt

Hundreds of thousands of laborers are held in bondage to their employers and places of employment because of loans that they or their parents have been given. Traditionally, bonded labor occurs mainly in agricultural areas, where laborers work as general servants or as farmers. In some cases, debts are passed on from one generation to the next, ensuring that members of a family remain in permanent bondage. In other cases, employers who are owed money sell the debt to a new employer. In extreme cases, bonded laborers receive no payment at all for the work they do.

Or they may be bound by relatively small advances on their wages, which are endlessly repeated, so that they become bonded to their employer.

Ritual Slavery

Binti, from West Africa, is 12 years old and is one of thousands of girls who serve as *trocosi*, meaning in the Ewe language "slaves of the gods." She has been forced into a life of slavery and

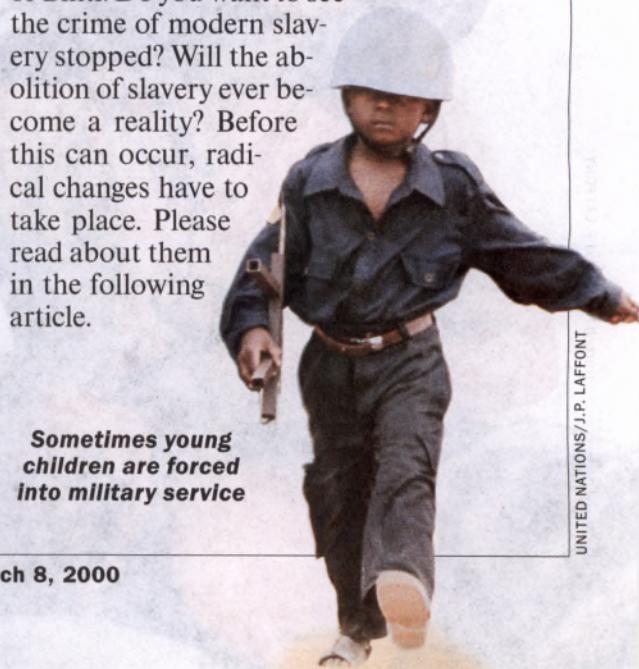


Food line for bonded slaves

of law has effectively been suspended," reports Anti-Slavery International, "and soldiers or armed militia are able to force people to work for them unpaid . . . without fear of retribution; such practices have been reported chiefly in areas controlled by armed groups which have not achieved international recognition." However, according to the same organization, "there have also

been recent reports of government soldiers forcing civilians to work as slaves, outside any legal framework. Soldiers and militias have also been reported to engage in the slave trade, selling those they have captured to work for others."

Sadly, the curse of slavery still haunts humanity in many forms and disguises. Stop and think again of the numbers involved—the millions of people suffering as slaves around the globe. Then think of one or two of the modern slaves whose stories you read in these pages—perhaps Lin-Lin or Binti. Do you want to see the crime of modern slavery stopped? Will the abolition of slavery ever become a reality? Before this can occur, radical changes have to take place. Please read about them in the following article.



Sometimes young children are forced into military service

Modern Slavery —Its End Is Near!

“One man’s freedom is part and parcel of universal freedom.
You cannot touch one without at the same time
jeopardizing the other.”

VICTOR SCHOELCHER, FRENCH JOURNALIST AND POLITICIAN, 1848.

“WHAT is this dark side of man that has always led him to despise, subjugate and debase his fellows?” ask the editors of *The UNESCO Courier*. “And how is it that such a crime against humanity has remained unpunished even since the inception of Human Rights?”

The answer is complex. Greed is the motivation for the use of cheap child labor and for the phenomenon of debt bondage. Poverty and lack of education are blamed when girls are sold into prostitution and servile marriage. Religious norms and cultural concepts lie behind ritual slavery. And in the case of males who visit Bangkok or Manila to find young AIDS-free boys or girls, the motive is outright sexual perversion and immorality. All of this is part of a world where people are “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . having no natural affection, . . . without self-control, fierce,” in the words of the apostle Paul, a first-century student of law. (2 Timothy 3: 1-5) It is part of a world where “that which is made crooked

cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot possibly be counted,” to use the words of an ancient statesman named Solomon.—Ecclesiastes 1:15.

A Change of Mind

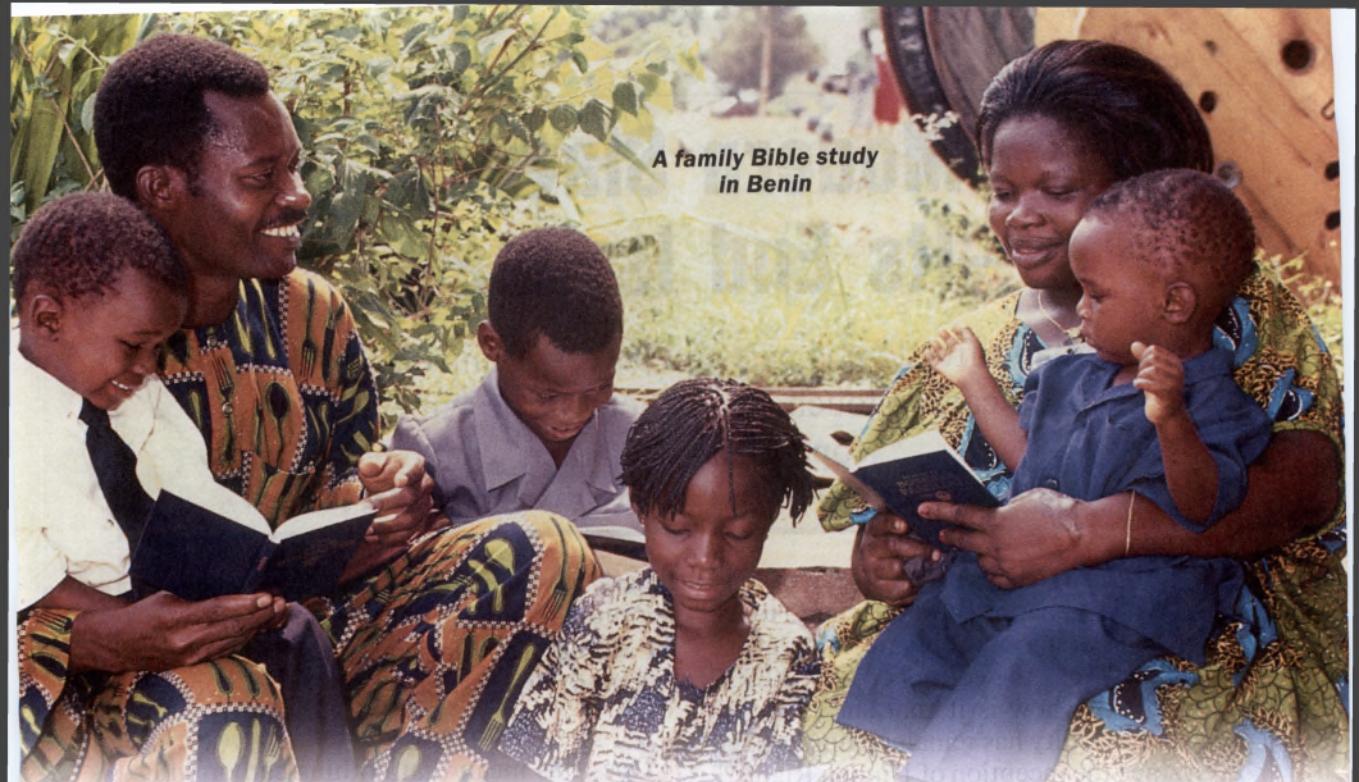
Does this mean that nothing can or will be done to put a permanent end to slavery—either in its traditional manifestations or in its more recent forms? Not at all!

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) states that slavery is “a state of mind,” adding: “Even when abolished, slavery leaves traces. It can persist as a state of mind—among its victims and their descendants and among the inheritors of those who practised it—long after it has formally disappeared.”

So one way to abolish slavery would be to effect a change of thinking—a change of heart—on a worldwide scale. And that involves a change of education—teaching people to love one another and respect one another’s dignity. It

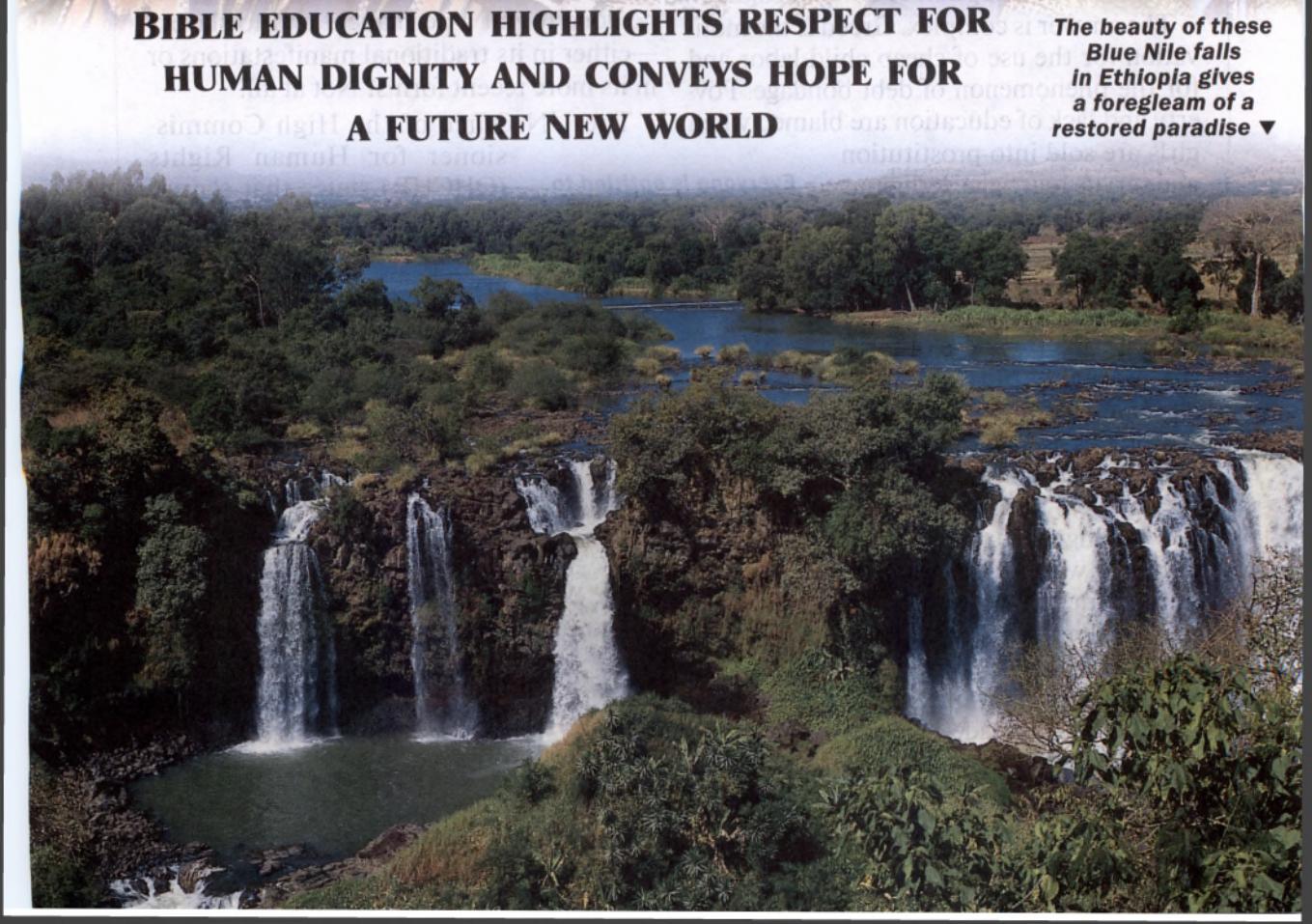
Everyone Is entitled to dignity and freedom





A family Bible study
in Benin

**BIBLE EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS RESPECT FOR
HUMAN DIGNITY AND CONVEYS HOPE FOR
A FUTURE NEW WORLD**



The beauty of these
Blue Nile falls
in Ethiopia gives
a foregleam of a
restored paradise ▼

means helping people to root greed out of their hearts and abide by high moral standards. Who can provide such education? The OHCHR says that "everyone has a contribution to make to a world order which no longer tolerates inhumane exploitation."

Consider an educational program that has been carried out worldwide by the Christian community of Jehovah's Witnesses. This program has successfully taught honesthearted individuals not to tolerate or condone inhumane exploitation. Through it, millions of people in more than 230 lands have been taught to treat all their fellowmen with dignity. Why is this program successful?

Because it is based on the Bible, a book

inspired by the Creator of man. It is a book that upholds human dignity. People instructed in the Bible through the educational program of Jehovah's Witnesses learn that our Creator, Jehovah, is himself a God of dignity. (1 Chronicles 16:27) He confers dignity upon all his creation. This includes both men and women, from all races, social backgrounds, and economic conditions.—See the box "Human Freedom and Dignity—From What Source?"

Equality and Respect for Dignity

The Bible teaches that God has "made out of one man *every nation of men*, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth." (Acts 17:26) Thus, no one can claim either supremacy over any of his fellow humans or

HUMAN FREEDOM AND DIGNITY —FROM WHAT SOURCE?

We are all born with an inherent need and desire for dignity and freedom. Kofi Annan, UN secretary-general, echoed feelings that are universal when he asked: "Who can deny that we all seek lives free of fear, torture and discrimination? . . . When have you heard a free voice demand an end to freedom? Where have you heard a slave argue for slavery?"

Such ideas are hardly new. Dismissing the notion that some are born to be slaves, first-century Roman philosopher Seneca, in his *Letters to Lucilius*, wrote: "Please reflect that the man you call your slave was born of the same seed, has the same good sky above him, breathes as you do, lives as you do, dies as you do!"

Imam 'Alī, revered as the fourth caliph after Muhammad, said that all men are "equals in creation." Sa'dī, a 13th-century Persian poet, declared: "The children of Adam are limbs of one another and in their creation come from one substance. When the world gives pain to one member, the other members find no rest."

The divinely inspired historical record found in the Bible highlights the dignity of all humans. For example, Genesis 1:27 describes man's creation, saying: "God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them." Our Creator is a God of freedom. "Where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom," said the apostle Paul. (2 Corinthians 3:17) In creating man in his image and likeness, Jehovah bestowed upon humans a measure of worthiness, self-respect, and dignity. By freeing his creation from "enslavement to corruption," he will also ensure that people will enjoy such freedom and dignity forever.—Romans 8:21.



the right to oppress or exploit others. People who are willing to learn come to appreciate the fact that "God is not partial, but in *every nation* the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) They realize that God's love is all-encompassing, since the privilege of a close relationship with him is open to *all* people. In fact, "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that *everyone* exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

This Bible-based education has a profound effect on personalities. Through it people's hearts and minds can be "made completely new." (Ephesians 4:22-24, *Today's English Version*) It motivates them to treat their fellow humans with dignity and respect. They are determined to "work what is good toward *all*." (Galatians 6:10) No one can be a true Christian and share in the inhumane exploitation and oppression of any of his fellow humans. Jehovah's Witnesses are happy to be a Christian community like the Christian congregation of the first century, in which 'there was neither Jew nor Greek, and there was neither slave nor freeman. All were one person in union with Christ Jesus.'—Galatians 3:28.

A Change of Government

However, for there to be a permanent end to all forms of slavery, a drastic change in human society is required. The International Labor Organization says that to end human exploitation, there is a need "to change the environment which permits and condones" such practices. International actions, international cooperation, and a commitment of the world community are among further suggestions made by that agency.

This would logically require a power able to exercise broad control over our planet,

a power able to ensure universal freedom. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former secretary-general of the UN, said that the real problems afflicting our planet must be solved "on a global level." But not everyone is so sure that this could ever happen. Past experience shows that many people in power are too selfish and self-centered in their interests and goals to achieve such international cooperation.

However, the Bible—the same book that has taught millions to respect the dignity of their fellow humans—shows that God purposes to establish such a world government. In the Bible you will find many promises of a new world of righteousness. (Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13) It is God's purpose to clear the earth of any who do not love God and neighbor. God has revealed his purpose to set up a worldwide government over mankind to rule the earth in righteousness. Jesus told us to pray for that government in what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer, or the Our Father.—Matthew 6:9, 10.

Human exploitation and every form of slavery will disappear under the rule of this government because Christ the King will reign "by means of justice and by means of righteousness." (Isaiah 9:7) Oppressed ones will find release under his just rule, for the Bible says: "He will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save. From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul."—Psalm 72:12-14.

If you yearn to see the end of slavery—all forms of enslavement—we invite you to learn more about God's purpose to establish this liberating world government. Jehovah's Witnesses in your area will be happy to help you to do this.

ATHENS' Famous Past and Challenging Future

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN GREECE

THE plane takes a final turn before touching down at the Athens International Airport. After two years away, I return to the place that I called home for two decades. From history books, I know that the city below is considered by many to be the place where democracy was founded.

On the ground, I find that beyond the history, the art, and the monuments, Greece's famous and gritty capital is bursting at the seams with an energetic and optimistic population. I also realize that its friendly and smiling residents are working hard to make their city work—and this is especially so because it is being groomed to host the 2004 Olympic Games.

A Famous Past

Athens traces its origins back to the 20th century before Christ and is named after the Greek goddess Athena. Here you can still walk the streets where Socrates walked, take a stroll in the school where Aristotle taught, or enjoy a soul-searching tragedy

or comedy on the very stages where Sophocles and Aristophanes directed their plays.

Athens was one of the first Greek city-states and enjoyed its most glorious days, its golden age, in the fifth century B.C.E. During that period a democratic Athens played a major role in the Greek victories over Persia and became the literary and artistic center of Greece. A number of its famous architectural monuments were also erected about that time—the magnificent Parthenon being the best known.

Although the Athenians escaped the yoke of the Persians, they later fell to the onslaughts of a long-time enemy closer to home—Sparta. In the centuries that followed, Athens was a subjugated city, ruled in turn by Macedonia, Rome, Byzantine emperors at Constantinople, Frankish dukes of the Crusades, and the Turks. When the Greeks gained their independence in 1829, Athens had declined to a small provincial town inhabited by only a few thousand people.





The Parthenon, an ancient pagan temple, has served as a church and a mosque

Modern Realities

Since 1834, when Athens became the capital of Greece, the city has grown at a rapid pace. It now covers some 170 square miles, spreading over the Attic plain. Its "fingers" thrust into the distance along the slopes of Mounts Parnes, Pendelikón, and Hymettus. The metropolis shelters more than four and a half million people—nearly 45 percent of the population of Greece. It was built largely without planning or regulation. By one estimate, more than a third of the housing went up illegally, and today just a small portion of Athens is not covered by concrete.

Most of Athens' modern neighborhoods are of the boxy, poured-concrete style of architecture. The city seems to squat in the sun, with an ancient column protruding here or there, dusted with gray fallout from industry and motor vehicles.

Like many other modern metropolises, Athens suffers from smog. A smog cloud—called *nefos* by locals—forms a few feet above the forest of television antennas. The smog is eating away the ancient monuments so rapidly that archaeologists once considered erecting a glass bubble over the Acropolis. Pollution warnings are common. When weather conditions trap the smog inside the mountains surrounding Athens, *nefos* can be deadly to humans. On such days, private cars are banned from the city center, factories cut fuel consumption, the elderly are advised to stay indoors, and Athenians are asked to leave their cars at home.

Athenians vacate the city en masse on weekends. "Jump into your car," says Vassilis—a seasoned Athenian—as he enjoys a honey-sweet, nut-crusted baklava and a cup of bitter coffee at one of the cafés. "In just

(03.6.98) HELLAS FA 189

a few hours, you will be in the mountains or at the sea." The implication of this remark is that you can hop into your car and then sit in bumper-to-bumper traffic for a couple of hours before the city gives way to the country.

Cleaning and Tidying Up

However, Athens says that it is serious about cleaning up, and it has a convincing record to prove it. For example, a large section of the city's commercial center is closed to traffic. Before they were closed, these shopping streets were some of the most congested. Cars moved at an average of three miles per hour, the pace of a leisurely stroll. Now trees in planters have replaced nose-to-tail traffic, and bird-songs have replaced the usual background sounds of grinding gears and whining motor scooters. The city has even challenged the traditional Mediterranean life-style, asking workers to stop heading home for a siesta—a habit that effectively added two more rush hours.

Reserved optimism fills the air in the office of Nikos Yatrakos, deputy mayor of Athens. When I mention that it took me two grueling hours to reach his office, he nods in compassion. "But don't forget," he is quick to stress, "the 2004 Olympic Games are coming. We are committed to improving the city, and we will do it."

Constantine Bakouris,

chief organizer of the games, notes: "We have to [present] the Games well. But in our own vision, we are guided by the day after. . . . We need to do things that we know will last."

The fact that Athens will host the 2004 Olympics has touched off a wave of unprecedented activity and development. Everywhere, machines are breaking ground to improve the infrastructure and to build roads and venues for the games. A new, ten-mile extension to the metro system is almost complete. If all goes according to schedule, in March 2001 the first aircraft will land at the new international airport of Athens, an airport that has been dubbed the most modern in Europe.

Moreover, by the year 2001, a total of 45 miles of new freeways will be ready.

Athens is the home of more than four and a half million people



These will divert traffic outside the center of Athens, and this will encourage the use of public transportation. It is hoped that this will reduce the number of cars in the city center by more than 250,000 per day and cut atmospheric pollution by 35 percent. The new biological treatment program for the wastewater of the greater Athens area promises to improve the maritime environment around the capital. The ambitious goal is, within a few years, to transform Athens into a new city, with an improved transportation system, more pockets of greenery, and a cleaner environment.

A Corner of Old Athens

To many, despite new office towers, renovated boulevards and fountains, smart shops, and lively street life, Athens will al-

ways remain a village—spontaneous rather than disciplined, fragmented rather than ordered. The village side of Athens can be found in those parts of the city where houses still have tile roofs and balconies with iron grillwork and pots of geraniums.

To find *that* Athens, I visit Plaka, the oldest neighborhood of the city, hugging the northern slopes of the Acropolis. There I find a warren of narrow and tilted winding streets, sagging houses, wine shops, stray cats and dogs, tavernas, and pushcarts. The area retains the raucous, carnival character of the past, which draws in the tourists. Tables that sometimes have one leg too short line the sidewalks, along with undersized chairs. The waiters, with menus held open, try to snag customers.

A taverna in Plaka, the oldest neighborhood in Athens



M. Burgess/H. Armstrong Roberts



Balconies characterize some souvenir shops

The put-put of motorbikes drowns out the music of the organ-grinder. Whole rows of freshly tanned leather purses hang in front of souvenir shops. Armies of marble chessmen made in the images of Greek gods stand in battle formation, marionettes do folk dances, ceramic windmills turn. It is evident that this corner of the city fiercely resists any attempts at modernization.

Athens by Night—Sights and Sounds

A visit to Athens would be seriously lacking without a sampling of the cultural wealth of the city. Tonight, I decide to attend a symphony with my wife at the restored Roman amphitheater of Herod, located on the south slope of the Acropolis. The pedestrian approach to the theater is a hushed, softly lit walkway under dark silhouettes of pines. The illuminated facade of ocher stones looms theatrically through

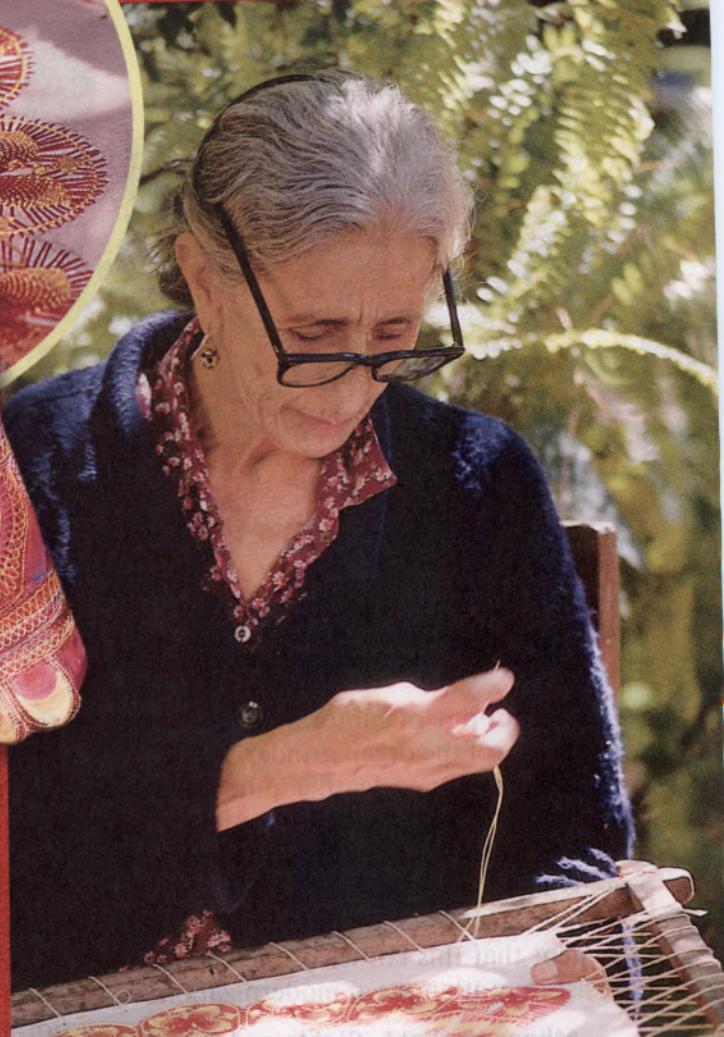
the trees. We have bought upper-tier tickets, so we climb up the marble steps and then enter through a Roman portal into the amphitheater.

We take a minute to savor the moment—a black velvet sky, a near-full moon behind a wisp of cirrus clouds, and floodlights, which turn the interior of the steep half cone into a brilliant scene. Hundreds of people—looking small and faraway in the vastness of this theater, which can seat 5,000—move along concentric rows of white marble to find their places. The stone seats are still warm from the sun, the same stones that have echoed drama and music and laughter and applause for millennia.

Also not to be missed are the numerous museums of the city. Most prominent among them is the National Archaeological Museum, with its impressive and thorough overview of Greek art through the centuries. Other museums worth visiting are the Museum of Cycladic Art and the Byzantine Museum. Since 1991 the Mégaron Athens Concert Hall—a majestic marble building with exceptional acoustics—has offered a year-round venue for opera, ballet, and classical music performances. And, of course, you can enjoy Greek folk music in many of the traditional tavernas.

You Are Welcome!

Modern Athens with its famous past faces the pressures of a challenging future. But its people have learned to adjust as best they can with good humor, ingenuity, and *philotimo*—literally, a love for self-respect. To most tourists, Athens remains a fascinating and culturally rich city.



"Spiderweb Lace"

Paraguay's Fascinating Handicraft

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN PARAGUAY

ASUNCIÓN, PARAGUAY. Our bags are being unloaded, so we have a few minutes to look around. My wife suddenly pulls me over to a wall display. "Isn't that gorgeous?" she exclaims, pointing to a beautiful lace tablecloth with a very intricate design. Immediately she wonders how it was made.

Spiderweb lace originated in Arabia. According to the book *Paraguay, Touristic and General Information*, "it was taken to the Canary Islands and to Spain, and between the 17th and 18th centuries, it was brought to Paraguay, where the so-called sun lace from Tenerife took the name Paraguayan lace, or nanduti." In Paraguay this delicate lace took on the lace maker's personal touch, and the characteristics of local vegetation and animals were incorporated into the design. Although the lace is not a local invention, Paraguayans did enhance their lace with new stitches. Lace weaving has become the livelihood of many natives.

How do they manufacture this intricate lace that resembles a spiderweb? To help us learn the answer, our guide took us 18 miles east of Asunción to the small town of Itauguá. He told us that much of Paraguay's spiderweb lace is produced in this area. Indeed, many woven articles are on display in stores along the main street.

The owner of one store greeted us warmly and showed us some attractive items. She explained: "Handmade lace is classified according to the way it is made. Spiderweb lace is a needlepoint lace. Most Paraguayan lace makers memorize their designs, though others use patterns. They all use a piece of cotton cloth in a wooden frame and make the lace with needle and thread. They learn this craft from

their mothers at an early age and then teach it to their children."

The orb weaver spider takes only two or three hours to spin a web. "It takes from two to three months to make a tablecloth with eight settings when coarse thread is used. To make the same tablecloth from fine thread takes about six to eight months," said our hostess. "The finer the thread, the more beautiful the result."

As she holds up a white lace doily, she explains: "It has a center design of the guava tree flower, and these threads have to be counted as it is being made. This design is the most difficult to make, and it takes two weeks to make with fine thread. Originally lace makers only used fine thread and all the lace was very expensive. Therefore, many lace makers began to use coarse thread in order to make items faster and to make them less costly."

Multicolored and white place mats, tablecloths, doilies, coasters, and other household items were on display. When we asked about clothes, our hostess quickly brought out a typical dress, belonging to her daughter, of which she was obviously very proud. It was a beautiful rainbow-hued, full dress. In other stores, we found some well-made postcards containing fine lace. It is no wonder that spiderweb lace is considered Paraguay's most famous handicraft.

Will Greater Freedom of Conscience Be Allowed in Mexico?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN MEXICO

RELIGIOUS freedom in Mexico is guaranteed by law. Nevertheless, the law still contains some restrictions on freedom of worship. For example, the concept of conscientious objection to military service is relatively unknown in this country. That is why the Institute of Legal Investigations, of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), decided to hold an international symposium entitled "Conscientious Objection in Mexico and the World." UNAM's Institute of Legal Investigations is accountable to the government, but its purpose is to investigate the established laws and their application. Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico were invited to send a representative to give a talk on the subject "Jehovah's Witnesses and Conscientious Objection."

Professors Speak Out

The presentation "Conscientious Objection in International Law," made by Dr. Javier Martínez Torró, professor at the Granada University of Law, in Spain, pointed out that freedom of conscience and the right to object to the application of some laws or obligations because of conscience is already internationally recognized. He mentioned the situation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Spain and the Kokkinakis case in Greece.*

Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández, a professor at UNAM's Institute of Legal

* See the articles "European High Court Upholds Right to Preach in Greece" and "Legally Protecting the Good News," in the September 1, 1993, and December 1, 1998, issues of *The Watchtower*.

Investigations, spoke on the topic "Mexican Experience on the Subject." "We must point out that the Mexican Law of Religious Associations and Public Worship practically forbids conscientious objection," he said, referring to the First Article, which states: "In no case do religious convictions exempt anyone from complying with the laws of this country. No one will be able to invoke religious reasons in order to avoid the responsibilities and duties prescribed by the laws." In conclusion, Dr. Soberanes said: "We believe that it is urgent to legislate on the matter of conscientious objection in Mexico."

He referred to the fact that each year hundreds of Witness children in Mexico confront problems related to their education because of their Bible-based refusal to salute the flag. Some Witness children are not allowed even to register for school. However, by means of appeals through the Human Rights Commission, many of them have been given back their right to an education. Some education officials have taken steps to prevent children from being expelled from school, but some teachers ignore such efforts. The authorities have been tolerant toward the Witnesses' position, but there has not been a standard that schools in Mexico can follow.

The symposium also covered conscientious objections presented by other religions, such as being forced to work on days considered holy, being required to dress at work in a way that violates their religious beliefs, and so on. Objections to military

service and to certain medical treatments were also covered.

Jehovah's Witnesses and Caesar

A member of the staff of the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico presented a summary of their basic beliefs. He explained their adherence to such Bible principles as the one expressed at Luke 20:25, which tells Christians to "pay back Caesar's things to Caesar." He also referred to Romans 13:1, which says that Christians must respect secular authorities. He stressed that Jehovah's Witnesses are normal, law-abiding citizens who strive to pay their taxes, live orderly lives, keep their homes clean, and send their children to school.

He then highlighted a Scriptural basis for the Witnesses' refusal to salute the flag, which can be found in the Ten Commandments, at Exodus 20:3-5: "You must not have any other gods against my face. You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them."

Jehovah's Witnesses worship God alone, and in no case do they worship an image. However, they will never commit any disrespectful act against a national emblem or speak disrespectfully of it.

In order to stress Jehovah's Witnesses' point of view on this question, the video *Purple Triangles* was presented. This video shows the firm position Jehovah's Witnesses took in Nazi Germany (1933-45). It presents the story of the Kus-

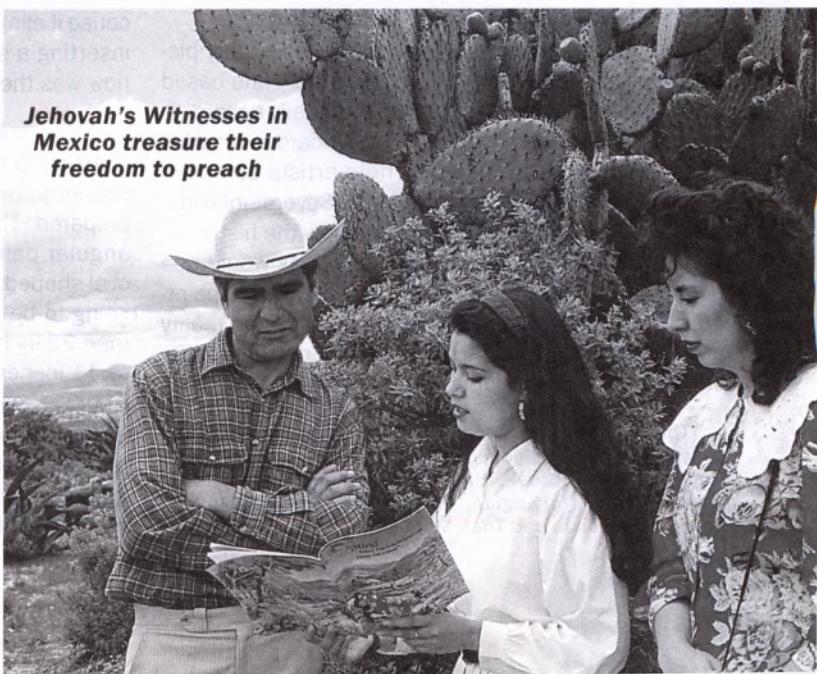
serows, a family that stood firm in their beliefs during the Nazi regime.*

The Scriptural basis for Jehovah's Witnesses' refusal to accept blood transfusions was then given. (Genesis 9:3, 4; Acts 15:28, 29) The arrangement for Hospital Liaison Committees worldwide was explained. In addition, the accomplishments of cooperative doctors in performing bloodless surgery on Jehovah's Witnesses were highlighted.

Each day some 100 people attended the symposium, many of whom were lawyers. Representatives of the Office of Religious Affairs in Mexico were also in attendance. All those present were able to listen to the viewpoint of experts regarding respect for conscientious objections. This concept is new to legislators in Mexico, although it is widely accepted in many democratic countries, such as France, Portugal, Spain, and the United States as well as in some former Communist countries, such as Czechia and Slovakia.

* See *The Watchtower* of September 1, 1985, "My Family's Love for God Despite Prison and Death." See also the issue of January 15, 1994, page 5.

Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico treasure their freedom to preach





NOAH HE WALKED WITH GOD



How the Video Was Made

HE GETS up in the morning talking about it. He watches it three or four times during the day and again before he goes to bed at night." What is this California mother talking about? Her two-year-old son and his love of the video *Noah—He Walked With God*.* She adds: "When he plays outside, he talks about building a lifesaving ark, with his hammer in hand."

Another mother wrote: "I must give a big thank-you for all the effort, time, and love that was put into the *Noah* video. I have a three-year-old who has memorized practically the whole video, even the sound effects! It is his favorite video, and he asks to see it every day, two or three times a day."

One little girl, Danielle, wrote: "I like it, and I want to follow the things that Noah did. I hope you make more videos for kids."

Of course, Bible videos take time to make. Why is that?

How Was the *Noah* Video Made?

Long before any sequence was filmed or any pictures painted, a scriptwriter drafted a story line based on the Bible account. This would eventually become a *Storyboard* and then a script. A storyboard is a series of small, rough drawings that help artists establish the sequence and design of a story. Several individuals, including the artists, discussed how the history of Noah could be illustrated—which portions would use actors and which would best be represented by paintings. Enacted sequences help to establish the reality of an account in a child's mind. They show that the Bible speaks of real people who served Jehovah thou-

sands of years ago. What would be the next step in the production?

A cast was chosen to represent Noah and his family. Their costumes were designed, and the color schemes for each scene were decided upon. All of this was necessary because the artists could not draw and paint Noah and his wife and sons and daughters-in-law until they knew what the actors looked like in their costumes. The paintings had to be consistent with the real-life scenes. But where would these scenes be filmed?

Denmark was chosen, since the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in that country had skilled prop builders and sufficient factory space available for the necessary indoor scenes. A film crew went from the Audio/Video Services Department of the Watchtower Educational Center at Patterson, New York, to do the filming, which also involved Danish personnel. The story is told through narration. This has made it much easier to produce the program in other languages because it eliminates the difficult step of dubbing, that is, inserting a synchronized translation of dialogue. But how was the difficult artwork prepared?

Art and a Special Camera

Artists prepared hundreds of watercolor paintings based on the storyboard that the creative team had prepared. These were not necessarily square or rectangular paintings. Sometimes they were curved or oval-shaped, depending on the camera angle that was going to be used. None of the paintings were larger than 22 inches by 30 inches, and most were as small as 11 inches by 15 inches.

A special motion-control camera was needed to film the paintings. In order to give a three-dimensional effect, the artwork was set up in three layers—foreground, middle distance, and background. In this way views could be shot through trees, through the legs of

* This video was released in 1997 and has been translated into Albanian, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Serbian, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish, and Thai. More languages are planned.



Production began with the storyboard

an elephant, or through whatever else was needed to give the effect of depth. The camera was controlled by a computer and could pan over a scene or zoom in to create a special effect. This can give the impression that the scene is moving when, in fact, it is only the camera that is doing so.

Since the Watch Tower Society does not have the skills or the resources to do genuine animation, the mixed-media approach of using enacted sequences along with paintings serves as a viable compromise. Children in the 3- to 12-year-old age-group, for whom the video was designed, have enjoyed this method. And the video clearly points out many lessons that

can be learned from Noah's example. Furthermore, the quiz on the video sleeve helps parents review the main points of the story with their children.

Other special effects, such as the increasing downpour at the time of the Flood, were achieved by computer technology. It is easy to see that much time and creative effort went into the production of the *Noah* video.

Since Bible accounts do not change, the video *Noah—He Walked With God* will always be current and can help teach each new generation of youngsters. Children and parents have written hundreds of letters of appreciation asking for more videos. One person wrote: "I am 50 years old and raised my children long ago. But I think it would be an invaluable tool today for parents with young children to have a video library of Bible stories."



Most enacted sequences were filmed in Denmark

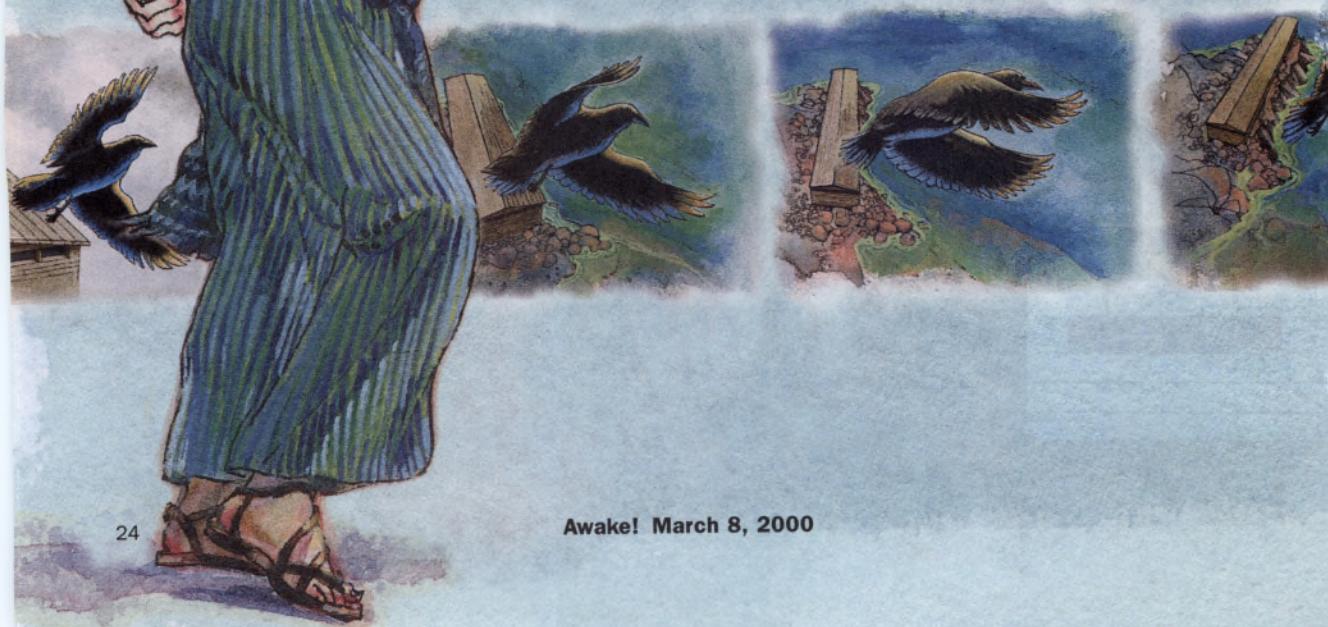
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53

▲ Artists drew and painted some 230 separate scenes



53



The motion-control
camera films
while moving,
giving life to
the artwork

2



Computer editing,
special effects, narration,
music, and sound
completed the video



True Faith—What Is It?

"WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM WELL, FOR HE THAT APPROACHES GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS AND THAT HE BECOMES THE REWARDER OF THOSE EARNESTLY SEEKING HIM."—HEBREWS 11:6.

WHAT is faith? Some explain faith as a religious belief in God without solid proof of his existence. American journalist H. L. Mencken defined faith as "an illogical belief in the occurrence of the improbable." Is this true faith as described in the Bible? It is vital to have a clear understanding of what faith is because, as quoted above, 'without faith it is impossible to please God.'

The Bible says: "Faith is being sure of the things we hope for." (Hebrews 11:1, *The New Testament in the Language of Today*) Therefore, faith is founded on accurate knowledge, facts on which right decisions can be based. It requires not only belief but a *reason* for believing.

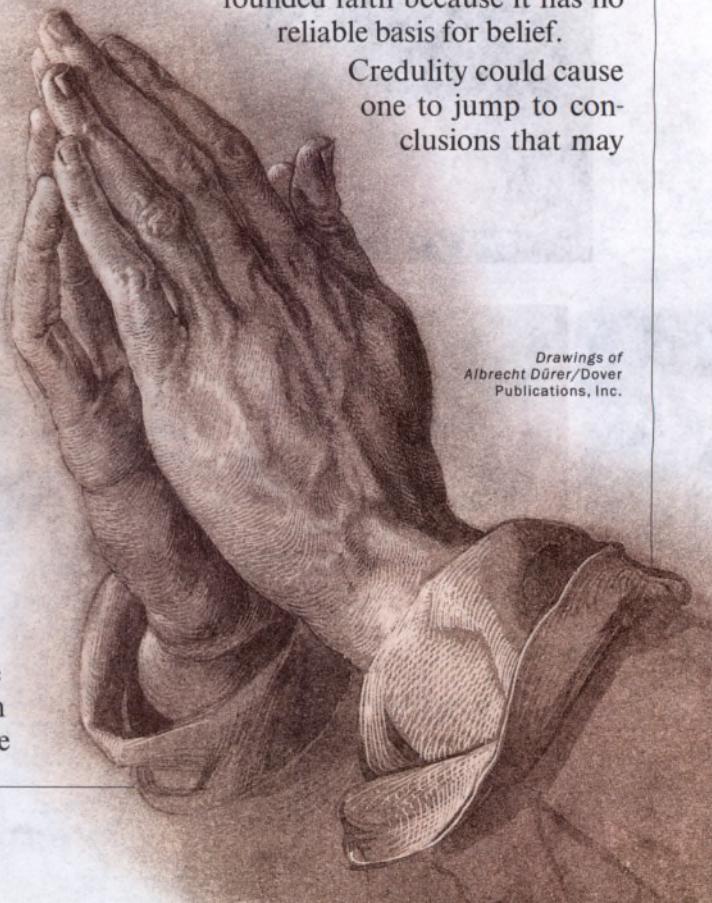
To illustrate: Perhaps you have a friend of whom you can say: "I trust that man. I can count on him to keep his word. I know that if I have a problem, he will come to my aid." It is not likely that you would say that about someone you have known for only a day or two, is it? He would have to be someone who had proved his dependability time and again. It should be the same with religious faith, which should produce

hope and conviction based on solid, dependable evidence.

Faith or Credulity?

Much of what passes for faith today is in reality credulity—a readiness to believe without a valid basis or reason. Credulity is often built on the shifting sands of emotion and superstition. This is not well-founded faith because it has no reliable basis for belief.

Credulity could cause one to jump to conclusions that may



Drawings of
Albrecht Dürer/Dover
Publications, Inc.

be out of harmony with Bible truth. Accordingly, the Bible warns against unfounded faith: "Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one considers his steps." (Proverbs 14:15) The apostle Paul wrote: "Make sure of all things; hold fast to what is fine." (1 Thessalonians 5:21) The Bible does not promote credulity. It does encourage faith based on evidence.

Being able to discern true faith from credulity is a serious matter. An individual can be religious and yet not have true faith. Paul noted: "Faith is not a possession of all people." (2 Thessalonians 3:2) But Bible-based faith *is* the possession of *some* people, and it does affect their lives.

True Faith Binds Man to God

Faith can be likened to a chain with links of confidence and trust that bind man to God. But this kind of faith is something that is cultivated; it is not something that we are born with. How can you develop true faith? The Bible explains: "Faith follows the thing heard. In turn the thing heard is through the word about Christ." —Romans 10:17.

Therefore, you need to take time to get to know God and the teachings of his Son, Jesus Christ. This knowledge is not acquired without effort. (Proverbs 2:1-9) You must exert yourself to find out what the Bible says so as to be convinced of its reliability.

True faith, however, involves more than just possessing knowledge or believing that something is true. It also involves the heart—the seat of motivation. Romans 10:10 says: "With the *heart* one exercises faith." What does this mean? As you meditate on godly things, building up appreciation for them, you allow the Bible's message to sink

deep into your heart. Faith grows and becomes stronger as you are motivated to act on God's promises and as you see the evidence of his blessing.—2 Thessalonians 1:3.

What a precious possession true faith is! We benefit by being able to face difficult conditions with confidence in God, trusting in his ability to guide our steps and in his willingness to care for our needs. In addition, God's Son, Jesus Christ, pointed to one long-term benefit of faith: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have *everlasting life*." (John 3:16) Everlasting life—what a marvelous gift to those having faith!

Faith in God's promise to reward his servants gives one a fresh perspective on life. Hebrews 11:6 says that true faith involves belief in God's ability to reward "those earnestly seeking him." Clearly, then, true faith is not credulity, and it is much more than just believing that God exists. It involves an acceptance of God's ability to act as a rewarder of those earnestly seeking him. Do you really and sincerely want to know God? If you do, then acquire accurate knowledge from his Word, the Bible, and your faith will be rewarded. —Colossians 1:9, 10.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

How You Can Quit Smoking

What About Body Piercing?

What Is El Niño?

WATCHING THE WORLD

Exotic Meats for Sale

In spite of international laws that outlaw its trade and its use as food in Europe, bat meat is being sold illegally in British shops and restaurants. "It is a real worry that protected bat species are being killed and imported undetected, not to mention the danger to public health of eating uninspected meat," notes Richard Barnwell, of the World Wide Fund for Nature. In parts of Africa, fruit bats have long been an important food source, and in Malaysia and Indonesia, the number of some of the rarest species of fruit bats has declined dramatically because of the trade in their meat. Also, in the Seychelles, bat curry is considered a luxury. *The Sunday Times* of London reports, however, that bats "are not the only endangered animals in demand in Europe." Restaurants in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, are serving chimpanzee meat.

Do You Fidget?

About 15 percent of the general population have nervous mannerisms, says Canada's *Globe and Mail* newspaper. Researchers note that some fidget by "hair-twirling, foot-tapping, leg-jiggling, fingernail-picking and the like." Why do people fidget? Peggy Richter, a psychiatrist at Toronto's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, believes that such ritualistic movements provide a feeling of comfort. On the other hand, clinical psychologist Paul Kelly says that fidgeting is due to tension and is an automat-

ic, unconscious response that kicks in and takes you outside of a stressful situation. According to experts, "you can learn to interrupt and eventually stop the habit by replacement therapy—that is, concentrate on another object when you notice yourself fidgeting," says the *Globe*.

Hooked on Cola?



Mexicans drink an average of 40 gallons of cola drinks per person per year, reports the *Mexican Association of Studies for Consumer Defense*. Annually, more money is spent on cola drinks than on the ten most basic foods put together. High consumption of these soft drinks is said by some to be one of the principal causes of malnutrition in Mexico. Some of cola's ingredients can impede the absorption of calcium and iron. Problems that are also thought to be linked with cola consumption include a greater likelihood of kidney stones, cavities, obesity, and hypertension as well as insomnia, gastric ulcers, and anxiety. "We used to be 'corn people,'" says *Consumer's Guide Magazine*, "but now you could say we are 'cola' people."

A "Just War"?

"The war in Yugoslavia has raised real divisions in churches, based on the interpretation of the traditional notion of a 'just war,'" notes the French newspaper *Le Monde*. The idea of a just war (*jus ad bellum*) goes back to Augustine, who lived in the fifth century. According to *Le Monde*, the "moral" justifications as formalized by a later Catholic philosopher, Thomas Aquinas, for such a war include the following: There must be a "just cause," the war should be a "last resort," the one waging war must have "legitimate authority," and "the use of arms [should] not lead to more harm and disorder than the ill to be removed." A further condition added in the 17th century is "chance of success." While most churches now reject the idea of a "holy war," they continue to debate what is considered a "just war."

Brazil's Sexually Active Youths

In Brazil, "33% of the girls and 64% of the young men have their first sexual relationship between 14 and 19 years of age," reports *O Estado de S. Paulo*. Additionally, the number of Brazilian girls aged 15 to 19 who begin sexual activity before marriage has doubled in just ten years. According to demographer Elizabeth Ferraz, there has been "a significant change in attitude regarding sexuality." For example, another study shows that 18 percent of Brazilian adolescents have already had at least one child or are now expecting a child.

How Safe Is Your Hospital?

"Patients have more than a one-in-10 chance of picking up infections in an Irish hospital," reports *The Irish Times*. Hospital acquired infection (HAI), as it is called, requires extra treatment and a longer stay in the hospital. On average, a single episode of HAI can cost \$2,200 per patient and require an extra 11 days in the hospital if it is a bloodstream infection. Especially worrisome are "super-bug" infections, which are "increasingly resistant to a wide range of antibiotics," says the paper. Those most vulnerable to HAI are "the elderly, the very young, those who spend long periods in hospital, [and] those with underlying chronic conditions such as heart conditions or chronic bronchitis."

Gene Estimate Increased

Researchers have recently revised the estimated number of genes in each human cell to be 140,000, reports *The New York Times*. Past estimates ranged from 50,000 to 100,000 human genes. This means that the human organism is considerably more complex than previously thought. Genes instruct the body's cells to put amino acids in the right sequence in order to build proteins. The sharp upward revision "points up how much there is still to learn about human genetic programming," says the paper.

Changed View of Hell

For centuries the Catholic Church has taught that hell is a place where the souls of wicked people suffer eternal torment. Apparently, that has changed. Hell "is not a pun-

ishment imposed externally by God," says Pope John Paul II, "but a development of premises already set by people in this life." So reports *L'Osservatore Romano*. "Rather than a place," the pontiff says, "hell indicates the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy." He adds that "eternal damnation" is not God's work; rather, "it is the creature who closes himself to [God's] love."

Walking for Health



In addition to helping you to lose weight and relieve stress, walking helps reduce "blood pressure and your risk of suffering a heart attack," says *The Globe and Mail*, of Toronto. Staying healthy requires a time commitment. How much? "According to Canada's *Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living*, if you're walking at a moderate pace, you need to work toward logging a total of 60 minutes a day—in periods of at least 10 minutes each." Brisk walking or biking for 30 to 60 minutes a day or jogging for 20 to 30 minutes daily may also keep you healthy. The *Globe* recommends wearing lightweight footwear that breathes and that has flexible soles, good arch supports, cushioned insoles, and comfortable toe room.

Early Warning

"The world may be in store for a decade of 'super-disasters,'" reports *World Press Review*, based on an article in London's *Financial Times*. Citing such natural disasters as cyclones and earthquakes, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies warns that large populations are vulnerable to catastrophe. "Of the world's 50 fastest-growing cities, 40 are in earthquake zones, and half the world's population lives in coastal regions, exposed to rising sea levels," the magazine says. Another ominous sign is that while disasters are increasing, government funding for emergency aid has dropped in many nations.

A Long Night

"Majestic darkness." That is how the Norwegian polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen described the "Mørketid," or the time when the sun does not rise at all in northern Norway. For two months, only a grayed twilight glow is visible for a few hours at noontime. But not everyone welcomes this dark period. According to the newspaper *Ibbenbürener Volkszeitung*, 21.2 percent of Norwegians living beyond the polar circle suffer from winter depression. The cause may be a deficiency of melatonin, a hormone produced in the brain. The only remedy is light. An increasing number of tourists, however, are enticed to the polar circle by the flickering aurora, the glistening of the snow in the moonlight, and the cozy light of scattered villages.

FROM OUR READERS

Theology of Prosperity I found the "Watching the World" item "Theology of Prosperity" (June 22, 1999) to be very misleading, to put it politely. Pentecostal and charismatic churches everywhere encourage giving based on sound Biblical principles. The article was written with a judgmental attitude.

C. B., United States

Our item accurately and objectively quoted the words of Lutheran theologian Wanda Deifelt as they appeared in the "ENI Bulletin," the newsletter of the World Council of Churches. As was stated, the article in that newsletter was not about Pentecostal and charismatic churches in general but was specifically about certain ones in Latin America.—ED.

Vinland I would like to thank you for the article "Where Is the Legendary Vinland?" (July 8, 1999) I have been interested in the Vikings for a long time and have hoped that you would discuss this subject. At last my wish has been granted.

S. S., Japan

Your articles are educational. However, I feel the need to clarify one point. Many historians use the popular term "Vikings" only for the Norse pirates who raided the European coast.

J. S., United States

"Awake!" consulted several respected historians in Norway and Greenland on this matter. The consensus is that while there may be some disagreement among historians regarding the use of the term "Viking," the terms "Vikings" and "Norsemen" are virtually synonymous in the English-speaking world.—ED.

Prison Survivor I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the article "God Has Been Our Helper." (June 22, 1999) It brought tears of joy to my eyes as I read of

how Francisco Coana learned the truth and made serving Jehovah a priority in his life. Reading about the trials my Christian brothers went through in Mozambique was truly faith strengthening.

J. H., United States

Sick Parents I was moved by the article "Young People Ask . . . Why Is Mom So Sick?" (July 22, 1999) I did not think that there were so many other youths who, like me, have the privilege of caring for a sick loved one. My grandmother stays with us, and she has been bedridden for four months. I was beginning to feel burdened down and tired of caring for her. I got much-needed strength from reading the article. It made me feel confident of Jehovah's support.

J. P., Philippines

The article was of great comfort to me, and it gave me the strength to support my mother, who suffers from depression. I was able to use the suggestions that the article made to see the situation more realistically and to show more empathy, understanding, and tact.

G. L., Italy

The article came at exactly the right time. I have cancer, and my son lives with me. My son was suffering so terribly that I no longer knew how to comfort him. The article accurately described his feelings. These articles are not for young people only. They are about life itself.

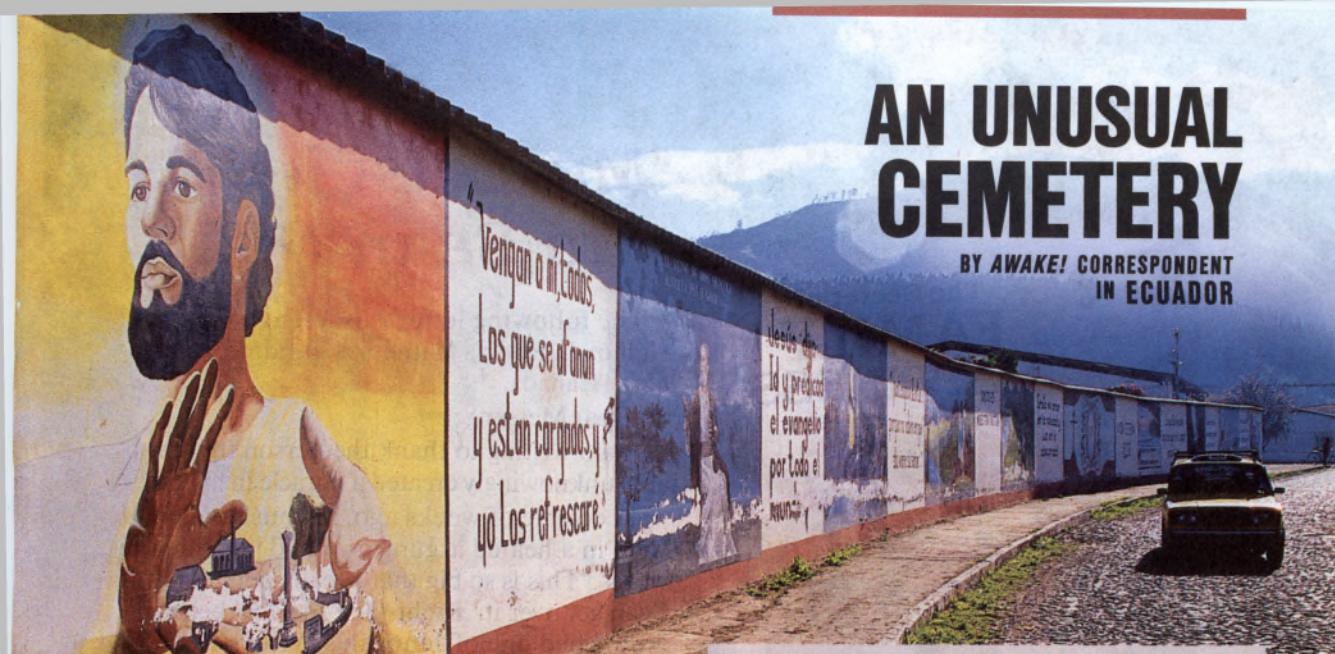
R. Z., Germany

This article helped me to realize how important it is to remain spiritually active. I became aware that you can only help a sick person when you keep your own life focused on God's Kingdom.

P. E., Austria

AN UNUSUAL CEMETERY

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT
IN ECUADOR



IN THE town of Ibarra, north of Ecuador's capital city, Quito, there is a unique cemetery—*el cementerio de los pobres* (the Cemetery of the Poor). What makes it unusual? The paintings on the outside wall are enlarged versions of illustrations taken directly from publications of the Watch Tower Society!* The picture in the center is a depiction of the apostle John, taken from page 7 of the book *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!* Above John, in Spanish, is the text: “The Kingdom of God means righteousness and peace and joy. Romans 14:17.” To the left are the words of Matthew 11:28: “Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you,” from the *New World Translation*. Doubtless this cemetery wall serves to direct people to God’s Word.

* To fulfill legal requirements, permission must be obtained before reproducing articles or artwork from Watch Tower literature, and these should be attributed to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.

"My Trust Needs to Be in God"

The following letter was left at a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

"Dear Messenger:

"I am writing to thank the person that probably unknowingly created a miracle in my life.

"A couple of weeks ago, my husband and I were in a heated argument. I had just said the words, 'This is so big that I really don't know if I can get over it.' Right then the doorbell rang. Now I had one of Jehovah's Witnesses at my door, and it was too late to hide.

"When I opened the door, I was really too distracted to hear what was being said. I do remember the words 'children' and 'family.' The man pulled out a book called *The Secret of Family Happiness*. When I saw the title, I just started to cry and couldn't stop. He looked up, and then he apologized for disturbing me, handed me the book, and left.

"The miracle? The reminder that when I don't know what to do, it's OK because God knows. My trust needs to be in God. He even sends a messenger. Thank you."

The book *The Secret of Family Happiness* can benefit every member of the family. Among its instructive chapters are "Protect Your Family From Destructive Influences," "Maintain Peace in Your Household," and "You Can Overcome Problems That Damage a Family."