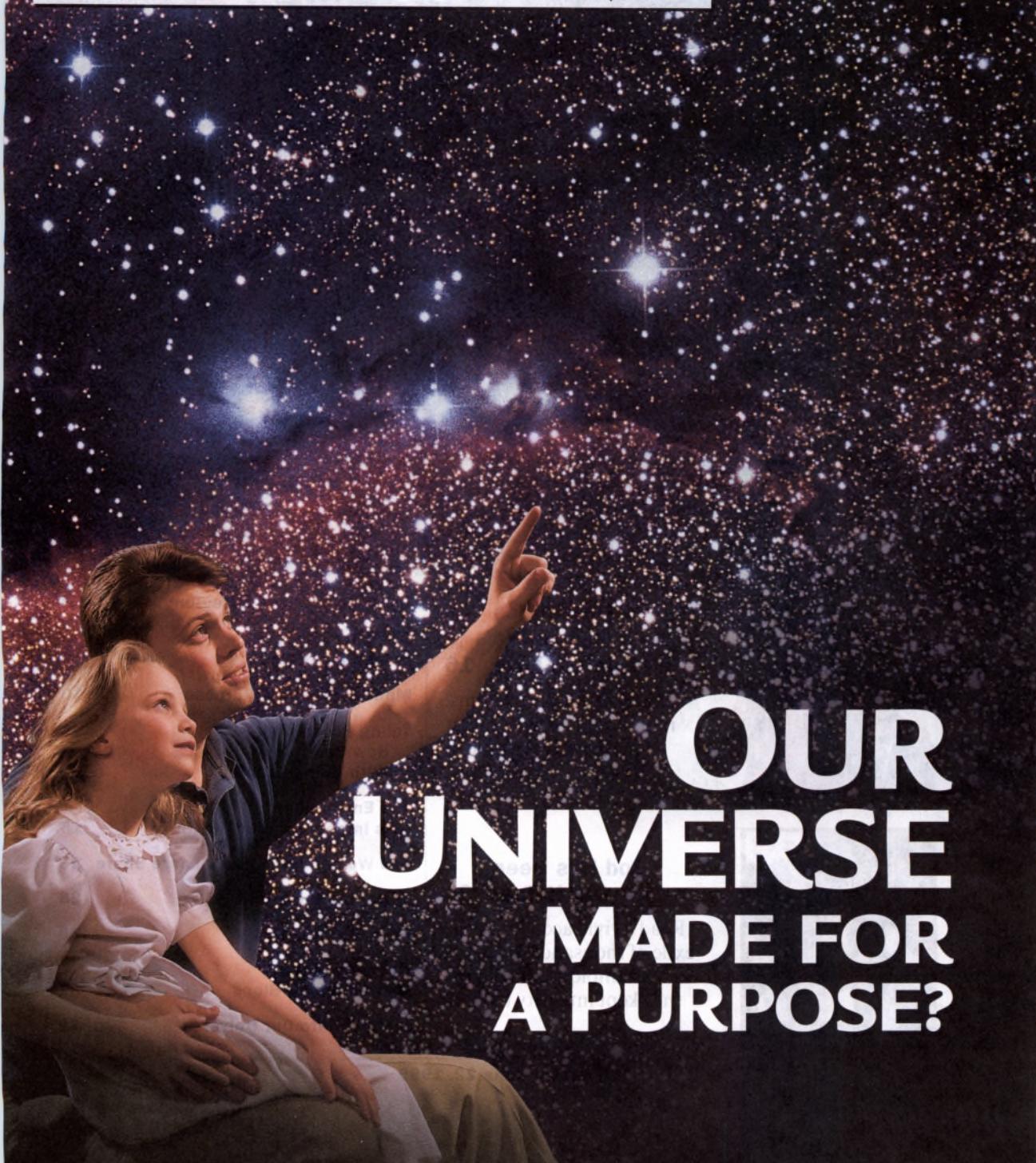


# **Awake!**

June 22, 1999



**OUR  
UNIVERSE  
MADE FOR  
A PURPOSE?**

## **Our Universe Made for a Purpose?**

**3-11**

How did our universe originate  
from what is invisible?

What reveals that it was created?

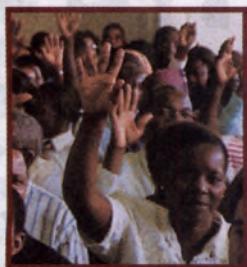
Why can we be confident  
that it will exist forever?

Cover and page 2: Courtesy of Anglo-Australian Observatory, photograph by David Malin



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# DID IT REALLY HAVE A BEGINNING?

**T**HROUGHOUT the ages many have gazed at the brilliant star-studded night sky and marveled. The immensity and awesome beauty of our marvelous universe overwhelm the senses. Who or what can account for it all? Why is it here? Has it always existed, or did it have a beginning?

Professor of astronomy David L. Block wrote: "That the universe has not always existed—that it had a beginning—has not always been popular." Yet, in recent decades evidence has forced most who study the universe to believe that it really did have a beginning. "Virtually all astrophysicists today conclude," reported *U.S. News & World Report* in 1997, that "the universe began with a big bang that propelled matter outward in all directions."

Regarding this generally accepted conclusion, Robert Jastrow, professor of astronomy and geology at Columbia University, wrote: "Few astronomers could have anticipated that this event—the sudden birth of the Universe—would become a proven scientific fact, but observations of the heavens through telescopes have forced them to that conclusion."

Is "the sudden birth of the Universe" really "a proven scientific fact"? Let us consider historical evidence that has led up to the conclusion that it is.

## Evidence of a Beginning

Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity, published in 1916, implied that the universe is either expanding or contracting. Yet, the idea was totally contrary to the then accepted view that the universe is stat-

ic, which Einstein also believed at the time. So he introduced into his calculations what he called a "cosmological constant." This adjustment was made to try to harmonize his theory with the accepted belief that the universe is static and unchanging.

However, evidence that accumulated in the 1920's caused Einstein to call the adjustment he had made to the relativity theory his 'greatest blunder.' The installation of the huge 100-inch telescope on Mount Wilson in California made possible the acquisition of such evidence. The observations made with the use of that telescope during the 1920's proved that the universe is expanding!

Previously, the largest telescopes could identify only individual stars within our own Milky Way galaxy. True, observers had noted fuzzy patches of light known as nebulas, but these were generally thought to be swirls of gaseous matter within our own galaxy. By using the more powerful Mount Wilson telescope, however, Edwin Hubble identified individual stars within these nebulas. These fuzzy patches of light were eventually identified as galaxies like our own Milky Way. Indeed, now it is estimated that there are from 50 billion to 125 billion galaxies, each having up to hundreds of billions of stars!

In the late 1920's, Hubble also discovered that these galaxies are receding from us and that the greater the distance they are away, the faster they are receding. Astronomers determine the rate of a galaxy's retreat by use of a spectrograph, which measures the spectrum of light coming from stellar objects. Light coming from distant stars is directed through a prism that disperses the light into its various color components.

Light from an object that is moving away from an observer is reddish and is called redshifted. On the other hand, light from an approaching object is called blueshifted. Significantly, apart from a few nearby galaxies, all known galaxies have spectral lines that are redshifted. Scientists thus ascertain that the universe is expanding in an orderly way. The rate of that expansion is determined by measuring the degree to which the lines in the spectrum are redshifted.

What conclusion has been drawn from the fact that the universe is expanding? Well, one scientist invited people to consider the reversal of that process. In other words, to visualize a film of the expanding universe that is being played backward so that the viewer sees the earlier history of the universe. Looked at in this way, the universe would be seen receding or contracting, rather than expanding. The universe would thereby ultimately return to a single point of origin.

In his book *Black Holes and Baby Universes and Other Essays*, published in 1993, prominent physicist Stephen Hawking concluded that "science could predict that the universe must have had a beginning."

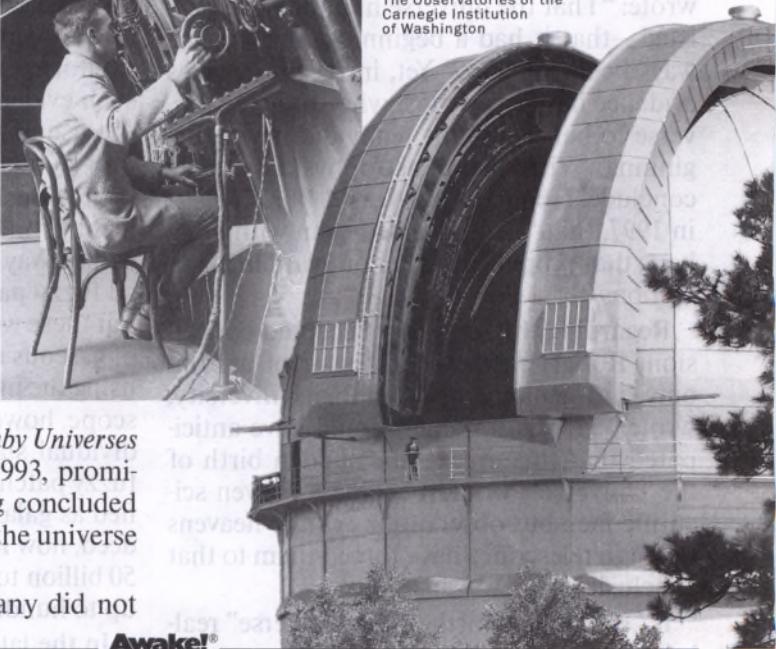
However, a few years ago, many did not

believe that the universe had a beginning. Fred Hoyle was a famous scientist who disagreed with the concept that the universe came to be in what he deridingly called 'a big bang.' Among other things, Hoyle argued that if there had been such a dynamic beginning, there should be a trace of that event preserved somewhere in the universe. There should be some fossil radiation, as it were, some faint afterglow in space. What



**The Mount Wilson telescope helped to show that our universe had a beginning**

The Observatories of the Carnegie Institution of Washington



**Awake!**

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

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

did the search for such background radiation reveal?

*The New York Times* of March 8, 1998, reported that about 1965 "the astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson discovered the ubiquitous background radiation, the left-over flash of the primordial explosion." The article added: "The [big bang] theory seemed to be clinched."

Yet, in the years following Penzias and Wilson's discovery, the question was raised by some that if the big bang model really was correct, why hadn't slight irregularities in the radiation signal been observed? For galaxies to form, the universe would have needed cooler and denser pockets where matter could have coalesced. However, the experiments conducted *from the surface of the earth* by Penzias and Wilson did not reveal such irregularities.

Therefore, in November 1989 the Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) satellite was launched into outer space by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, of the United States. Its discoveries were described as monumental. Professor Block explained: "The ripples reported by the Differential Microwave Radiometer on board COBE were the very fluctuations imprinted on our cosmos that led billions of years ago to the formation of galaxies."

### Implications of the Evidence

What can we deduce from the fact that the universe had a beginning? Robert Jas-

trow said: "You can call it the big bang, but you can also call it with accuracy the moment of creation." Penzias, who shared in the discovery of background radiation in the universe, observed: "Astronomy leads us to a unique event, a universe which was created out of nothing." And COBE team leader George Smoot remarked: "What we have found is evidence for the birth of the universe."

Is it reasonable to conclude that if there was a beginning, or creation, of the universe, there was a Beginner, or Creator, of it? Many think so. Smoot declared regarding the discoveries made by COBE: "It's like looking at God."

Of course, without the scientific evidence that has come to light in recent decades, millions have put faith in the opening statement of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."—Genesis 1:1.

Yet, not all want to acknowledge this simple statement in the Bible. "Many scientists did not like the idea that the universe had a beginning, a moment of creation," noted physicist Stephen Hawking. They "didn't like the extra-scientific implications of the theory," wrote Michael J. Behe, "and labored to develop alternatives."

So the questions are, Did the universe come into existence, in effect, by itself? Did it just happen, or was it created by an intelligent Creator? You will find the following evidence enlightening.

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# DID IT JUST HAPPEN, OR WAS IT CREATED?

**M**ANY scientists are uncomfortable with the idea that the universe was created by an intelligent Creator. So they speculate that it somehow just came into existence by itself. But no one has been able to explain how that could happen.

Actually, it is as the magazine *Scientific American* reported in its January 1999 issue: "The big bang theory does not describe the birth of the universe." The magazine added: "Another theory describing even earlier times will be needed to explain the original creation of the universe."

Yet, does it seem reasonable to you that the universe just somehow created itself? Physicist Charles H. Townes observed: "It is true that physicists hope to look behind the 'big bang,' and possibly to explain the origin of our universe as, for example, a type of fluctuation. But then, of what is it a fluctuation and how did this in turn begin to exist? In my view, the question of origin seems always left unanswered if we explore from a scientific view alone."

It is now accepted that the universe at one time did not exist and that by some means it came into existence. Can what has been learned about the laws of the universe help us to understand how this could have happened?

## "Two Sides of the Same Coin"

The above has been said of energy and matter. "Matter is simply one form of energy," *Scientific American* noted. This relationship between matter and energy was expressed by Einstein's famous formula  $E=mc^2$  (energy equals mass times the speed of light squared). This equation reveals that a little

mass, or matter, harbors unbelievable energy. "It explains," noted university professor Timothy Ferris, "why a bomb the size of an orange can lay waste to a city."

Looking at the other side of the coin—according to Einstein's theory, energy can also be turned into matter. The forming of the material universe may thus have involved what one cosmologist called "the most awesome transformation of matter and energy that we have been privileged to glimpse."

From where, though, did the matter and the energy needed for such a "transformation" originate? Science has no satisfying answer. Interestingly, the Bible says of God: "Due to the abundance of dynamic energy, he also being vigorous in power, not one of them [the heavenly bodies] is missing." (Isaiah 40:26) Whatever means God used to create the universe, he clearly has the energy and the power needed to do so.

Does scientific evidence provide a basis for believing that a Supreme Intelligence created our universe? A look at the way the universe began helps to supply an answer.

## An Orderly Beginning

Think about this: The uncontrolled conversion of matter into energy in the explosion of a nuclear bomb causes *chaos*, as was

**During the atomic blast at Hiroshima, a little matter released tremendous energy**





Courtesy of Anglo-Australian Observatory, photograph by David Malin

### **Energy turned into marvelous, orderly galaxies**

seen in Japan in the total destruction of Hiroshima and much of Nagasaki by such bombs in 1945. However, far from being chaotic, the universe is harmonious and beautiful! Consider, too, this marvelous earth with its amazing variety of life. Clearly, it could not have come into existence without some intelligent direction and control!

*Newsweek* magazine of November 9, 1998, reviewed the implications of discoveries regarding the creation of the universe. It said that the facts "suggested that matter and motion originated rather as Genesis [in the Bible] suggests, ex nihilo, out of nothing, in a stupendous explosion of light and energy." Note the reasons *Newsweek* gave for comparing the beginning of the universe with the Bible's description of the event.

"The forces loosed were—are—remarkably (miraculously?) balanced: If the Big Bang had been slightly less violent, the expansion of the universe would have been less rapid, and would soon (in a few million

years, or a few minutes—in any case, soon) have collapsed back on itself. If the explosion had been slightly more violent, the universe might have dispersed into a soup too thin to aggregate into stars. The odds against us were—this is just the right word—astronomical. The ratio of matter and energy to the volume of space at the Big Bang must have been within about one quadrillionth of 1 percent of ideal."

*Newsweek* suggested that there was, as it were, a "Tuner" of the universe, observing: "Take but degree away (see above, the one quadrillionth of 1 percent margin for error), . . . and what follows is not just discord but eternal entropy and ice. So, what—who?—was the great Tuner?"

Astrophysicist Alan Lightman acknowledged that scientists "find it mysterious that the universe was created in such a highly ordered condition." He added that "any successful theory of cosmology should ultimately explain this entropy problem"—why the universe has not become chaotic.

### Why Disinclined to Believe

Would you agree that "a highly ordered condition" points to an Organizer? Most would. But those professing atheism are not inclined to accept this. Why? Because of faith! As Professor Ferris wrote, "atheism is, let's face it, a faith like any other." And it would be better, he claimed, "if we left God out of cosmology altogether."

That is what many do—but with difficulty. For example, after noting many things that could be considered evidences of design in the universe, George Greenstein, professor of astronomy, wrote: "I became convinced that such 'coincidences' could hardly have happened by chance." Nevertheless, Greenstein asserts: "God is not an explanation." Thus some scientists sacrifice sound reasoning to preserve their scientifically religious orthodoxy.

The "faith" of the famous physicist Fred Hoyle, however, was admittedly shaken later during his life. In the 1980's, he confessed: "A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question."

Interestingly, when the age of scientific investigation in the modern sense was just dawning, Sir Isaac Newton drew similar conclusions. He was moved by his discoveries to write: "This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being."

Consider one consequence of the discoveries of laws of motion by Newton and Johannes Kepler.

### How Spaceflight Is Possible

Kepler described the laws of planetary motion in the early 1600's, and *The World Book*

*Encyclopedia* noted that these "are used to determine the orbits of artificial satellites and to plan the flights of spacecraft." In 1687, Newton published his famous laws of motion, and these laws, "like Kepler's, form a cornerstone of space-flight planning," said this encyclopedia. Why is this so?

Because by using these laws, humans can determine by mathematical calculations where in space a particular body will be at a given time. Such calculations are made possible by the consistent, ever predictable movement of heavenly bodies, including the moon and the earth. The moon, for example, speeds along in an orbit around the earth at an average of 2,300 miles per hour, completing its trip of shortly less than a month with amazing predictability. The earth makes its yearly trip around the sun, traveling some 66,600 miles per hour, with similar predictability.

Thus, when guiding flights to the moon, humans on the earth aim their spacecraft at a point in space many thousands of miles ahead of the orbiting moon. By various calculations they know exactly where the moon is certain to be at the predetermined time. And if the spacecraft is given proper direction and power, it will be at that spot too, making a moon landing possible.

What makes such predictability in the movement of





### **What laws make moon landings possible?**

heavenly bodies possible? The first American astronaut to orbit the earth, John Glenn, exclaimed regarding the order in the universe: "Could this have just happened? . . . I can't believe that." Then he added: "Some Power put all this into orbit and keeps it there."

Space scientist Dr. Wernher von Braun, in awe of the laws governing the universe, had this to say: "Manned space flight . . . has opened for us thus far only a tiny door for viewing the awesome reaches of space. Our outlook through this peephole at the vast mysteries of the universe only confirms our belief in its creator."

Famous physicist P.A.M. Dirac, who was a professor of mathematics at the University of Cambridge, concurred: "One could perhaps describe the situation by saying that God is a mathematician of a very high order, and He used very advanced mathematics in constructing the universe."

Who is this Master Mathematician, this Supreme Intellect, responsible for the marvels of creation?

### **Created by Whom?**

We do not travel through unfamiliar territory and come upon a beautiful chalet surrounded by manicured lawns and gorgeous gardens and conclude that it just happened by itself. That is a totally unreasonable conclusion. An excellent builder and a skilled gardener obviously were responsible.

Similarly, our grand universe, which is so much more complex, clearly had a Creator. In the Bible, that one identifies himself by a name, saying: "I am Jehovah. That is my name." (Isaiah 42:8) Persons who are appreciative of God's works are recorded in the Bible as exclaiming: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created."—Revelation 4:11.

Besides revealing his personal, self-given name to humans, Jehovah has also, in his written Word, revealed his purpose for preparing the earth for human habitation. And Jesus Christ, God's own Son, guaranteed that God's Word can be relied upon when he said: "Your word is truth."—John 17:17.

Not long ago a science magazine noted: "Unlike all previous generations, we know how we come to be here. But, like all previous generations, we still do not know why." Yet, the answer to that question, *Why?*, is available—God's Word provides it.

Please consider the answer in the following article.

**"Some Power put all this into orbit and keeps it there."**  
—John Glenn

NASA photo



# MADE FOR A GRAND PURPOSE

**A**S NOTED earlier, people have long looked skyward and wondered, ‘Why is it all here?’ A talented musician long ago sang appreciatively: “The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling.” —Psalm 19:1.

Our gorgeous earth brings a similar response. For example, after a spaceflight, astronaut Charles M. Duke, Jr., exclaimed: “The earth is the most beautiful sight in space, with all its colors of land, seas, and clouds.” He added: “Looking at it against the blackness of space was almost a religious experience.”

What is your response when you look at a bright, star-filled sky? Or when you view a scene on earth of spectacular natural beauty? Do you ever wonder how it came to be, or why?

## Making Known His Purpose

Jehovah proposed a question to the man Job: “Where did you happen to be when I founded the earth?” (Job 38:4) The question served to humble Job, for he, of course, did not exist at that time. Yet, long before the time

*“The most beautiful sight in space”*

of Job, God created sons in his likeness—spirit persons, angels. (Psalm 104:4, 5) So continuing his questioning of Job about the earth, God asked: “Who laid its cornerstone, when [angels] joyfully cried out together, and all the sons of God began shouting in applause?”—Job 38:6, 7.

Why was there such gladness among the angels at the founding of the earth? Because they evidently knew that the earth was special among God’s material creations. Perhaps God even gave the angels some preview of his glorious purpose respecting the earth. Later, Jehovah revealed to mankind

NASA photo



that he "did not create [the earth] simply for nothing, [but] formed it even to be inhabited," yes, to be lived upon and enjoyed by humans, even forever.—Isaiah 45:18.

After creating man and woman, Jehovah made known his purpose regarding the earth when he instructed the first couple: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28) God created the human pair with the miraculous powers to produce children, and his purpose was that the entire earth be filled with perfect people reflecting the good qualities of their Creator.

True, people now live practically everywhere on earth, but they are not inhabiting it in a way that brings credit to their Creator. Humans are in a sick, dying condition, and they do not properly care for the earth or its animal creations. Jehovah created humans perfect, and his purpose was, in the course of time, to have the entire earth brought under the control of a righteous human family all living together forever in an earthly paradise.

We can be confident that this purpose will be fulfilled. Why? Because of Jehovah's promise that what he purposed he "shall also do." (Isaiah 46:11; 55:11) His Word gives the assurance: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:29; Revelation 21:3, 4) Many may recall that God's Son, Jesus Christ, promised the repentant wrongdoer who died alongside him: "You will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43) How will that come about?

#### **How God's Purpose Will Be Fulfilled**

When Christ fully asserts his rulership over the earth, that wrongdoer will be resurrected to life on earth under the long-

prayed-for heavenly rulership. (Psalm 72:1, 5-8; Matthew 6:9, 10; John 18:36, 37; Acts 24:15) However, before the resurrection of the dead occurs, the earth will be cleansed of all those who refuse to worship God. The Bible promises: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin." And it adds: "It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44.

Surely, the all-wise Creator of our grand universe can fulfill his purpose to have this earth filled with people who reflect his good qualities! (Genesis 1:27) So that humans could have opportunity to learn how God will accomplish this, he provided a book that people everywhere can read.\* Note how a man in Dayton, Ohio, U.S.A., described it:

"I will never finish reading this book in my lifetime. It begins by having a beautiful home destroyed by rebellion. Tragedy, disaster, sorrow, murder, and death follow. As the family multiplies, the plunge into despair and darkness accelerates. Centuries roll by, nations rise and fall, thousands of characters pass in review, every human emotion from stark, raw hate to a martyr's love is encountered. Hope, beginning as a faint spark, grows to absolute assurance. A perfect government is to reestablish the beautiful home. Its ruler is the King, Christ Jesus. The government, the Kingdom of God. The family, the human race. The book is the Bible!"

We encourage you to examine this most important book, the Bible. In addition, we invite you to examine in greater detail evidence that this universe and its many features did not develop simply by chance. You will find a scholarly examination of this matter in the book *Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?* On page 32 of this magazine, you can learn how to receive a copy.

\* See *A Book for All People*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

## YOUNG PEOPLE ASK . . .

YOUTHS who act or dress differently from their peers may be the victims of cruel taunting. This is true of Christian youths, whose conduct is often quite different from that of other young people. Did not Christ say of his true followers: "If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also"?—John 15:20.

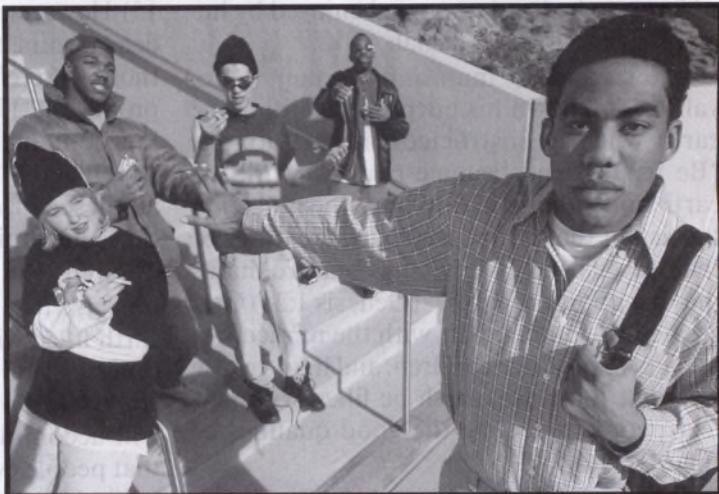
How does this affect youths who are Jehovah's Witnesses? Some of them are ridiculed for not celebrating certain holidays; others are criticized for not saluting the flag. A number of them are even harassed for not abusing drugs, for being honest, and for upholding the Bible's moral standards.

This situation is not new. Indeed, the apostle Peter told Christians living in the first century: "Because you do not continue running with [the people of the nations] . . . , they are puzzled and go on speaking abusively of you." (1 Peter 4:4) Other translations put it, they "call you ill names" (*Knox*) or, "They insult you."—*Today's English Version*.

Have you ever been ridiculed because of your religious convictions? If so, take courage. You are in good company! And you will be happy to know that you can learn to cope with the discomfort of being taunted for your faith.

### Why They Ridicule

Why do some make fun of those whose beliefs and conduct differ from their own? Sometimes ridiculers—much like bullies—are insecure. They may mock you in



## How Can I Cope With Being Taunted?

order to boost their image in front of their peers. Likely, when left to themselves, few of such hecklers would have the interest—or the courage—to criticize you openly.

On the other hand, some ridiculers are, as Peter wrote, "puzzled." Yes, they may be genuinely baffled at your course of conduct. For example, if you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses, they might sincerely think it strange that you do not participate in activities associated with certain holidays. They may have even received distorted information about Witnesses from determined opposers.

Whatever the cause, when faced with an onslaught of derisive remarks, you may agree with the Bible proverb: "There exists the one speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword." (Proverbs 12:18) But remember that those who engage in such talk are probably not doing so because they dislike you as a person. More likely, they are doing precisely

what the Bible proverb states—"speaking thoughtlessly."

Still, being ridiculed can hurt, just like a stab wound. You may even feel tempted to compromise your faith to stop the barrage of insulting talk. How, then, can you cope with being taunted for your beliefs?

### Making a Defense

The apostle Peter admonished Christians: Always be "ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect." (1 Peter 3:15) To make such a defense of your faith requires that you take in accurate knowledge and that you come to understand the reasons for your beliefs.

However, you must also learn how to express yourself to others with "deep respect" or, as *The Bible in Basic English* renders it, "without pride." Your knowledge of the Bible and its teachings should not make you feel superior to others. On the contrary, you should strive to cultivate the attitude of the apostle Paul, who wrote concerning his ministry: "I have made myself the slave to all, that I may gain the most persons."—1 Corinthians 9:19.

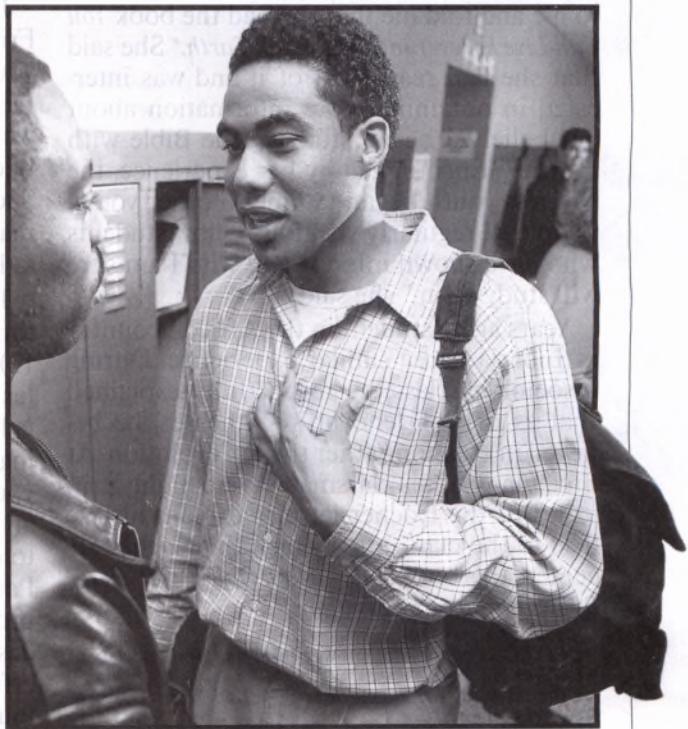
If you find that you are timid about making a defense of your faith, do not despair. Many Witness youths have felt the same way. "When I was in grade school," says Jamal, "I did not know how to explain to others why I did not celebrate holidays or salute the flag or even why I go out in the door-to-door ministry." What helped him? "My father kept working with me until I could finally explain these things, and this made a world of difference." If you have trouble explaining your beliefs to others, perhaps you can enlist the assistance of a parent or of another mature member of the Christian congregation

to help you to gain a thorough grasp of the knowledge of God.—Ephesians 3:17-19.

A 16-year-old Witness youth said that a program of personal Bible study helped her to summon the courage to speak up at school. "Before, when my classmates would tease me about being a Witness, I didn't know what to say," she admits. "Now, as a full-time evangelizer, I study the Bible a lot more, and I am able to make a reply. Keeping up with the latest articles in the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines helps me to talk to my schoolmates about my beliefs."

Of course, no two situations are alike. Different circumstances will therefore call for different responses. However, when you are provoked by an unkind remark, it is never proper to "return evil for evil." (Romans 12:17-21) An insulting comeback, no matter how witty it may seem, will only add fuel

### **Can you make a defense of your faith?**



to the fire and may even encourage further taunts. Hence, some have found it better to ignore the insult.

In some cases, such as when a statement is simply a good-natured attempt at humor, it may even be prudent to laugh along with the remark rather than take offense at it. (Ecclesiastes 7:9) If the taunter sees that his words are having little or no effect, he may well cease the harassment.—Compare Proverbs 24:29; 1 Peter 2:23.

### Speaking Up

There are times, though, when it may be possible to offer a brief, tactful explanation of your beliefs. A 13-year-old girl tried this and had marvelous results. "I was on my way to class," she said, "when several students began making fun of Jehovah's Witnesses. I felt moved to speak up, but they just walked away and continued to laugh at me—except for one, that is." The Witness student explained: "A girl named Jaimee turned to me and told me that she had the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*.\* She said that she had read most of it and was interested in obtaining more information about our beliefs. I began studying the Bible with Jaimee." Encouraged by her experience, the Witness youth began talking to other young people. "I regularly visit four fellow students who have shown interest and who I am sure will study soon," she said.

Years ago a student in the African country of Liberia had a similar experience. During a sociology class, he respectfully explained that as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, he believed in creation rather than in evolution. At first, many of his classmates were highly critical. But the teacher let him explain his beliefs to the class, after which the teacher accepted the book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?*\*\*

\* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

\*\* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

After reading the book, the teacher told the class: "This book is beyond compare. It is one of the best science books about creation that I have ever read." Then the teacher explained that he intended to use the *Creation* book along with the class textbook for the next two semesters, and he directed the class to obtain copies from the Witness student. Dozens of books were placed, and many students changed their view of Jehovah's Witnesses!

### A Tested Faith Is a Strong Faith

Granted, at times you may feel overwhelmed by the number of those who do not share—or appreciate—your Bible-based position. (Compare Psalm 3:1, 2.) Therefore, it is wise to seek out the companionship of those who do share your convictions and beliefs. (Proverbs 27:17) But what if there are no youths of like faith in your school or in your neighborhood?

If this is so, remember that your greatest Friend is Jehovah God, and he can support you. He has borne the brunt of Satan the Devil's taunts for thousands of years. Thus, we can be sure that it makes Jehovah's heart rejoice when you stand firm for your faith. Such a course gives him an opportunity 'to make a reply to Satan, who is taunting him.'—Proverbs 27:11.

It is only to be expected that from time to time, your faith will be tested. (2 Timothy 3:12) Yet, the apostle Peter assures us that the tested quality of our faith is of "much greater value than gold that perishes despite its being proved by fire." (1 Peter 1:7) Hence, when you are reproached for your faith, view it as an opportunity to strengthen your faith and to demonstrate your endurance. The apostle Paul wrote that endurance leads to "an approved condition." (Romans 5:3-5) Yes, the desire to gain Jehovah's favor provides powerful incentive for you to cope when you are taunted for your faith!

# THE ENVIRONMENT ITS Impact ON YOUR HEALTH

Photo: Casas,  
Godó-Foto

**R**ECENTLY, Dr. Walter Reed, of the World Resources Institute, told UN Radio that man's impact on global environmental systems is now at a scale where man is "disrupting these cycles in a very major way." Dr. Reed says that this

contributes to the spread of diarrheic diseases that claim the lives of three million children each year. For instance, cholera, long banished from Latin America, reappeared there and killed 11,000 people in 1997 alone.

Each day more than 30,000 children in the poorest regions of the world reportedly die of diseases related to the environment. Just try to imagine that—30,000 persons every single day of the year, enough to fill all the seats of some 75 jumbo jets!

Environmental threats to health are, however, not limited to the developing world. *Our Planet* notes that "more than 100 million people in Europe and North America are still exposed to unsafe air," which contributes to a dramatic rise in the occurrence of asthma. At the same time, increasing international travel and trade have contributed to the appearance of some 30 new infectious diseases in the developed world. In addition, the magazine reported that previously controlled diseases "have returned with a vengeance."

The tragedy is that most of these diseases related to the environment can be prevented with existing technologies and at relatively low cost. For example, significant improvements in health could be achieved by providing all people with clean water and with sanitation. How much money would it take to realize this goal? UN Radio reports that according to the United Nations *Human Development Report 1998*, providing clean water and sanitation for everyone would cost 11 billion dollars—that is less than the amount of money that Europeans spend on ice cream in one year!

environmental disruption, in turn, is contributing to health threats worldwide. In an article reviewing the book *World Resources 1998-99*, the magazine *Our Planet*, published by the United Nations, lists some of these threats to people's health. Among them are the following:

- Indoor and outdoor air pollution has been linked to respiratory infections that cause the death of almost four million children each year.
- A lack of clean water and of sanitation



# The Altaics

## A People We Came to Love

During the past century, Russian Orthodox priest Archimandrite Makarios translated the "Old Testament" of the Bible into Russian. Prior to doing so, however, he was commissioned by the church synod to acquaint the Altaics with Christianity. Who are the Altaics? Where do they live? What is their way of life?

ONE of the district conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses held in Russia last July was attended by about 40 Altaics. It took place in Barnaul, the largest city in Russia's Altay Kray. The convention had an attendance of 1,730. To attend this three-day gathering, I flew there with friends from St. Petersburg, a nearly 4,000-mile flight.

During our few days in Barnaul, we came to know and love dearly the Altaics we met. Especially were we moved when we were informed that many of them had traveled by bus nearly 400 miles over mountain roads and that even when a falling rock broke the windshield of their bus, they never entertained the thought of turning back. Upon learning about their land and culture, we were eager to visit them in their homes and villages. So after the convention, we made a fascinating journey of over 900 miles through the land of the Altaics.

### Their Land and Religion

Most of the some 70,000 Altaics, the area's original inhabitants, make their home in the mountainous areas not far from the borders of Kazakhstan, China, and Mongolia. We found the landscape there to be awe-inspiring—beautiful and mountainous, with crystal-clear rivers and plenty of flowers. The local folk gather a variety of roots from which they make a delicious aromatic tea. They also enjoy eating pine nuts.

Some Altaics own farms. One Witness said that she and her relatives have 75 head of cattle and 80 sheep. They sell the meat, and they exchange wool for flour and sugar. Another Christian sister told me that she sold four rams so that she and her daughter could go to the convention. Seven other people came with her, ones with whom she conducts Bible studies! At the

## **Altaics at the convention in Barnaul**

convention one of these told me: "We have but one way of life—God's way."

Although this is a remote area of breathtaking beauty—visitors call it the second Swiss Alps—life has changed dramatically even here. One elderly man told us: "If someone had said several years ago that I would have to lock my yurt [circular domed house] before going to bed, I would not have believed him. But now I do this every night." These "critical times" have moved many to examine prophecies in the Bible.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Altaics are generally proud of their ancient traditions and form of worship. Most believe in river and mountain spirits—to them a mountain is the symbol of their gods. These also worship animals, even drawing an image of a rabbit on a white cloth and hanging it on a wall of their yurt. When the first thunderstorm of the rainy season comes, they perform a ritual before the image of the rabbit, sprinkling it with tea, milk, or an alcoholic drink called arrack. But especially do they worship what they believe to be spirits of the dead.

Their religious leaders are called shamans. In both spring and fall, the shamans perform rituals at 'holy places' on tops of mountains or on mountain slopes. During such rituals the shamans tie white cloth strips to tree branches, covering many trees



**Many believe that these strips of cloth protect travelers**

with them. They believe that the mountain spirits will be pleased when they do this and that the spirits will protect them from mishaps while traveling.

### **The Effects of Spiritism**

My friends and I were impressed most, however, by the people and their warmhearted sincerity. We met Svetlana and her daughter Tulunai in Barnaul and then enjoyed their hospitality at Ust'-Kan, a village of about 3,000



**Scenery in Altay**





people. Svetlana was raised by her grandmother according to local traditions and in close association with the shamans. In fact, Svetlana learned to communicate with what were reputedly spirits of the dead. As a result of her special knowledge, Svetlana came to have a position of authority, which she enjoyed.

Yet, she began to experience many problems. "I was tormented by the demons," she told me. "I could not get a good night's sleep." At times, she would be in a semihypnotic state. "One time," she explained, "I saw my six-month-old daughter Tulunai in the form of a piglet that was crawling toward me. I wanted to strangle it. But Tulunai began to cry loudly. I was horrified when I came to my senses and realized that I could have killed my daughter." Svetlana began to wonder about the identity of these spirits.

Then in 1991 an Altaic woman took some Bible literature published by Jehovah's Witnesses to Ust'-Kan. Each time Svetlana started to read the brochure *"Look! I Am Making All Things New,"* she would start to fall asleep. "I would giggle," she noted, "and



#### **Preaching in Ust'-Kan**

say that the Witnesses had given me something better than any sleeping pill." But she still had disturbing visions at night and so uttered a sincere prayer: "Jehovah, if you are so powerful, please help me to get rid of these terrifying nightmares." Within a few seconds, everything was fine and she felt normal.

Svetlana started to pray before going to sleep at night, and to her surprise she would fall asleep quickly. "It was unbelievable that I could sleep like a normal person," she said. She decided to study the Bible seriously with the help of publications of the Watch Tower Society, and in 1992 she symbolized her dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism. "I learned that if you trust Jehovah completely, nothing will prove to be impossible," she told me.—Philippians 4:13.

**Svetlana and her daughter**



## Christian Worship Prospects

By 1993 a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses was established in Ust'-Kan, and some 70 people were attending meetings there. In April 1998, 120 attended the Memorial of Christ's death. The village of Yakonur, a few miles north of Ust'-Kan, was at one time considered to be the center of shamanism. But a man named Shamyt said that when Witnesses started preaching there, the shamans started to lose their power. A group of Witnesses are active in this village now, and many people are showing interest in the Bible.

In the village of Chagan-Uzun, located about 55 miles from the Mongolian border, it is said that most of the some 500 residents read our publications. And in Gorno-Altaysk, the capital of the Altay Republic, there are two congregations made up of about 160 Witnesses.

Early in 1994, however, many Witnesses, including those from Ust'-Kan, were summoned to appear in court in Gorno-Altaysk. They were charged with such outrageous offenses as practicing child sacrifice. Because of the opposition, some Witnesses were fired from their jobs and expelled from Altay. But in time it became clear that the charges against the Witnesses were false. Thus, in May 1994, the justice department of the Altay Republic legally registered the Gorno-Altaysk community of Jehovah's Witnesses. Today the Witnesses and their Bible literature are well-known throughout Altay.

## Sharing in the Ministry

During our visit to Ust'-Kan, we were able to share with the local Witnesses in their public ministry. In fact, word had been passed around that visitors were coming. So on seeing us out preaching, a reporter for the local newspaper approached our group and said: "I heard that some important people were coming our way. How can I get in touch with them?"

What a surprise he had when we were identified as the supposedly important people! He was amazed that we were out with the local folk calling on the homes of his neighbors. During our discussion with him, he remarked: "I see that there are no bosses among you. You are just ordinary people who don't view yourselves as special. This is truly remarkable! You are real Christians, and I am on your side."

Our visit came to an end all too soon. As we were leaving, our friends had tears in their eyes. They stood close together shoulder to shoulder, forming a living fence. This is a traditional Altaic farewell to their dearest friends. In the few days that we were with them, we developed deep affection for one another. We became true friends. Why? Because the one who united us is Jehovah, the impartial God.—Acts 10:34.

## On Our Return

On our return trip to Barnaul, we stopped at a store in a small mountain village. The sales clerk, who was alone, was very happy to see us. After we exchanged a few words, I asked: "Have you ever heard the name Makarios?"

"No, I haven't," she replied, after a brief pause.

So I showed her a copy of the Makarios translation of the Bible and explained: "It was here in Altay country that, during the past century, Makarios worked on this translation." At that, I presented the Bible to her as a gift.

As we continued to look around, the woman began reading it immediately. All of a sudden, we noted a sparkle of hope in the lady's eyes. When we were leaving, she told us that she has many friends and relatives who would be interested in the Bible. So before we said our final good-bye, we left her a considerable amount of Bible literature.

How rewarding it is to know that although it has been over 150 years since Makarios lived among the Altaics and worked on his Bible translation, many Altaics are benefiting from that Bible today!—Contributed.

## Makarios Bible



# God Has Been Our Helper

AS TOLD BY FRANCISCO COANA

***"If you refuse to obey the authorities, you'll be executed!" my brother warned. "That would be much better than living under these horrible conditions," I protested.***

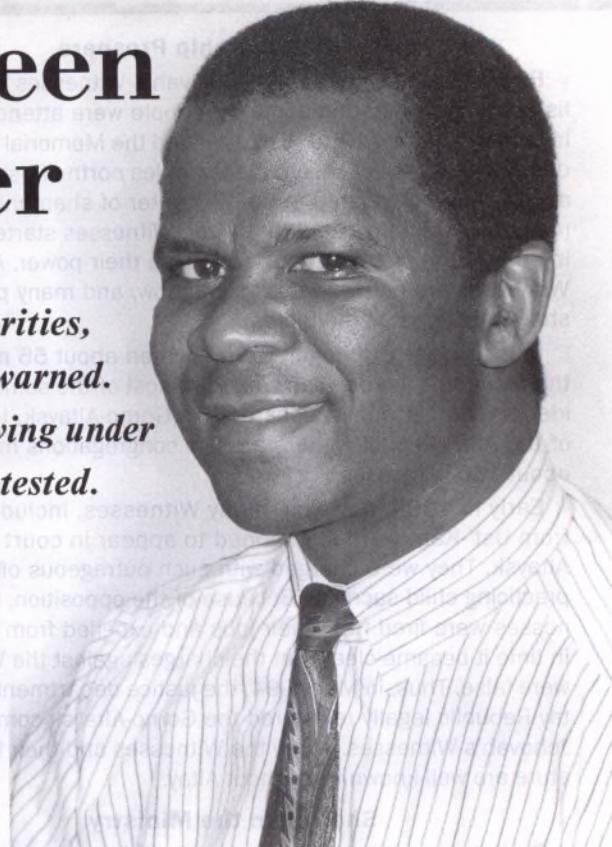
THAT was an exchange that took place between my older brother and me in September 1975. He had come to bring me food during my imprisonment in Maputo (at the time called Lourenço Marques), in southern Mozambique. Over 180 of us, the majority Jehovah's Witnesses, were crammed into a single cell. My brother was so irritated with me that he didn't even leave the food he brought!

To help you understand this emotional meeting, let me go back and explain how I came to be in prison.

## A Religious Upbringing

I was born in 1955 into a Presbyterian family in the village of Calanga in the Manica District. This is not far from the large city of Maputo. Although Father was not a church-goer, Mother was, and she would take her five children to church on Sundays. Early in our lives, she taught us the Lord's Prayer, and I would recite it often. (Matthew 6:9-12) As a young boy, I asked Mother questions such as "Why do we die?" and, "Will people always have to die?"

Mother said that death was part of God's purpose—that those who do bad will go to



hell and those who do good will go to heaven. Although I said nothing in reply, her answer saddened me. The harsh reality of death disturbed me, especially after our dear father died when I was only ten. Afterward my desire grew to know about the condition of the dead and whether there was any hope for them.

## Learning and Applying the Truth

Shortly after Father died, one of the teachers at school used the book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained* to teach our class. The book, published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, was in Zulu, a South African language. The teacher let me borrow it, and although I did not know Zulu well, I was happy with what I learned from the Bible texts cited.

When I was 16, my brother who was the breadwinner in the family was summoned to military service. That is when I began to work at a perfume company in Maputo and to attend a technical school at night. During lunch breaks at work, I observed Teófilo Chiulele, one of Jehovah's Witnesses—he was always reading the Bible. When Teófilo noted my interest, he started speaking to me.

Later, another Witness, Luis Bila, began to conduct a Bible study with me. I was relieved to learn that the dead are conscious of nothing at all and that they have the hope of being brought back to life in a resurrection. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; John 5:28, 29) I immediately wrote to Mother and provided her with Bible answers to the questions that I had asked her. She was happy to know that I had finally found reliable answers.

Moved by enthusiasm for what I was learning, I prepared to share these things with others. I was permitted to give Bible talks at school but not in church. Soon I was no longer welcome in church. Even members of my own family began to persecute me, despite the fact that Mother was pleased with my newfound beliefs. My older brother gave me a severe beating. When such opposition had no effect, family members began to mock me, especially when they saw me praying at mealtimes. So I would pray in the bathroom before coming to the table to eat. I felt that 'God was my helper.'—Psalm 54:4.

Then Luis was prevented from coming to our home to study the Bible with me. Thereafter, we studied at his home. When I began attending congregation meetings and sharing in the preaching work, I would find myself locked out of our home on my return. As a result, I ended up staying overnight at the homes of various Witnesses.

Eventually, on May 13, 1973, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism. At the time, Mozambique was under the Portuguese colonial regime, which had

banned Jehovah's Witnesses in Portugal and all of its colonies. On October 1, 1974, I became a pioneer, as full-time evangelizers are called by Jehovah's Witnesses. Since my goal was to become a missionary, I began to study English so that I could qualify to attend the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, in the United States, for missionary training.

### Using Strategy In Preaching

During those years of the ban, the Portuguese colonial police, the PIDE, imprisoned many Witnesses for preaching. So to avoid detection, we used strategy. For example, we would speak at one house and then go to another one in a different area. Also, two of us would go to a city park during our lunch break or in the evening. One would sit next to a person and begin reading the newspaper. Shortly, the other one of us would sit down, observe the newspaper, and say something like this: "My, just look at how many people died! But did you know that under God's government this will no longer happen?"

A conversation would follow during which the one who had been reading the newspaper would request Biblical proof for what the other had said. Then we would arrange to meet the next day to continue the discussion. In this way we were often able to involve the person sitting next to us in our conversations regarding Bible prophecies, and many Bible studies were started. We would thank God for helping us.

### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**Is Your Life-Style Killing You?**

**Sydney—A Vibrant Harbor City**

**Sun Lover—Protect Your Skin!**

## A Time of Severe Testing

On April 25, 1974, the dictatorship in Portugal ended, and many political changes occurred in the Portuguese colonies. In Mozambique political prisoners, as well as Witnesses who had been imprisoned for their political neutrality, were granted amnesty. But then, on June 25, 1975, only 14 months later, Mozambique declared its independence from Portugal. A few days afterward, a new wave of persecution against the Witnesses commenced. Neighborhood groups were mobilized to arrest all Witnesses who could be found. We were depicted as "agents left behind by Portuguese Colonialism."

In September, I was compelled to attend a meeting of a neighborhood group. Upon arriving, I discovered that all of those in my Bible study group were there. We were ordered to shout political slogans that exalted the ruling party. When we respectfully refrained, we were taken to prison and placed in the overcrowded cell I spoke about at the beginning.

The cell was so crowded that we could hardly move. For a few to have room to sleep on the floor, others had to sit or stand. There was only one toilet, and it was often blocked, so that it would overflow, leaving a horrible stench. Our food consisted of oily spaghetti filled with fish bones and big blue flies, which we had to eat with unwashed hands. For 19 days the more than 180 of us endured these horrible conditions. Then we were transferred to a place where only Witnesses were held, including men, women, and children. During the next few months, many children died because of the appalling prison conditions.

Eventually, the government decided to banish the Witnesses to Carico, a remote area in the north. The objective was to isolate us. There were then about 7,000 Witnesses in Mozambique, a large percentage of whom

had been baptized in 1974 and 1975. Realizing that we would need Bible literature during our isolation, I obtained permission to return home to gather some food and belongings for the journey. Unobserved by the officer who accompanied me, I partially emptied some boxes of cookies and packed Bible publications in the bottom of the boxes. At such times, we were not afraid. We trusted in God to help us.—Hebrews 13:6.

## Life in the Camps

We arrived at Carico in January 1976 and found many Witnesses from neighboring Malawi living in camps that they had constructed. From 1972 to 1975, over 30,000 people, including children, had fled from brutal religious persecution in Malawi. They were granted permission to enter northern Mozambique as refugees, and when we arrived, they shared their homes and meager provisions with us.

Since most of us had no experience in construction, our Malawian brothers showed us how to build our houses by making bricks and using these along with vegetation from the bush. They also taught us how to grow food and to do other things to maintain ourselves. Thus I learned carpentry, agriculture, and tailoring. These acquired skills proved useful to many of us when we later returned to our cities of origin.

Our principal concern was to maintain our spirituality, and I must say that we never lacked spiritual food. How was this possible? Well, as noted earlier, when we were sent into exile, many of us used our creativity to bring Bible literature along with other belongings. Also, tiny copies of *The Watchtower* were printed by Jehovah's Witnesses in South Africa. This made it easier to take them into the camps.

After many petitions, on December 1, 1978, the first marriage was permitted within the camps. That day I wed Alita Chilaule, whose father was among the first to be

baptized in Maputo back in 1958. When our children Dorcas and Samuel came along, we taught them to love Jehovah, and we regularly took them with us to our Christian meetings. Later, we had another child, named Jaimito.

### How We Preached

The Witnesses were granted permission to leave the camps to sell things, including food that they had grown. Many of us used this opportunity to preach. In fact, I deliberately asked a high price for salt so that no one would buy it. Quite a few people that I met, however, responded to the Kingdom message, and I started a number of Bible studies.

One of my Bible students spoke with a director of a certain company in nearby Mialange who manifested interest in the Bible. When I was informed of this, I corresponded with the director. He responded with an invitation for me to pay him a visit. So I hid Bible literature on myself and set off, ostensibly to sell him some furniture that I had made.

When I arrived, I found the house guarded by soldiers; and I became apprehensive. However, the man came out and informed the soldiers that he did not wish to be disturbed. We started our Bible study at five o'clock in the evening, and he showed such

great interest that we did not finish until five the next morning! Later, he offered to receive our literature from Portugal, since no restrictions were placed on his mail. Then he would give the literature to me, and I would take it into the camp.

True, some of us were apprehended and arrested a number of times for our preaching activity. Yet, when many responded to the Kingdom message, we were confident that God was helping us, just as he helped first-century Christians.—Acts, chapters 3-5.

### Release, and Return to Maputo

In September 1985, it was decided after prayerful consideration of the circumstances that we would organize a mass exodus from the camps. Although some stayed in the Carico camps and remained isolated from the rest of Jehovah's Witnesses for the next seven years, others escaped to Malawi and to Zambia. My wife and I decided to go with our children to the nearby town of Mialange. There I obtained employment and a place to live, and we continued in our ministry. The following year we finally returned to Maputo.

At first, we lived with relatives. Employment was hard to find, but in time I managed to get work. Alita sold roasted peanuts

**Witnesses in front of the Kingdom Hall built while they were in Isolation**



to augment our meager income. Since my English had improved, I submitted a job application at the British Embassy. I passed the tests and was employed at a salary 20 times higher than what I had been making before! I truly felt that Jehovah had helped me, and I thanked him in prayer.

### Balancing Responsibilities

Finally, on February 11, 1991, the Mozambican government granted legal recognition to Jehovah's Witnesses. What a memorable date for us! The following year I was invited to serve as a member of the committee that oversees the preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mozambique. At the time, our children were only 12, 9, and 6 years of age. I spent the night in prayer, asking Jehovah for wisdom in making a decision that would reflect proper balance in handling both family and organizational responsibilities.

We were able to obtain a small trailer, which we used in a business venture. We employed a number of pioneers to make and sell sandwiches, and the business prospered. Thus, I had time to care for my new organizational privileges. We were also in need of a house, since it was not possible to continue renting the house we were living in. So I prepared a request to the authorities, describing my family's situation. Soon we received approval to acquire a house. This was given

great publicity, since I was the first Mozambican to buy a house from the state.

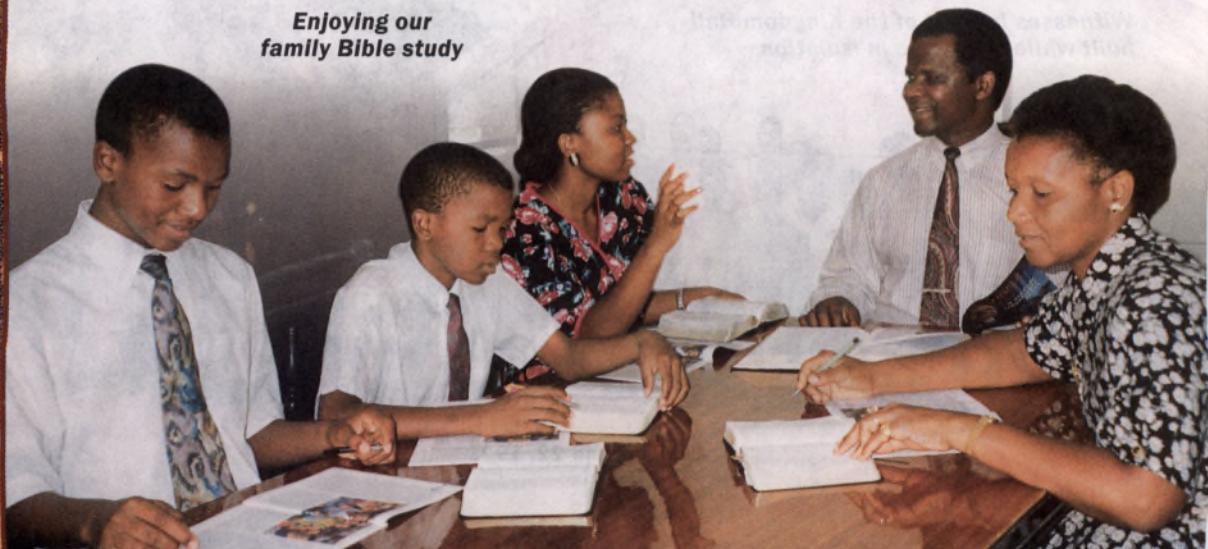
Alita and I have been blessed with children who have responded to our program of spiritual instruction. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9) Our habit has been to discuss a Bible text for the day at 5:40 a.m., after which we do Bible reading together. Since our children need to be at school early, they are accustomed to this early morning schedule. On Friday at 6:00 p.m., we have our family study, during which the children discuss with us Bible themes that they have done research on during the week. This is also the time when we practice presentations for the ministry.

All of our children are baptized. In fact, Dorcas and Samuel have been serving as pioneers since 1994, and ever since his baptism, Jaimito has been an auxiliary pioneer. The children are still in school, and each one has the goal of increasing his or her ministry afterward. Alita balances her time between pioneering and caring for our home. For many years, including the years spent in the detention camps, I served as a pioneer. However, since 1993, I have been working at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses during the day.

### Blessings From God Continue

In 1997, I received the grand blessing of attending a two-month course for Branch

*Enjoying our  
family Bible study*



Committee members. The course was held in the United States at the Watchtower Educational Center at Patterson, New York. Thus, my efforts to learn English were rewarded once again. On my way home, I was able to visit Jehovah's servants in other lands, and how this made my heart overflow with appreciation for our worldwide brotherhood!

This very love among true Christians has been a factor contributing to the drawing of additional thousands of sincere ones into association with Jehovah's Witnesses in Mozambique. (John 13:35) From the some 7,000 who were preaching when we were banished to detention camps, we now have over 29,000 preaching the good news of God's Kingdom throughout Mozambique. These are associated with more than 665 congregations; only 4 existed in 1958.

In 1993, plans were approved for a branch office in Maputo that would accommodate a branch staff of over 75 and care for the marvelous expansion of pure worship in Mozambique. After a construction period of about four years, the project was completed. Then, on December 19, 1998, our joy was unbounded when 1,098 were on hand from

many countries for the dedication of these beautiful facilities. On the program, I had the privilege of interviewing people who spent years in exile in Carico. I asked for those who had been exiled there to raise their hands, and the audience was deeply touched when hundreds of hands went up.

The following day a crowd of 8,525 were present at the Matola Assembly Hall for a review of the dedication program, encouraging reports from other countries, and Bible-based talks by visitors from the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, in Brooklyn, New York.

True, since coming to a knowledge of Bible truth as a teenager, I have experienced family opposition, threats of execution, and horrible persecution that at times made me think that dying was preferable to continuing to live. Yet, I rejoice because as a result of these experiences, my relationship with Jehovah has been refined. Indeed, as the Bible psalmist said, "God is my helper; Jehovah is among those supporting my soul." (Psalm 54:4) It has been an unequaled privilege for my family and me to serve Jehovah along with the worldwide family of his worshipers.

***Those who had been in Carico camps raised their hands***





# The Women Have Had a Large Share

THE important role of Christian women in the construction of the Zimbabwe branch of Jehovah's Witnesses was emphasized during the dedication program, which was held on December 12, 1998. During the four years of the construction project, volunteers from many countries—including hundreds from Zimbabwe—gave of their time, energy, skills, and resources to build the beautiful complex of buildings that you see in the accompanying photograph.

You will note six residence buildings of similar size in the rear. The large building closest to them accommodates the dining room, the kitchen, and the laundry. The residence buildings have 61 bedrooms, and the dining

#### Zimbabwe branch

room will seat about 200. In front, to the left, is the office building. In the center is the reception area, and to the right is the warehouse, where the dedication program was held.

This fine branch facility in Zimbabwe, in southern Africa, is only one among scores of such projects that have been completed since an international construction program was initiated by Jehovah's Witnesses in November 1985. *Awake!* of August 22, 1991, described this program in an article entitled "Something New in International Construction."

Regarding the role of women in that program, *Awake!* reported: "Many have been trained to tie reinforcing steel together with wire, to set and grout tile, as well as to sand and paint. Others care for necessary domestic chores. All of them thereby contribute in a fine way to the work at construction sites around the world."

During the recent dedication program in Zimbabwe, George Evans and James Paulson, who were in construction oversight, drew a comparison between the role that women had in building the branch in Zimbabwe and the role that women had in building Israel's ancient tabernacle. "They came, everyone whose heart impelled him," the Bible says about the Israelites, "and they kept coming, the men *along with the women*."—Exodus 35:21, 22.

Using this Bible account, Brothers Evans and Paulson emphasized the quality of the women's contribution. They quoted the Bible account: "All the women who were *wise of heart* spun with their hands, . . . all the women whose hearts impelled them *with wisdom*." Indeed, the women were among those who gave of themselves willingly to do the work. "Every man *and woman* whose hearts incited them to bring something for all the work that Jehovah had commanded to make by means of Moses did so."—Exodus 35:25, 26, 29.

Regarding the Zimbabwe branch project, the construction overseers said: 'The women did every job that the men did.' This included tying steel and running heavy equipment. Brother Paulson said that the women kept their concrete trucks and other heavy equipment in shiny, spotless condition, which, he noted, men are generally not inclined to do.

Surely, we are grateful for the many thousands of women who have shared alongside the men in the worldwide construction of branch offices and Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses!



### **Quest for Spiritual Enlightenment**

"As the end of the century approaches, the British are searching for something spiritual in their lives, to judge by their appetite for books about faith, the occult and the supernatural," says *The Times* newspaper. According to a study appearing in *Cultural Trends*, the number of books with religious titles has risen by 83 percent in the past five years and those on New Age and the occult by as much as 75 percent. Contrastingly, the number of science books published has fallen, with those on chemistry and physics decreasing by 27 percent. Reflecting on these statistics, Sara Selwood, editor of the report, suggested that "towards the end of a century, people become more introspective and wonder what it's all about." Then why have atlases and books on geography increased by 185 percent? It may suggest "a need for escapism," she said.

### **Religious Freedom Violated in Europe**

The International Helsinki Federation "has charged 19 European countries with violating religious freedoms," reports the magazine *Catholic International*. The federation noted that pressure against religious minorities has been especially strong in Orthodox countries. In addition, several European Union member states are "drafting laws to strengthen the status of traditional faiths while restricting smaller groups like [Je-

hovah's Witnesses]," the magazine stated. The federation's director, Aaron Rhodes, added: "Western societies show signs of being stampeded by fears of a 'sect invasion' into clamping down on religious minorities. The situation will deteriorate until people come to see freedom of belief as part of a set of values and rules which must be upheld equally for everyone."

### **"Theology of Prosperity"**



Quoting Lutheran theologian Wanda Deifelt, the *ENI Bulletin* states that "traditional Protestant churches in Latin America are being 'eclipsed' by new, fast-growing religious movements preaching a 'theology of prosperity.'" According to Deifelt, Brazil's Pentecostal and charismatic churches now have "two or three times more members than the traditional mainstream churches." The "theology of prosperity" promises believers "immediate rewards for financial contributions to the church," she said. "A prayer to God is almost like a business transaction . . . If I give something to God, God has to give something to me." The movements recruit members from among Brazil's poor. Why do followers remain when the promised prosperity does not occur and it is the church lead-

ers who are benefiting the most? Says Deifelt: "The most common approach is to have two [religions] to make sure that if one doesn't work, the other will." Besides, "they talk the language people understand, and say what people want to hear."

### **Check Video Games**

"Parents are being taken for idiots," declares the French newspaper *Le Figaro*. Why? Because most are apparently unaware of the contents of video games for youngsters. For example, the aim of one game is to torture the enemy, the aim of another, to run over pedestrians. One of the most successful games in recent times features ten hideous ways to torture women. *Le Figaro* encourages parents to undertake "a detailed inspection" of their children's games to uncover the "hidden barbarity," which so often exists. Agreeing "to buy what youngsters ask for with eyes closed is becoming increasingly dangerous," says the paper. It also raised this question, "How much nerve does it take to go on about human rights when we let the shelves fill up with things that so openly flaunt those rights?"

### **"The Overlooked Helper"**

An important factor in the healing process of hospital patients has long been neglected, says the German journal *Psychologie Heute*. It is the patient in the neighboring bed. A study showed that having a fellow sufferer nearby helps therapeutically and that, contrary to

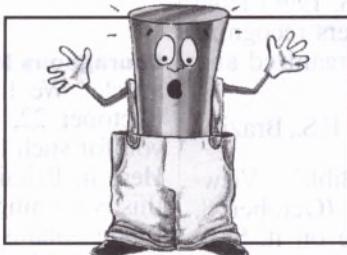
popular belief, only a minority of all patients, about 7 percent, want to be alone. Most like to share their hospital room with one or two patients. However, the type of individuals they are makes a difference. The ideal roommate "should first and foremost be sociable and tolerant," the article said. The following desirable qualities were listed in order of importance: "understanding, humorous, clean, open-minded, helpful, considerate, orderly, friendly, honest, neat, balanced, patient, discreet, kind, quiet, intelligent, flexible, and alert."

#### Dangers of Too Much Exercise

While exercise is good for the heart and lungs, too much exercise can weaken bones, leading to problems in later life. That is what was reported at a conference dealing with the impact of exercise on the human skeleton, according to *The Guardian* of London. Runners and those "in the pursuit of supreme fitness" were at greatest risk. Young women who participate too often in aerobic or dance classes experience more stress fractures and are said to risk suffering from osteoporosis when they are older. "Athletes were warned that they only had until the age of 18 or 19 to strengthen their bones before they started becoming weaker with time," the article said. "Squash and tennis were identified as the best sports to play to increase bone strength." Michael Horton, head of the University College of London's bone center, advised striking a proper balance between exercise and health. He warned: "The Government keeps saying

that young people should do lots of exercise. It may have a benefit for a while, but no one has thought what the end result is going to be when these young people reach the age of 50."

#### A Weight Problem



Since the late 1800's, *Le Grand K*, a platinum-iridium cylinder about the size of a film canister, has been the world's standard measure of a kilogram. Even the U.S. pound is based on it. However, scientists are concerned that the mass of this cylinder seems to be changing. Housed under three bell jars and locked in a safe in a suburb of Paris, France, the cylinder has been taken out only three times in a century. The journal *Science* reports that after the most recent occasion, scientists "concluded that its mass was drifting by less than 5 millionths of a gram per year." This tiny difference—probably a gain—may be attributable to contaminants that build up on the object's surface despite cleaning procedures. Today's technology demands increasingly precise measurements. Space travel, for example, depends on atomic clocks that lose only one second in 1.4 million years. Thus, scientists are debating ways to base the kilogram on an even more reliable standard. However, notes *Science*, this may re-

quire "a level of precision that will force scientists to worry about effects as small as missing atoms."

#### No Cold Cure?

After ten years of research costing £5 million (\$8 million), Britain's Common Cold Centre has finally admitted defeat. With more than 200 different viruses that cause the common cold, trying to find one cure for the cold is "like trying to cure measles, chickenpox, mumps and rubella all at once," comments Professor Ronald Eccles, director of the center at the University of Wales, Cardiff. "I don't foresee a cure in which we eradicate all the viruses. I think the best we can hope for is to live at peace with it."

#### What Mitch Accomplished

Although Mitch, last year's devastating hurricane, left thousands dead in its wake and affected approximately one million people, it did have one positive aftereffect. It helped archaeologists who were excavating the ruins of León Viejo, Nicaragua—some 50 miles northeast of the capital—by "exposing new walls, bones, and archaeological pieces," reports the newspaper *Excelsior*, of Mexico City. Rigoberto Navarro, director of the León Viejo Ruins Historical Site, explained that Mitch washed away the earth and uncovered a site for which the archaeologists had unsuccessfully been searching for a long time. A wall 8 feet high, 30 inches wide, and 300 feet long was left exposed. According to Navarro, "the hurricane did in three days what archaeologists would have taken years to do," the paper stated.

## FROM OUR READERS

**Hurricane Pauline** It always makes me happy when I am reminded that I am part of an organization that really cares about people. Thank you for the excellent article "Two Faces of a Disaster." (October 8, 1998) How satisfying it is to know that others recognize that Jehovah's Witnesses are "organized and honest"!

D. F. S., Brazil

**Solitude** The article "The Bible's Viewpoint: The Value of Solitude" (October 8, 1998) seemed to have my name on it. Solitude is something necessary in order for me to keep doing well spiritually and emotionally. However, I will remember the point that solitude is "a rewarding place to visit but a dangerous place in which to remain."

L. G., United States

**Vatican and Holocaust** Over the years, Witnesses have come to my home, and we have had a pleasant time. However, I found your article "The Catholic Church and the Holocaust" (October 22, 1998) to be offensive. Pope Pius XII was a saintly man who did all that he could to assist Jews, and thousands were saved by his efforts!

J. P., United States

*Our intent was not to offend Catholic readers but to give an accurate report on the controversy over the Vatican document "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah." Statements made in the article were the views of respected historians, writers, and jurists—some of whom are Roman Catholics themselves. Obviously, any role the Vatican might have played in saving lives is commendable. Still, it is a fact that the pope failed to speak out publicly against the Nazi regime. Doing so might well have saved millions of lives.—ED.*

**Loving One Another** The series "Will All People Ever Love One Another?" (October 22, 1998) was excellent! It has helped me to restrain a powerful urge I sometimes have

to nurture resentment and hatred. Many thanks! I hope that the encouragement I receive from your publications will help me to become a servant of Jehovah God.

G. C., Italy

**Courageous Missionaries** After reading the article "We Live No Longer for Ourselves" (October 22, 1998), I just had to say thank you for such faith-strengthening information. Here in Britain we face a lot of apathy. But this is nothing compared with what Jack and Linda Johansson went through. The article really touched my heart and made me grateful for what I have.

L. J., England

My wife and I have been full-time ministers for some years now, and we know that adapting to a new assignment can be a real challenge. The Johanssons were frank in expressing how they felt when they moved. Their story showed us that our feelings are not unique and that we should continue relying on Jehovah.

S. E. C., Brazil

**Making the Truth One's Own** I am 12 years old, and I enjoyed the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Make the Truth My Own?" (October 22, 1998) Now that school has started, it is a bit more difficult to prepare for Christian meetings. But I have to buy out time. I think that this article is going to help many young people to develop affection for Jehovah and deep roots in the truth.

C. S., Portugal

A year ago I was asking myself the same questions about the truth. I wasn't sure whether I really loved the truth or was in it because of my family. Then I did as you encouraged—I proved it to myself by doing Bible research. I am now happy to say that the truth is my own. I look forward to being a full-time evangelizer!

H. N., United States

# Concerns About CONTAMINATED BLOOD



WHEN Demetrio Pessoa, a biochemist in Bolivia, ran into complications after surgery, he was rushed to a clinic. There he received a blood transfusion, and his situation stabilized. Before long, however, the biochemist broke out in a fever. After examining him, the doctors told him the bad news: Mr. Pessoa had received blood contaminated with the parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi*. As a consequence, he had become a victim of Chagas' disease.

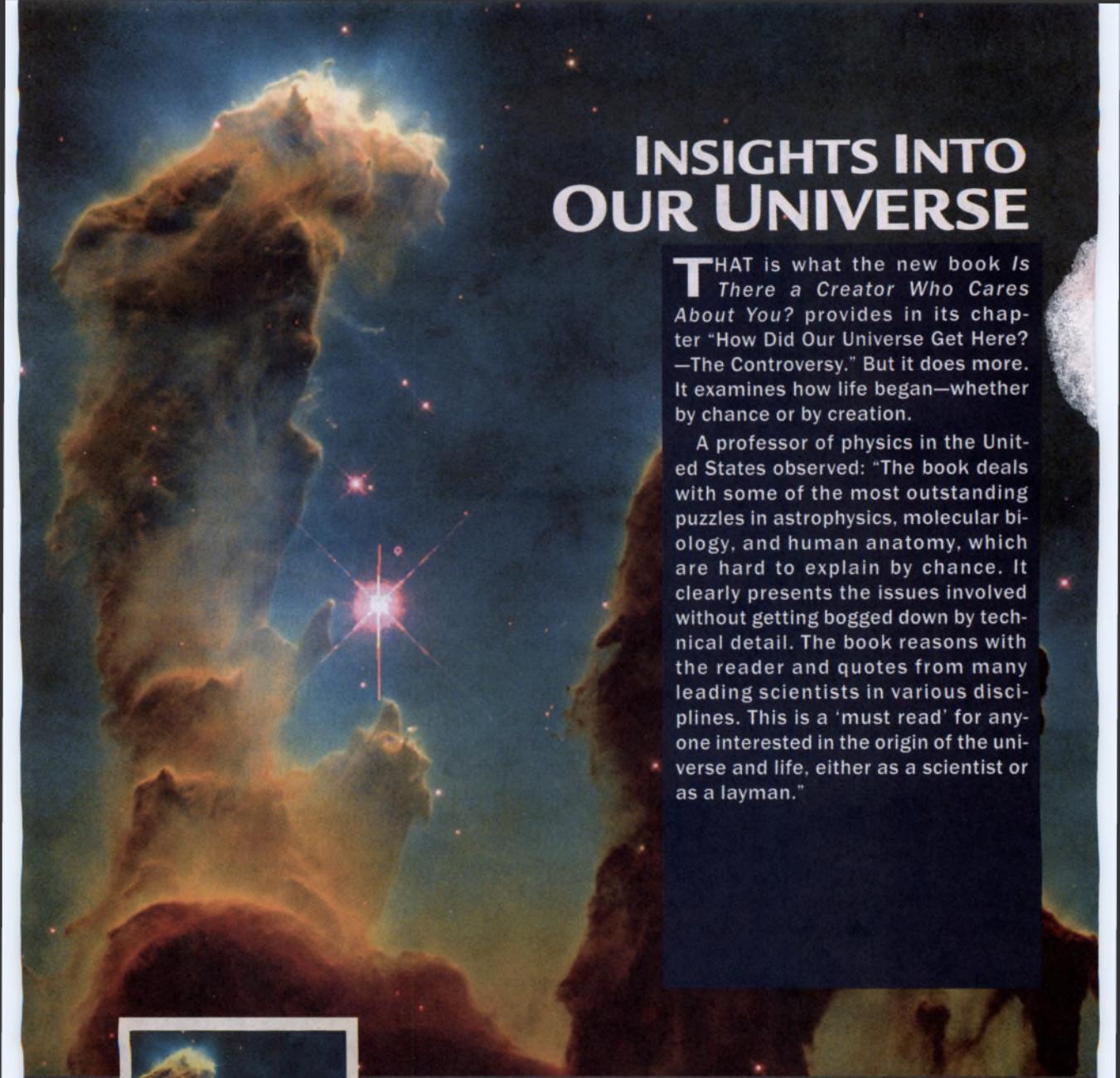
Mr. Pessoa's case is no exception in Bolivia, notes Panos, a London-based news organization. A lengthy medical study carried out in 12 Latin-American countries shows that in that part of the world, infections caused by contaminated blood are everyday occurrences. In one Latin-American country, of every 10,000 patients who received a blood transfusion, 220 ended up with an infectious disease. That means that 1 out of every 45 persons given a blood transfusion became a victim!

Chagas' disease, though, is not the only threat. The same study shows that several Latin-American countries did not test donated blood for hepatitis C and that in some countries tests for syph-

ilis were carried out only occasionally. In addition, a number of countries lacked sufficient equipment to test blood for HIV. When speaking about contaminated blood, Tonchi Marinkovic, the Bolivian minister of health, said: "God save us from an emergency, because we might end up with a medical crisis of syphilis, hepatitis, Chagas' or AIDS."

Unwittingly, this government official was pointing in the right direction for halting this threatening medical crisis. The journal *Noticias Bolivianas* noted some years ago in an article on the risks of blood transfusions: "Abstinence from blood is recommended in harmony with the Biblical commandment." The Biblical command that this Bolivian journal refers to is found at Acts 15:29. It says: "Keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper."—See also Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 3:17.





# INSIGHTS INTO OUR UNIVERSE

**T**HAT is what the new book *Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?* provides in its chapter "How Did Our Universe Get Here?—The Controversy." But it does more. It examines how life began—whether by chance or by creation.

A professor of physics in the United States observed: "The book deals with some of the most outstanding puzzles in astrophysics, molecular biology, and human anatomy, which are hard to explain by chance. It clearly presents the issues involved without getting bogged down by technical detail. The book reasons with the reader and quotes from many leading scientists in various disciplines. This is a 'must read' for anyone interested in the origin of the universe and life, either as a scientist or as a layman."



Is There a  
Creator  
Who Cares About You?

J. Hester and P. Scowen (AZ State Univ.), NASA

on the left of the 2000-micron wavelength. In the  
middle, the 3.6-micron band shows the  
dust at the top of the pillars.