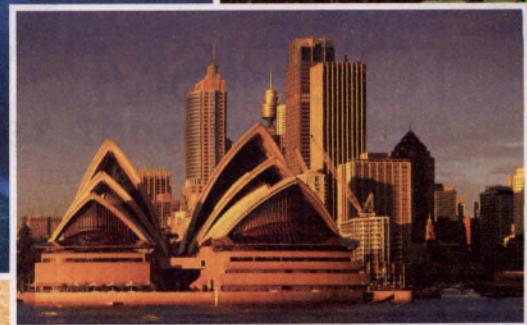


# Awake!

AUGUST 22, 2005

## TOURISM A Force for Good?



# Awake!

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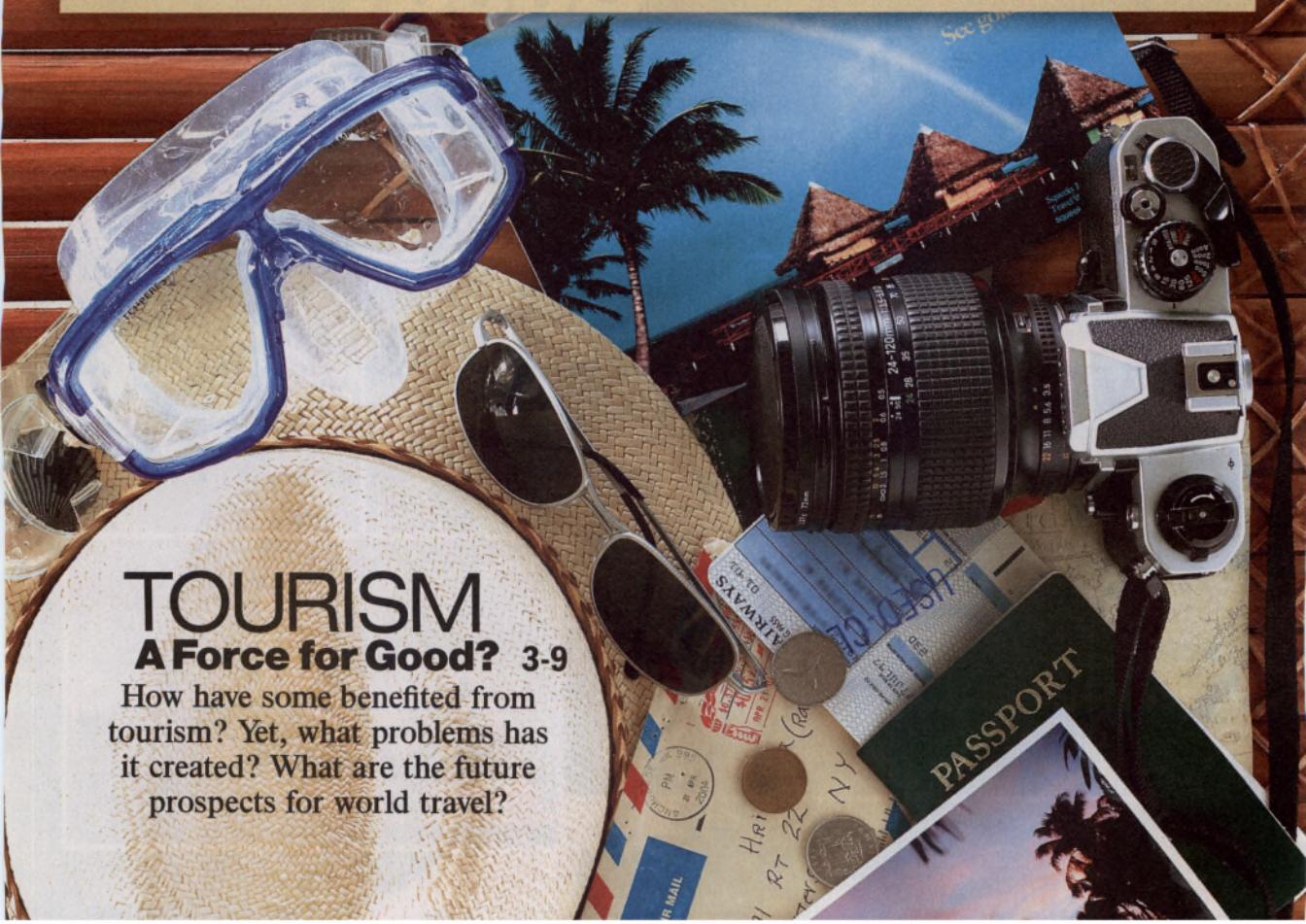
Read about a 17,000-foot-high mountain whose peaks rise above the equator.



Picture Courtesy of Camerapix Ltd.

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How have some benefited from tourism? Yet, what problems has it created? What are the future prospects for world travel?



# "The World's Number One Employer"

Each year over 600 million people travel internationally.

Hundreds of millions more journey within their home country, doing so for both work and pleasure. As a result, the tourism industry—including hotels, resorts, airlines, travel agencies, and other businesses that cater to travelers—is described as "the world's number one employer."



**W**ORLDWIDE, tourism generates an estimated four trillion dollars annually. Individual tourists may not view themselves as part of a worldwide peace movement, but this is how the UN World Tourism Organization describes the industry. In 2004, Francesco Frangialli, secretary-general of the organization, told a presidential conference in the Middle East: "Tourism and peace are inseparable. The forces unleashed by tourism are so powerful that they can change apparently irreversible situations and bring about reconciliation where none was considered possible."

What are the origins of this influential industry? Is tourism truly a force for good? And can "the forces unleashed by tourism" really bring peace?

## A Golden Age of Tourism

The seeds of the modern tourist industry in the West were sown especially in the 19th century. As the industrial revolution swelled the ranks of the middle classes in Europe and the United States, a growing number of people found themselves with both the money and the time to travel.

In addition, great advances were made in methods of mass transportation. Powerful

locomotives pulled passengers between major cities, and great steamships sped them between continents. To cater to the growing traffic, large hotels sprang up near railway terminals and shipping ports.

In 1841, English entrepreneur Thomas Cook saw the potential in tying these elements together. He was the first to combine transportation, accommodation, and activities at desired locations into a holiday package tour. "Due to the system founded by Mr Cook," noted the British statesman William Gladstone in the 1860's, "whole classes have for the first time found easy access to foreign countries and have acquired some of the familiarity with them which breeds not contempt but kindness."

### The 20th-Century Boom

Regrettably, the growing familiarity with foreigners fostered by tourism did not restrain the outbreak of two world wars during the first half of the 20th century. Rather than ruining tourism, though, the social changes and technological advances spawned by those wars actually accelerated the growth of the industry.

Air travel became faster and less expensive, highways spread across continents, and motor vehicles proliferated. By the middle of the 20th century, holidays and tourist travel were an accepted part of Western culture and were available to most classes of society. In addition, millions of households acquired television sets and became fascinated by

pictures of exotic locations, fueling the urge to travel.

During the early 1960's, the number of international tourists reached 70 million each year. By the mid-1990's, that figure ballooned to over 500 million! Around the globe, tourist resorts sprang up to cater to both international and domestic travelers. Industries not directly associated with tourism benefited, since tourists consume vast quantities of food and drink and spend money on numerous other goods and services.

Today tourism is important to the economy of over 125 countries. Highlighting the benefits tourism can bring, a 2004 UN World Tourism Organization news release explained that tourism can alleviate poverty through the creation of small and medium-size tourism businesses. As it creates new jobs, it can raise "environmental, cultural and social awareness."

But you may ask: 'How can tourism do such things? And how could it benefit the environment?'

### Selling Nature to Save It

In the early 1980's, some scientists and filmmakers took an increasing interest in saving rain forests and coral reefs as well as the creatures that depend on them. The resulting reports and nature documentaries heightened the public's interest in visiting these natural marvels. The small businesses that sprang up to cater to the scientists and filmmakers expanded to care for the influx of ecology-minded tourists.

## Awake!

**THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED** 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.

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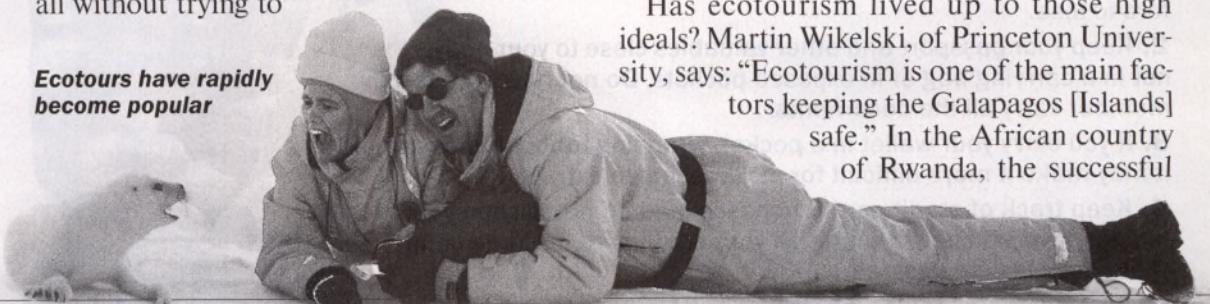
Ecotours have rapidly become popular, making ecotourism the fastest-growing segment of the tourism industry. Indeed, promoting natural wonders has proved very profitable. Journalist Martha S. Honey explained: "In several countries, nature-based tourism mushroomed into the largest foreign exchange earner, surpassing bananas in Costa Rica, coffee in Tanzania and Kenya, and textiles and jewelry in India."

Tourism has thus provided a valuable financial incentive to save plants and animals. "In Kenya," Honey observed, "it is estimated that one lion is worth \$7,000 per year in income from tourism, and an elephant herd is valued at \$610,000 annually." Hawaii's coral reefs are estimated to generate \$360 million each year from nature-based tourism!

### Identifying an Ecotour

The United Nations Environment Programme report *Ecotourism: Principles, Practices and Policies for Sustainability* says: "Many travel and tourism businesses have found it convenient to use the term 'ecotourism' in their literature, and governments have used the term extensively to promote their destinations, all without trying to

**Ecotours have rapidly become popular**



**Semimonthly Languages:** Afrikaans, Albanian, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech,<sup>#</sup> Danish,<sup>#</sup> Dutch, English,<sup>#+</sup> Estonian, Finnish,<sup>#</sup> French,<sup>#</sup> German,<sup>#</sup> Greek, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,<sup>#</sup> Japanese,<sup>#</sup> Korean,<sup>#</sup> Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese,<sup>#</sup> Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,<sup>#</sup> Swahili, Swedish,<sup>#</sup> Tagalog, Ukrainian

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implement any of the most basic principles [of ecotourism]." How can you determine if the tour you are considering is really an ecotour?

Megan Epler Wood, author of the above report, identifies a good ecotour as containing the following features: Prior to the trip, it provides information about the culture and environment to be visited as well as guidelines on appropriate dress and behavior; it arranges for an in-depth briefing of the participants regarding the geographical, social, and political characteristics of the host destination and opportunities for interaction with the locals other than at a commercial venue; it ensures that all park entry fees are paid in full; and it offers site-sensitive accommodations.

### What Ecotourism Has Accomplished

Ecotourism is often more than just an organized tour of a natural site. It has been defined as "purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people."

Has ecotourism lived up to those high ideals? Martin Wikelski, of Princeton University, says: "Ecotourism is one of the main factors keeping the Galapagos [Islands] safe." In the African country of Rwanda, the successful

Publication of *Awake!* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

**Would you welcome more information?** Write Jehovah's Witnesses at the appropriate address: **America, United States of:** Wallkill, NY 12589. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **New Zealand:** P.O. Box 75-142, Manurewa. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

promotion of ecotourism is credited with saving the mountain gorilla population, as it provides the local people with a source of income that is an alternative to poaching. In other African countries, game reserves are sustained by tourist spending.

Worldwide, ecotourism has contributed to environmental and social improvements, and the tourism industry has undeniably brought many financial benefits. But is this industry always a force for good? What are future prospects for world travel?

## Tips for International Travelers\*

### Before you leave

1. Make a list of important facts—passport information, credit card numbers, airline ticket numbers, and details regarding traveler's checks. Leave a copy at home, and carry another copy with you.
2. Ensure that you have an up-to-date passport and a valid visa; arrange for any immunization shots that may be required.
3. Ensure that you have adequate medical insurance, since emergency treatment or transportation from overseas could cost you thousands of dollars. If you have a medical condition, take a letter with you from your doctor that describes your condition and any medications you take. (Note: It may be illegal to take some medications into certain countries. For details, check with the nearest embassy or consulate of the country you plan to visit.)

### While traveling

1. Do not take any item with you that you cannot afford to lose.
2. Keep your passport and other valuables close to your body, not in a carrying bag or in exposed pockets. Do not have one family member carry all the documents.
3. If you carry your wallet in a pocket, wrapping rubber bands around it may make it more difficult for pickpockets to extract.
4. Keep track of credit card purchases, and do not exceed your budget. If you exceed the limit on your credit card, in some countries you could be arrested.
5. Be cautious of taking photographs of military personnel or structures or of industrial structures, such as harbor, rail, or airport facilities. Some countries may view this as a security threat.
6. Do not deliver packages for anyone you do not know well.

### When buying souvenirs

1. Remember, many countries ban the importation of ivory, turtle shells, plants, fur, and other items, even if they are small souvenirs.
2. Be cautious of buying glazed ceramics, since some of such items may cause lead poisoning if not made correctly.



\* Information adapted from Department of State Publication 10542.

# The Future of Tourism

**"There are examples from almost every country in the world, where tourism development has been identified as being the main cause of environmental degradation."—*An Introduction to Tourism*,**  
by Leonard J. Lickerish and Carson L. Jenkins.



NOT only might the growth of tourism be a threat to the environment but it may contribute to other problems as well. Let us briefly consider some of these. Afterward, we will discuss future possibilities of touring our marvelous earth and of becoming acquainted with its wonders, especially its lovely people.

## Environmental Problems

The sheer volume of tourists today has led to problems. "In India, the Taj Mahal is suffering wear and tear from visitors," write researchers Lickerish and Jenkins, adding: "In Egypt, the pyramids are also threatened by large numbers of visitors."

In addition, these authors warn that uncontrolled tourism can kill or stunt vegetation when hordes of visitors tramp through conservation areas. Moreover, species can be endangered when tourists collect items such as rare seashells and coral or when local residents gather these items to sell to tourists.

Tourists produce pollution—an average of 2.2 pounds of solid waste and litter each day per tourist, according to estimates by the UN Environment Programme. Even the most remote locations seem to suffer. A recent report from the Rainforest Action Network says: "In popular Himalayan tourist routes, litter has been strewn along the trails and the alpine forest [has] been decimated by travelers looking for fuel to heat food and bathe water."

Furthermore, tourists often consume a disproportionate amount of resources at the expense of local inhabitants. For example, James Mak writes in his book *Tourism and the Economy*: "Tourists in Grenada consume seven times as much water as residents." He adds: "Directly and indirectly, tourism accounts for 40 percent of total energy consumed in Hawaii, although on average only one out of every eight people in Hawaii is a tourist."

While tourists may spend a lot of money to visit developing countries, most of it does not benefit the local population. The World Bank estimates that only 45 percent of the revenue raised by tourism reaches the host country—most of the money floods back to developed nations by way of overseas tour operators and foreign-owned accommodations.

#### **Adverse Social Impact**

Relatively affluent Western tourists visiting developing countries can have other subtle—and sometimes not so subtle—adverse effects on local cultures. Tourists, for instance, often bring their material comforts with them. For local people such wealth may be unimagined. Many locals come to desire such expensive things but cannot pay for them without major lifestyle changes—changes that may involve detrimental social behavior.

Noting potential problems, Mak observed that the increase of tourism can “lead to the loss of cultural and community identity, create conflict in traditional societies over the use of community-owned land and natural resources, and increase antisocial activities, such as crime and prostitution.”

Often tourists today feel free of restraint, so they engage in activities that they would not share in if they were at home around family and friends. The immorality of tourists, as a result, has become a problem of serious consequence. Pointing to a noted example, Mak said: “Worldwide concern is growing over the effects of tourism on child prostitution.” In 2004, CNN news agency reported: “Reliable estimates point to 16,000-20,000’ child sex victims in Mexico, ‘largely in border, urban, and tourist areas.’”

#### **The Benefits of Travel**

Our earth is a marvelous home, displaying constant wonders—colorful sunsets, glistening star-filled skies, and a variety of plant and animal life. Regardless of where we live, we enjoy some of these and other marvels of our earthly home. Yet, how fine if the opportunity arises for us to travel and see other examples of earth’s wonders!

Despite being impressed by earth’s physical spectacles, however, many tourists say that for them the highlight of travel is getting to know people of cultures different from their own. Often, travelers come to appreciate

*A highlight of travel can be making friends with people of another culture*



that negative views about others are not true. Their travel contributes to understanding people of other races and cultures and developing treasured friendships.

A lesson impressed upon many tourists is that possessions do not necessarily make people happy. More important is one's relationship with others—enjoying established friendships and making new ones. An account in the Bible relates how the "human kindness" received from the "foreign-speaking people" of Malta benefited the first-century travelers who found themselves shipwrecked there. (Acts 28:1, 2) Visiting other countries and peoples today has helped many to realize that we are truly one human family and that we have the potential of living together on earth in peace.

Now, relatively few are able to tour the world. But what about the future? Is it possible that such travel will be an experience of the majority, if not everyone?

### **Future Prospects**

The fact is, we are all relatives, members of the human family. True, the first human couple died, as they were warned they would if

they disobeyed God. (Genesis 1:28; 2:17; 3:19) So all their offspring, including all of us today, are also subject to aging and death. (Romans 5:12) But God promises that his original purpose for earth to be inhabited by people who love him will be fulfilled. "I have even spoken it," his Word says, "I shall also do it."—Isaiah 45:18; 46:11; 55:11.

Think of what that will mean! The Bible promises that under the rule of God's Kingdom: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:29; Matthew 6:9, 10) Describing the future situation of people on earth, the Bible says: "God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore."—Revelation 21:3, 4.

Think of the marvelous possibilities then of touring the earth and of becoming acquainted with its wonders, especially its lovely people. No worry at that time about security! All on earth will then be our friends—indeed, what the Bible describes as an 'entire association of brothers in the world.'—1 Peter 5:9.

### ***Future prospects of visiting peoples and places are unlimited***





# *the* **Sunflower** beautiful and useful

By *Awake!* writer in Switzerland

**B**RIGHT, sunny days tend to cheer us up. No wonder, then, that people around the world also feel cheered by the flower named for the sun—the sunflower! The happy, smiling face of a single sunflower in a garden can lift one's spirits. How much more a big field full of their bright-yellow faces!

But do you know how that friendly flower came to be so popular? Does it really turn toward the sun? And is it truly useful?

#### **A Journey Around the World**

The sunflower's original home extended from Central America to what is now southern Canada. There, Indians cultivated sun-

flowers. After Spanish explorers took the plant across the Atlantic in 1510 C.E., it quickly spread throughout western Europe. At first, the sunflower was considered just an ornament for adorning botanical and private gardens. But by about the middle of the 18th century, its seeds came to be viewed as a delicacy. People back then also used its leaves and blossoms to make a tea for combating fever.

In 1716 an Englishman obtained a license to extract oil from sunflowers for use in the weaving and tanning industries. Yet, sunflower oil remained almost unknown in the rest of Europe until the 1800's. True, the Russian



Czar Peter the Great took sunflower seeds to Russia from the Netherlands in 1698. However, commercial production of sunflowers in Russia did not begin until the 1830's. A few years later, Russia's Voronezh region was producing thousands of tons of sunflower oil. Cultivation of sunflowers soon spread into neighboring Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, and the former Yugoslavia.

Ironically, at the end of the 19th century, the sunflower was reintroduced to North America by Russian immigrants. Early settlers to the continent had not continued cultivating sunflowers as the Indians had. Today huge sunflower fields dot the landscape in countries all around the globe.

#### **It Follows the Sun**

Does the sunflower really turn to face the sun? Yes! Both its leaves and its flowers are heliotropic, that is, oriented by sunlight. The plant stores auxin, a plant hormone that controls growth. The greater quantities of auxin on the side away from the light cause the stem to grow toward the light. Once the flowers are in full bloom, however, they are no longer heliotropic but generally remain facing east.

The sunflower's Latin name, *Helianthus annuus*, is derived from the Greek words meaning "sun" and "flower" and from the Latin word meaning "annual." The flower usually grows to about six or seven feet in height, but some giant specimens grow to more than twice that height. The sturdy stalk and rough, green leaves are crowned with a big, round flower with bright-yellow petals. These surround a dark center composed of smaller, tubular flowers. When pollinated by insects, these smaller flowers develop into the sunflower's edible seeds. A sunflower's center can vary from 2 to 20 inches in diameter and may produce from 100 to 8,000 seeds.

There are dozens of species of *Helianthus*, and new hybrid varieties are constantly being developed. Normally only two species are

cultivated for agricultural purposes. One is *Helianthus annuus*, which is grown mainly for the production of sunflower oil. The other, *Helianthus tuberosus*, better known as the Jerusalem artichoke, is cultivated for its potato-like tubers. These are used for livestock feed and in the production of sugar and alcohol.

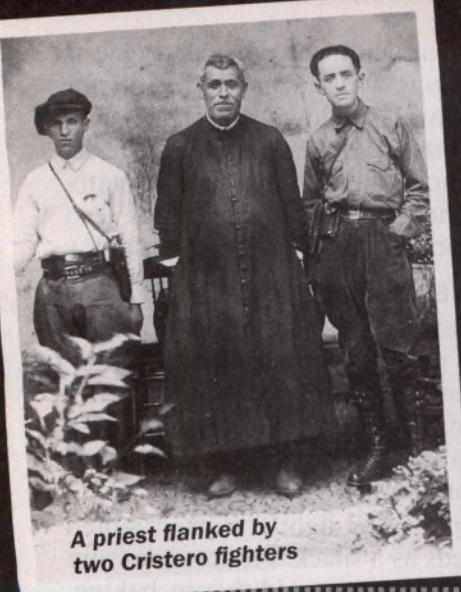
#### **Economic Virtues**

Most sunflowers today are grown for their seeds, which produce an excellent oil. Sunflower oil is used for cooking, in salad dressings, and in margarine. The seeds have a high nutritional value, containing 18 to 22 percent protein and other nutrients.

Many people enjoy lightly roasted, salted sunflower seeds as a snack. Flour made from the seeds is used as an additive in baking. Moreover, sunflower oil is an ingredient in shampoo, lip balm, hand cream, body lotion, and baby-care products. It is even used in the manufacture of industrial motor oil. Sunflower seeds are also used as food for birds and small animals.

A sunflower field is a paradise for honeybees—two and a half acres of sunflowers may yield from 50 to 100 pounds of honey. When the sunflower harvest is over, the stalks that remain are between 43 and 48 percent cellulose, which is useful in making paper and other products. Leftover parts of the sunflower can serve as silage for livestock or as fertilizer.

Surely, the sunflower has proved to be a valuable gift to mankind. Its beauty has inspired artistic works, such as Vincent van Gogh's painting "Sunflowers." Wherever it grows, the sunflower seems to transplant the sun into our homes and gardens. Its cheery face and many uses may well come to mind when we read the psalmist's words: "Many things you yourself have done, O Jehovah my God, even your wonderful works and your thoughts toward us . . . They have become more numerous than I can recount."—Psalm 40:5.



A priest flanked by  
two Cristero fighters

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# When Blood Was Spilled in the Name of Christ

By *Awake!* writer in Mexico

**"At Mass the priests would shout from the pulpits: 'Sons of the holy Mother Church, to the combat! The government wants to take over the churches!' "** —Pedro Rosales Vargas, an eyewitness.

**W**HY would religious people take up arms in defense of their faith? What can happen when people resort to violence to defend their religion? Mexico's Cristero Rebellion, also called the *Cristeros*—named after those who took part in it—gives insight into these questions.

The *Encyclopedia Hispánica* explains: “*Cristeros* is the name given to Mexican Catholics who rebelled against President Plutarco Elías Calles in 1926 because of measures that he took against the church, such as closing down religious centers and buildings.” Originally it was the government that labeled the rebels *Cristeros* because of their war cry, “Long live Christ the King!” The roots of the conflict, however, go back further.

## Roots of the Conflict

The Reform laws, first passed in the 1850's, were finally ratified in 1917. Among the laws' objectives was “nationalizing real estate that was property of the church.” (*Historia de México*) The government introduced these laws to restrict the accumulation of wealth and land by the Catholic Church. Their ratification was quickly followed by strong protests

from the clergy. The government responded by arresting a number of priests.

One of the goals of the Mexican Revolution (1910-20) was to provide land for the poor. Thus, the new laws proposed confiscating land from large landholders and distributing it among the poor in what was called agrarian reform. The clergy in general desired to intervene in this matter. After all, the new laws affected influential clergymen who owned large tracts of land. The church claimed that it did not oppose the redistribution of land, but it promoted a plan that differed from the government's proposal.

Some people, however, believed that the church was only out to protect the interests of large landowners, including rich members of the clergy. There were, on the other hand, some priests, known as agrarians, who favored distributing the land among the poor. The conflict within the church only served to widen the breach between the church and the government.

Early in 1925, Plutarco Elías Calles, who had just assumed office as president of the Mexican Republic, began to apply

### **President Plutarco E. Calles**

the church-related articles of the new constitution with severity. For instance, he expelled many foreign Catholic priests from Mexico. In addition, the archbishop of Mexico was arrested after he declared that the clergy would fight the anti-clerical articles of the constitution. Some church-owned buildings were also confiscated. Many people believed that the purpose of these actions was to prevent large sums of Mexican money from ending up in Rome.

In July 1926 the Mexican bishops themselves ordered the suspension of religious services in the churches. The government regarded this step as a political ruse intended to incite the masses against the government. In any case, suspending religious services lit the fuse that ignited the tragic Cristero Rebellion.

### **War Breaks Out**

Thousands of Catholics, incited by their priests, fought in defense of their religion. As their standard, they carried with them an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Al-



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though some *Cristeros* expected the hierarchy to rise to the defense of the church, the great majority of bishops and priests did not get involved in the conflict for fear of retribution by the government. Rather, most sought refuge in the homes of wealthy families, staying out of the fray while the common people carried on a violent religious uprising.

Some priests, however, actively supported one side or the other. According to the book *The Cristiada*, (Volume 1, *The War of the Cristeros*), some 100 Catholic priests opposed the *Cristeros*, while 40 actively supported the armed struggle. An additional five priests actually joined in the fighting.

The consequences of the rebellion were calamitous. In many areas extreme poverty resulted. Moreover, accounts abound of young men being forcibly taken away by the *Cristeros* to fight. There were also reports of families' receiving constant visits from *Cristeros* and federal troops alike demanding food. And there were reports of rapes by both sides and the loss of loved ones.

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**Some of the  
Cristero leaders**



Both the *Cristeros* and the government's army were guilty of outrages, including the killing of many people who had nothing to do with the conflict. In the end the cold figures tell the story—at least 70,000 were killed during the three years of armed struggle.

### The War Suspended

After a formal agreement was reached between the Catholic Church and the government in June 1929, hostilities were suspended, and by August fighting had stopped. But the *Cristeros* fighters had not been included in the negotiations, and they could not understand how the church could submit to what many regarded as an enemy of heavenly authority. Frustrated but submissive to the orders of the clergy, the *Cristeros* at last surrendered and returned to their homes. The government promised to be more tolerant and to allow Mass to resume. However, the laws restricting religions remained unchanged.

The Cristero Rebellion has been characterized at times as an attempt by some in the Catholic Church to recover the power the church had enjoyed in the era before the Reform laws. Despite the war, these laws continued in force in Mexico until 1992, when a law affecting religious associations was passed. There is still considerable distrust of religious associations. Priests and religious ministers are still prohibited from participating in politics, and although religious organizations may now own property, church property acquired prior to 1992 continues to belong

to the government. Nevertheless, the law has not prevented many priests in Mexico from getting involved in political matters.

### What Was Accomplished?

Did taking up arms to defend their faith accomplish lasting good for the *Cristeros*? Maria Valadez, who survived the turmoil, now says: "I believe that all the slaughter was in vain. It was stupid." Pedro Rosales Vargas, quoted in the introduction, observed regarding the war's sad consequences: "People killed their fellow man, even those of their own religion. That is how I became an orphan—they murdered my father."

The hard lessons of the Cristero Rebellion have not prevented religious sentiment from fueling further conflicts, such as in Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia. Only practicing the pure religion of Christ can prevent such tragedy. Jesus commanded his followers to stay separate from politics, to be "no part of the world." (John 17:16; 18:36) He told the apostle Peter, who tried through force to prevent Jesus' arrest: "Return your sword to its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword."—Matthew 26:52.

### How Do Christians Respond to Oppression?

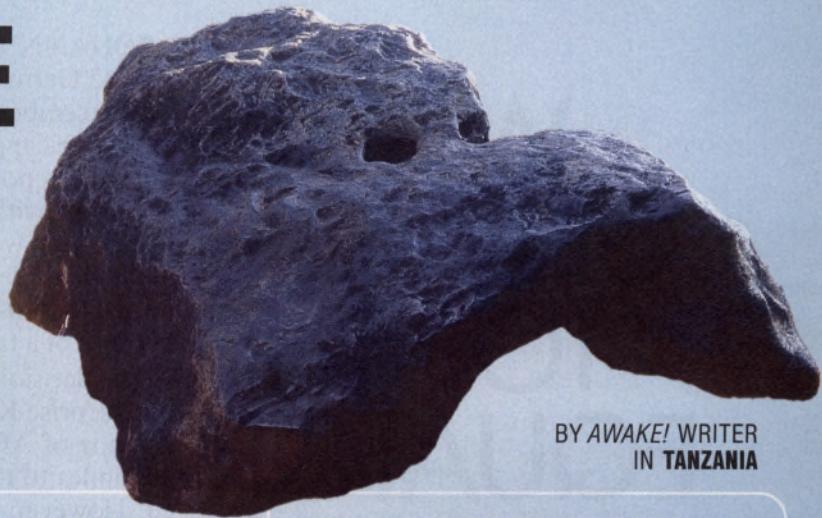
Does this mean that if true Christians find their freedom to worship threatened they should do nothing about it? No. When the first-century Christians were persecuted, on several occasions they defended themselves through the legal resources available to them. They appealed to the courts. Though at times they were imprisoned, they neither gave up their faith nor compromised their political neutrality.—Acts 5:27-42.

Under no circumstances did early Christians take up arms to establish their religious rights by means of violence. True Christians do not kill people of any other religion, much less those of their own faith. Rather, they adhere to their Master's teaching: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves."—John 13:35.

## In Our Next Issue

- Cooperation—Vital to Life
- Should You Pray to the Virgin Mary?
- Youths Who Give a Powerful Witness

# IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE



BY AWAKE! WRITER  
IN TANZANIA

**H**AVE you ever seen a streak of light in a starry sky? Perhaps you called it a shooting star. Actually, such streaks of light are more accurately known as meteors.

Most of the matter that enters our atmosphere from space burns up completely before it reaches earth. Sometimes, however, chunks of stony or metallic matter survive the intense heat and reach the earth's surface. These are called meteorites. Most are small in size, but some weigh many tons. One meteorite in Namibia, Africa, is estimated to weigh about 60 tons.

Let us enjoy a visit to the Mbozi meteorite in Tanzania, which is the eighth largest found on earth. It is located at Marengi hill in the Mbozi district of southern Tanzania, near its borders with Malawi and Zambia. This ten-foot-long and three-foot-wide object weighs some 16 tons and consists of 90 percent iron, about 9 percent nickel, and small portions of cobalt, copper, sulfur, and phosphorus.

Nobody knows when this meteorite fell, but it must have been long ago because there are no local legends regarding it. A land surveyor from Johannesburg, W. H. Nott, reported finding it in October 1930. Since then, a trench has been dug around the object, making it appear as if the meteorite had been lifted up and placed on a stone altar.

Thus, the meteorite has remained at its original landing place.

Some have tried to cut or saw the meteorite's surface to secure a souvenir—a very difficult task. In December 1930, when Dr. D. R. Grantham of the Geological Society used a hacksaw to cut out a specimen of about five inches, it took ten hours! This specimen can now be seen in the meteorite collection at the British Museum in London.

The site where the Mbozi meteorite lies has been arranged to accommodate visitors. There is a little reception house with some benches and a table. The warden, who lives in a small mud house about 150 feet from the meteorite, kindly asks us to sign the visitor's book. We notice that thousands of visitors from all over the world have found their way here. We leaf through a small booklet that describes the meteorite, and then we take photographs.

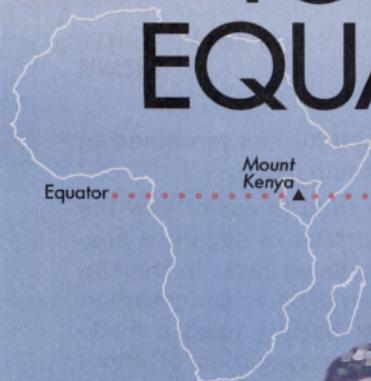
Some children climb the meteorite and imagine that they are riding a spaceship. As we picnic nearby, enjoying the peaceful surroundings, we marvel at the sight of this extraordinary object that traveled all the way from outer space to Mbozi.



Saw-cuts on the meteorite

# WHERE GLACIERS TOP THE EQUATOR

BY AWAKE! WRITER  
IN KENYA



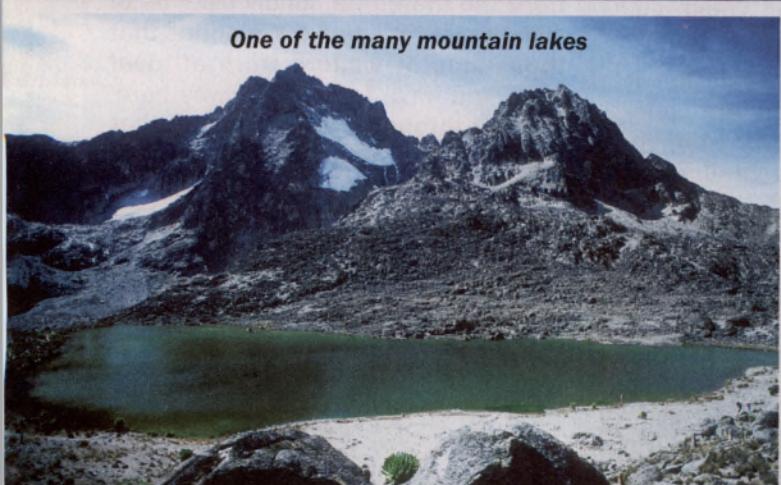
JOHANN LUDWIG KRAPF, a 39-year-old German missionary, claimed that on December 3, 1849, he caught a glimpse of a white-capped mountain in equatorial Africa. His report was treated by geographers in Europe with derision. They said that what he had seen was mere chalk. Krapf, who was more than 80 miles from the mountain, admitted that his view lasted only a few minutes because of a fast-moving cloud cover.

The derision of European geographers did not surprise Krapf. A year earlier a reported sighting of Africa's highest mountain, some 200 miles to the south, had also been doubted. However, before long, the existence of that mountain, 19,340-foot Mount Kilimanjaro, was confirmed. Krapf's claim, on the other hand, was not vindicated until 34 years later—two years after his death.

In 1883, Scottish explorer Joseph Thomson verified the existence of the mountain with gla-



*One of the many mountain lakes*





ciers that Krapf had seen—17,058-foot-high Mount Kenya—the peaks of which are located immediately south of the equator. It is the second-highest mountain in Africa. Some think that Mount Kenya, which is now an extinct volcano, was once more than 20,000 feet high. Years of erosion, it is believed, removed the dust and ashes, revealing two jagged peaks that are over 17,000 feet high and a third that is 16,355 feet high.

#### Venerated Locally

Long before Europeans arrived in Africa, people who lived on Mount Kenya's lower slopes venerated the

#### *The three highest peaks of Mount Kenya*

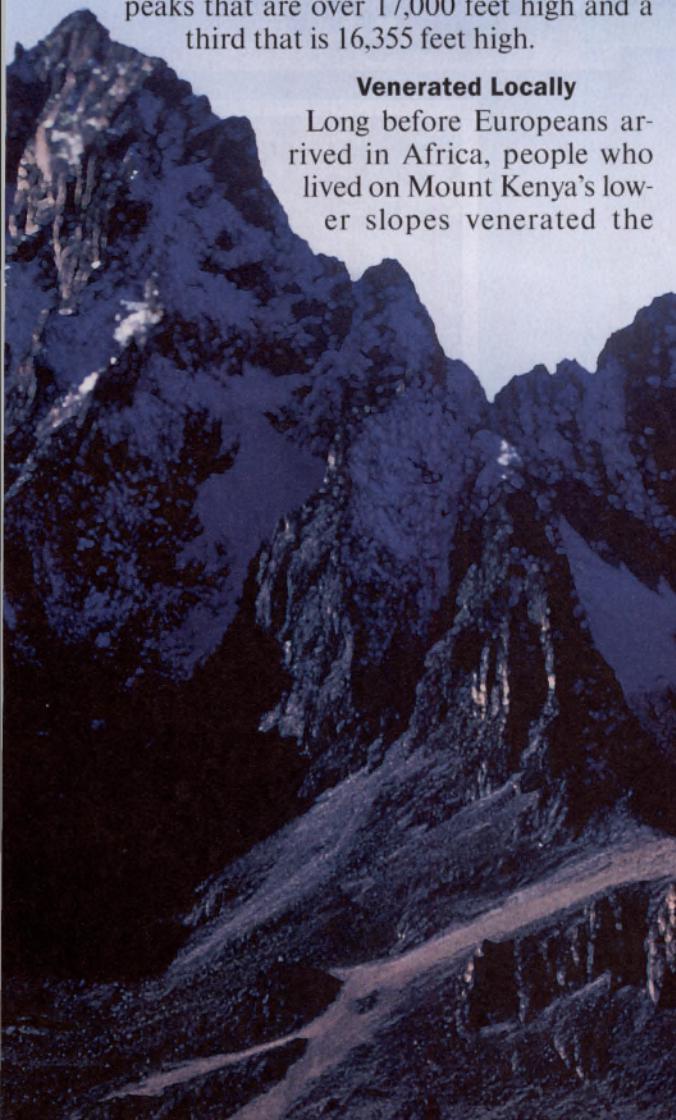
mountain. Some believed that the maker of the universe dwelt on its highest point and that it was there he created man. This creator was also believed to be responsible for the rains watering the fertile grounds below. To appease him, animal sacrifices were offered—and they still are by those who cling to such beliefs.

Because of the snow and ice near Mount Kenya's dark pinnacles, early inhabitants called it both speckled mountain and mountain of whiteness. The mountain's three highest peaks—Batian, Nelion, and Lenana—are named after great ancestral chiefs of a local community. The many jade-green mountain lakes that are near the rocky peaks enhance the area's beauty.

#### **Rich in Flora and Fauna**

The mountain provides many spectacles for nature enthusiasts to enjoy. Over the years, melting glaciers have turned the desert of lava into a large seedbed for diverse forms of flora. The lower slopes are covered with dense forests. The trees include cedar, yellowwood, and camphor, which produce woods valued by furniture manufacturers.

Picture Courtesy of Cameraphot Ltd. ▾



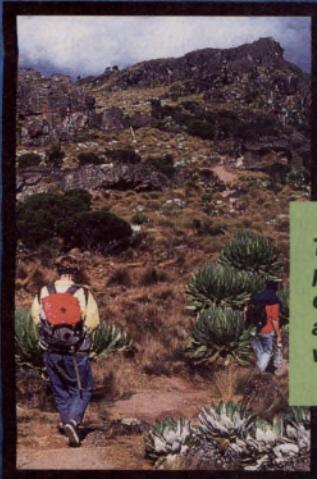
Birds, such as this red-chested sunbird, are common



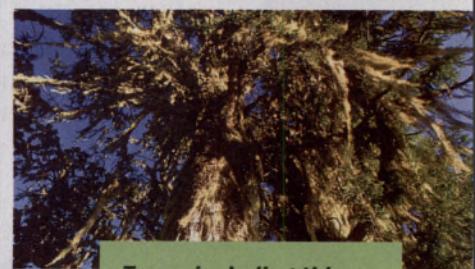
Rock hyraxes live at an altitude of nearly 14,000 feet



The higher peaks attract climbers from around the world



Trees, including this yellowwood, cover the lower slopes



Common, too, is tall bamboo, which makes up "forests" of grass that grow to heights of over 20 feet and choke the undergrowth.

Animal life abounds in this region. Larger mammals include lions, leopards, Burchell's zebras, Cape buffalo, bushbuck, and waterbuck. Elephants and black rhinos have found refuge on this mountain as well. Smaller animals include Sykes monkeys, black-and-white colobus monkeys, tree hyraxes, and several species of rodents.

The local birds are vast in number and varied in type. Preying on the rodents and snakes are white-backed vultures, black kites, crowned eagles, long-crested hawk eagles, mountain buzzards, and red-tailed augur buzzards. Adding contrast to the lush green forests are crimson-colored Hartlaub's turacos, violet-colored starlings, and silvery-cheeked hornbills, as well as orioles. Several species of sunbirds with their eye-catching plumage are constant features in the mountain forest.

Above 10,000 feet the forest breaks to reveal an expanse of moorland that extends upward as far as the eye can see. Here, tussock grass covers the ground like a mat. Another plant with interesting characteristics is the cabbage groundsel, which flowers once every 20 years. Here also are tree groundseeds with broad leaves at the topmost part of the stem and lobelias that reach a height of over 20 feet. These, as well as giant heather, combine to provide alpine scenery in this vast area.

Few animals inhabit the lofty rough terrain, and most of them live there for just part of the year. The only full-time residents are rock hyraxes. They live at a higher altitude than any of the other animals on the mountain, being found at nearly 14,000 feet. Their bodies are adapted to live at such heights—in spaces between rocks, as their name suggests. They feed primarily on vegetation. Friendly and welcoming, these rabbit-size mammals have been known to grab food items from tired and unsuspecting hikers!

### Around the Magnificent Peaks

In sharp contrast with the lower parts of the mountain are the picturesque pointed peaks. The highest points of Batian (17,058 feet) and Nelion (36 feet lower) are shaped like two large horns. These points consist of huge, black volcanic boulders that seem to float high above the clouds. Below this, 11 glaciers mock the hot equatorial sun, which no doubt contributed to the disappearance, over time, of at least 7 of their kin. The largest glacier is now but half the size it was a hundred years ago. Some of these glaciers are visible from Kenya's capital city, Nairobi, 80 miles away.

This high island of rock has attracted climbing enthusiasts from all over the world. Halford Mackinder was the first European recorded to have reached the summit of Batian, having done so on September 13, 1899. It would be 30 years before report was made of another person reaching the summit. The mountain has paid out harsh retribution to some who dared to try to reach its top. By 1987 more than 60 had died attempting it.

Various forms of mountain sicknesses have taken their toll on climbers. In fact, the mountain, it is said, accounts for half the world's high-altitude pulmonary edema cases. The book *On God's Mountain—The Story of Mount Kenya* observes: "For those who do not fall to this malady [mountain sickness], trekking and climbing can still be a tortuous affair, each step an exercise in foot-dragging exhaustion. At your side, a sheer drop of several hundred feet. In your head, a splitting pain. In your stomach, nausea. On your feet, blisters. In your eyes, water."

Although the peaks of Mount Kenya may be weather-beaten and its glaciers receding, the splendor and majesty of this fortress in the sky remains undimmed. Its beauty, however rugged, continues to give silent praise to its Creator, Jehovah God.—Psalm 148:9, 13.



AS TOLD BY  
FRANCIS DEL ROSARIO DE PÁEZ

# We Found Something Better

*In 1988 my brothers and I, along with other musical groups, performed before thousands of spectators in New York City's Madison Square Garden. Our group, which featured my dancing, received an enthusiastic reception. Years earlier, Father had taken steps to make our success possible.*

A MUSICIAN himself, my father observed that my seven older brothers had musical talent. So he sold our house and bought musical instruments and the equipment necessary to help them form a musical group. I was then only a child, having been born a few years earlier in 1966. At the time, our family lived in the town of Higüey in the Dominican Republic.

My brothers' first musical performance was in 1978 at the Higüey town hall. Later they established themselves in the capital, Santo Domingo. They began to play and sing an innovative style of merengue and, as a result, enjoyed widespread popularity.\* The group became known as Los Hermanos Rosario (The Rosario Brothers).

Since I had long dreamed of being a famous dancer, I wanted to join my brothers. At a party my brother Pepe, who was the leader of the group, invited me to perform, saying: "Francis is one of my little sisters, the youngest, and she knows how to dance." My dancing impressed those present. Taking advantage of the opportunity, I told Pepe I wanted

\* Merengue is dance music in 2/4 time. In its traditional form, a small group of musicians would play merengue on the accordion, the guiro (a metal scraper), and the *tambora* (a small double-headed drum). As time went by, larger groups (also known as *orquestas* in the Dominican Republic) were formed. Currently, many merengue groups employ a keyboard, saxophones, trumpets, and conga drums, as well as other instruments.

to dance in front of the group. So at age 16 I began dancing at all performances of Los Hermanos Rosario.

## Professional Success

Prior to this, there had been female vocalists with merengue groups but never a woman dancing at center stage before an ensemble of men. I choreographed all my moves, using a new dance style to accompany our merengue arrangements. Once my dance technique became well-known, it was called *a lo Francis Rosario*.

We had a merengue song called "Cumandé," in which part of the lyrics were: "*Yahora todo el mundo como Francis Rosario*" (And now everyone do like Francis Rosario). People would then imitate my dance style. Sometimes they just sat on the floor to watch me rather than dance themselves. Eventually, all that was used to advertise a performance of our group was a photo of me. Everyone knew it meant that Los Hermanos Rosario would be giving a concert.

After I started performing with my brothers, other musicians were added to the group, including three brothers with the last name Páez. One of them, a trumpet player named Roberto, later became my husband. The Páez brothers started sharing in the success of the group. Los Hermanos Rosario began receiving many invitations to perform on television

in Santo Domingo, as well as to give concerts in other countries.

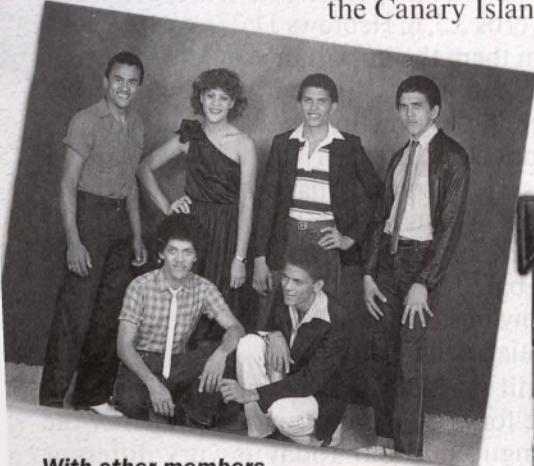
In 1988 we went on tour in the United States and Canada. One of our performances was the previously mentioned one in Madison Square Garden. Many of the most popular merengue groups participated there, and our group was the best received. After that performance, concert promoters always presented us as the last act of a program. More than ever, my dancing was getting attention and the fan base for Los Hermanos Rosario was widening. Sales of our recordings were also increasing dramatically.

We traveled widely, visiting Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Puerto Rico, Curaçao, Spain, Germany, and other countries. Soon we became one of the most widely acclaimed musical groups in the Latin world. The dance, the stage, the costumes, and the makeup all became the most important things in my life.

When I was single, I used to say that if a man became interested in me but did not like to dance, I would leave him before I would leave dancing. However, my attitude regarding my priorities in life was about to change.

#### Spiritual Awakening

This change began when we were on tour in the Canary Islands in



**With other members  
of the group early in my career**

**Performing in New York City,  
about 1990**

1991. Roberto and I had recently married. His brother Freddy, who also performed with the group, had begun studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and always had their publications with him.

One day I saw the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* in Freddy's room, and I began to look through it. I was captivated by the chapter "What Kind of Place Is Hell?" It caught my attention because Mother had said that a person who had done bad things would burn in hell. So I was afraid of going there.

A few weeks later, while we were still in the Canary Islands, I had a miscarriage. When they took me to the hospital, I told Roberto to ask Freddy for the book I had seen in his room. I wanted to read it while recovering. I loved the book. Among other things, I learned that the Bible hell is simply the common grave of mankind and that it never came into God's heart to torture anyone. (Jeremiah 7:31) It impressed me that the Bible teaches that the dead are not conscious of anything at all.—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.

When we returned to the Dominican Republic, Freddy sent one of Jehovah's Witnesses to visit us. He shared with us the Bible hope of eternal life on a paradise earth, and this also sparked my husband's interest. (Psalm 37:29; Luke 23:43) We requested a Bible study.

#### Change in Values and Priorities

As I progressed in Bible knowledge, my point of view about the work that I loved



so much began to change. Bible principles started molding my thinking. (Romans 12:2) I would ask myself: ‘How can I dance here in this way with all these people watching me? This is not what I want.’ I prayed to God, “Please get me out of this situation.” I talked to my husband about my feelings, and he felt similarly. “Be patient, Sweetheart,” he said. “You leave the group first, and I will follow afterward.”

I became pregnant again, and since that limited my dancing anyway, I was free to attend Christian meetings at the Kingdom Hall more often. These strengthened me, as they did Roberto, who also attended, causing us to appreciate the great value of gathering together with Jehovah’s people. We understood that to continue progressing in the way of Bible truth, we needed the instruction and encouragement that Christian meetings provide. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) Even when we worked outside the Dominican Republic, Roberto and I looked for a Kingdom Hall and attended the meetings.

After I gave birth, I returned to work, but my heart was no longer in it. The change became obvious, and the press began to criticize me. I was often asked, “Why don’t you dance the way you used to?” I kept praying to Jehovah to show me a way out so that I wouldn’t have any difficulties with my brothers. I had become one of the owners of the group, and I did not want to have a confrontation with them.

When I got pregnant again, I told Rafa, who directed the group after the death of our brother Pepe, that I wanted to spend more time with the children and would not be coming back to work. He told me to do what I thought best. None of my brothers ever opposed my studying the Bible. For this I am very thankful.

#### A New Life Serving Jehovah

In 1993, after ten years with the group, I ended my dancing career and dedicated myself unreservedly to Jehovah. I became a

publisher of the good news of God’s Kingdom, and after Roberto left the group, we were baptized in 1994. (Matthew 24:14) Both Freddy and Roberto’s other brother, Julio, became Witnesses, as did Manuel Pérez, another member of the group. To this day they are all serving Jehovah faithfully.

Many people did not understand why I left the entertainment business, since I had enjoyed my work so much. Some felt, as did a well-known television producer in our country, that I was simply passing through a phase. “Like all of the other artists, she’ll get over this and return to the group,” he predicted. But that never happened. I was determined to devote myself as fully as possible to serving Jehovah.

We now have three children: Katty, Roberto, and Obed. We try to teach them that the most important things in life are spiritual and not material. We are in a good position to warn them of the world’s misleading influence and to give them sound guidance in life. Our weekly family Bible study has been very beneficial, helping us to stay united in a world where families are becoming more and more divided.

We have tried to teach our children to see Jehovah as a real person whom they can trust. (Proverbs 3:5, 6; Hebrews 11:27) We have also shown them the importance of attending and participating in Christian meetings. Seeing our children grow in the way of Bible truth is a priceless gift. For the last two years, I have served as an auxiliary pioneer, a term Jehovah’s Witnesses use for those who spend 50 hours or more each month sharing their Bible-based beliefs with others. And for years now my husband has served as an elder in the Christian congregation.

I still consider the merengue a beautiful dance form. But unfortunately, much of the merengue popular today is very different from what it was some time back. In general, it used to be wholesome. Now, in order to

find acceptable merengue music, we have to be very selective.

### The Superiority of Serving Jehovah

The world offers many things, but one must look at what is behind it all. This is true regarding the music industry, which on the surface can appear very attractive and harmless. Yet, it isn't. Many connected with the industry are involved in drugs and immorality. Performing in a show puts one in association with people who believe in living for the moment and who have no conscience whatsoever.—1 Corinthians 15:33.

We have come to appreciate that the best thing anyone can do is serve Jehovah. I remember returning to the hotel after one of our biggest performances and feeling so empty. I now realize that it was because we were not satisfying our most important need, our spiritual need.—Matthew 5:3.

**In front of the Kingdom Hall**

**Inset: During a family Bible study**

Our focus in life now is on pleasing our Creator, especially by preaching and teaching the good news of his Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14; Acts 20:35) Doing this leaves our family feeling happy and satisfied. We are truly grateful to be among God's people and to have *genuine* friends—brothers and sisters in the faith—with whom we share the marvelous hope of everlasting life in God's new world.—Mark 10:29, 30; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3, 4.

We were well rewarded financially in the world of entertainment. But by getting to know our God, Jehovah, we have found spiritual riches that are worth far more than any material wealth. We are so happy to be able to serve a God of purpose, a happy God who invites us to trust in him! (Psalm 37:3) We are absolutely convinced that we have found something far better than fame and material wealth, and we pray that Jehovah will help us and our family to do his will forever.



By Awake! writer in Brazil

# Tapioca Crepes

## A Brazilian Delicacy

In Brazil, tapioca can refer to several different products derived from the cassava plant. One of them is plain, rustic flatbread. This type of bread looks more like a crepe and is often called a tapioca crepe. It is made of a fine starch known as *polvilho doce* or *goma*, which is produced from the fleshy rootstocks of the cassava plant.

After the rootstocks are grated and pressed, they yield a milky-white liquid. The liquid is set aside to allow the solids to settle to the bottom. The liquid is then discarded, and the solids, a starchy mass, are left to dry in the sun.

Tapioca was a staple food of the Indians. Later, Portuguese settlers found tapioca to be a good substitute for bread. It was not until a few years ago, however, that tapioca caught the eye of some inventive Brazilian chefs, who decided to convert it into a trendy item on their restaurant menus.



### Making Tapioca Crepes

#### Ingredients for eight crepes:

3 cups *polvilho doce*, 1½ cups water, and a little salt.

**Directions:** In a medium-size bowl, sprinkle water over the *polvilho doce* and the salt, and combine them with your fingertips. Gradually add more water while rubbing the mixture between your hands until it resembles coarse crumbs and you are able to shape it into a ball that does not stick to your hands. Then press the ball through a sieve. It is now ready for making crepes.

Heat a nonstick eight-inch skillet over medium-low heat. Put one eighth of the mix-

Cassava rootstocks



A tapioca crepe with coconut and condensed milk filling

ture in the skillet, and spread it evenly with the back of a spoon. Cook for two to four minutes, or until the mixture sticks together and forms a flat cake, separating from the pan at the edges. Turn with a plastic spatula, and cook the other side for a minute. Repeat this process with the remaining mixture. Stack the cooked crepes.

Why not try making these crepes yourself? They will delight your family and friends and will broaden their tastes as well.

A new face can be given to tapioca crepes by adding different fillings. For breakfast, try spreading butter on them while they are still hot, and then add two tablespoons of freshly shredded coconut. Or you can pour sweetened condensed milk evenly over the crepes, add coconut, fold the crepes, and serve.

## Young People Ask . . .

# How Can I Avoid Getting Involved With the Wrong People?

*"I began to hang out with a girl at school. . . .*

*She wasn't into drugs, partying, or being promiscuous.*

*She didn't even swear, and she got straight 'A's.' But she was definitely a bad associate."—Beverly.\**

**W**HY did Beverly reach the conclusion expressed above? She now realizes that this girl influenced her to become involved in unwholesome trends. "As I continued to associate with her," Beverly explains, "I also became involved in spiritistic books, even writing a story along those lines."

A youth named Melanie was also led into misconduct—but by someone claiming to be a fellow Christian! How can you know whether

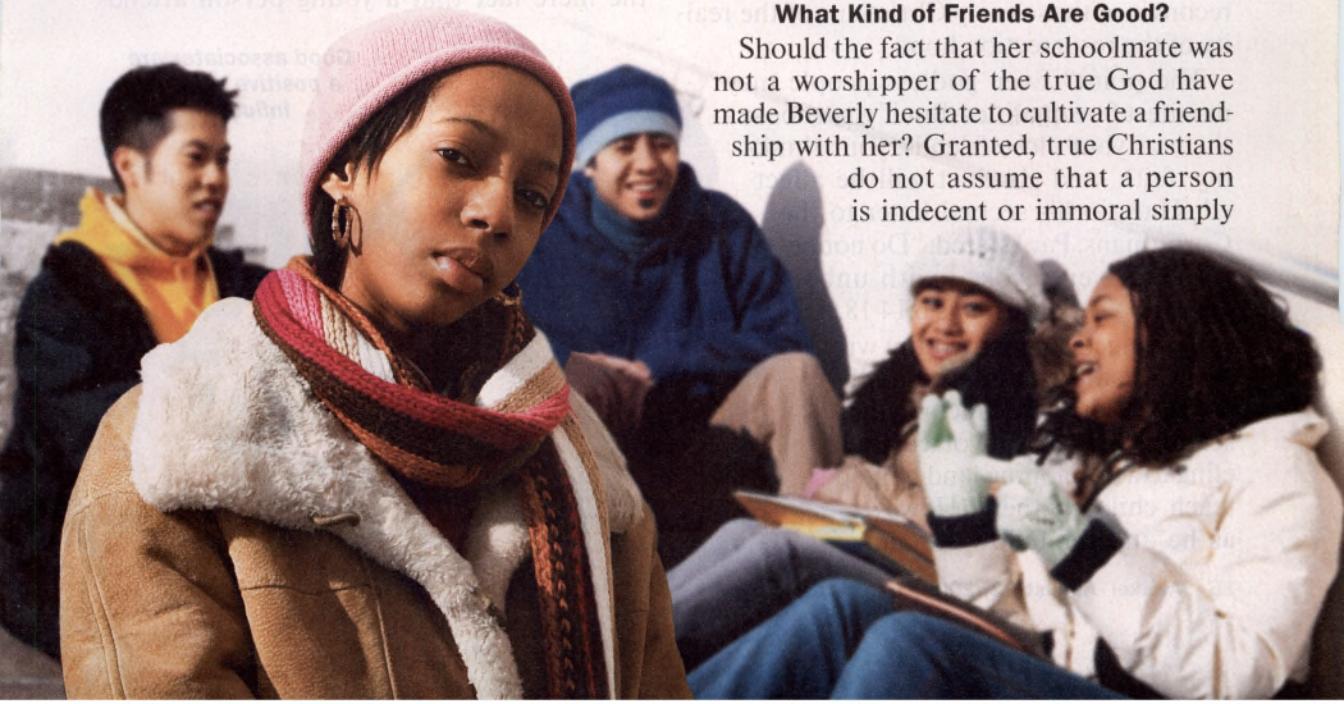
someone is likely to be a wholesome associate? Is it always dangerous to associate closely with unbelievers? Are friendships formed between fellow Christians always safe?

In particular, what about friendship with a member of the opposite sex? If you are looking at someone as a potential marriage mate, how can you know whether the relationship is likely to be a wholesome one? Let us see how Bible principles can help answer such questions.

### What Kind of Friends Are Good?

Should the fact that her schoolmate was not a worshipper of the true God have made Beverly hesitate to cultivate a friendship with her? Granted, true Christians do not assume that a person is indecent or immoral simply

\* Names have been changed.



because he or she is not a fellow believer. But when it comes to forming close bonds, there is reason to be cautious. The apostle Paul warned those in the first-century Corinthian congregation: "Bad company ruins character." (1 Corinthians 15:33, *The Bible—An American Translation*) What did he mean?

It is quite possible that some of those Corinthian Christians were associating with the Epicureans, followers of the Greek philosopher Epicurus. Now, Epicurus did teach his followers to live in accordance with good sense, courage, self-control, and justice. He even discouraged them from secret wrongdoing. So why would Paul consider the Epicureans, and even those within the congregation with similar ideas, to be "bad associations"?

The Epicureans were not worshippers of the true God. Since they did not believe in a resurrection of the dead, their focus was on making the most of their current life. (Acts 17:18, 19, 32) Little wonder, then, that because of keeping company with such ones, some in the congregation at Corinth had begun to lose faith in the resurrection. That is why 1 Corinthians chapter 15—in which we find Paul's warning against bad association—is packed with arguments designed to reconvince those early Christians of the reality of the resurrection hope.

The point? Even godless people may manifest fine qualities. But if you choose them as your close friends, your thinking, faith, and conduct will be affected. Thus, in his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul stated: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers."—2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

Fred, aged 16, learned the wisdom of Paul's words. He initially agreed to join an extracurricular school effort that involved traveling to a developing land to help teach children there. However, as he and his fellow students

prepared together, Fred had a change of heart. He said: "I could see that so much time spent in their company would do me no good spiritually." For this reason Fred chose to withdraw from the project and to help disadvantaged ones in other ways.

### **Friendships Among Fellow Christians**

What, though, about friendships *inside* the Christian congregation? When writing to the young man Timothy, Paul warned: "In a large house there are vessels not only of gold and silver but also of wood and earthenware, and some for an honorable purpose but others for a purpose lacking honor. If, therefore, anyone keeps clear of the latter ones, he will be a vessel for an honorable purpose, sanctified, useful to his owner, prepared for every good work." (2 Timothy 2:20, 21) So Paul did not gloss over the reality that even among Christians, there may be some who do not conduct themselves honorably. And he was just as frank in exhorting Timothy to *keep clear* of such ones.

Does this mean you should be suspicious of your fellow Christians? No. Nor does it mean that you should expect your friends to be flawless. (Ecclesiastes 7:16-18) However, the mere fact that a young person attends

**Good associates are  
a positive spiritual  
influence**



Christian meetings or has parents who are zealous in the congregation does not of itself mean that this one is a good choice for a close friend.

"Even by his practices a boy [or girl] makes himself recognized as to whether his activity is pure and upright," states Proverbs 20:11. Therefore, you are wise to consider: Is this person's relationship with Jehovah clearly the focal point in his or her life? Or, instead, is there evidence of thinking and attitudes that reflect "the spirit of the world"? (1 Corinthians 2:12; Ephesians 2:2) Does being with him or her build your desire to worship Jehovah?

If you choose friends who have a strong love for Jehovah and for spiritual matters, you will not only avoid problems but also find greater strength to serve God. Paul said to Timothy: "Pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, *along with those who call upon the Lord out of a clean heart.*"—2 Timothy 2:22.

#### **Friendship With the Opposite Sex**

If you are of age and want to marry, have you given thought to how these same principles should affect your choice of a mate? Many factors can make you feel drawn to a prospective spouse, but none are as important as the person's spiritual condition.

Thus, the Bible repeatedly warns against marriage to one who is not "in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39; Deuteronomy 7:3, 4; Nehemiah 13:25) True, people who are not fellow believers may be responsible, decent, and caring. Yet, they do not have the motivation that you have to build on such qualities and to persevere in marriage as the years go by.

On the other hand, one who is dedicated to Jehovah and loyal to him deliberately cultivates Christian qualities and safeguards them, come what may. He or she appreciates that the Bible links loving one's mate with having a good relationship with Jehovah. (Ephesians 5:28, 33; 1 Peter 3:7) Thus, when both mates love Jehovah, they have the

strongest incentive to remain loyal to each other.

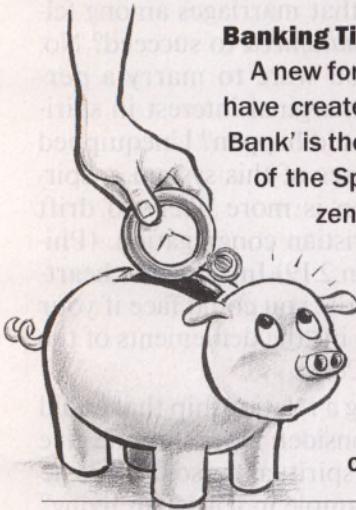
Does this mean that marriages among fellow believers are *guaranteed* to succeed? No. For instance, if you were to marry a person who has only marginal interest in spiritual things, what could happen? Unequipped to resist the pressures of this system, a spiritually weak person is more likely to drift away from the Christian congregation. (Philippians 3:18; 1 John 2:19) Imagine the heartache and marital strife you could face if your mate got caught up in "the defilements of the world."—2 Peter 2:20.

Before developing a relationship that could lead to marriage, consider: Does this one give evidence of being a spiritual person? Does he or she set a fine example in Christian living? Is this person well rooted in Bible truth, or does he or she need more time for spiritual growth? Are you convinced that love for Jehovah is the primary force in his or her life? Knowing that the person has a fine reputation is helpful. However, in the final analysis, you must be convinced that the one in whom you are interested is devoted to Jehovah and will likely make a fine marriage partner.

Remember, too, that some who are attracted to the "wrong people" are first drawn to the wrong *things*—such as some form of inappropriate entertainment or activity. Exemplary youths in the Christian congregation would not share with you in such things. So examine your heart.

If you find that your heart needs discipline, do not feel hopeless. The heart can be disciplined. (Proverbs 23:12) It comes down to this: What do you *want* to want? Do you want to be drawn to what is good and to those who practice it? With Jehovah's help, you can develop that kind of heart. (Psalm 97:10) And by training your perceptive powers to distinguish right from wrong, you will find it easier to determine who will make wholesome, upbuilding friends.—Hebrews 5:14.

# Watching the World



## Banking Time Instead of Money

A new form of banking has arisen in Spain. Several local volunteer associations have created "time banks" that exchange services among people. "The 'Time Bank' is the first bank that works without money," claims Elvira Méndez, director of the Spanish association Health and Family. These banks keep a list of citizens who offer to perform certain tasks such as caring for the elderly, babysitting, cooking, cleaning, or teaching. The unit of exchange is the hour, and all activities have the same value. An hour of teaching quantum physics, for example, is equivalent to an hour of hairdressing or babysitting. The beneficiary pays for the service by performing other tasks, and the time spent is credited to him. Time banks thus seek to organize and encourage the traditional interchange of services that used to exist among good neighbors.

## Dogs Foresee Epileptic Fits?

Some dogs that have been household pets for more than a year can foresee epileptic attacks in the children with whom they live, reports the Spanish newspaper *Diario Médico*. Researchers reached this conclusion after carrying out a study of 45 families. Several parents with epileptic children noticed that prior to an attack, their dog began to behave in a "peculiar way." It would force the young one to sit down or would lean against the child's side so that if he fell, the dog would break his fall.

## Bhutan Bans Tobacco Sales

The kingdom of Bhutan, nestled in the Himalayas between India and China, has banned the sale of all tobacco products. The ban does not

apply to foreign diplomats or tourists or to those who work for nongovernment organizations. It is believed that Bhutan is the first country in the world to take such a step. Smoking in public places has also been forbidden. "The moves are part of government efforts to make Bhutan a smoke-free nation," says BBC News.

## Childhood Trauma Linked to Heart Disease

Childhood experiences of physical or psychological hardship increase the child's risk of suffering from heart disease later on in life. This conclusion was reached by researchers in Atlanta, Georgia, and San Diego, California, U.S.A., who examined the medical records of 17,337 adults. *Science News* explains that the participants were assessed according to "which

of them, as children, had witnessed domestic violence, experienced mental or physical abuse or neglect, or lived with someone who went to prison, abused drugs or alcohol, or was mentally ill." It was found that the greater the number of traumatic experiences a person had early in life, "the greater were his or her chances of developing heart disease" as an adult.

## Tainted Blood in Japan

The Japanese health ministry has taken the unusual step of disclosing "the names of 6,916 hospitals and 17 medical suppliers believed to have stocked a hepatitis C-tainted blood product," states *The Japan Times*. The coagulant was responsible for causing "one of the largest medical disasters in Japan's postwar history." According to the paper,

between 1980 and 2001, some 290,000 people were treated with the coagulant. It is estimated that 10,000 were infected. Many were pregnant women who received it to stop bleeding during labor. The ministry's announcement followed campaigns by victims who wanted to bring the problem to the attention of the public and encourage any who may have received the product to test for hepatitis C. If untreated, hepatitis C can prove fatal.

#### Frog Extinction Risk

Millions of frogs are dying, according to *New Scientist* magazine, and no one quite understands why. They face a higher risk of extinction than either birds or mammals. Almost one third of the 5,743 known amphibian species are endangered. These are some of the conclusions of the first

global survey of amphibians. The magazine reports that "scientists have been concerned about the health of amphibians since 1989, when they compared notes at the first International Conference on Herpetology and found sudden and mysterious declines in many species around the world." Nine species of amphibians are known to have become extinct since 1980, and another 113 species known to exist then "can no longer be found." Says zoologist James Hanken of Harvard University: "We simply do not know what's hurting them."

#### Crisis of Confidence

Worldwide, politicians and business leaders are distrusted, reports the Paris daily *International Herald Tribune*. According to a Gallup International survey conducted in

60 countries, a majority believe that political leaders are "dishonest," wield "too much power," are "overly susceptible to influence," and "behave unethically." In Africa, West Asia, and Latin America, more than 80 percent of respondents expressed doubts as to the honesty of politicians. Business leaders have a slightly better reputation —only about 40 percent of the respondents thought that business leaders are dishonest and behave unethically. When it comes to global security, 55 percent in Western Europe were pessimistic about the future. In Egypt, 70 percent thought "the future looked dim." The most optimistic respondents were from other African countries surveyed, and 50 percent of them felt that the situation will improve.

#### Pets Cloned to Order

Household pets are now being cloned to order. The first case in the United States was that of a kitten delivered to a Texas woman, reports *The New York Times*. Bereaved of Nicky, the cat she had owned for 17 years, the woman had a kitten cloned from Nicky's DNA, which had been banked beforehand. The cost was \$50,000. The kitten, named Little Nicky, is said to be identical, even in personality, to the original cat. The company that produced Little Nicky also plans to clone dogs "for a much more lucrative market than cats," says the newspaper. David Magnus, codirector of the Center for Biomedical Ethics at Stanford University in California and a critic of such practices, said: "It's morally problematic and a little reprehensible. For \$50,000, she could have provided homes for a lot of strays."



## From Our Readers

**Obesity** I would like to commend you on your series "Obesity—What is the Solution?" (November 8, 2004) I have lost 112 pounds by developing a plan of more-healthful eating plus daily exercise. Since losing this weight, I have acquired more endurance, so that I can stay out longer in the ministry without getting overly exhausted.

*M. E., United States*



I started right away. This series assures me that Jehovah is looking after each one of us.

*H. S., Japan*

Thank you for the factual information on obesity. Today I started my exercise program and different eating habits. I have been a reader for more than 30 years, and your magazine has given me so much help in my life!

*N. J., United States*

I weigh 350 pounds. According to the chart on page 5, I should be 168 pounds. I have a lot of work to do to lose all this weight. I know that this article and the experiences in it will help.

*W. O., United States*

I am pleased to know that Jehovah and his organization are concerned about our health. One thing that concerned me, however, was the chart on page 5. Some doctors use a chart that shows the minimum to maximum weight for a person's frame. I have a large frame, so my weight would be different from that of someone with a small frame of the same height.

*C. S., United States*

**"Awake!" responds:** Thank you for this information. What appears on page 5 is merely one type of chart that can help a person to determine his or her appropriate

weight. It was not our intent to imply that other approaches are less valid.

The series reflected the prevalent view that a thin person is successful, whereas an overweight person is the opposite. Does my being overweight mean that I am lazy, unmotivated, and useless?

*I. J., Germany*

It seems to me that you omitted the psychological aspect of this problem. I agree that it's important to fight against being fat, but suppose someone is unsuccessful. How will he or she feel?

*Y. Z., Russia*

Some readers may get the impression that Jehovah loves only thin people or that only people of "normal" weight are allowed to be Jehovah's Witnesses.

*R. B., Germany*

**"Awake!" responds:** The above three readers raise points that were not addressed in our series. Admittedly, obesity has a number of causes that may not be related to overeating. For example, some medications can cause a person to gain weight. Genetic factors may also make weight loss more difficult for some. Whatever the cause, we did not mean to imply that only men and women of ideal weight are acceptable to God. Hopefully our series provided motivation and practical suggestions for any who would like to adopt a program of healthful eating and exercise—and as a result lose excess weight. Such programs save lives. We regret any misunderstanding in this matter.

# Manifesting a Good Conscience Glorifies God

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN UKRAINE



**O**N THE way home after a Christian meeting, the Chibisov family, Jehovah's Witnesses in Ukraine, found a purse with valuables inside, including a driver's license, credit cards, and about \$500 in local currency. In this family of five, only the husband had a job. He made about \$70 a month. So this money could have been a tremendous help to them. What did they do?

The mother relates: "Our girls immediately began discussing how to return the purse to its owner, who, according to the driver's license, was a woman. My husband and I were pleased to see how our children manifested their well-trained consciences. The next day I called the woman who had lost the purse. Crying with joy, Olha came and told us that she and her husband own a few small shops in our town. The money in the purse was the

monthly salary for their employees. Additionally, one of the financial documents was very important for her business accounts.

"Olha asked us where we found the purse. We told her where and also explained that we were there because we were returning from our Christian meeting. When we offered her some Bible literature, she accepted it respectfully.

"A few weeks later, a fellow Witness in our congregation told us that while she was offering Bible literature to passersby on the street, a woman explained that previously she would never have listened to Jehovah's Witnesses. Now, though, she was ready not only to listen but also to take literature. This is because, she said, Witnesses had returned a purse to her daughter."



*The Chibisov family*



## Does God Really Care?

A photograph of a family of three—mother, father, and young daughter—looking upwards with expressions of concern or hope. The mother is in the foreground, the father behind her, and the daughter resting her head on the mother's shoulder.

**DOES  
GOD  
REALLY  
CARE  
ABOUT  
US?**

If so,  
why does he  
permit  
suffering?  
Will it  
ever end?

■ Many reason that if there is a God, he would not permit humans to suffer so much. A common question some ask is, "Where was God when we needed him?" Throughout history millions have suffered terrible misery, even death by torture.

At the same time, the miraculous order and design of living things give clear evidence of a caring Creator. Why would a God who cares about us permit such terrible suffering? If we are to worship God properly, we must have a satisfying answer to that important question. Where can we find it?