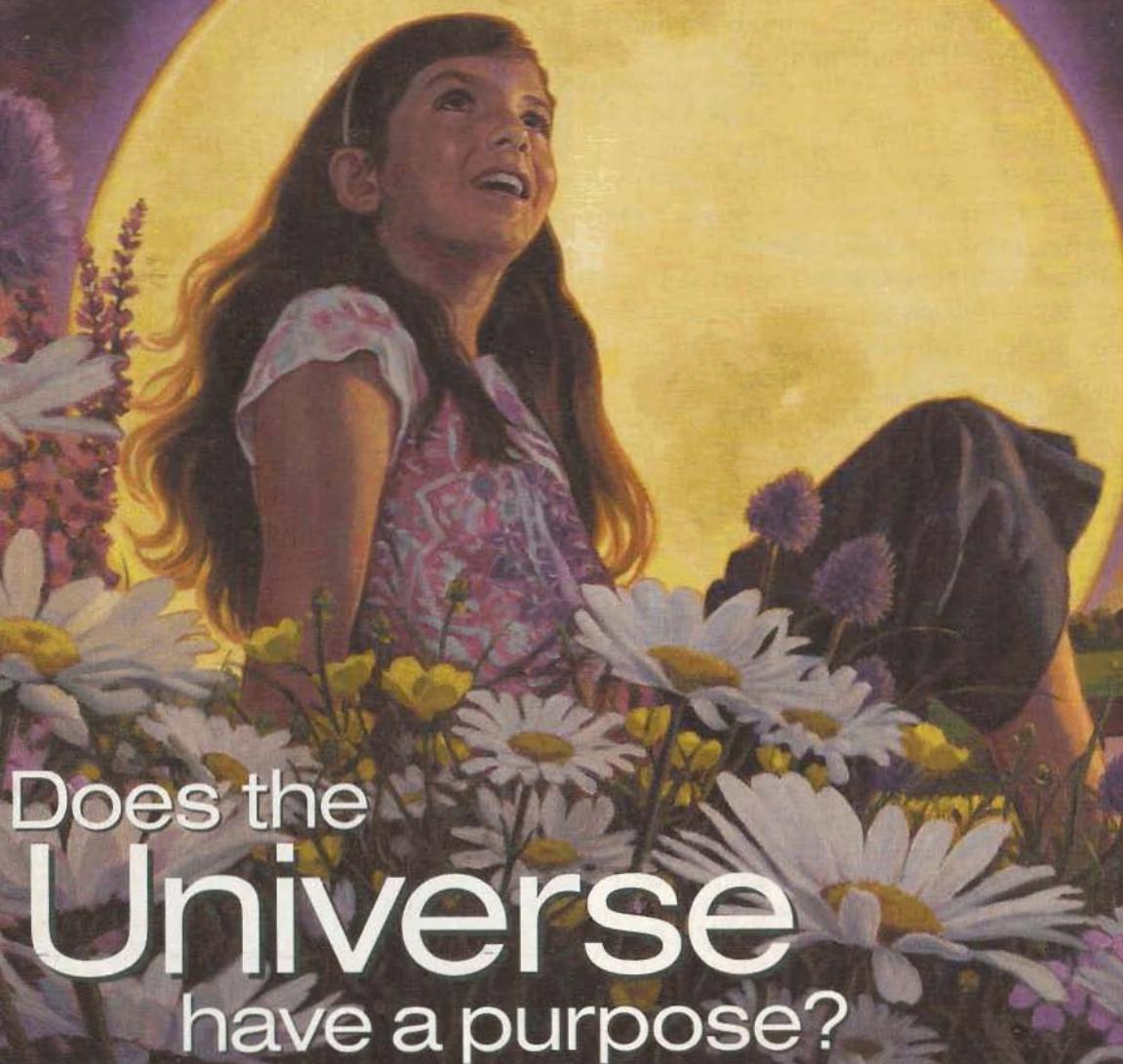


Awake!

DECEMBER 2009



Does the
Universe
have a purpose?

ALSO: WHAT KIND OF STAR LED THE
“WISE MEN” TO JESUS? PAGE 11

Does the Universe have a purpose? 3-10

Scientists fail to agree on whether the universe fulfills any purpose. Yet, there is a reasonable explanation that sheds light on the purpose of human life and the universe that surrounds us.

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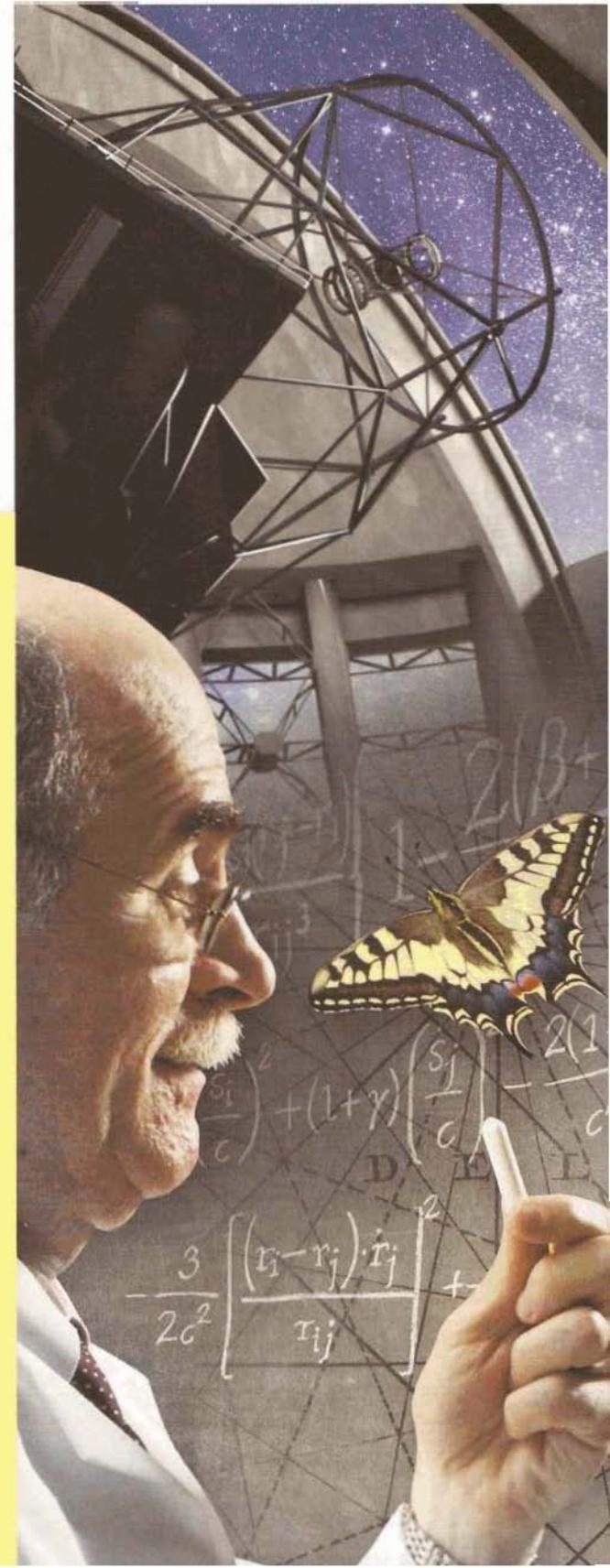
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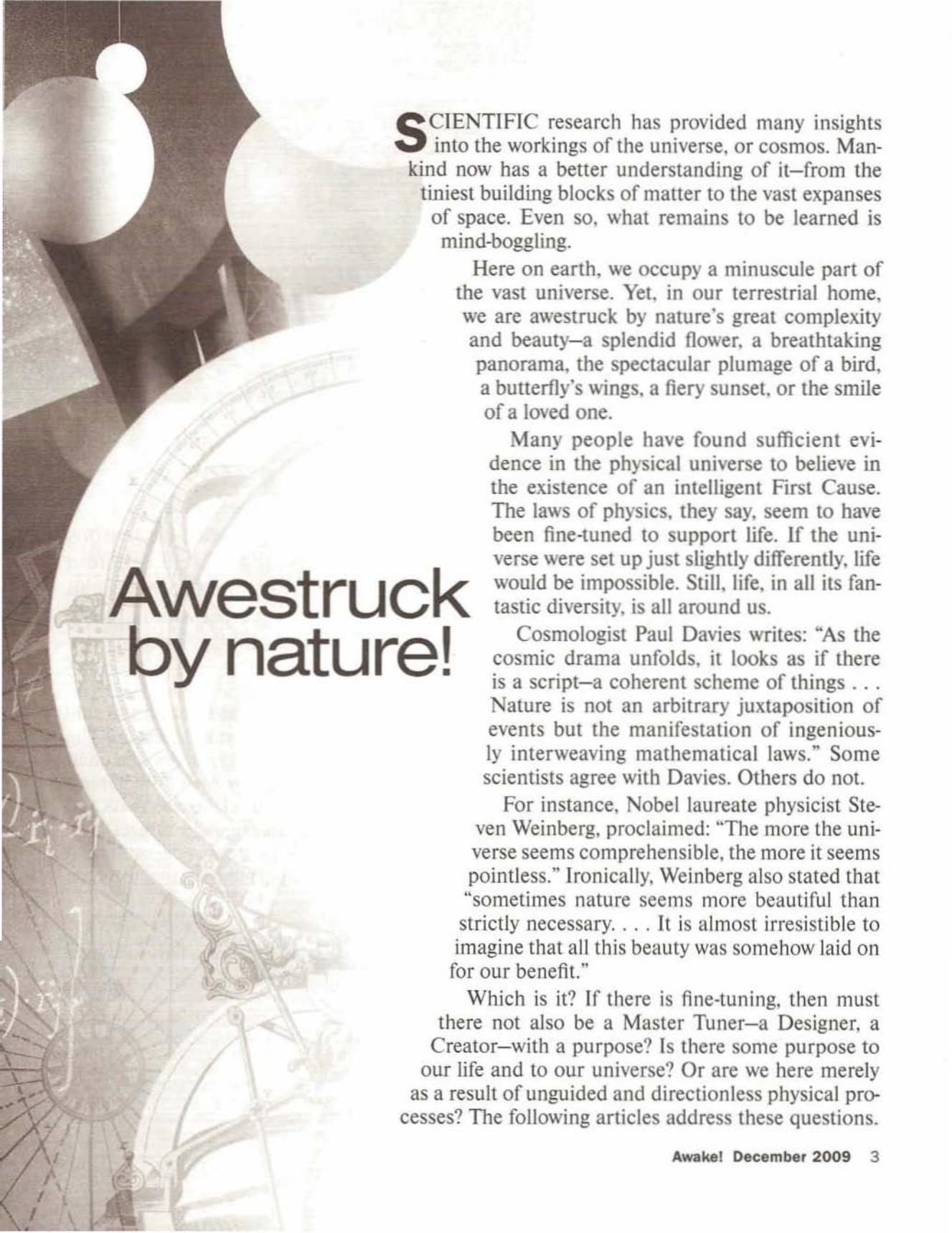
There are a wide variety of cultural and religious practices that offer to fill our need for spirituality. Does it matter how you choose to satisfy your spiritual need? Consider the Bible's clear answer.

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How I Lost My Love for War

Read the intriguing story of a man who loved warfare but later found a better purpose in life.





Awestruck by nature!

SCIENTIFIC research has provided many insights into the workings of the universe, or cosmos. Mankind now has a better understanding of it—from the tiniest building blocks of matter to the vast expanses of space. Even so, what remains to be learned is mind-boggling.

Here on earth, we occupy a minuscule part of the vast universe. Yet, in our terrestrial home, we are awestruck by nature's great complexity and beauty—a splendid flower, a breathtaking panorama, the spectacular plumage of a bird, a butterfly's wings, a fiery sunset, or the smile of a loved one.

Many people have found sufficient evidence in the physical universe to believe in the existence of an intelligent First Cause. The laws of physics, they say, seem to have been fine-tuned to support life. If the universe were set up just slightly differently, life would be impossible. Still, life, in all its fantastic diversity, is all around us.

Cosmologist Paul Davies writes: “As the cosmic drama unfolds, it looks as if there is a script—a coherent scheme of things . . . Nature is not an arbitrary juxtaposition of events but the manifestation of ingeniously interweaving mathematical laws.” Some scientists agree with Davies. Others do not.

For instance, Nobel laureate physicist Steven Weinberg, proclaimed: “The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless.” Ironically, Weinberg also stated that “sometimes nature seems more beautiful than strictly necessary. . . . It is almost irresistible to imagine that all this beauty was somehow laid on for our benefit.”

Which is it? If there is fine-tuning, then must there not also be a Master Tuner—a Designer, a Creator—with a purpose? Is there some purpose to our life and to our universe? Or are we here merely as a result of unguided and directionless physical processes? The following articles address these questions.



Purposeful design or mindless process?

In 1802, English clergyman and theologian William Paley expounded his reasons for belief in a Creator. He stated that if while crossing a heath, he were to find a stone lying on the ground, he might reasonably conclude that natural processes had put it there. But if instead he were to find a watch, he would scarcely come to the same conclusion. Why? For the simple reason that a watch has all the hallmarks of design and purpose.

PALEY'S ideas had a profound influence on the English naturalist Charles Darwin. Yet, contrary to Paley's logic, Darwin later proposed that the apparent design in living organisms could be explained by a process that he termed "natural selection." Darwinian evolution was seen by many as the definitive answer to arguments for design.

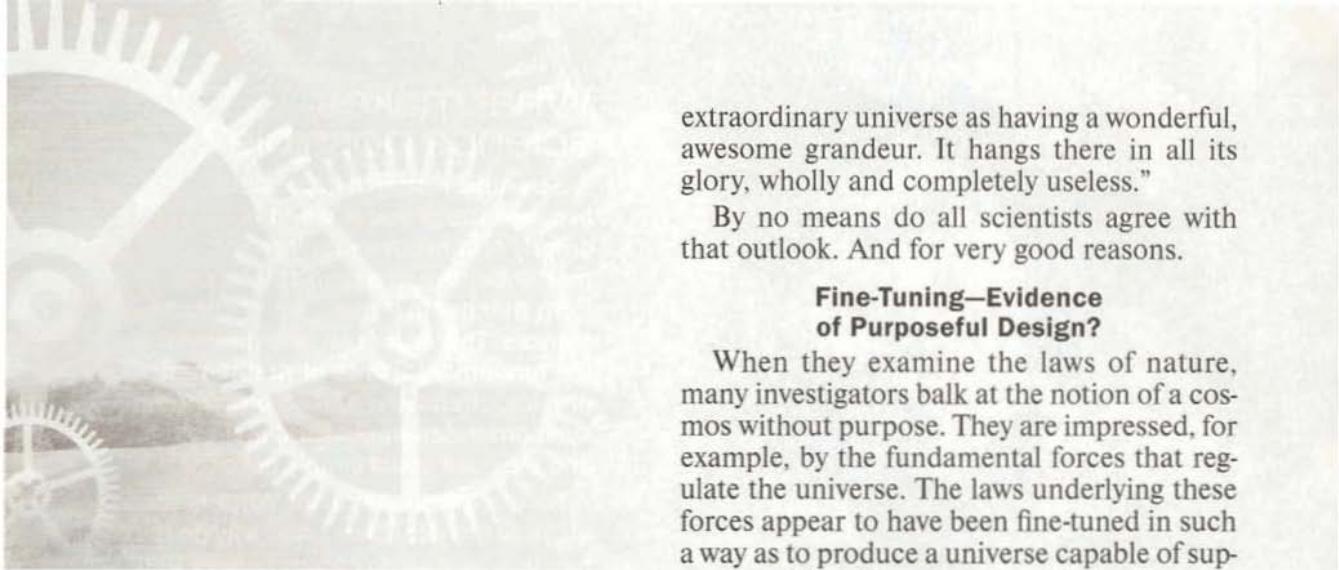
A great deal has been written on the subject since the days of Paley and Darwin. The arguments in favor of design on the one hand and of natural selection on the other have frequently been refined, elaborated on, and updated. And both sides of the subject have greatly influenced what people believe about purpose—or lack of purpose—in the universe.

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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What you believe might well influence how purposeful you feel your life is. How so?

The Logical Consequences of Darwinism

Belief in Darwin's theory has led many sincere people to conclude that their existence is devoid of real purpose. If the cosmos and everything in it are the product of spontaneous combinations of elements after the primordial big bang, then there can be no real purpose to life. The late Nobel Prize-winning biologist Jacques Monod stated: "Man knows at last that he is alone in the unfeeling immensity of the universe from which he emerged by chance. His destiny is nowhere spelled out, nor is his duty."

A similar thought is expressed by Oxford professor of chemistry Peter William Atkins, who declares: "I regard the existence of this

extraordinary universe as having a wonderful, awesome grandeur. It hangs there in all its glory, wholly and completely useless."

By no means do all scientists agree with that outlook. And for very good reasons.

Fine-Tuning—Evidence of Purposeful Design?

When they examine the laws of nature, many investigators balk at the notion of a cosmos without purpose. They are impressed, for example, by the fundamental forces that regulate the universe. The laws underlying these forces appear to have been fine-tuned in such a way as to produce a universe capable of supporting life. "Changing the existing laws by even a scintilla could have lethal consequences," says cosmologist Paul Davies. For example, if protons were slightly heavier than neutrons, rather than slightly lighter as they are, all protons would have turned into neutrons. Would that have been so bad? "Without protons and their crucial electric charge," explains Davies, "atoms could not exist."

The electromagnetic force attracts electrons to protons, allowing molecules to form. If this force were significantly weaker, electrons would not be held in orbit around the nucleus of an atom, and no molecules could form. If, on the other hand, this force were much stronger, electrons would be stuck to the nucleus of an atom. In that case, chemical reactions and life would simply be impossible.

A slight difference in the electromagnetic force would affect the sun and the solar

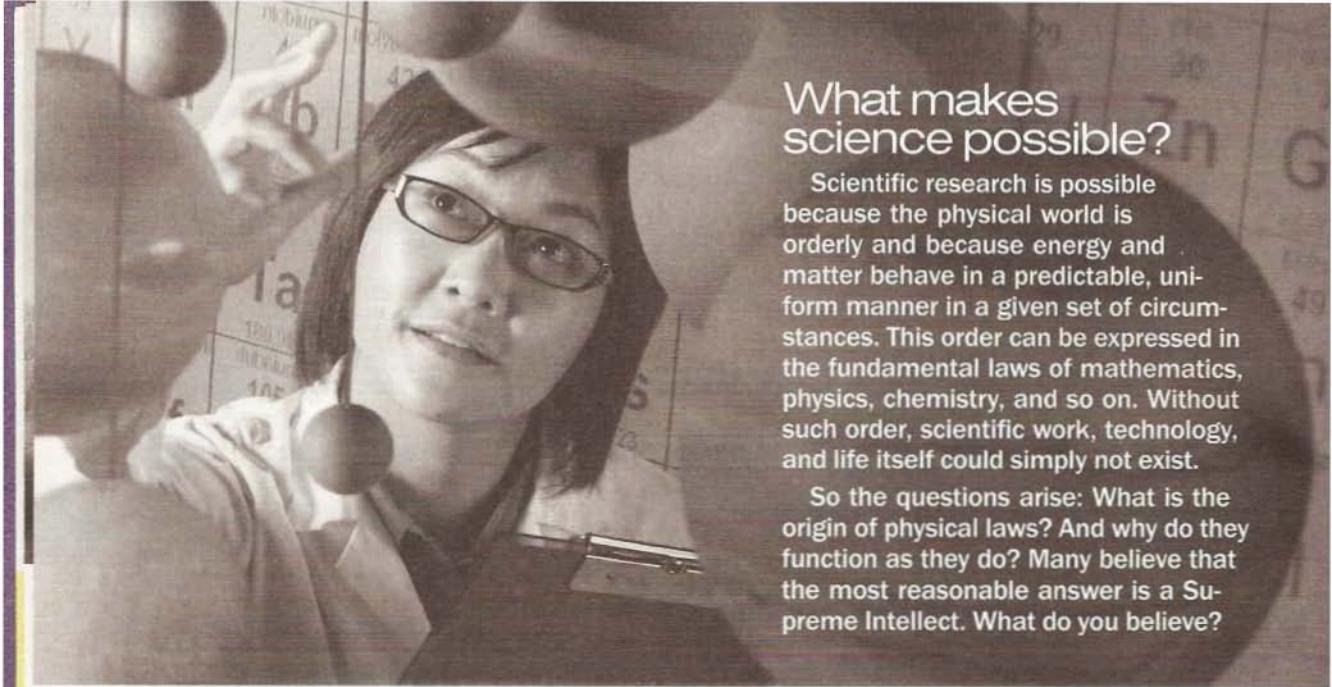
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¹ CD also available.

² MP3 CD-ROM also available.

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What makes science possible?

Scientific research is possible because the physical world is orderly and because energy and matter behave in a predictable, uniform manner in a given set of circumstances. This order can be expressed in the fundamental laws of mathematics, physics, chemistry, and so on. Without such order, scientific work, technology, and life itself could simply not exist.

So the questions arise: What is the origin of physical laws? And why do they function as they do? Many believe that the most reasonable answer is a Supreme Intellect. What do you believe?

energy that reaches our earth. Such a difference could easily make photosynthesis in plants difficult or impossible. So the precise strength of the electromagnetic force determines whether life on earth is possible or not.*

The book *Science & Christianity—Four Views* has an interesting way of illustrating the delicacy of the balance of forces and elements in the cosmos. The writer asked his readers to visualize an explorer's visit to an imaginary "control room for the whole universe." There, the explorer observes rows and rows of dials that can be set to any value, and he learns that each has to be calibrated to a precise setting in order for life to be possible.

* For more information on this topic, please see pages 10-26 of the book *Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

One dial sets the strength of the force of gravity, one the strength of electromagnetic attraction, another the ratio between the mass of the neutron and the proton, and so on. As the explorer examines these numerous dials, he sees that they could have been set to different values. It also becomes clear to him, after meticulous calculation, that even a small change in any one of the dial settings would modify the architecture of the cosmos in such a way that life in it would cease to exist. Yet, each dial is set to precisely the right value needed to keep the universe running and habitable. What should the visitor deduce about how the dials came to be set the way they are?

Astronomer George Greenstein states: "As we survey all the evidence, the thought insistently arises that some supernatural agency—or, rather, Agency—must be involved. Is it

possible that suddenly, without intending to, we have stumbled upon scientific proof of the existence of a Supreme Being?"

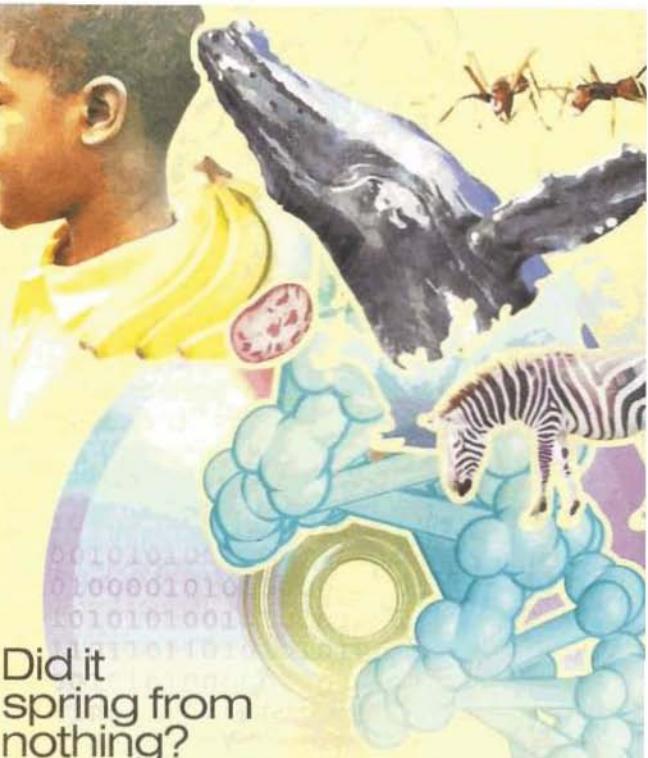
What do you think? Which explanation best fits the fine-tuning observable in the cosmos? Purposeful design or mindless process?

**'We're Just Here
—That's All There Is to It'**

Atheists, of course, have their counterarguments. Some shrug off the apparent fine-tuning in nature, saying: 'Of course the observable universe is capable of supporting human life. If it weren't, we wouldn't be here to worry about it. So there's really nothing to explain. We're just here, and that's all there is to it.' But do you find that a satisfying explanation for our existence?

Another argument is that it will someday be proved that only one possible set of numbers can work in the equations that express the fundamental laws of nature. That is, the dials mentioned above *had* to be turned to the right settings for the universe to exist at all. Some say, 'It's that way because it had to be that way!' Even if this circular reasoning were true, it would still not provide an ultimate explanation for our existence. In short, is it just a coincidence that the universe exists and that it is life-supporting?

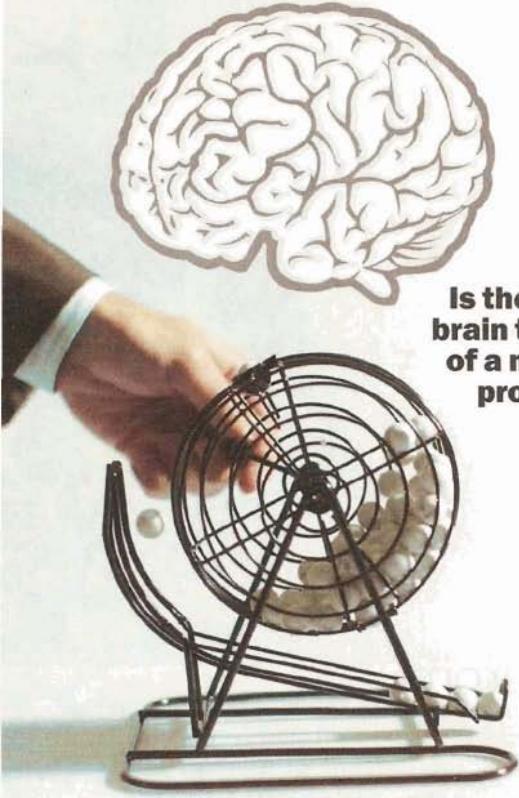
In efforts to explain by natural processes alone the design and fine-tuning evident in the cosmos, still others turn to what has been called the multiverse, or many-universe, theory. According to this hypothesis, perhaps we live in just one of countless universes—all of which have different conditions, but none of which have any purpose or design. Now according to that line of reasoning and the laws of probability, if you have



**Did it
spring from
nothing?**

The DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) molecules in each living cell contain elaborate, detailed instructions necessary for the correct development of organisms. Although DNA is much more complex, it could be compared to the digital information embedded on a DVD. When processed, the coded data on a DVD makes it possible for one to watch a video or listen to music. Similarly, DNA molecules, shaped like twisted rope ladders, carry encoded information that underpins all life and that makes living things differ—bananas from beans, zebras from ants, humans from whales.

Hardly would anyone suggest that the digital information on a DVD could possibly be a product of spontaneous events. Is it reasonable to propose that the highly complex information in DNA sprang from nothing?



Is the human brain the result of a mindless process?

have to be nothing but the result of a mindless process. Does that seem reasonable to you?

The human brain has been described as "the most marvelous and mysterious object in the whole universe." No amount of knowledge in the fields of physics and chemistry can in itself produce adequate explanations for the human capacity for abstract thought and our widespread search for purpose in life.

Either the human mind, with its quest for understanding, was put in place by a superior intelligence, or it arose randomly. Which of these two possibilities seems more reasonable to you?

Another Explanation?

Science, indeed, has told us much about how the cosmos, the world, and living organisms work. For some people, the more science tells us, "the more improbable our existence seems." Improbable, that is, if our being here were merely a product of evolution. However, to use the words of science writer John Horgan, "reality seems awfully designed and, in some ways, too good to be here through pure chance." Physicist Freeman Dyson similarly commented: "The more I examine the universe and study the details of its architecture, the more evidence I find that the universe in some sense must have known that we were coming."

In view of the evidence—complexity in nature, fine-tuning, apparent design, and human consciousness—would it not be logical at least to consider the possibility of the existence of a Creator? A very good reason for doing so is that a Creator should be able to tell us how life appeared and whether life has a purpose—questions that science is incapable of answering.

These questions are addressed by the writings called the Bible, or the Holy Scriptures, whose writers claimed to be inspired by the Creator. Why not consider what the Bible says on these matters?

enough universes, eventually one of them should have the right conditions to support life. However, there actually is no scientific evidence to support the multiverse theory. It is pure speculation.

After stating that he did not subscribe to that hypothesis, Nobel Prize-winning biochemist Christian de Duve said: "In my opinion, life and mind are such extraordinary manifestations of matter that they remain meaningful, however many universes unable to give rise to them exist or are possible. Diluting our universe with trillions of others in no way diminishes the significance of its unique properties, which I see as revealing clues to the 'Ultimate Reality' that lies behind them."

Human Consciousness

The fact that we form theories for the existence of the cosmos is remarkable. In a universe without purpose, such an ability would

Why are we here?

ACCORDING to the Bible, God, whose name is Jehovah, is supremely intelligent. He is the Source of all cosmic power and the Creator of the universe. (Psalm 83:18; 92:5) The first chapter of the Bible states: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Thereafter, God made man in his "image"—that is to say, with qualities like his own—and God told man to multiply and fill the earth.—Genesis 1:1, 26, 28.

Does this mean that God created the universe, including the earth with its many animals and plants, simply to accommodate mankind? And are we here merely to enjoy life for a few decades, eat, drink, and produce offspring?

Why Did God Create Us?

Jehovah God created mankind as an expression of his love—he wanted to share life and happiness with humans. Doubtless, God experienced great joy in fashioning physical creations of all kinds, so that man would be surrounded by beauty and plenty. Above all, humans were to have a meaningful relationship with their Creator, knowing him and communicating with him. They were created to live forever under perfect, peaceful conditions.—Genesis 3:8, 9; Psalm 37:11, 29.

Jehovah also assigned humans fulfilling and meaningful work to do. God told the first humans: "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) Yes, the first couple and their offspring were to transform the whole earth into a paradise of pleasure.

Things did not immediately work out as Je-

hovah purposed.* Nevertheless, God's original purpose for mankind will be fulfilled.—Isaiah 46:9-11; 55:11.

In the meantime, man's desire—his *need*—to know God and to have a relationship with him is manifest in his search for purpose. Man was created as an intelligent creature with the desire to explore and understand. And the Bible says that man will go on accumulating satisfying knowledge of God and his creation forever.

One Bible writer expressed man's purpose this way: "I have seen the occupation that God has given to the sons of mankind in which to be occupied. Everything he has

Man was created as an intelligent creature with the desire to explore and understand

made pretty in its time. Even time indefinite he has put in their heart, that mankind may never find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish. I have come to know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good during one's life; and also that every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work. It is the gift of God." (Ecclesiastes 3:10-13) So there will never be an end to what mankind can find out about God and his creation.

Learn About God

You can get to know Jehovah by examining his creation. One Bible writer said that God's "invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are

* For many people, the existence of evil and suffering is an obstacle to belief in a loving Creator. On this topic, please see chapter 11 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship.” (Romans 1:20) Yes, much about Jehovah’s love, wisdom, and power is evident in creation.

Another vital source of information about God is the Bible. That inspired book tells us much more about Jehovah—his views, qualities, and purpose—than can be learned from examining his creation.

The Bible states regarding God’s purpose: “As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong, but the earth he has given to the sons of men.” (Psalm 115:16) It would seem that the only adequate place in this universe for mankind to live is on the earth, which Jehovah made for this very purpose.

So, what of the boundless cosmos? Are all the stars around us just there to keep our solar system in perfect equilibrium so that life on earth is possible? Are the heavenly bodies just there to make the night sky beautiful? We have to recognize that there are many things we still do not know. But that is a good thing! Why?

Eternity will not suffice for mankind to understand all that God has done and purposed. He wants our future to be one of endless discovery and endless joy. Everlasting life in happiness on earth will give obedient mankind ample opportunity to discover much, much more about the universe.

The Bible indicates that the earth was created primarily for the enjoyment of humankind





WHAT KIND OF STAR LED THE "WISE MEN" TO JESUS?

Popular Christmas stories portray the star as a good sign from heaven. Was it really?

■ The peculiar nature of the star caught the eye of "wise men" from the East, eventually leading them to young Jesus, relates the Bible writer Matthew. (Matthew 2:1-12, King James Version) Popular Christmas stories portray the star as a good sign from heaven. One reference work refers to the star as part of a "divine pre-arrangement whereby . . . the child Jesus was honored and acknowledged by the Father as his beloved Son." Even Christmas carols honor that star. What was this star?

Some have suggested that it was a natural celestial phenomenon. A number of scholars have proposed that it was a conjunction of planets. However, as *The New Bible Dictionary* points out, "such a phenomenon could not naturally be referred to as 'a star.'" Multiple planets passing close to each other would still appear as individual points of light and not as a single star. Some have suggested other celestial phenomena, such as a comet or a supernova. However, none of these phenomena could maneuver through the sky in a way that would lead the men to a specific city and then stop over a specific house.

Could the star have been a natural event or could it have appeared by divine providence? Consider some facts: The "wise men" were not what we would today call academics; neither were they kings. They were, as most modern English translations read, "astrologers." They engaged in a practice condemned in the Holy Scriptures. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) Note that

only these astrologers were reported to have "seen" the star. If the star had been an actual star, it would have been as visible as a beacon to the public in general. But even King Herod had to ask them about the details of its appearance. This star guided the astrologers first to Jerusalem, to Herod, a mortal enemy of the future Messiah. He intended to kill the child Jesus. Then the star shifted direction and led the astrologers south to Bethlehem where Jesus was, thus placing Jesus' life in danger.

These facts give evidence that the star was from an evil source, most likely Satan the Devil. The Bible describes him as using "lying signs and portents." (2 Thessalonians 2:9) It should thus not surprise true Christians that Satan could make only astrologers see a starlike object and could jockey that "star" to lead them to God's Son, whom he wanted to destroy. Of course, no one can outmaneuver Jehovah God. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the Devil's ploy to bring an early death to Jesus was thwarted.

It is noteworthy, however, that God did in fact announce Jesus' birth through miraculous means. On the very night of Jesus' birth, an angel appeared to a group of shepherds and announced the birth of a "Savior." The angel also provided directions so that the shepherds could visit Jesus. Then a multitude of angels appeared and proceeded to praise God. (Luke 2:8-14) God used these angels and not the star to inform people of Jesus' birth.

THE BIBLE'S VIEWPOINT

You Can Satisfy Your Spiritual Need

HUMANS possess a spiritual need that is as fundamental as the need for food. When it comes to nutrition, however, we have many good choices because of the great variety of life-sustaining foods available. Is it the same with spirituality? There are endless cultural and religious practices that are said to provide satisfaction.

Many feel that as long as you do something spiritual, it really does not matter what you choose to believe or what form of worship you engage in. What do you think? Does it matter how you satisfy your spiritual need? What does the Bible say?

What True Spirituality Involves

At Genesis 1:27, the Bible reveals the source of our spiritual capacity: "God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them." Since Jehovah God is a spirit, this refers, not to any physical likeness, but to a resemblance based on qualities held in common. Like his Creator, the first man, Adam, could value and display



such qualities as unselfish love, kindness, compassion, justice, and self-control. He was also endowed with a conscience, an inner moral sense, to guide his use of free will in harmony with God's laws. These characteristics made him different from the animal creation and uniquely equipped him to carry out his Creator's will.—Genesis 1:28; Romans 2:14.

The Bible identifies an element essential to human spirituality. At 1 Corinthians 2:12-15, it describes a spiritual person as one who receives the spirit that is from God. This spirit is God's active force, and its operation is a prerequisite to getting to know spiritual things. A person is thus able to examine and understand issues from a spiritual perspective. By contrast, a person lacking God's spirit is called a physical man, one who considers spiritual things as foolishness. As a result, his conclusions are limited to what human wisdom alone reveals.

Hence, while our spiritual capacity stems from being made in God's image, genuine spirituality is not realized through self-awareness, human wisdom, or personal achievement. It requires the influence of God's holy spirit. In fact, those who refuse to be influenced by God's spirit, choosing instead to pursue their own desires and ungodly things, are described as not having spirituality. They are driven by fleshly appetites and inclinations.—1 Corinthians 2:14; Jude 18, 19.

Filling the Need

True spiritual fulfillment begins with acknowledging Jehovah as the Creator and recognizing that we owe our existence to him. (Revelation 4:11) We thus realize that our life has meaning only to the extent that we do his will. (Psalm 115:1) Doing God's will provides purpose in life, an aspect of our spiritual need that is as vital as our physical need for food. That is why Jesus, a man renowned for his spirituality, could say: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me." (John 4:34) Doing God's will invigorated him, bringing him refreshment and satisfaction.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- Where does your spiritual need come from?—Genesis 1:27.
- Can we satisfy our spiritual need on our own?—1 Corinthians 2:12-15.
- What must we do to fill our spiritual need?—Matthew 4:4; John 4:34; Colossians 3:10.

Since we are created in God's image, true spiritual satisfaction also depends on our conforming our personality to his. (Colossians 3:10) By so doing, we avoid conduct that demeans us or that damages our relationships with others. (Ephesians 4:24-32) Choosing to live by Jehovah's standards elevates our lives and contributes to real peace of mind, since we are spared the plague of a guilty conscience.—Romans 2:15.

Jesus revealed another fundamental truth regarding filling our spiritual need when he said: "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through

Failing to satisfy our spiritual need properly will ultimately result in harm

Jehovah's mouth." (Matthew 4:4) Our spirituality requires constant attention. Through the Bible, Jehovah provides the answers to life's questions—questions that are common to all people.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Source of True Happiness

A person might relieve hunger pangs by eating junk food. Similarly, we could "fill up" on activities or philosophies that seem to satisfy our spiritual appetite. But just as surely as a poor diet leads to malnutrition, disease, or worse, failing to satisfy our spiritual need properly will ultimately result in harm.

If, however, we develop a relationship with Jehovah God, seek to do his will, and follow his guidance, we will find the truth behind the Bible's words: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need."—Matthew 5:3.

Youths Consider Peers Spoiled

According to the newspaper *de Volkskrant*, young people in the Netherlands "feel that their peers are being spoiled" and that they "receive too much encouragement to feel good about themselves, resulting in a lack of consideration toward others." Among people aged 16 to 24, "no less than 2 out of every 3 . . . feel that young people's rights are no longer balanced with their duties," reports the newspaper. The general opinion is that "youths demand a lot . . . and seldom ask themselves what they can contribute to society."

Children Make Lunch

When a Japanese school principal sought ways to get parents and children to spend more time together, the school adopted his idea to have pupils prepare their own lunch boxes one day a month. Now hundreds of schools do the same. "Children are not expected to do everything themselves from the start," says Japan's *IHT Asahi Shimbun*. "Each grade has its own goal. Children in the lower elementary grades enlist their families to help come up with a menu and shop for ingredients. . . . The focus in the upper grades is on drawing up a balanced menu." The result? "Schools have reported that children's cooking skills improved, less food was wasted and families had something new to talk about,"

■ A recent study "has found that six in 10 Britons think that religion has become a divisive force."—THE CATHOLIC HERALD, BRITAIN.

■ The world's biggest photovoltaic plant has been set up in Portugal. Solar cells cover 600 acres and will be capable of producing enough electricity for some 30,000 homes.—EL PAÍS, SPAIN.

■ Worldwide, 900,000 youngsters die of unnatural causes each year—more than 2,000 every day. The primary causes are road accidents, drownings, and burns.—DIE WELT, GERMANY.

■ "Although the rate of net loss of forest has decreased in recent years, the world is still losing about [80 square miles] of forest a day."—FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, ITALY.

■ In January 2009, five pirates drowned just after their group reportedly received a \$3,000,000 (U.S.) ransom for a Saudi oil tanker. The body of one of them washed ashore with \$153,000 in cash in a plastic bag in his pocket.—ASSOCIATED PRESS, SOMALIA.

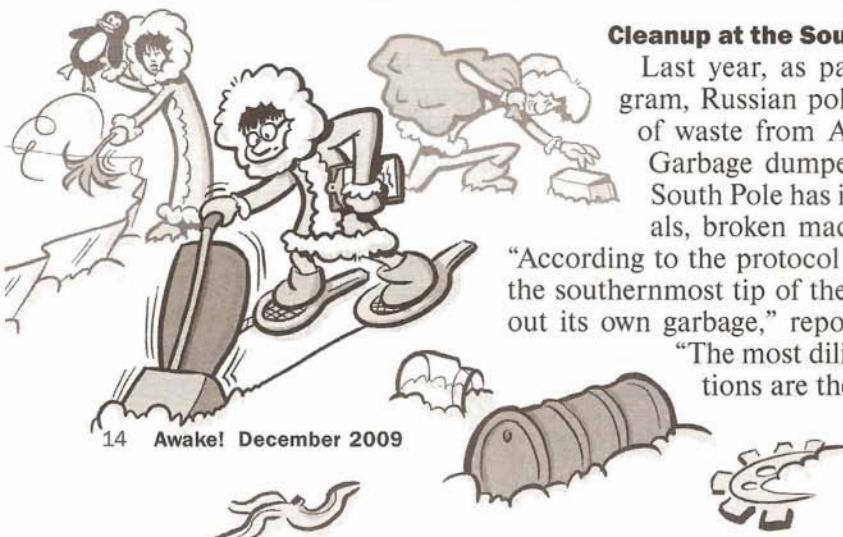
says the newspaper. Children also claim "to have learned to appreciate what their parents do for them."

Cleanup at the South Pole

Last year, as part of a special ecological program, Russian polar specialists removed 360 tons of waste from Antarctica in a general cleanup. Garbage dumped near research stations at the South Pole has included unused building materials, broken machinery, and empty fuel barrels.

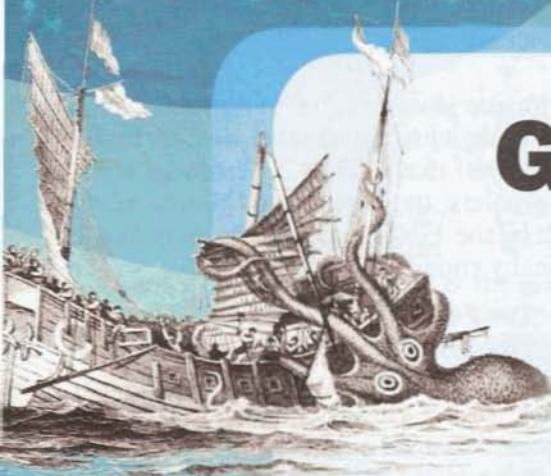
"According to the protocol for the ecological protection of the southernmost tip of the earth, every country must take out its own garbage," reports the Russian magazine *Itogi*.

"The most diligent in carrying out their obligations are the Japanese."





Great white shark



Great Monsters OF THE DEEP SEA

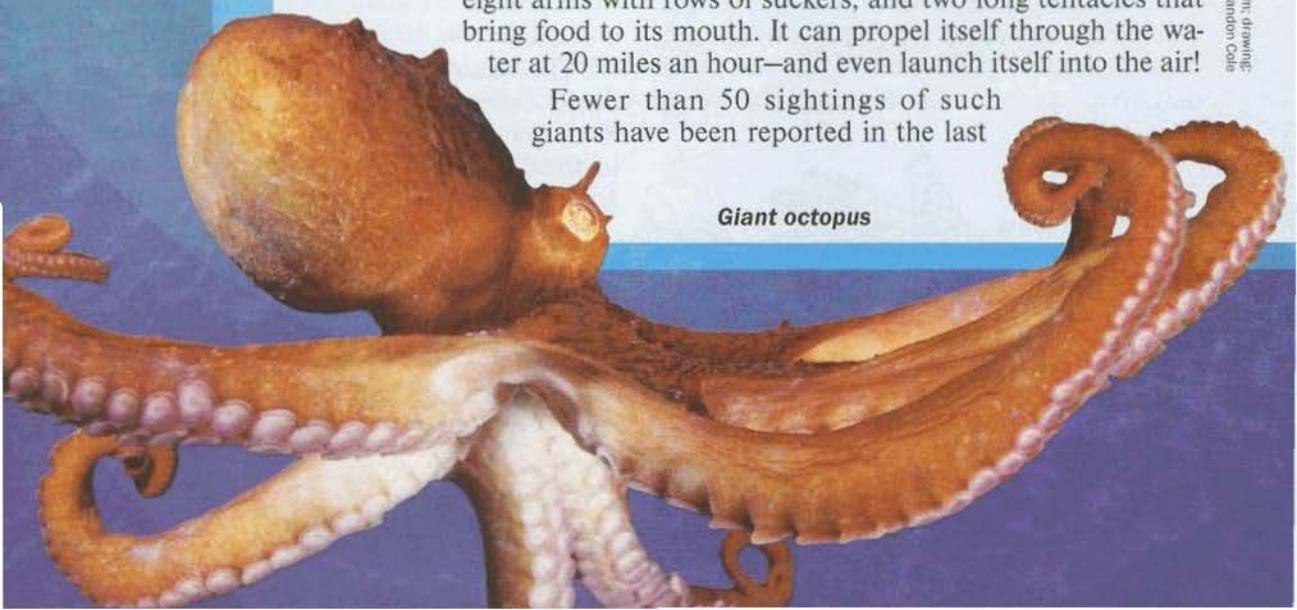
A monster suddenly ascends from the sea, snatches the boat, and drags the sailors down to a watery grave. This story line provides the plot for legends that have persisted through the ages. But do monsters that large really exist?

IN 2007 a **colossal squid** was accidentally caught by fishermen in the Ross Sea off Antarctica. It was about 33 feet long, including its tentacles, and it weighed over 1,000 pounds! Scientists believe that this species of squid can grow even larger.

A similar sea monster known as the **giant squid** has a torpedo-shaped body, eyes that can be as large as a human head, a parrotlike beak strong enough to cut a steel cable, eight arms with rows of suckers, and two long tentacles that bring food to its mouth. It can propel itself through the water at 20 miles an hour—and even launch itself into the air!

Fewer than 50 sightings of such giants have been reported in the last

Shark: © Steve Drost/SeaPics.com; drawing: Getty Images/Octopus; © Brandon Cole



Giant octopus



Sperm whale

century, and these creatures have never been studied in the wild.

Gigantic Whales of the Sea

Colossal and giant squids, however, are just a meal for an even larger animal, the **sperm whale**, which can grow to about 60 feet in length and weigh as much as 50 tons. One tooth alone weighs two pounds! Dead sperm whales have been found with portions of giant squid in their stomach. These whales also had circular scars from squid suckers on their huge, blunt heads, showing that the squid put up a hard fight. In 1965 the crew of a Soviet whaleboat claimed to have seen a battle between a giant squid and a 40-ton sperm whale. Neither survived. The strangled whale was found afloat in the sea, with the head of the squid in its stomach.

Huge indeed are the giant squid and the sperm whale, yet the **blue whale**, the largest mammal, surpasses them in size. The longest blue whale on record was a 108-foot adult female caught in Antarctica. The blue whale may weigh as much as 150 tons. The weight

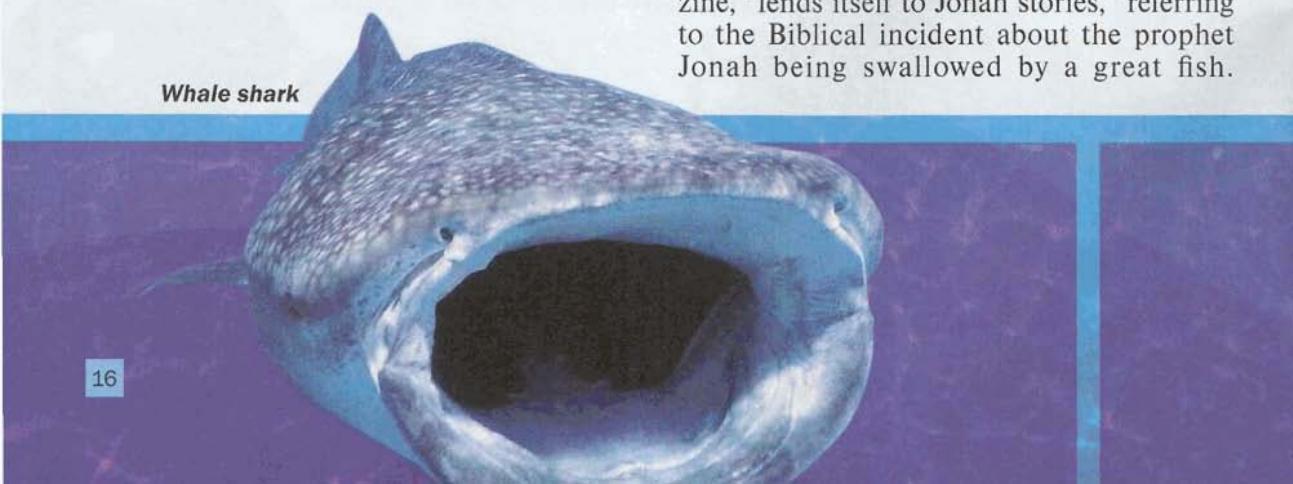
of its tongue alone is equal to that of an adult elephant! And just imagine—it gives birth to a three-ton calf that is 23 to 27 feet long! Hunted by whalers, the blue whale became nearly extinct by the 1960's and today is classified as a critically endangered species.

The Ferocious and the Gentle

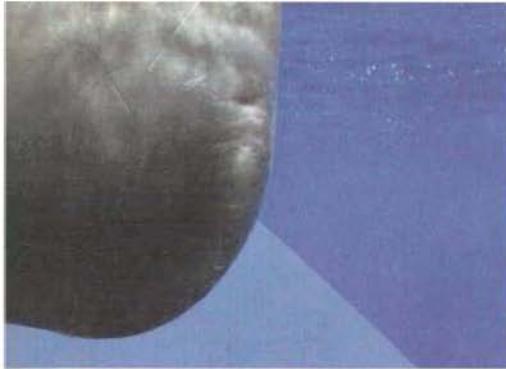
With its 3,000 formidable teeth, the **great white shark** is perhaps the most frightening carnivorous fish. The largest great white on record was 23 feet long and weighed 7,000 pounds. This shark has an extraordinary sense of smell, being able to detect one drop of blood diluted in 25 gallons of water!

The **whale shark** is the largest of living fish, averaging some 25 feet in length. However, some can reach nearly twice that size. Its mouth can be up to four feet wide, easily capable of swallowing a man. But far from being a ferocious predator of other large sea creatures, this gentle giant feeds on tiny plankton and small fish.

"The whale shark's unusual digestive anatomy," reported *National Geographic* magazine, "lends itself to Jonah stories," referring to the Biblical incident about the prophet Jonah being swallowed by a great fish.



Whale shark



Whale sharks have "a nonviolent way of getting rid of large objects of dubious digestibility they swallow accidentally."—Jonah 1:17; 2:10.

The Shy Giant

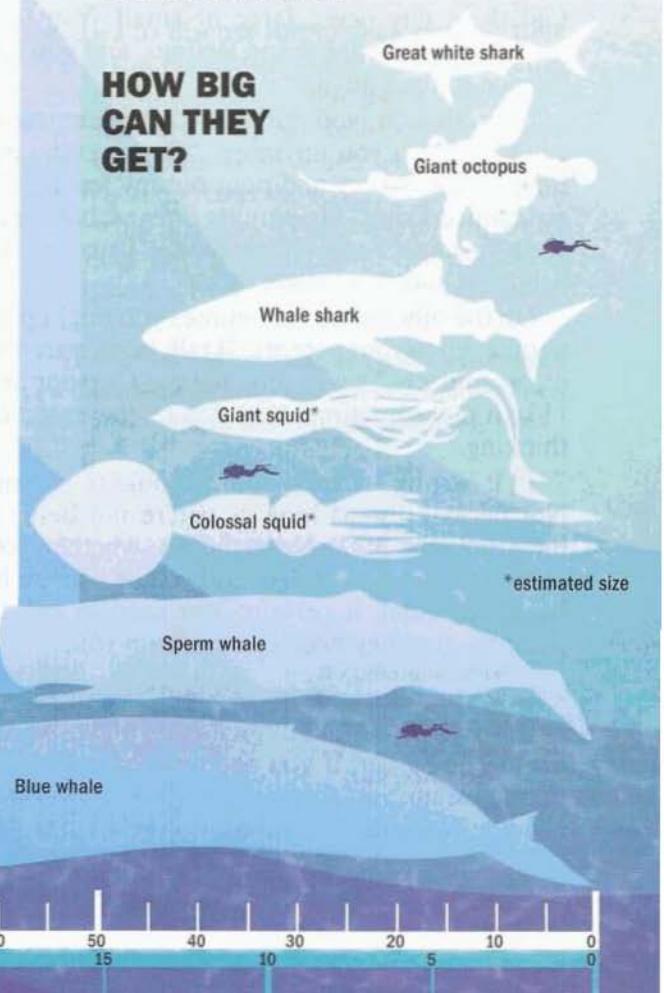
Another large sea creature is the **giant octopus**, which can weigh up to 600 pounds. Once called devilfish, it was thought to be able to sink ships. Yet, this octopus is actually shy and hides in rock dens and crevices on the seafloor. Its eight arms can have a span of 30 feet, and it possesses the largest brain of any invertebrate. Indeed, octopuses are highly intelligent and can learn complex tasks, such as solving mazes and unscrewing jar lids!

Like the giant squid, the giant octopus can camouflage itself by changing color, use jet propulsion to move through the water, and escape danger by squirting a dense cloud of ink. The octopus can even leave the water for a short time to search for food on land!

These creatures of the deep truly furnish praise to the name of their Creator, Jehovah. Fittingly, the Bible psalmist sang: "Praise Jehovah from the earth, you sea monsters and all you watery deeps."—Psalm 148:7.

▲ Blue whale and calf

HOW BIG CAN THEY GET?



How can I talk to my parents?

*"I tried really hard to tell my parents how I felt, but it didn't come out right—and they just cut me off. It took a lot for me to get up the nerve to express myself, and it was a complete failure!"—Rosa.**

WHEN you were younger, your parents were probably the first ones you ran to for advice. You told them any news, large or small. You freely expressed your thoughts and feelings, and you had confidence in their advice.

Now, though, you may feel that your parents just can't relate to you anymore. "One evening at mealtime I began to cry and pour out my feelings," says a girl named Edie. "My parents *listened*, but they didn't seem to *understand*." The result? "I just went to my bedroom and cried some more!"

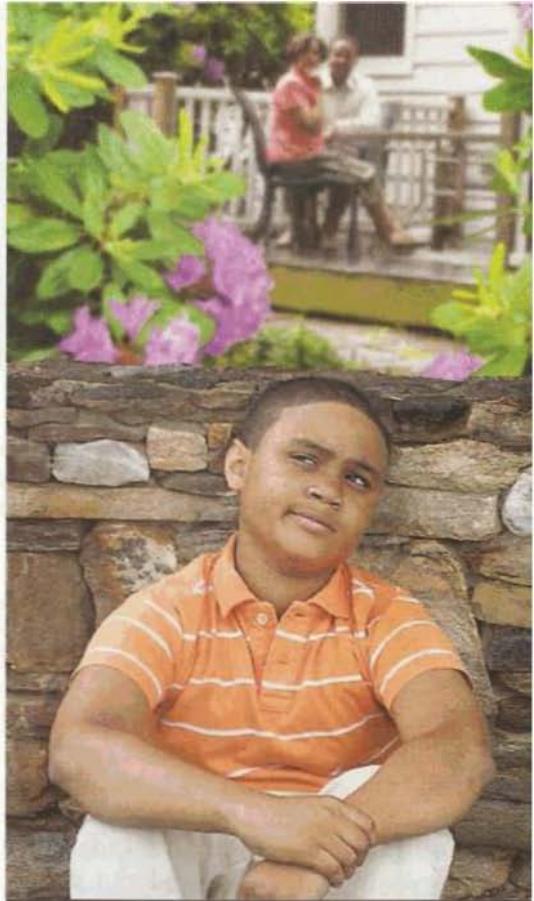
On the other hand, sometimes you might prefer *not* to open up to your parents. "I talk to my parents about many subjects," says a boy named Christopher. "But I like it that sometimes they don't know *everything* I'm thinking."

Is it wrong to keep some thoughts to yourself? Not necessarily—as long as you're not being deceitful. (Proverbs 3:32) Nevertheless, whether your parents don't seem to understand you or you are holding back, one thing is certain: You need to talk to your parents—and they need to hear from you.

Keep Talking!

In some ways, communicating with your parents is like driving a car. If you encounter a roadblock, you don't give up; you simply find another route. Consider some examples.

* Some names have been changed.



MIXED MESSAGES?

Are you having trouble communicating with your parents? Maybe what you're saying isn't what they're hearing.

When you say . . .

"I don't want to talk about it."

Your parents hear . . .

"I'll freely share my thoughts and feelings with my friends, but you're not important enough in my life for me to open up to you."

When you say . . .

"You wouldn't understand."

Your parents hear . . .

"You're too old and out of touch. Forget about even trying to understand my world."



Roadblock #1: You need to talk, but your parents don't seem to be listening.

"I find it difficult to communicate with my father," says a girl named Leah. "Sometimes I'll talk to him for a while and then he'll say, 'I'm sorry, were you speaking to me?'"

QUESTION: What if Leah really needs to discuss a problem? She has at least three options.

Option

A

Yell at her dad.

Leah might scream:
"Come on, this is
important! Listen!"

Option

B

Stop talking to her dad.

Leah could simply give up on trying to tell her problems to her parents.

Option

C

Wait for a better time and bring up the subject again.

Leah could speak with her dad face-to-face, or she might even write him a letter about her problem.

Which option do you think Leah should choose?

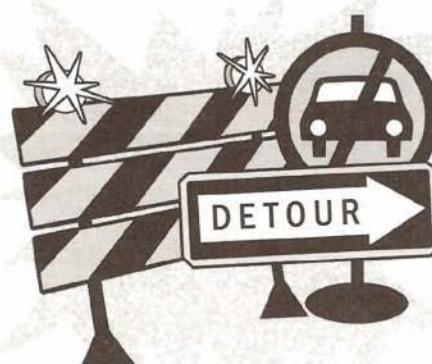
Let's explore each option to see where it would likely lead. Leah's dad is distracted—and thus unaware of her frustration. So if Leah chooses **Option A**, her screaming might seem to come out of nowhere. This option probably wouldn't make Leah's dad more receptive to her words, and it wouldn't show respect and honor for her parents. (Ephesians 6:2) Really, then, this option leads to a no-win situation.

While **Option B** might be the easiest course to take, it's not the wisest. Why? Because "there is a frustrating of plans where there is no confidential talk, but in the multitude of counselors there is accomplishment." (Proverbs 15:22) To deal successfully with her problems, Leah needs to talk to her parents—and if they're going to be of any help, they need to know what's going on in her life. Ceasing to talk accomplishes neither.

With **Option C**, however, Leah doesn't let a roadblock become a dead end. Rather,

she tries to discuss the subject another time. And if she chooses to write her dad a letter, Leah might feel better right away. Writing the letter may also help her to formulate exactly what she wants to say when her dad *is* listening. When he reads the letter, Leah's dad will learn what she was trying to tell him, which may help him to understand her plight better. Option C thus benefits both Leah *and* her dad.

What other options might Leah have? See if you can think of one, and write it below. Then, write down where that option will likely lead.



A communication roadblock need not be a dead end—you can find a way to talk to your parents!



Roadblock #2: Your parents want to talk, but you'd rather not. "There's nothing worse than being hit with questions immediately after a hard day at school," says a girl named Sarah. "I just want to forget about school, but right away my parents start asking: 'How was your day? Were there any problems?'" No doubt, Sarah's parents ask such questions with the best of intentions. Still, she laments, "It's hard to talk about school when I'm tired and stressed."

QUESTION: What can Sarah do in this situation? As with the previous example, she has at least three options.

Option

A

Refuse to talk.

She might say:
"Just leave me
alone. I don't want
to talk right now!"

Option

B

**Go ahead and
talk.**

Despite feeling stressed, Sarah could begrudgingly answer her parents' questions.

Option

C

**Defer the "school" talk but keep the
conversation going on another topic.**

Sarah might suggest that they could discuss school at another time, when she knows that she'll be in a better frame of mind. Then she could say, with genuine interest: "Tell me about your day. How did things go for you?"

Which option do you think Sarah should choose?

Again, let's explore each option to see where it would likely lead.

Before choosing **Option A**, Sarah feels stressed and isn't inclined to talk. After choosing this option, she would still feel stressed, but she'd also feel guilty for blowing up at her parents.—Proverbs 29:11.

Meanwhile, Sarah's parents wouldn't appreciate her outburst—or the silence that would follow. They might suspect that Sarah is hiding something. They might try even harder to get her to open up, which, of course, would frustrate her even more. In the end, this option leads to a no-win situation.

Option B is obviously a better choice than **Option A**. After all, at least Sarah and her par-

ents would be talking. But since the conversation wouldn't be heartfelt, both Sarah and her parents wouldn't get what they want either—a relaxed, open discussion.

With **Option C**, however, Sarah would feel better because the "school" talk has been delayed for now. Her parents would appreciate her effort to make conversation, so they'd be happy too. This option likely has the best chance of success because both sides are applying the principle found at Philippians 2:4, which says: "Look out for one another's interests, not just for your own."—*Today's English Version*.

More articles from the "Young People Ask" series can be found at the Web site www.watchtower.org/ype

TO THINK ABOUT

- What role does timing play in good communication?—Proverbs 25:11.
- Why is talking to your parents worth the effort?—Job 12:12.



WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY



"I told my parents about a problem I had at school, and I was surprised at how readily they listened. With their help the problem was easy to solve!"—Natalie.

"Communicating with your parents isn't always easy, but when you do open up and talk to them, you feel as if a huge weight has been lifted off your mind."—Devenye.

A NOTE TO PARENTS

As a concerned parent, perhaps you wonder whether your children find it hard to talk to you. Consider what some youths told *Awake!* about why they hold back from talking to their parents. Then, ask yourself the accompanying questions, and look up the cited scriptures.

"I find it hard to approach Dad because he has a lot on his plate, both at work and in the congregation. There never really seems to be a convenient time to talk to him."—Andrew.

'Have I unwittingly sent the message that I'm too busy to talk to my teenagers? If so, how can I make myself more approachable? What time can I regularly set aside to talk with my children?'—Deuteronomy 6:7.

"I approached my mother in tears about an argument I'd had at school. I wanted her to comfort me, but instead she just reprimanded me. Since then, I haven't approached her about anything important."—Kenji.

'How do I respond when my children approach me with a problem? Even if correction is in order, can I learn to stop and listen with empathy before giving advice?'—James 1:19.

"It seems that every time parents say we can talk and they won't get angry, they still become upset. Then the teen feels betrayed."—Rachel.

'If my child tells me something that is upsetting, how can I control my initial reaction?'—Proverbs 10:19.

"Many times when I opened up to Mom about very private matters, she turned around and told them to her friends. I lost confidence in her for a long time."—Chantelle.

'Do I show consideration for my child's feelings by not spreading private matters that he or she has confided to me?'—Proverbs 25:9.

"I have a lot of things I want to talk about with my parents. I just need their help to start the conversation."—Courtney.

'Can I take the initiative to talk to my adolescent? What times are best for talking?'—Ecclesiastes 3:7.



The Importance of Showing Affection

HUG them a lot!" said a professor of child psychiatry to a first-time mother who had just given birth to twins. She had asked him for advice on the best way to bring up her children. "Love and affection have to be shown in numerous ways," the professor added, "such as by hugs and kisses, by expressions of warmth, understanding, happiness, generosity, and forgiveness and, when necessary, by reasoned discipline. We should never assume that our children know that we love them."

Tiffany Field, director of the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami, Florida, U.S.A., seems to agree with the above recommendation. "Touch is as essential to the growth and well-being of a child as diet and exercise," she asserts.

Do adults need physical expressions of affection too? Yes. Clinical psychologist Claude Steiner concluded from his research that verbal and physical encouragement are essential for our emotional well-being, whatever our age. Laura, a nurse who cares for a large group of elderly people, says: "I have seen that expressions of affection toward the elderly really make a difference. When you treat them kindly and touch them, you win their trust and they follow your instructions willingly. Furthermore, such affectionate treatment shows respect for their dignity."

Moreover, expressing affection benefits the giver as much as the receiver. As Jesus Christ once said, "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) It is especially rewarding when affection is

expressed toward those who are worried, depressed, or insecure. Many incidents in the Bible describe how such ones received this kind of help.

Imagine how comforting it must have been for "a man full of leprosy," an outcast of society, to feel a compassionate touch from none other than Jesus Christ!—Luke 5:12, 13; Matthew 8:1-3.

Think about how much stronger the elderly prophet Daniel must have felt when an angel of God fortified him with warm encouragement and touched him three times. Those loving touches and upbuilding words were just what Daniel needed to help him recover from his physical and mental exhaustion.—Daniel 10:9-11, 15, 16, 18, 19.

On one occasion, dear friends of the apostle Paul traveled about 30 miles from Ephesus to Miletus to meet him. There Paul told them that they might not see him again. How encouraged the apostle must have felt when his loyal friends "hugged him and kissed him good-bye"!—Acts 20:36, 37, *Today's English Version*.

Thus, both the Bible and modern research encourage us to show affection to one another. Satisfying this need brings physical and emotional benefits. Clearly, sincere appropriate expressions of affection are not just for children.

- 1. No four-footed creatures. 2. No creeping things.
- 3. No birds. 4. Dan.—Judges 13:2-5. 5. The Philistines.—Judges 13:1. 6. False.



WAS IT DESIGNED?

The Owl's Feather

Flight engineers look with envy upon the nocturnal owl. Why? Because of its "silent flight. "No other birds fly with such stealth," says the National Geographic Web site. What is the owl's secret?

Consider: The air that rushes over the feathers of most birds creates a turbulence that can be quite noisy. With the owl, on the other hand, it is different. Its trailing feathers have fringes that break up the sound waves that are generated as air flows over the top of the wing at the downstroke. The downy feathers found elsewhere on the owl's body help absorb the remaining sound.

Aircraft designers would like to tap into the secret of the owl's virtually silent flight. Quieter planes would mean that airports with stringent noise limits could allow flights to take off and land at later hours of the night—and earlier hours of the morning. Some improvements are already being planned. "We are just now coming along," says Geoffrey Lilley, professor emeritus of aeronautics at England's University of Southampton. He adds that it could be decades before such a quiet plane could be designed.

What do you think? Was the owl's noise-reducing trailing feather a product of chance? Or was it designed?



Compare an owl's feather on the left with a hawk's on the right



How I Lost My LOVE FOR WAR

AS TOLD BY THOMAS STUBENVOLL

I WAS born in New York City on November 8, 1944. I grew up in the South Bronx, at that time a neighborhood divided into racial enclaves. As a boy, I spent much time on the streets, and I soon learned to respect the territorial boundaries of the various ethnic gangs. Those gangs were feared for their criminal activities and violent temperament.

By the time I was 12 years old, I belonged to a gang. We called ourselves The Skulls. My partners and I would break into railroad freight cars and steal cases of peanut butter and other food items. Gangs with boys in their late teens were far more brazen. There were many bloody fights between such gangs. On one occasion a good friend of mine was stabbed to death in front of my eyes.

Fascinated by War

The gang scene didn't really make me happy. After a while, I just wanted to move out of the city. My uncle Eddie had been in the Korean War, where he served as a member of the Marine Corps, a branch of the U.S. military. Uncle Eddie's description of the Marines fascinated me. I was told that every Marine is a disciplined leader and a tough warrior trained to act decisively. The Marine Corps motto, Semper fidelis, Latin for "always faithful," highlights its strict code of loyalty and commitment. Soon, there was nothing I wanted more than to be a skilled Marine.

On November 8, 1961, the very day I turned 17, I enlisted as a Marine recruit. Less than four months later, I graduated from boot camp as

*Serving as a drill instructor (top)
and in the infantry in Vietnam (left)*

My injuries earned me the Purple Heart, but they were not serious enough to stop me from fighting



a Marine. That was the start of an 11-year career in the military.

I joined the military during peacetime. Still, the life of a Marine is one of constant training. First, I was sent to Oahu, Hawaii, where for two years I received intense training in infantry tactics and guerrilla warfare. I became a marksman, able to hit a ten-inch bull's-eye at 500 yards. I was trained in martial arts, the use of explosives, map reading, demolition, and communications. I relished every moment.

After Hawaii, I spent six months in Japan on a mission to guard underwater weapons at the Atsugi Naval Air Station. Soon hostilities between the United States and North Vietnam escalated, and I was assigned as part of a Marine detachment on the *USS Ranger*, an aircraft carrier. From the Gulf of Tonkin, our ship joined in the aerial bombardment of North Vietnam. Finally, I was fighting a real war. Still, I felt that by just being on a ship, I was missing out on the real action.

The Realities of War

In the spring of 1966, while on the *Ranger*, I was honorably discharged after four years of military service. Most soldiers in my position would gladly have returned home and avoided the bloodbath that was about to take place. But I had become a devoted Marine, a professional warrior, and I wasn't about to quit. I decided to reenlist.

I wanted to fight. That is what I was trained for. So I volunteered to serve in the infantry. It didn't matter where I was assigned, as long as I was a Marine Corps infantryman. Being a good Marine was my mission in life, and the war was becoming my god.

In October 1967, I was sent to Vietnam. Nervous and excited, I was immediately tak-

en to the front lines in the province of Quang Tri. Less than a day later, I found myself in the middle of a bloody battle.

Men were being killed and wounded all around me. I could see the dust kicked up by the impact of enemy bullets hitting the ground. There was no shelter other than a few bushes. I just started shooting. It was terrible. I thought I was going to die. Finally, the fight was over. I survived, but I cannot say the same for the men I helped to carry back.

For the following 20 months, I shared in the most intense fighting of the Vietnam War. Seven days a week and almost around the clock, I was either shooting or trying not to be shot, either laying ambushes or being ambushed. During most of that time, I exchanged fire with the enemy from holes in

Seven days a week and almost around the clock, I was either shooting or trying not to be shot, either laying ambushes or being ambushed

the ground that quickly turned into mud pits when it rained. Sometimes it was cold and unbearably uncomfortable. In such holes I both ate and slept.

My search-and-destroy missions took me in and out of the humid jungle, with the ever-present danger of the enemy jumping out of the thick underbrush. At times, for hours on end, I was under the constant pounding of artillery exploding around me. During one battle near Khe Sanh, about three fourths of my platoon were injured or killed—only 13 of us were left.

January 30, 1968, found me at an army base, where I could sleep in a tent for the first time in over a year. The relative comfort was shattered early that morning when I was awakened by the deafening sound of a mortar

explosion. I was wounded. Several pieces of shrapnel became lodged in my shoulder and back. That morning the enemy had begun a massive invasion.

My injuries earned me the Purple Heart, a medal of military decoration, but they were not serious enough to stop me from fighting. The medics quickly plucked out the shrapnel, and I was soon on my way to the city of Hue, where one of the major battles of the war took place. There I operated as a veritable killing machine. Shooting the enemy was nothing to me. For 32 days, I spent every waking hour going from house to house hunting down and killing the enemy.

At the time, I felt absolutely justified. 'After all,' I reasoned, 'the enemy was killing thousands of innocent men, women, and children in the city of Hue. The streets and alleys were strewn with thousands of corpses. There were booby traps everywhere, even beneath some of the corpses. We were under the constant threat of enemy snipers.' None of this deterred me. In my mind, killing the enemy was the right thing to do.

An Unhealthy Appetite for War

Some time after the battle of Hue, I completed my 13-month tour of duty. The war was raging, however, and I wanted more of it. So I volunteered to stay in Vietnam for another tour. By then I was a staff sergeant and was assigned to a special mission. It involved leading detachments of Marines into small hamlets in the countryside. There we interacted with civilians, training them to protect their communities.

Christine and I have devoted our 36 years together to helping others acquire Bible knowledge

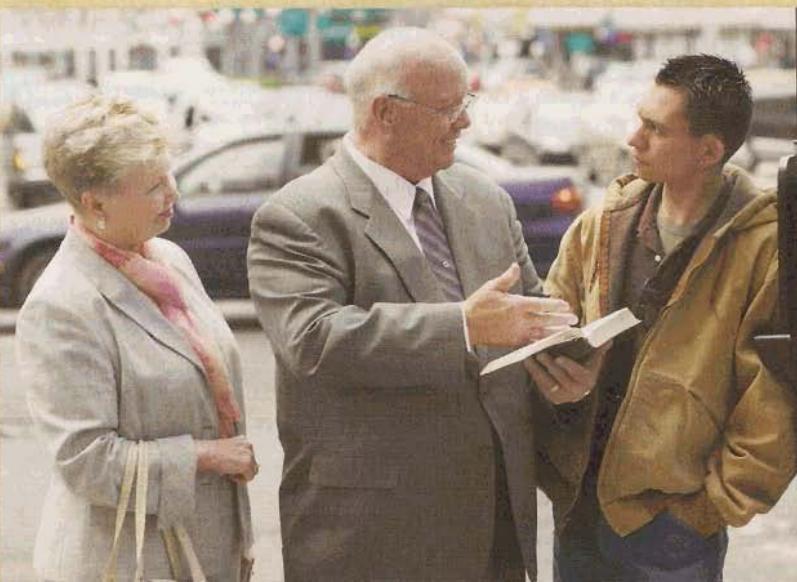
We were in a constant state of alert because the enemy would often blend in with the local people. At night we moved about stealthily—hunting, catching, and killing enemy combatants. Despite the extreme tension, my love for war only kept growing.

My second tour in Vietnam passed quickly. Again I asked to remain in the battlefields. This time my superiors denied my request, perhaps noticing my unhealthy appetite for war. But my career as a Marine wasn't over. I was sent back to the United States to be a drill instructor, training recruits. For three and a half years, I focused on my duties as a drill instructor. I had much to share with my recruits, and I did my best to turn each of them into the mean fighting machine that I myself had become.

I Found a Better Purpose in Life

I befriended a fellow drill instructor. His wife had just left him. His sister, Christine Antisdel, who had recently become one of Jehovah's Witnesses, offered to move in with him and help him care for his two very young children. That was the first time I had ever heard about the Witnesses.

I was raised as a Catholic and went to Catholic school for eight years. At church I even served as an altar boy. Still, I knew virtually nothing about the Bible. Christine changed that. She introduced me to Bible



truths that I had never heard before. I learned what the Bible really teaches and what it doesn't teach.

For example, I learned that the Bible doesn't teach that God punishes people in a fiery hell after death. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) It doesn't teach that God is part of a Trinity. (John 14:28) The Bible, however, does teach that God will eliminate wickedness, pain, and death and that obedient mankind will live forever in an earthly paradise. (Psalm 37:9-11; Revelation 21:3, 4) I also learned the truth about God's moral standards. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) I learned that God has a name, Jehovah. (Psalm 83:18) All of this was fascinating!

In November 1972, I was transferred to another base, where I was to teach warfare tactics to noncommissioned officers. There I began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. I attended their meetings and was very impressed by the friendly atmosphere and genuine brotherhood of the Witnesses.

But the more I learned about the Bible, the more my conscience bothered me. The truths of the Bible were so much in conflict with my way of life. I had dedicated my life to the promotion of nationalistic warfare and violence, things that God hates.

I concluded that I could not be a Marine and worship Jehovah God at the same time. It was then that I lost my love for war. I decided to quit my profession. After months of paperwork, interviews, and a psychiatric examination, I received an honorable discharge —this time as a conscientious objector. Thus ended my 11 years of service with the Marine Corps.

Now I could say to Jehovah the words of Isaiah 6:8: "Here I am! Send me." Yes, I was ready to use my energy and enthusiasm in serving the true God instead of serving in the Marine Corps. I was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses on July 27, 1973. Five months later I married Christine Antisdel, the first Witness I ever met.

Christine and I have devoted our 36 years together to helping others acquire Bible knowledge and draw closer to God. For eight years we served as missionaries in the Dominican Republic. For the past 18 years, I have served as a traveling minister. My wife

After drawing closer to Jehovah God, I deeply regret having taken the lives of fellow humans during the war

and I have visited hundreds of Spanish-speaking congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the United States.

To this very day, I am not aware of any emotional or mental ill effects from my war days. No shell shock, no post-traumatic stress disorder, no nightmares, no flashbacks. Still, after drawing closer to Jehovah God, I deeply regret having taken the lives of fellow humans during the war.

Mine was quite a transformation—but a worthwhile one. Now I feel forgiven by God for what I did in the past. Instead of taking life away, my mission is now to offer people the hope of life on a paradise earth forever. As a Marine, I did what I did out of ignorance and misguided zeal. As one of Jehovah's Witnesses, having learned what the Bible teaches, I do what I do out of a firm conviction that there is a true, living God, that he is a loving God, and that in the end, only good things will happen to those who love and obey him.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- Are You Working Too Hard?
- Can Mealtime Strengthen Your Family Values?
- Cultivating Orchids—How Patience Pays Off

BEWARE OF LEAD POISONING!

In recent years governments have issued emergency recalls of such consumer products as toys and jewelry. Why? Dangerous levels of lead have been detected in some of these items, and young children tend to suck or chew on them. Lead poisoning can be especially dangerous for children under six years of age, since their central nervous system is still developing.

ACCORDING to a study by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, lead inhibits a protein that is important for brain development and cognition. Studies show that children absorb up to 50 percent of the lead ingested, whereas adults usually absorb only 10 to 15 percent.

Recent research has suggested that even levels of lead that fall under some government-issued toxicity limits may cause harm. The problems, according to the National Safety Council in the United States, can include "learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, behavioral problems, stunted growth, impaired hearing, and kidney damage" in children. Women who may become pregnant should take extra precautions to avoid exposure because lead can harm the fetus.*

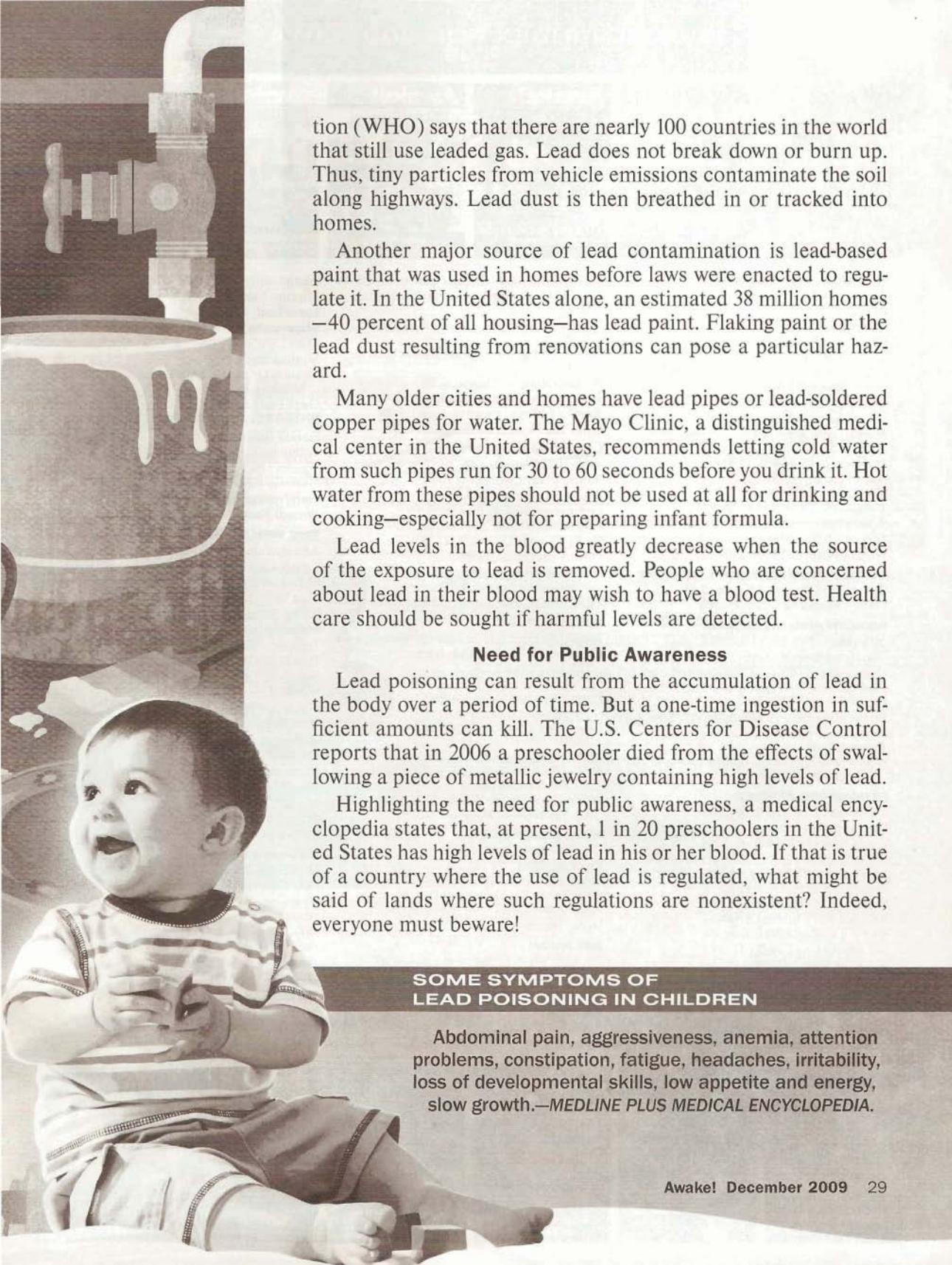
Lead can also contaminate food and drink prepared in lead-glazed earthenware, which is customarily used in some parts of Asia and Latin America. Sometimes drinking water is stored in clay pots to keep it cool, and hot beverages are served in glazed mugs. A study of children under five years of age in Mexico City revealed that nearly half the children over 18 months of age had high levels of lead in their blood. Food prepared in glazed ceramics was mentioned as the reason. Lead imparts a smooth, glasslike finish to clay items, but it can leach out, especially from dishware that is heated or exposed to some fruits and vegetables.

Other Sources of Lead Poisoning

Although in recent years most developed countries have phased out lead from their gasoline, the World Health Organiza-

* Adults can also get lead poisoning, resulting in nerve disorders, muscle and joint pain, or problems with memory and concentration.





tion (WHO) says that there are nearly 100 countries in the world that still use leaded gas. Lead does not break down or burn up. Thus, tiny particles from vehicle emissions contaminate the soil along highways. Lead dust is then breathed in or tracked into homes.

Another major source of lead contamination is lead-based paint that was used in homes before laws were enacted to regulate it. In the United States alone, an estimated 38 million homes—40 percent of all housing—has lead paint. Flaking paint or the lead dust resulting from renovations can pose a particular hazard.

Many older cities and homes have lead pipes or lead-soldered copper pipes for water. The Mayo Clinic, a distinguished medical center in the United States, recommends letting cold water from such pipes run for 30 to 60 seconds before you drink it. Hot water from these pipes should not be used at all for drinking and cooking—especially not for preparing infant formula.

Lead levels in the blood greatly decrease when the source of the exposure to lead is removed. People who are concerned about lead in their blood may wish to have a blood test. Health care should be sought if harmful levels are detected.

Need for Public Awareness

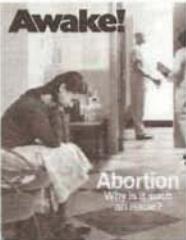
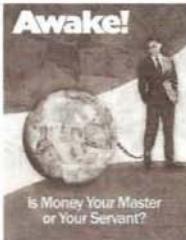
Lead poisoning can result from the accumulation of lead in the body over a period of time. But a one-time ingestion in sufficient amounts can kill. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control reports that in 2006 a preschooler died from the effects of swallowing a piece of metallic jewelry containing high levels of lead.

Highlighting the need for public awareness, a medical encyclopedia states that, at present, 1 in 20 preschoolers in the United States has high levels of lead in his or her blood. If that is true of a country where the use of lead is regulated, what might be said of lands where such regulations are nonexistent? Indeed, everyone must beware!

SOME SYMPTOMS OF LEAD POISONING IN CHILDREN

Abdominal pain, aggressiveness, anemia, attention problems, constipation, fatigue, headaches, irritability, loss of developmental skills, low appetite and energy, slow growth.—MEDLINE PLUS MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA.

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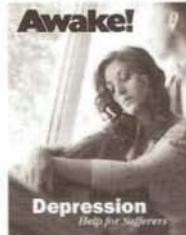
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HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What Is Missing From This Picture?

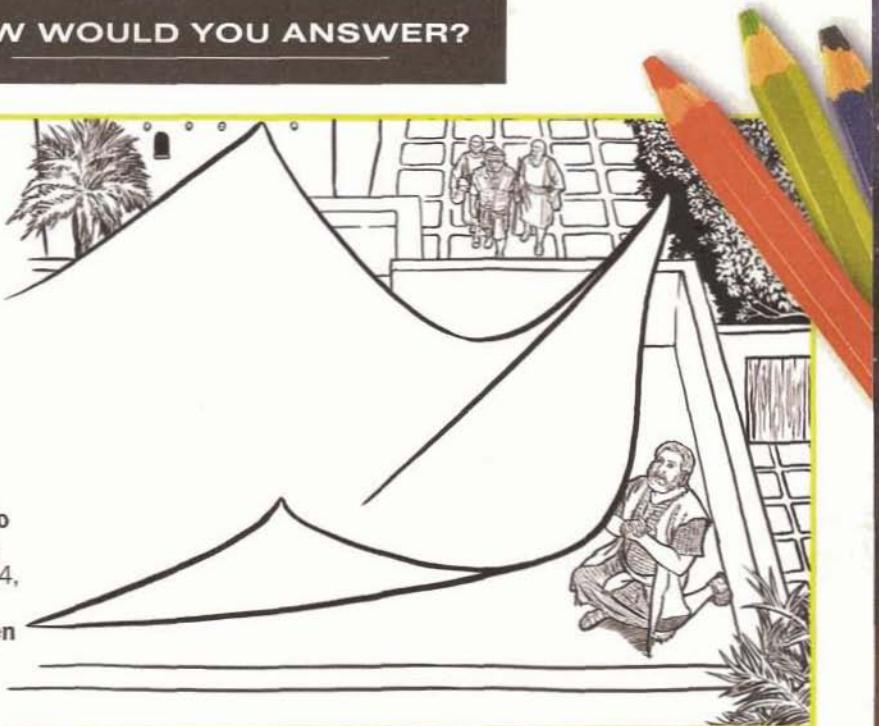
Read Acts 10:9-48. Now look at the picture. What features are missing? Write your answers on the lines below, and then draw in the missing features.

1.....

2.....

3.....

FOR DISCUSSION: What lesson do you think Jehovah was teaching Peter? CLUE: Read Acts 10:28, 34, 35. How can you show that you learned from Peter's lesson when you deal with people of another race or culture?



Children's Picture Search

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.

From This Issue

Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

PAGE 9 **What will mankind never find out?** Ecclesiastes 3:_____

PAGE 10 **The earth has been given to whom?** Psalm 115:_____

PAGE 13 **To be happy, we must be conscious of what?**
Matthew 5:_____

PAGE 19 **When are plans frustrated?** Proverbs 15:_____

What Do You Know About Judge Samson?

Read Judges 13:1-16:31. Now answer the following questions.

4.....

He was from which tribe?

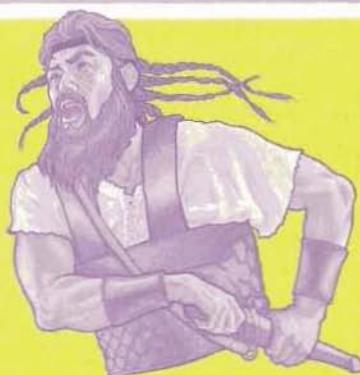
5.....

He delivered Israel from which nation?

6.....

True or false? He lived after the prophet Samuel.

FOR DISCUSSION: Why was Samson so powerful? CLUE: Read Hebrews 11:32-34. What part of Samson's story did you enjoy most, and why?





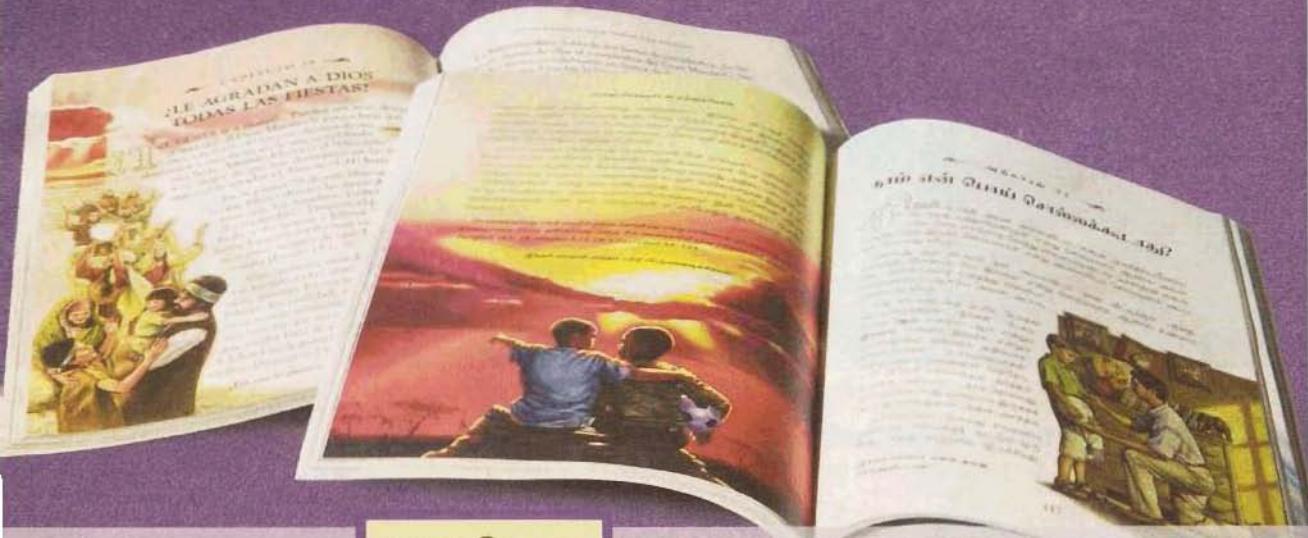
She Stood Up for What She Believed

■ During a recent holiday season, the first-grade class of seven-year-old Morgan was assigned to read a story about Christmas. Morgan reminded the teacher that she felt that this celebration was not in harmony with the Bible. Her teacher kindly allowed her to choose to read a story that did not offend her conscience.

Sometime later, a school awards ceremony was held, and Morgan's family was invited to attend. Morgan was surprised when at the ceremony she was presented with an award for her courage in holding firmly to what she believed. When asked how she had developed such courage, she explained that she and her family read together from the book *Learn From the Great Teacher*, the lessons of which are drawn from the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

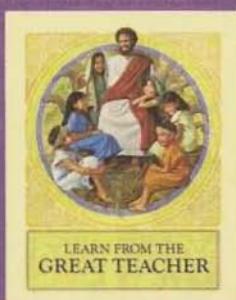
This 256-page book, with colorful illustrations throughout, provides a basis for parents to enjoy interactive discussions with their children. It includes such chapters as "Why We Should Not Lie," "Do All Parties Please God?," and "Help to Overcome Our Fears."

If you would like a copy, please fill in the accompanying coupon, and mail it to the address provided or to an appropriate address on page 5 of this magazine.



Without obligation,
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