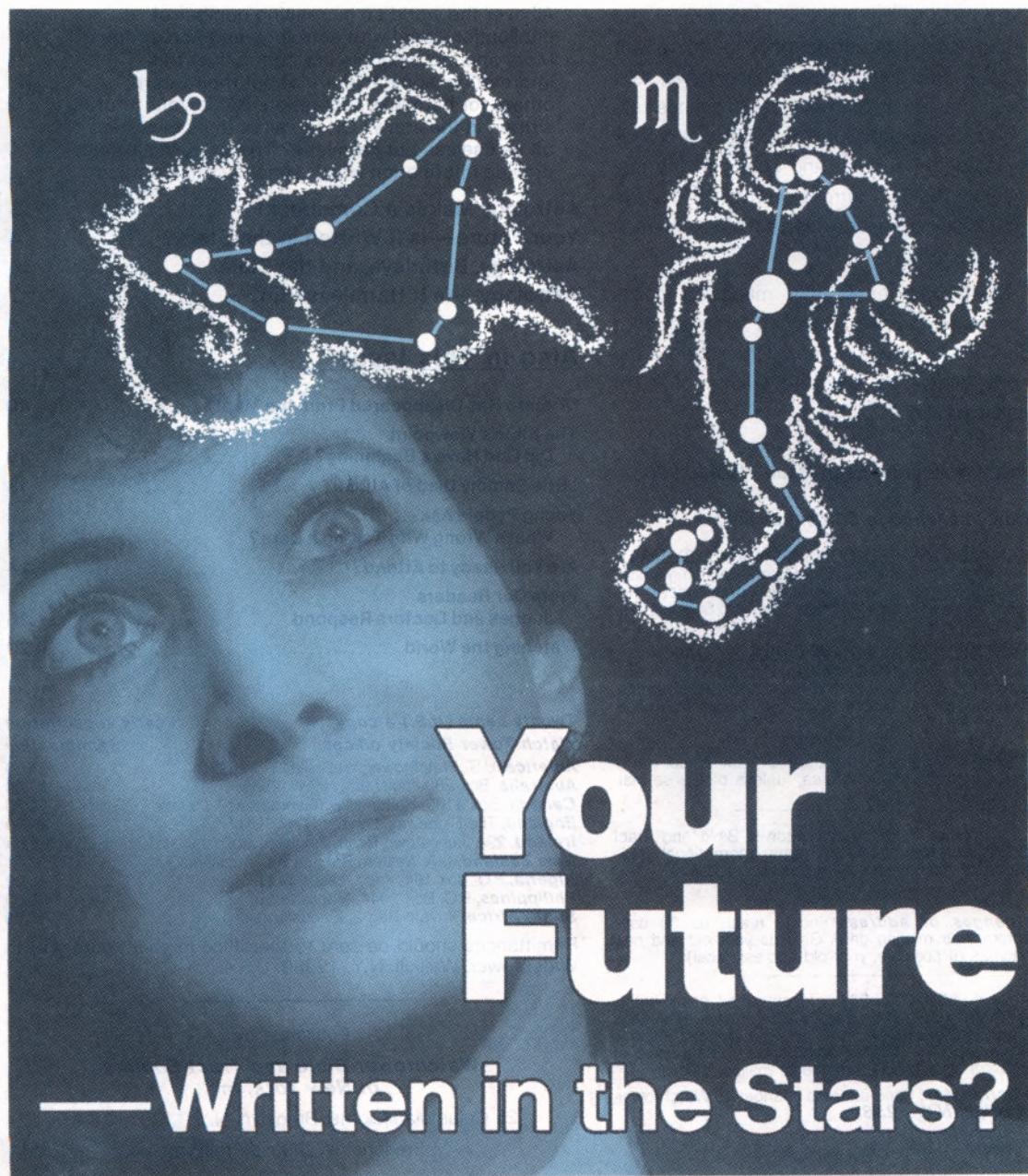


# ***Awake!***

MAY 8, 1986



**Your  
Future**

**—Written in the Stars?**

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AWAKE! is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another.

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*Awake!* (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly for \$4.00 (U.S.) per year by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.

Printed in U.S.A.

## Feature Articles

All over the world an increasing number of publications deal with astrology and horoscopes. More and more people are poring over this information, some to learn about their future, others for harmless recreation. But is your future written in the stars? Or can all of this be written off as useless but harmless? The following articles provide information worth serious consideration

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<b>Twenty cents (U.S.) a copy</b>	<b>Yearly subscription</b>
<b>Watch Tower Society offices</b>	<b>Semimonthly</b>
<b>America</b> , U.S., Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589	\$4.00
<b>Australia</b> , Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565	A\$7.00
<b>Canada</b> , Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4	\$5.20
<b>England</b> , The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	£5.00
<b>Ireland</b> , 29A Jamestown Road, Finglas, Dublin 11	£5.00
<b>New Zealand</b> , 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3	NZ\$12.00
<b>Nigeria</b> , P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State	N6.00
<b>Philippines</b> , P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800	P50.00
<b>South Africa</b> , Private Bag 2, Elandsfontein, 1406	R5.60

Remittances should be sent to the office in your country or to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589, U.S.A.

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

25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.

Frederick W. Franz, President



# Astrology Makes a Comeback!

*His Majesty's ladylove lay dead. The grief-stricken king summoned before him the astrologer who had predicted this tragedy. Filled with murderous intent, the king said: "You pretend to be so clever and learned. Tell me, what will your fate be?" "Sir," he replied, "I foresee that I shall die three days before Your Majesty." Quick thinking saved this astrologer's life!*

**W**HETHER this story is true or not, it does illustrate the fact that in previous centuries astrologers were taken quite seriously, even by ruling monarchs. Regarding Louis XI of France, one historian wrote: "A swarm of astrologers . . . preyed upon his fears—and his purse." During the 15th and 16th centuries, astrology's popularity reached its peak in Europe. Even prominent scientists believed in it.

Astrology's rising star, though, soon began to fall. "One glance through the telescope," admits the book *Astrology—The Celestial Mirror*, "and a whole cosmology was blown away. . . . Astrology was cast out by the rising authority of scientific reason." European universities banned it. And by the turn of the 20th century, historian Bouché-Leclercq described Western astrology as "definitively dead."

Over 30 years ago, a Gallup poll in England revealed that only 6 percent of those polled believed in astrology. Now 80 percent

reportedly do! And magazines, TV programs, and newspapers report a growing public interest in astrology in other countries. "The first thing I read when I get my newspaper," one South African man told an *Awake!* correspondent, "is the stars."

Why such a rebirth? When asked why she and others consult astrologers, an Italian woman answered: "Too many things in this world are going wrong." Yes, we live in "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) And some people feel that astrology gives them needed guidance. Astrology's star has thus risen again. Books on the subject have proliferated. The expression "What's your sign?" has become a popular conversation opener. Some individuals even refuse to date if they do not have compatible "signs."\*

For all their popularity, though, astrological predictions are still based on a rather dubious premise: that the positions of the sun, moon, and planets at the time of one's birth reveal both one's personality and one's future. Nevertheless, professional astrologers do not hesitate to write out horoscopes ranging from a few lines to

\* Each year the sun is thought to pass 12 groups of stars called the constellations of the zodiac. Each constellation has its "sign." The sign the sun happened to pass when you were born is reckoned to be your sign, say astrologers.

many pages—depending on how much one is willing to pay. According to the magazine *Psychology Today*, "millions of dollars are spent on casting horoscopes." Indeed, American scientist John Wheeler recently lamented that his country could "afford 20,000 astrologers and only 2000 astronomers."

So strong is astrology's comeback in Western nations that the late Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung wrote: "It knocks at the doors of the universities from which it was banished some 300 years ago." In fact, a number of Western universities now offer courses in astrology. 'Could there be some truth to astrology?' a person might ask.

# YOUR FUTURE —Is It Written in the Stars?

*It is an October morning in the ancient city of Babylon. From atop a towering ziggurat, a priest beholds an important sign over on the eastern horizon! The constellation of Scorpio briefly rises before slowly fading beneath the advancing dawn.*

TO THE superstitious Babylonians, this was most significant. Their stargazers had long noted that the stars of a certain constellation seemed to resemble a scorpion with a large curling tail. It was thus named *girtab*, or Scorpio. They imagined that this group of stars actually had the characteristics of a scorpion. As the scorpion is a nocturnal creature, Scorpio seemed a fitting symbol of darkness. Its brief appearance at dawn every October signaled the approach of winter.

In his book *The Truth About Astrology*, Dr. Michel Gauquelin explains: "They projected the earthly scorpion into the sky, and that, in its turn, was supposed to have an influence on those born under that constellation. This kind of astrological inversion still goes on today. Modern textbooks



Babylonian stela, depicting the constellation Scorpio, from the National Museum, France

state that when the Sun moves into Scorpio at the time of birth, it confers on the newborn child some of the characteristics of the scorpion—a dangerous, aggressive and courageous insect [arachnid], with a fearsome sting."

## *Is It Scientific?*

The sun no longer rises with Scorpio during October. Over the centuries, the earth's relationship

**"Modern textbooks state that when the Sun moves into Scorpio at the time of birth, it confers on the newborn child some of the characteristics of the scorpion—a dangerous, aggressive and courageous insect, with a fearsome sting."**

to the constellations has gradually altered. Now during October the sun instead moves into the constellation of *Libra* (Latin for "scales"), which is said to confer qualities such as charm and ease. Quite different from *Scorpio*!

While Eastern astrologers have kept up-to-date with these celestial changes, most of their Western colleagues have not. They thus base their predictions on a heavenly scheme that is some 2,000 years old! Regarding this, Drs. H. J. Eysenck and D. K. B. Nias state: "If Western astrologers are right in making any particular interpretation, Eastern astrologers are wrong, and vice versa. Yet both sides claim to be extremely successful!"

This alone sheds much doubt on the reliability of astrology. In addition, one psychologist examined the marriage and divorce records of 3,456 couples. Did the compatibility of their astrological signs have any bearing upon the success or failure of their marriages? According to *Science 84* magazine: "Incompatible signs got married—and divorced—as often as the compatible ones."

Astrologers counter by saying that the sun sign, on its own, is of little significance and must be considered together with planetary influences. But this also creates problems because the Babylonians believed in the influence of only five planetary gods—Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. The telescope, however, has revealed three more—Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. This has caused confusion among astrologers. "Some astrologers,"

writes Louis MacNeice in his book *Astrology*, "made these an excuse for the inaccuracies of their predecessors; but others . . . argued that these new planets could not influence human beings because they could not be seen with the naked eye." Most Eastern astrologers therefore ignore the distant planets. Western astrologers, though, attach great significance to them.

### How Far Away Are the Stars?

Ancient stargazers thought the stars must have been very close to earth—a few miles away at the most—to exert what they imagined to be a potent influence upon men's lives. But with the development of the telescope, it became obvious that such could hardly be the case. For when viewed even through a powerful telescope, the stars remain pinpricks of light.

In the 1830's, however, German astronomer Friedrich Bessel developed the means to figure out just how far away some of these stars are. Using simple trigonometry, he was able to figure out that the star called 61 Cygni was over ten light-years away! (Light travels 186,000 miles [300,000 km] per second.) Yet 61 Cygni is one of the closer stars!

So while appearing to be close to one another, the stars in a constellation may be hundreds of light-years away from one another! "It is only by chance," says the book *Astrology: Science or Superstition?*, "that, seen from our earth, they appear to cluster together." Does it therefore seem reasonable to you to believe that a constellation such as *Scorpio* could influence your life?

The time selected as the basis for a horoscope also raises questions. Most astrologers use the moment of birth. But the law of genetics says that hereditary traits are passed on to offspring at *conception*, not at birth. According to the book *Astrology: Science or Superstition?*, the ancient astrologer Ptolemy "neatly side-stepped this by claiming that birth will be under the same constellation as reigned at the time of conception, although there is in fact no reason at all to suppose that it is."

### **Scientists React**

Many scientists have therefore become alarmed at the growing acceptance of astrology. In 1975, 19 Nobel prize winners, together with other scientists, issued a manifesto entitled: "Objections to Astrology—A Statement by 192 Leading Scientists." It declared:

"In ancient times people . . . looked upon celestial objects as abodes or omens of the Gods and thus intimately connected with events here on earth; they had no concept of the vast distances from the earth to the

planets and stars. Now that these distances can and have been calculated, we can see how infinitesimally small are the gravitational and other effects produced by the distant planets and the far more distant stars. It is simply a mistake to imagine that the forces exerted by stars and planets at the moment of birth can in any way shape our futures."

Interestingly, one group of ancient people did not need modern science to explain that astrology was a mistake. Over 2,500 years ago, Jehovah God told the nation of Israel: "Do not learn the way of the nations nor be apprehensive of the signs of the sky because the nations are apprehensive of them; for the usages of the nations are *superstition*." (Jeremiah 10:2, 3, *Byington*) Or as the *New World Translation* expresses it: "The signs of the heavens . . . are just an exhalation." In other words, astrological signs have as much substance as the breath exhaled from your lungs.

'But so what if astrology is unscientific?' object some. 'Can't it just be viewed as harmless fun?'

### **Astrology, Birthdays, and the Bible**

According to authors Ralph and Adelin Linton, there is a definite connection between astrology and birthdays. They observe in their book *The Lore of Birthdays: Mesopotamia and Egypt*, the cradles of civilization, were also the first lands in which men remembered and honoured their birthdays. The keeping of birthday records was important in ancient times principally because a birth date was essential for the casting of a horoscope."

True, the Israelites also kept birth records. But this was done so as to establish men's ages for priestly, military, and other

services. (Numbers 1:2, 3; 4:2, 3; 2 Kings 11:21) The Bible, however, does not record the birth dates of even prominent men, such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, David—or Jesus Christ! To be sure, the above authors admit, "there are birthday celebrations mentioned in the Bible, but only to commemorate the natal day of such wicked heretics as Pharaoh and Herod. When the early Christians were trying to fix the date of Christ's birth, many of the Church Fathers considered it sacrilegious . . . They proclaimed that there should be no attempt to celebrate it, as this was an impious pagan custom."



# ASTROLOGY —Is It Harmless Fun?

**R**ECENTLY, British astronomer Patrick Moore said: "It is quite ridiculous to think that lives and destinies are controlled by stars . . . [Astrology] is all pretty harmless stuff, but as any kind of science it is quite baseless."

Looking at matters from a purely practical viewpoint, however, one is forced to conclude that astrology is anything *but* harmless.

### **'Blame It on the Stars!'**

One of the most obvious dangers is the fact that astrology discourages people from taking responsibility for their actions. Take marriage, for example. Stated one South African astrologer regarding couples with incompatible horoscopes: "I have told several people their marriage has no chance, that they should get divorced."

But consider: Is it reasonable to end a marriage because stars and planets are badly matched? Would it not be better for couples having problems to take responsibility for their actions and seek help? The Bible contains much practical advice for solving marriage problems. (See, for example, Ephesians 5:22-25.) And many who have applied it have found it to be just the right help and have saved their marriages. This is surely better than blaming one's problems on the stars!

And what about the numerous mistakes that we make in life? Is it healthy to turn to astrology for justification? Some years ago, a man from Miami, Florida, (U.S.A.) was charged with robbery, rape, and assault. His defense? He rounded up three astrologers who claimed he could not cope because of "disharmonious alignment of the planets." Following this sort of reasoning could only harden one in a course of wrongdoing.

Also, think if responsible people, such as national leaders, begin looking to the stars for guidance. In the book *Human Destiny—The Psychology of Astrology*, Gwyn Turner gives this chilling reminder: "Kings and Rulers of the past always had their Astrologers by their side and even as late as the second world war a Hungarian Astrologer, Louis de Wohl, was quietly employed by the British War Office." He provided the British with predictions of success of certain officers and victories in certain battles. He was also able to tell the British War Office what advice Hitler was getting from his astrologers according to his horoscope. Some even claim that a number of politicians today look to the stars for guidance.

Does it seem harmless to you that life-and-death decisions may hinge on the position of the planets?

*Stated one South African astrologer: "I have told several people their marriage has no chance, that they should get divorced"*

### **Behind the Power of Prediction**

At times astrological predictions do come true. But is it really because of reading the stars? A few years back, the late psychologist Vernon Clark tested the abilities of some astrologers. He gave them ten case histories and asked the astrologers to match each with one of a pair of horoscopes. The astrologers were remarkably successful! Three astrologers were even able to match all of them correctly!

American astrologer Dal Lee got seven out of ten right. But what accounted for his success? Apparently more than reading the stars was involved. "It should have taken an astrologist at least half an hour to evaluate each theme, that is to say, ten hours in all," Lee reportedly said. Yet, because he was busy at the time, Lee "only gave a minute to each theme." Admittedly, then, his success was not "purely astrological." Confessed Lee: "I believe rather that it was a case of 'extra-sensory perception.'"

Interestingly, a number of astrologers have similarly admitted to using what amounts to occult power. This is of concern to people interested in pleasing God. For at Isaiah 1:13, God pointedly says: "I cannot put up with the use of uncanny power." Why? The Bible shows that people manifesting predictive powers are often under the control or influence of de-



memonic spirit forces. (Compare Acts 16: 16-18.) Astrological predictions may therefore at times be nothing less than the utterances of demons—avowed enemies of God and of the people who serve him! Only harm could come to anyone who seeks demonic guidance!

### **Astrology—A Religion?**

Some, though, claim that their interest in astrology is only casual. Yet what often starts off as a casual interest can develop into something akin to religious devotion. One scientist who signed the aforementioned declaration against astrology said: "To some, astrology is doubtless a kind of escape . . . To others, astrology has become a divine revelation, a pure truth—that is, a genuine religion." Authorities say there is a tendency for some to allow horoscope predictions to become self-fulfilling prophecies. When astrology controls a person this much, it has indeed become like a religion.

Astrology actually did become an official part of the religion of ancient Babylon. But did this religion work to her benefit? On the contrary, the Bible contains this pronouncement against ancient Babylon: "You have grown weary with the multitude of your counselors. Let them stand up, now, and save you, the worshipers of the heavens, the astrologers, those giving out knowledge at the new moons concerning the things that will come upon you." (Isaiah 47:13, Ref. Bi., footnote) The predictions of Babylon's astrologers were un-

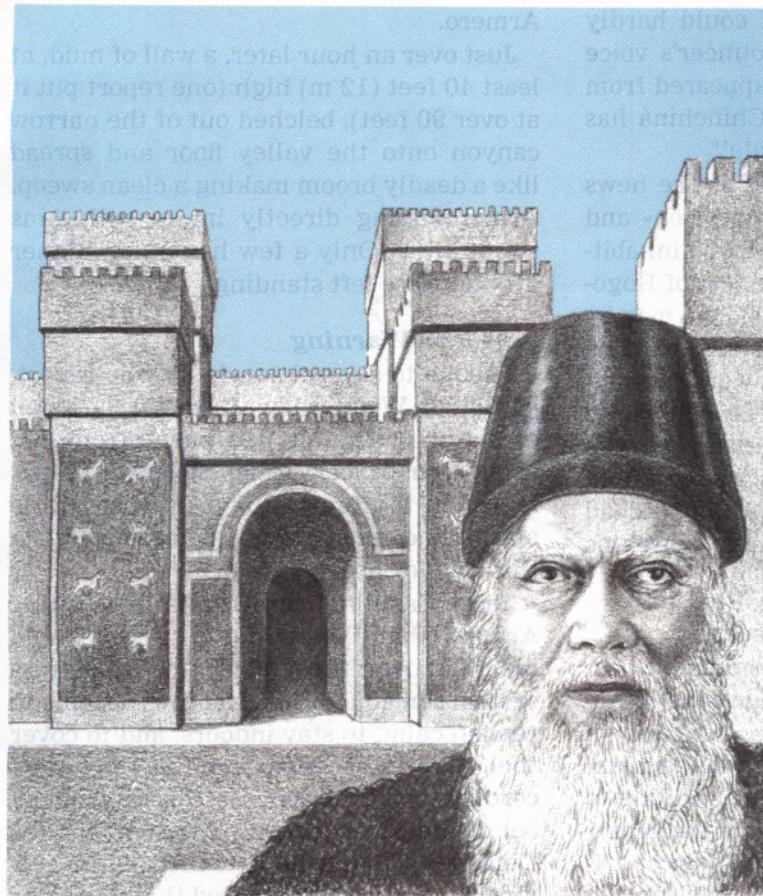
able to save the city from falling into permanent ruin.—Isaiah 13:19, 20.

Interestingly, though, Babylon's religious influence survived her. "From Babylonia," states the book *A History of Astrology*, "the Chaldeans carried astrology into Egypt, and more importantly into Greece."

Following the religion of astrology is thus dangerous. Why? Because according to the Bible, all religions that are based on Babylonian beliefs are scheduled for destruction. Indeed, ancient Babylon's fall

points to this future devastation. At Revelation 18:4, we are warned: "Get out of her [Babylonish organization], my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues."

Astrology can thus hardly be termed 'harmless fun.' (Compare Deuteronomy 18:10-12.) Following it could be the first step to falling under dangerous, demonic influences and losing one's friendship with God! (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18) True, all of us need guidance. But how much safer and better it is to turn to the Bible for guidance! (Psalm 119: 105) Those who heed God's Word gain practical help in coping with life's problems, something astrology fails to give.



**Ancient Babylon's reliance on astrology did not prevent her ruin**

# **"Armero Has Disappeared From the Map!"**

**By "Awake!" correspondent in Colombia**

**T**HE people of Colombia were awakening to a new day. It was Thursday, November 14, 1985. I turned on the radio to get the morning news. I could hardly believe my ears as the announcer's voice exclaimed: "Armero has disappeared from the map! . . . A portion of Chinchiná has been swept away in a mudslide!"

I listened in utter disbelief as the news report continued. Armero, a cotton- and rice-growing town of some 28,000 inhabitants, 55 miles (90 km) northwest of Bogotá, had been virtually wiped off the map by an avalanche of mud, ice, and lava. The number of dead and missing were estimated to be more than 21,000. Chinchiná, an important coffee-growing center on the other side of the mountains, had suffered to a lesser degree, with about 2,000 dead there. But what had happened to cause this total devastation?

## **Nevado del Ruiz Blows Its Top**

The night before, at about nine o'clock, the 17,550 foot (5,400 m) snowcapped volcanic peak, Nevado del Ruiz, exploded on its northeast flank, spewing out huge quantities of sulfurous volcanic ash. Adding to this, the tremendous heat from the crater melted a large portion of the snowcap. As a consequence, normally crystal-clear, leisurely flowing, glacial streams were transformed into death-dealing torrents of mud

and melting ice. A large part of this slithering mass slipped into the Lagunilla River, rolling and twisting downstream, sweeping along trees and boulders as it picked up speed along its 32-mile (52 km) descent to Armero.

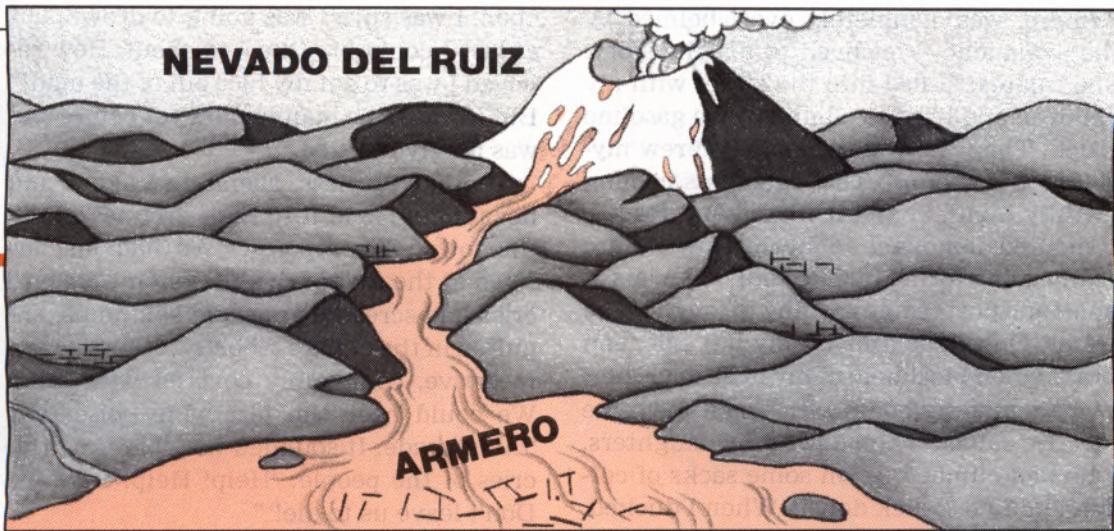
Just over an hour later, a wall of mud, at least 40 feet (12 m) high (one report put it at over 90 feet), belched out of the narrow canyon onto the valley floor and spread like a deadly broom making a clean sweep. Armero, lying directly in its path, was swept away. Only a few houses on higher ground were left standing.

## **No Clear Warning**

I spoke to several survivors who reported that on Wednesday afternoon the smell of sulfur in the air had been strong. At about four o'clock, ashes began to fall silently on the town. But this caused little alarm, since the volcano had been active in this way for nearly a year.

Jorge Castilla, from Bogotá but visiting Armero that Wednesday afternoon, told me that over the church public-address system someone urged the townspeople to remain calm, to stay indoors, and to cover their faces with damp handkerchiefs. According to church sources, this was a member of the Emergency Committee for Civil Defense. Those who attended early evening Mass were also assured that there was no reason for alarm.

At about seven-thirty, a torrential rain



began to fall, then suddenly stopped, to be followed by a strange fallout—a fine, warm sand that soon covered roofs and streets. This was something new. More and more, people became uneasy. A few locked up their houses and fled to higher ground. The majority stayed.

Some time later, from high on the slopes, radiotelephone messages were sent down to Armero, warning that a tremendous explosion had occurred in the side of the volcano and that the town of Armero should be evacuated. At 10:13 p.m. the mayor of Armero, Ramón Antonio Rodríguez, suddenly interrupted a radio conversation with a Red Cross representative, exclaiming, "The water is here!" It had taken an hour and a quarter for the avalanche to travel 32 miles!

#### ***"The Volcano Is Coming!"***

Survivors told me pretty much the same story. Some were awakened by the heavy rain of sand on the roof. Others heard the noise and shouting outside. Frantically, they called their children and family members out of bed. The lights suddenly

went out. People were banging and kicking on doors as they shouted, "The Lagunilla is coming! Run! Run!" "The water is upon us!" "The volcano is coming!"

Thousands rushed out of their homes. Cars, motorcycles, and trucks raced madly through the streets, blowing their horns, heedless of people in their way. Many were run down before the wall of mud struck. It was total panic.

In the eerie darkness, the approaching avalanche made a terrifying noise. According to the visitor from Bogotá, Jorge Castillo, it sounded like two jumbo jetliners coming in low. The churning mass climbed over the riverbanks, rose higher than the houses, and swept straight down through the center of town. Houses, churches, stores, and other buildings were engulfed and swiftly carried away. Children were ripped from their parents' arms and buried in the mud or carried helplessly away to their death.

#### ***"Now We Are Really Going to Die!"***

Obdulia Arce Murillo, mother of nine and associated with Jehovah's Witnesses in

Armero, was completely overwhelmed by the avalanche—yet lived to tell the story. She relates: "I fled into the street with my children and tried to climb up on a gasoline truck. Then the waters came. I threw myself to the ground. The water was coming awfully high . . . and it roared and roared. I shouted 'Jehovah! Jehovah! Now we are really going to die! It's the end!' Then lots of poles and posts came rushing through in the water. One struck me on my left side, and that's when I lost hold of my little daughter.

"I got all tangled up with a pole and some electric cables. Then one of my daughters, who had climbed up on some sacks of coffee, shouted, 'Duck down!' When I ducked, I felt as though a train were running over me. It was the mud. I could no longer see because I was buried under the mud. I was completely covered.

"I felt the force of the mud that was pulling me away. I tried to shout, and my mouth filled with mud. I was choking . . . I swam and strained until I at last got my face above the slime. With my hand, I pulled the mud out of my mouth with such force that I thought I had ripped my face

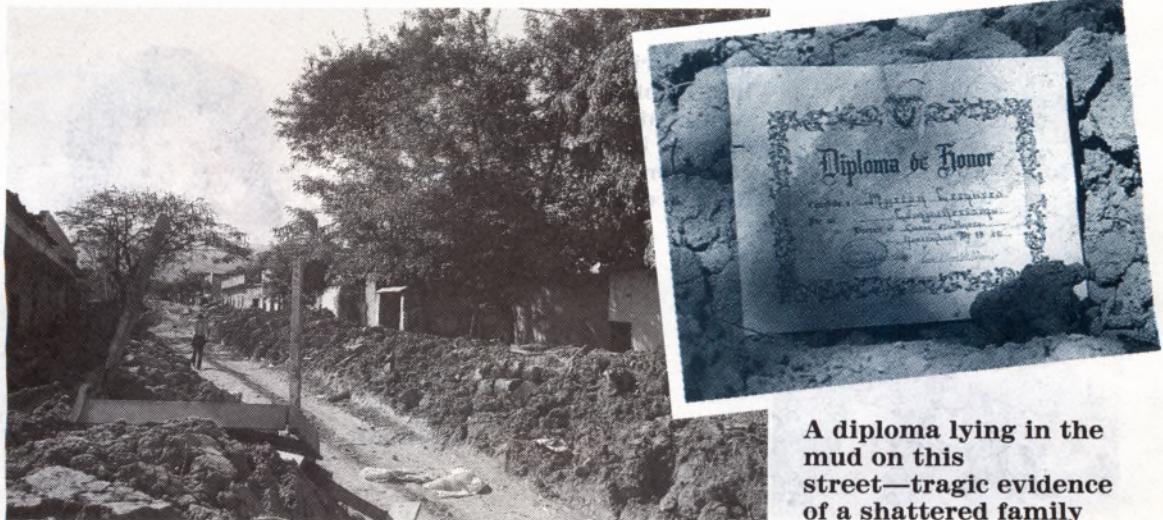
open. I was sure I was going to drown, but at last I could breathe and shout. How relieved I was to get my face out of the mud!" But it was to be many hours yet before she was finally rescued.

Another Witness, Elena de Valdez, and her family made it to high ground behind the town. She reports: "We had just arrived at the foot of the hill when we heard cries and screams of people behind us, engulfed in the deluge. Shortly, others began to arrive, completely covered with mud. We could hear the terrifying noise that 'thing' made. It sounded horrible! And the cries of the people: 'Help! Help! Save us! Don't leave us to die!'"

Finally, it was all over. Only an eerie silence and inky blackness remained. Jorge Castilla, safe on a farm on the outskirts of Armero, said he could feel "an atmosphere of death in the night." He added: "Survivors—old people, young people—were coming up out of the muck, many of them injured. They looked like zombies, as if walking in their sleep. They gazed at you with a blank stare. They asked for water, nothing more. It was horrible!"

**The force of the avalanche destroyed the psychiatric hospital and wrapped girders around these remains**





**A diploma lying in the mud on this street—tragic evidence of a shattered family**

Meanwhile, out in the deep, Obdulia Arce was still struggling to keep her head out of the mud. For her and thousands of other survivors, that will always be remembered as the longest night of their lives.

### **Mud-Covered Mummies**

As morning dawned, a lone crop duster surveyed the lush, cultivated fields of the valley below. He could hardly believe his eyes. Close to the mountainside, where thriving Armero should have been, there was just an immense expanse of gray mud, with hundreds of bodies, animal and human, floating on the surface. He reported: "The town is just an enormous beach, with only a few houses still standing. People can be seen in treetops, on walls, and on the hillsides."

On the edge of the disaster area, would-be rescuers saw survivors looking like mummies, covered with gray clinging mud, wandering about in a daze, searching for their loved ones. Children and old people were crying in despair, mothers screaming disconsolately, looking for their children. Others, just emerging

from the muck, stood like statues, clad only in their underwear. Some had their nightwear torn completely off in the fury of the avalanche. Still others were less fortunate.

Living people could be seen out there, buried to the neck and crying for help, unable to move. Those on the edge of the morass were trying desperately to reach those nearby. Using planks, they succeeded in saving a few. Some ventured into the mud but then had to retreat as they began to be sucked down. A rescuer tried to drive a tractor in to help. Within three yards (3 m), the tractor was sucked under!

Obdulia Arce appreciated the warmth of the mud, for the night was cold. During the night, she kept slipping into sleep, only to wake up gasping for air when her face dropped in the mud. Morning came, but no one saw her.

### **"From the Least Expected Places, Arms Extend Upward"**

Reaction countrywide was spontaneous and wholehearted. Institutions and individuals mobilized to help. The armed



Mud buried this tree to a height of 25 feet and wrapped one-inch iron bars around it. Armero's commercial center in the distance lies desolate

Obdulia Arce Murillo survived 35 hours in the mud



forces, civil-defense units, the police, and Red Cross rescue squads were rushed to the area. Thousands of volunteers—doctors, surgeons, paramedics, engineers, and other professional personnel—offered their services. Jehovah's Witnesses sent in three vehicles with help and provisions from Bogotá.

Rescue teams were flown in from other countries. Soon some 30 helicopters, local and foreign, were combing the area in search of survivors. The rescue work had to be done almost exclusively from the air, since nearly every effort to maneuver on the thick mud ended in failure.

The sheer magnitude of the devastation slowed down the job of searching for the few living and digging out the many dead. After bringing in hundreds of survivors, rescue workers reported that there were still many out there waiting to be saved. As one rescuer said: "One thinks that there is no one down there, but as the helicopter approaches, from the least expected places, arms extend upward, a survivor beckons to be picked up."

Among those waving to the helicopters

every time they passed over was Obdulia, her head encrusted with dried mud. She could only wave feebly from the wrist, and all day she tried to get their attention. No one noticed her. She despaired of ever being seen. She prayed continually. She started another endless night of anguish, locked in the mud and with severe pain from her injured side.

When Friday morning dawned, she somehow mustered enough strength to shout and shout, until rescue workers combing the area finally spied her below. At 11 o'clock she cried out in sharp pain as she was pulled free and hoisted into a helicopter. She was whisked away to a first-aid center and then to a hospital. She had spent 35 hours suspended in that mud.

What had happened to her children? She later learned that two perished, but her other children were swept away to the edge of the morass, and they were eventually rescued.

#### **Frustration and Joy**

Under the hot tropical sun, the mud began to harden, and it required more and

more time to extricate people. Pitiful cases were still seen—heads protruding above the surface, crying for help, or lips simply moving as an indication that a glimmer of life was still there. Some were pinned under fallen debris deep down in the thick muck. They had to be abandoned to die.

One such heartrending case was that of Omayra Sánchez, a 12-year-old schoolgirl, who gained the admiration of rescue workers and newsmen alike by her valor and optimistic conversation. She was pinned between the dead body of her aunt and a concrete slab. Rescuers struggled for some 60 hours to get her out. Finally, three days after the avalanche, she died of heart failure, still up to her neck in mud and water. The rescue team and the newsmen—in fact the whole nation—wept.

There was a happier outcome when the motionless naked body of four-year-old Guillermo Páez was sighted 60 hours after the tragedy. Scarcely discernible in the desolate gray expanse, he wasn't dead, just asleep! The noise of the descending helicopter woke him up, and he sat up unsteadily. The helicopter dropped to within range, and he was lifted aboard. That was one event that brought joy to the hearts of the selfless rescuers.

### **Time and Unforeseen Occurrence**

An estimated 21,000 people were lost in the tragedy in Armero, as well as some 2,000 more in Chinchiná. About 5,400 were rescued in Armero, of whom some 2,000 were treated in hospitals throughout the country. Many had their arms and legs badly mangled in the fury of the flood and had to suffer amputations because of the onset of gangrene. One of these persons was Epifanía Campos, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, bank employee in Armero. Sadly, she died from the effects of gangrene.

Of the 59 persons associated with the Armero Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, 40 who lived in the most seriously affected parts of the town have disappeared without a trace. Three persons associated with the Chinchiná Congregation lost their lives, and some 30 others lost their homes and belongings.

Six weeks after the tragedy, I visited the site again along with Gervasio Macea, who had lived for eight years in Armero. He could not identify with precision where the Kingdom Hall used to be—such was the total destruction. Where a town used to be, there is now a gray, wide, boulder-strewed beach in the shape of an enormous fan.

Obviously, Jehovah's Witnesses are just as exposed to accidents and vagaries of the elements as is anyone else. In times like these, we can appreciate how the principle expressed in Ecclesiastes 9:11, 12 applies to all, without discrimination: "*I returned to see under the sun that the swift do not have the race, nor the mighty ones the battle, . . . nor do even those having knowledge have the favor; because time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all.*" For man also does not know his time. . . . So the sons of men themselves are being ensnared at a calamitous time, when it falls upon them suddenly."

Yet, as the Bible clearly teaches, there will be a resurrection "of both the righteous and the unrighteous." Christ Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life." The Bible indicates that the time is near for God's Kingdom rule and for the restoration of Paradise conditions on earth. Then the dead will return to an opportunity of real life, everlasting life.—Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; 11:25; 17:3.

# Did God Have a Beginning?

THE skeptical Frenchman, standing ramrod straight in front of his home, looked one of Jehovah's Witnesses directly in the eye and said: "If you can tell me where God came from, I'll listen to you." Unperturbed, the Witness replied: "Some very logical people have come to the same conclusion as 18th-century French philosopher Voltaire, who stated: 'If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.' Have you ever reflected on why a man as intelligent as Voltaire would make such a statement?"

The man admitted he had not but asked the Witness to step in. The Witness developed his argumentation along the following lines.

### Let's Be Logical

Like Voltaire, many people are of the opinion that life and the universe must have a cause. To be sufficient to produce the things we see, this cause would have to be endowed with certain powers and qualities, such as energy, organizing ability, artistic taste, love, and wisdom. Why? Because the things observable in the universe, particularly on our planet Earth, reflect these characteristics. Now, these are not the attributes of *things*, but of *persons*. So we end up with the concept of a Supreme Being—God.

"Fair enough," replied the incredulous Frenchman, "but where did God come from?"

### No Absolute Beginning

We are faced with the observable fact of a material universe and many different forms of life on earth. Where did they originate? Some

scientists, although not all, say these life-forms have come about by chance. But the divergent theories of scientists always presuppose the existence of something, no matter how they name it. They say, and rightly so, that matter is a form of energy. On that basis, they feel that the material universe could have come about accidentally. But they do not explain how the initial set of circumstances came to be. There is always a preexistent *something* the origin of which they are incapable of explaining.

So atheists presuppose the existence of a *thing*, whereas believers in God presuppose the existence of a *person*. In view of all the natural laws, mathematical precision, organization, and wisdom observable on earth and throughout the universe, Jehovah's Witnesses see that it is more logical to conclude that the First Cause is a Person rather than a thing, an intelligent Creator rather than a blind force. To atheism's premise, 'In the beginning something,' they prefer the Bible's opening words, "In the beginning God."—Genesis 1:1.

"I knew you would get around to quoting the Bible," said the inquiring Frenchman.

The truth is that Jehovah's Witnesses find the Bible's viewpoint on basic facts to be logical and in harmony with observable realities. Let us examine a few.

**Something Cannot Come From Nothing.** No scientist has been able to produce something from nothing. Man can only transform or build up existent materials. Similarly, no one possessed of his senses would suggest that a manufactured article just happened. The Bible

states as a self-evident truth: "Of course, every house is constructed by someone." Then it continues with the logical conclusion: "But he that constructed all things is God." (Hebrews 3:4) To recognize that a house needed an architect and a builder and, at the same time, claim that a complicated atom, molecule, or cell sprang out of nothingness simply does not make sense from the Bible's viewpoint. The Bible asks logically: "Should the thing made say respecting its maker: 'He did not make me'?"—Isaiah 29:16.

**Life Comes From Life.** Although some people persist in believing that life sprang spontaneously from nonliving matter, we have yet to see factories converting carloads of chemicals into manufactured living cells. If life happened spontaneously, why cannot man repeat and develop the process? Simply because the facts show that all known living things come from preexisting living things. The Bible recognizes that the primeval First Cause must have been a living Being, stating: "From time indefinite to time indefinite you are God." "With you is the source of life." —Psalm 90:2; 36:9.

**Matter Is a Form of Energy.** The Bible is in perfect agreement with the scientifically proved fact that matter is a form of energy. Man has discovered how to release energy from matter in his atom bombs and in his nuclear power stations. The Bible shows God to be the source of the energy locked up in the material universe. We read: "Raise your eyes high up and see [bodies of the solar system, stars, galaxies]. Who has created these things? It is the One who is bringing forth the army of them even by number. . . . Due to the abundance of dynamic energy, he also being vigorous in power, not one of them is missing." (Isaiah 40:26) "He is the Maker of the earth by his power."—Jeremiah 10:12.

**The Universe Gives Evidence of Purpose.** In human experience, order never results from confusion. Is it, therefore, logical to believe that the order visible on earth, with its seasons

and cycles so necessary to plant, animal, and human life, could have come about by chance? Rather, do not these things give evidence of design and purpose? The Bible states: "This is what Jehovah has said, the Creator of the heavens, He the true God, the



**"If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him."**—French philosopher Voltaire

Former of the earth and the Maker of it, He the One who firmly established it, who did not create it simply for nothing, who formed it even to be inhabited."—Isaiah 45:18.

#### **A Wonderful Purpose for the Earth**

The doubting Frenchman ventured: "Created or not, it looks very much as if the earth will end up uninhabited."

His fears are seemingly justified. So the choice today is between despairing unbelief and the reasoned recognition of the eternal Life-Giver, whose written Word offers hope of living forever on earth in a global paradise. (Matthew 6:10; Psalm 37:9, 11, 29) Surely such a prospect is worth looking into.

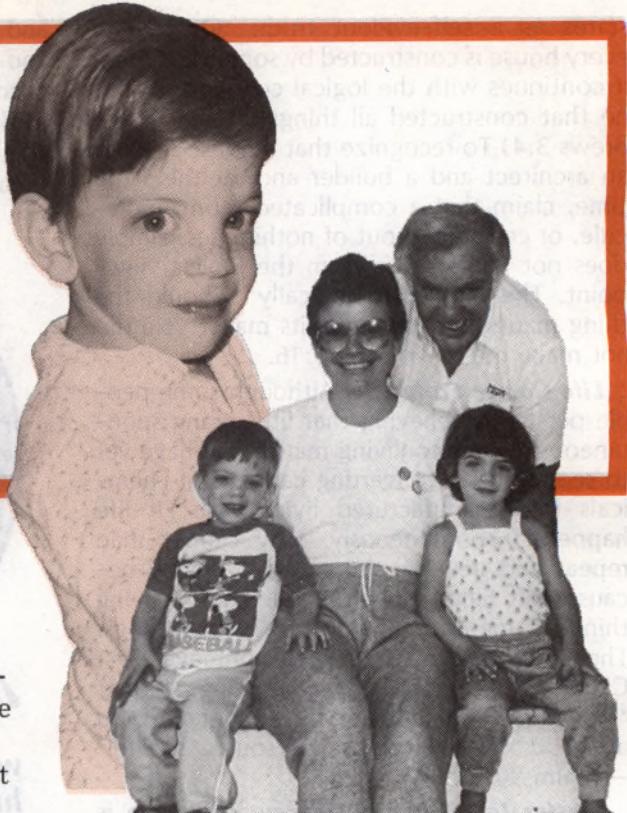
# Little Sammy Died of AIDS!

LITTLE Sammy Kushnick's parents, Jerrold and Helen, had no idea that their young son was dying of AIDS. How could a loved and well-cared-for three-year-old in this Jewish family possibly have got this terrifying disease?

A specialist told them: "He got it from a blood transfusion."

The Kushnicks said: "We didn't know he had been transfused at all." Unknown to them, their infant son had received 20 transfusions from 13 different donors before he ever left the hospital. Jerry Kushnick later told *Awake!* that the transfusions ranged "from 5 cc to 17 cc—from less than a teaspoon to about a tablespoonful." At least one of them—which some donor may have been told would be a gift of life—actually turned out to be a gift of death.

Sam, and his twin sister Sara, were born seven weeks prematurely, on August 19, 1980. Both had respiratory and other problems common to premature infants, but they came through these. The relieved parents brought Sara home at six weeks, Sam at seven. Their father said: "We thought we were taking home two healthy



children; we were very excited to have both of them. They grew beautifully."

Sammy's mother said: "Sam didn't grow quite as rapidly as Sara did, but they told us that boys didn't develop as fast as girls."

Then other problems began to develop. Toward the end of 1982, Sam got a perpetual cold. In February he got an ear infection and was put on antibiotics. Diarrhea developed, but the doctor thought this was a side effect of the antibiotics.

The Kushnicks insisted on a series of tests, but the doctors found only a slight anemia and a high gamma globulin level. The pediatrician said this meant that Sam had very strong body defenses. Later they learned that it was a sign that something had gone seriously wrong with his immune system.

Then Sam developed oral thrush—*Candida*—a white spot in the mouth. He had another infection, then a fever that never went away. His mother said: "He just lost all interest—he was literally exhausted." Then one Sunday his lips began turning blue. She said: "I took him to the hospital. They drew blood, and it was purple from lack of oxygen."

### **"He Has AIDS"**

When the news came back from the lab, it was bad. Sam had a rare form of pneumonia known as *Pneumocystis carinii*. Jerry says the doctor explained: "When we say *Pneumocystis carinii*, we mean AIDS." Imagine the shock! Helen recalls that the doctor said that "there wasn't a chance for him to survive—it was just a question of how long he'd live, but there was no recovery." Little Samuel Kushnick died less than three weeks later.

His father said: "There were many, many caring doctors." One was Dr. Arthur Ammann, a leading authority on transfusion-AIDS, whom the Kushnicks brought down from San Francisco the day before Sam died. Dr. Ammann had reported a case of a 20-month-old transfusion-AIDS victim back in 1982.\* Helen recalls that he said of Sam: "He has AIDS, and he got it from a blood transfusion. From going through his neonatal charts, I can tell you it's probably one of these five donors—these are the ones they should look at first."

Sam's father told *Awake!* that the doctors "did not want to show AIDS on the

death certificate" but finally did so. Helen added: "We had been stonewalled by the hospital and the blood-bank people, who kept telling us that Sam could not possibly have got AIDS from a blood transfusion. Then we found out that Sam was the fourth baby to die in Los Angeles in an eight-month period of what pediatricians were calling Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome—pediatric AIDS."

The Kushnicks are convinced that there are many more cases of blood-transfused pediatric AIDS than the statistics show.

### ***Transmission by Casual Contact?***

Helen said: "I hope everybody calms down so they can understand that it is a virus, that it's sexually transmitted, and that it's transmitted by blood transfusion, but if it were casually contracted by saliva or in any other way, we'd all be dead." The Kushnicks had not known that Sam had AIDS, so they had taken no special precautions.

Yet what did the tests later show? Helen answered: "We proved negative in every respect. We don't have antibodies—which means we haven't even been exposed to the virus. Sara was also negative in every respect."

Since the Kushnick's case has become widely known, they have heard from other families who had not known that their child had AIDS and so likewise had taken no extraordinary precautions. The members of these families, too, have all proved negative in tests. Helen said: "What they know now is that the virus doesn't live very long outside the body, and every indication is that it cannot be passed on by casual contact."

She produced a copy of the August 30, 1985, issue of *MMWR*, which says: "Other than the sexual partners of . . . [AIDS-virus]-infected patients and infants born to

\* This case was reported in *MMWR (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report)*, published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, December 10, 1982. Dr. Ammann's report of that case, published in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, April 30, 1983, said: "A disturbing observation in this report is that the platelet donor was healthy [when he gave the blood] and did not become ill with AIDS until 7 months after donation . . . The patient died aged 2 years with *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia."

infected mothers, none of the family members of the over 12,000 AIDS patients reported to CDC have been reported to have AIDS."

Jerry thinks the real worry of families of AIDS victims is that they might give the victim his or her final illness—the one that the AIDS-weakened immune system can no longer fight off. So a family member who uses the tub "must bleach it out before the AIDS victim can take a bath." If you have a cough or the flu, you worry: "Will I literally become the giver of death by transmitting this disease to him?"

### **The Other Child**

When the people at Sara's nursery school heard that Sam had AIDS, some of them panicked. Jerry said: "Even after they had been advised by physicians and a representative of the Los Angeles County Health Department that Sara had been tested, was healthy, and could not possibly be a carrier, they still refused her return to school."

The Kushnicks transferred Sara to a nursery school at their own synagogue, where they say the few parents who objected were told: "Sara stays. If your child goes, we'll take the next child on our waiting list. Sara is healthy. We're not going to throw her out."

The Kushnicks think there will soon be thousands of such cases of children who have relatives with AIDS. Helen asked: "What are we going to do? Provide them all with special tutoring?"

### **The Risk Grows**

AIDS symptoms can take five years or longer to manifest themselves, so no one knows how many people are walking the streets with this disease. Jerry worries that drug-abusing prostitutes will pass it on to men who will bring it home to their wives,

who through pregnancy could eventually pass it on to their child. He feels that people should be made aware of the dangers that can occur from multiple sex partners.

Jerry Kushnick is a theatrical attorney. His wife is a theatrical manager. Their clients include major American television producers, writers, and comedians. He told *Awake!*: "Since the death of our son, there is a part of our life that will always be missing. My sense of values has changed drastically. I don't need material things anymore. I find little desire to buy new things since our son's death. I certainly would trade everything that we have if it could bring Sam back!"

The Kushnicks say they thought seriously about whether they should go public with their story. Not all parents in their position have wanted it known that their child had AIDS, and young Sara's experience helps to explain why. Helen said: "We talked about it and decided that if we didn't do it, we would be accessories to murder. We felt that we had to make other parents aware of the problems that could be caused by blood transfusion."

They feel that blood banking has become a big business, the policies of which are largely determined by the blood-banking industry itself. Helen also explained: "We wanted people to know that fear is not a cure for this disease. Funding of research to find a cure is what must be done."

The Kushnicks have appeared on national television in the United States, Australia, and England. Their story has been told in newspapers and periodicals throughout the world, including the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *People* magazine. They believe they have saved many lives by calling people's attention to the part blood can play in transmitting AIDS.

## Young People Ask...

# What's Wrong With Taking a Dare?

"GO ON," insisted Lisa's classmates. "Tell the teacher her breath stinks!" No, oral hygiene was hardly the issue. Fourteen-year-old Lisa was being challenged to accept a dare—and a rather risky one at that!

'Pick a fight!' 'Kiss a girl!' 'Sneak out of class!' 'Steal a watch!' 'Jump on the railroad tracks.' So urge youths who get perverse pleasure out of challenging others to perform acts that range from mildly mischievous to simply suicidal.

'I'll bet you \$10 you're afraid to jump into the water,' one youth dared his 14-year-old companion. Bowing to pressure, his friend jumped from the ferryboat they were riding on. He did not realize there were powerful currents in the water. And if it had not been for the fact that a deckhand saw the plunge and jumped in to save his life, the boy may not have lived to tell it.

After a round of beers, 17-year-old James poured gasoline over himself and dared one of his friends to set him on fire. One of them took him up on his dare. James suffered third-degree burns over



30 percent of his body. Summing the matter up nicely, James' father said: "From what my son tells me, the kids were just playing around. It's plain stupid." What do you think?

A "dare," according to the 1984 *American Journal of Public Health* is 'the process by which one is challenged to perform a variety of activities.' Of course, challenges in themselves are not always bad. Receive a bad grade in math and your parents might well demand, 'Learn that multiplication table now!' And you'll find yourself rising to that challenge very quickly!

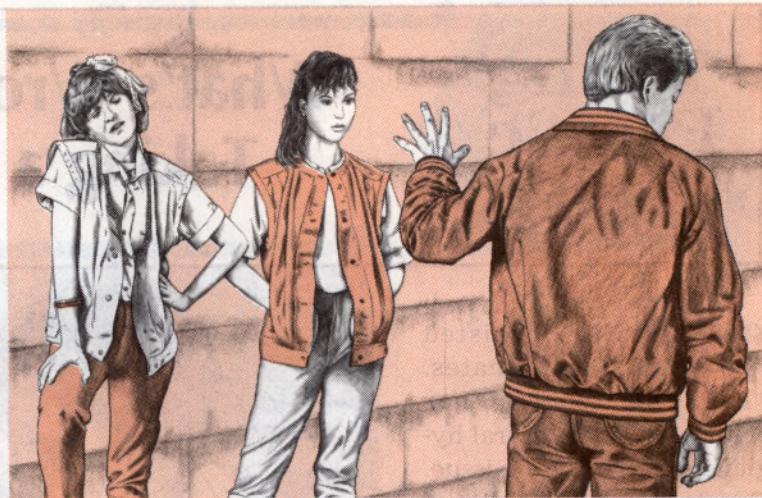
But when you are challenged to do something silly, unkind, or downright dangerous, it's time to think twice about accepting it. Said a wise man: "Dead flies are what cause the oil of the ointment maker to stink, to bubble forth. So a little foolishness does to one who is precious for wisdom and glory." (Ecclesiastes 10:1) In ancient times, a valuable ointment or perfume could be ruined by something as tiny as a dead fly. Similarly, one's hard-earned reputation could be ruined by just "a little foolishness." Do you want to take that risk?

### **Why It's Hard to Say No**

Nevertheless, researchers Charles and Mary Ann Lewis found that almost one out of three young persons would rather accept a dare than be called chicken. Without question, desire to be accepted by peers is potent. The book *The American Teenager* cites a survey showing that whether youths are rich or poor, "their concern is to be liked."

So a dare might put you in a difficult position. You want to be liked, so turning down the dare could seem costly. As the young man Mike said: "Your friends make you feel like an outcast." But carrying out the dare could be dangerous.

Also, if you take them up on their dare, will you violate the standards of the Bible or those taught by your parents? If so, do you really want the standards of fun-seeking youths to control your life? Too,



**Following your Bible-trained conscience prevents you from doing something you will later regret**

are youths who ask you to put your life and reputation on the line really friends? A proverb states: "There exist companions disposed to break one another to pieces, but there exists a friend sticking closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24) A true friend would never think of putting you in a dangerous situation.

### **He Listened to "the Young Men"**

The peril of giving in to youthful peers is well illustrated by the experience of King Rehoboam of ancient Israel. Early in his reign his subjects begged him to lessen the burdens his father had imposed upon them. Rehoboam first sought counsel from older men who wisely told him to "speak to them with good words; and they will be bound to become your servants always." (1 Kings 12:7) Reasonable advice, was it not? Yet, not content with what they had to say, Rehoboam went for advice to the young men that had grown up with him.

His friends, in effect, urged him to

prove how tough he was. They prodded him to say: "My father, for his part, loaded upon you a heavy yoke; but I, for my part, shall add to your yoke. My father, for his part, chastised you with whips, but I, for my part, shall chastise you with scourges."—1 Kings 12:10, 11.

Rehoboam selected the advice of his young friends. His subjects, however, were incensed. Rebellion erupted and 10 out of the 12 Israelite tribes chose another king! All because Rehoboam 'took counsel with the young men that had grown up with him.'—1 Kings 12:8-17.

### ***Cultivate Discernment***

Clearly, it is better for you to "incline your ear and hear the words of the wise ones." (Proverbs 22:17) That may mean finding more wholesome companions. "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly," says Proverbs 13:20.

It can also involve learning to discern between helpful advice and the manifestation of playful—perhaps harmful—"desires incidental to youth." (2 Timothy 2:22) If someone dares you to do something, consider the consequences of following through on it. True, as a youth named André observes, youths often try to entice you by saying "no one will be watching." However, 'you will reap what you sow.' (Galatians 6:7) And childish pranks often do result in lower grades, suspension from school, and even arrest!

### ***Learning to Say No***

How, then, can you avoid the snare of dares? One Bible writer said: "Every man must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking [or responding]." (James 1:19) Give thought to who is speaking and what

you are being asked to do. Is it reasonable? Is it loving? Does it manifest kindness and unselfish concern for others? If not, ignore the dare. True, as another youngster, Maurice, put it, "they will make you feel like an oddball." But who really is "odd"? The sane person or the one promoting foolishness?

You might therefore try reasoning with youths who make dares. Eighteen-year-old Terry likes to "take the fun out of it" by asking questions such as 'Why should I do it?' 'What would it prove if I did it?' 'How would I benefit from it?' Perhaps using the Bible will be effective. Let it be known that you have definite standards you intend to live by. One young girl tried to dare a young boy into immorality, saying, "You don't know what you're missing." "Yes, I do," the boy replied. "Herpes, gonorrhea, syphilis . . ." How true it is that exercising a Bible-trained conscience can help you avoid doing something you'll later regret!—Compare Genesis 39:7-12.

Nevertheless, young Lisa observes: "When they know you won't go along with them, most kids will leave you alone. However, there are some who will test you again and again." While alone in the wilderness for 40 days, Christ Jesus was tempted by the Devil on three occasions. Taunted Satan: 'Turn stones into bread!' 'Jump off the temple wall!' 'Bow down to me!' Jesus' reply was, "Go away, Satan!" (Matthew 4: 1-10) Even so, Luke 4:13 adds: "The Devil, having concluded all the temptation, retired from him until another convenient time." Resisting repeated dares may require similar persistence on your part. But do not let yourself feel challenged by silly dares. Have the courage to stand up for what is right!

Now that is a *real* challenge, isn't it?

# Are You Ready to Attend?

ACH year, Jehovah's Witnesses around the world look forward to the district convention as the spiritual high point of the year. Why? Well, first of all they know they will benefit from the timely Scriptural counsel presented on the program. They also treasure the upbuilding experiences and the fine Christian association they will enjoy. To be present at a convention is to be eyewitness of true faith in action.

## Faith in Action

Many who attend the conventions are only beginning to associate with Jehovah's Witnesses. But their attitude, expressions, and actions show that the Bible truth they are learning yields a powerful influence in their lives.

At one such convention, two men, an Israeli and an Iranian, both of whom had just started to study the Bible, met for the first time. The Israeli man had a full beard and dark skin, and thus the Iranian man mistook him for his countryman and started to speak to him in Persian. The Israeli man apologized that he could not speak Persian but then asked, "Did you find it difficult to accept Jesus Christ?" "Not really," answered the Iranian. "Muslims already accept Jesus as one of the prophets, so I wasn't prejudiced." The two soon became fast friends, finding that their common desire to serve Jehovah drew them together and to Jehovah's organization.

At a convention in the Orient was a young woman from a communist land who had traveled to a neighboring country at the invitation of relatives. Since they were Jehovah's Witnesses, her relatives told her what they had learned from the Bible. But having been brought up with evolutionary ideas, she found the concept of a Creator completely foreign to her. However, after examining the matter carefully, she became convinced that there really is a Creator. From then on she studied the Bible seriously. The result was that she attended the convention and was baptized—just before she had to return to her country. Though she realized that now she

would have to maintain her integrity under very difficult conditions, she was grateful for having been strengthened by attending the convention.

Another happy face at one of the conventions was that of Naomi, who is paralyzed from the neck down. The superintendent at the institution where she stays sternly forbade her to have anything to do with the Bible, not even allowing her Christian friends to visit her. But Naomi did not let this dampen her spirit. She persevered in her efforts to share the good news with others at the home, conducting regular Bible studies with three of them. When convention time arrived, she courageously—and tearfully—pleaded for permission to attend. Imagine her joy when finally she was allowed to go. Her cheerful attitude belied all the hardship she had to endure.

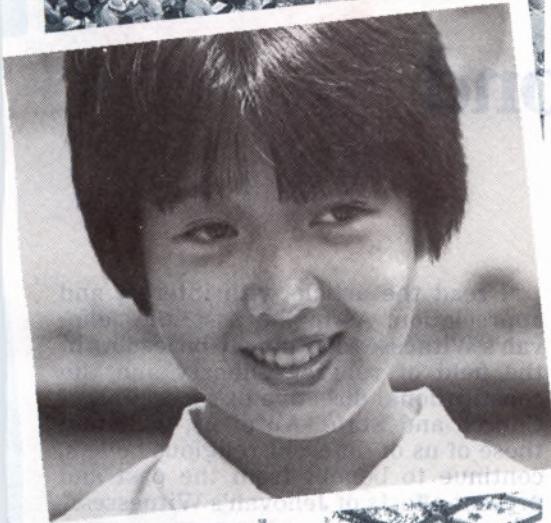
## Heartfelt Notes of Appreciation

Jehovah's Witnesses do not take up collections at their meetings or conventions. Rather, contribution boxes are provided for those who wish to make voluntary donations. But along with such donations, notes of appreciation such as the following are sometimes dropped into the boxes:

"I am sorry to put in all this small change, but I had no time to go to the bank. As we are a fatherless family, it is not always possible to put something in the contribution box, and that upsets me. These coins are what I have saved up from change at the supermarket in the last six months. The one large bill was in a drawer and I cannot remember why I put it aside. . . . If I kept it, I would spend it, but if I didn't have it, I would get by without it anyhow. Please accept it as an expression of my gratitude. Incidentally, I am studying now and it is my desire to be baptized at this convention."

Another note was found, although it was about a contribution of a different sort:

"I am bursting with joy and gratitude, and it is difficult to show these feelings in a tangible way. I have been hoping to take up regular pioneering



[full-time ministry] sometime when I am a little better prepared for it. But now I want to volunteer right away, and I am making urgent effort to meet the requirements. We are living in critical times, and I sincerely thank you for showing the way that leads to so much happiness."

### **Observers Impressed**

Often people who are not Jehovah's Witnesses are attracted to their conventions out of either curiosity or genuine interest.

Hoping to hear something about the Bible, a man came to a convention held in Japan. What he heard caught his attention, and he kept attending. On the third day, he said: "I was particularly impressed when I heard that this religion teaches and requires integrity to one God. I can see how this is not like the old established religions of Japan or of Christendom that are so loose, self-centered, shallow, and perfunctory. I can see, too, that this is a way that gives a reason for living." By the end of the convention, the man, who was a homeless vagrant, had cleaned himself up and accepted a Bible study.

In another city in Japan, a couple from a communist European country were curious at seeing crowds of people streaming into an exhibition hall along the harbor. They were surprised to learn that it was a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. They explained that they knew there were many zealous Witnesses back in their own country but had no idea that there were so many of them in the Orient as well. Impressed by what they saw, they attended some sessions and left with a supply of the new releases.

### **Will You Be There?**

Yes, the annual district conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses are truly a source of spiritual refreshment and encouragement. This year, the conventions will feature the theme "Divine Peace." You can be sure that any effort you put forth to attend will be richly rewarded. Will you be there? For information as to the time and place of the one nearest to you, check with Jehovah's Witnesses locally.

# From Our Readers

## Judges and Doctors Respond

IMPORTANT details on three court cases were presented in "Your Medical Freedom—The Courts Speak!" appearing in *Awake!* of September 8, 1985. These court decisions could affect the medical rights of all citizens. As a public service, many of Jehovah's Witnesses sent the article to doctors, judges, and hospital personnel in their area. Let us share with you some responses.

### **Judges Happy to Be Informed**

Numerous judges recognized the medical/legal implications of the court cases, and they expressed appreciation for receiving the article. For example:

"I have shared your letter and the article with [the County Attorney], and I have instructed my secretary to obtain the complete texts of these important cases. Your letter came to me at a time when I was wondering about the current contamination of the nation's blood supply, and perhaps it is no coincidence that you have forwarded this information to me at this time."

—W. K., Kentucky District Court



"I read the article with interest and appreciation. As in the past, the Jehovah's Witnesses continue to be leaders in the field of religious liberty and the constitutional directive of separation of Church and State. All of us, including those of us of different religious beliefs, continue to benefit from the past and present efforts of Jehovah's Witnesses."

—D. W., Florida Circuit Judge

"Your church has some very expert lawyers among those who write for its publications. I have found their articles useful in the past, and am glad to add the one you sent me to my reference collection."

—D. Y., U.S. District Court, Ohio

### **Problem of Inaccurate Reporting**

The press gave a distorted picture of one case that the *Awake!* article discussed. Judges thus commented:

"I was not at all aware of the factual nuances of the Randolph case. The summaries that I read did not provide the factual information set forth in that article and, therefore, did leave one with a slightly different understanding of the

case. I certainly appreciate your calling [the facts] to my attention."

—R. R., Idaho District Court

"One of the problems constantly plaguing the judiciary is the inaccurate reporting of certain of our court decisions. This often gives both the public and lawyers a distorted view of what the justice system is doing. The article which you forwarded me indicates your familiarity with our problem."

—S. W., New York State Court of Appeals

### **Helpful Steps**

Some of the professionals who read the *Awake!* article offered suggestions for things that they thought might help to avoid legal complications regarding refusal of treatment:

"In the article there is reference to release documents for patients who do not want blood transfusions . . . I would appreciate seeing a copy of such a release form. In my discussions with the hospital administrator, it would be helpful to show them one of these releases."

—R. S., Attorney, Indiana

[The American Medical Association provides a sample release form in *Medico-legal Forms With Legal Analysis* (1976), page 85. This is quoted on page 29 of *Jehovah's Witnesses and the Question of Blood* (1977).]

"I would think it would be advisable for all Jehovah's Witnesses to wear some sort of identification medal such as a Medical Alert bracelet indicating their religious beliefs and desire not to have transfusion."

—J. G., Physician, Maine

[Jehovah's Witnesses do carry a Medical Alert card, a signed and dated document that was prepared after consultation with medical/legal authorities.]

"May I suggest that each of your

members share their views with their physician, thereby, hopefully to eliminate any problem that could surface at a later date, or at the time an emergency may arise?"

—J. T., Hospital Administrator, Missouri

### **Wider Distribution**

Many hospital officials who received the *Awake!* article felt that their associates would benefit from the enlightening material:

"I read . . . the attached articles with interest. I subsequently presented your concerns to our Ethics Committee here in the hospital and it prompted considerable discussion. I find that our physicians are very sensitive to the concerns and beliefs of the Jehovah's Witnesses."

—M. R., Hospital Chaplain, California

"I have taken the opportunity to go ahead and make copies of the article for other members of our surgical staff. I should call to your attention that there are several of these cases involving obstetrical patients. Obstetrics is not part of the Surgery Department. If you would like for them to have copies of this article, you should contact the Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Again, thank you for sending this article."

—T. L., Physician, Kentucky

## **In Our Next Issue**

- *The Bomb and Man's Future*
- *Working Women—A View From the Third World*
- *The Great Wall—Monument to an Emperor's Dream*

"[The article] proved to be most helpful and interesting and I would appreciate if you could continue to forward articles of similar importance to my attention. I respectfully request to use the article, 'Your Medical Freedom—The Courts Speak!', with your permission, as a resource at a future date."

—J. F., Hospital Administrator,  
Florida

"You apparently are aware of the concerns that arise among many of us in the medical community when a Jehovah's Witness requires surgery or other emergency procedure. Indeed, the legal ramifications are a prime concern, but probably more difficult is the thought of having a patient die for lack of a treatment that, in most cases, seems so routine. Without personally experiencing the deep-seated beliefs of the Jehovah's Witness, it is difficult to give such conviction the consideration due. Sometimes we forget that there are worse dreads than dying and thus the Jehovah's Witness patient may become the victim of our lack of understanding of the depth of their religious beliefs.

"Hopefully, through sharing such as you have provided, such conflicts can be kept to a minimum. I will be passing this information on to other members of our staff."

—V. H., Hospital Administrator,  
Idaho

[A minister in the local congregation writes that a Witness who recently checked about an operation at this hospital was met with cooperation and was told that 'after receiving some recent information, they were willing to work with Jehovah's Witnesses.]

### **"Awe and Reverence"**

One surgeon, whose hospital is affiliated with Columbia University in New York, reflected on an experience he had:

"I will never forget 15 years ago, as a young intern when I stood at the bedside of a Jehovah's Witness who bled to death from a duodenal ulcer. The patient's wishes were respected and no transfusions were given, but I can still remember the tremendous frustration as a physician I felt at the time.

"The passage of time and treating many patients has a tendency to change one's perspective, and today I find the trust between a patient and his physician, and the duty to respect a patient's wishes far more important than the new medical technology which surrounds us. In thinking about that event, 15 years ago, it is interesting that the frustration has now given way to a sense of awe and reverence for that particular patient's steadfast faith and commitment. The event continues to remind me that I should always, as a physician, respect a patient's personal and religious wishes regardless of my feelings or the consequences."—J. S.

Many surgeons have found that by employing meticulous techniques they are able to operate successfully on Jehovah's Witnesses without blood. Such patients thus are not subjected to the risks of blood use, such as contracting AIDS. Further, many courts are upholding the principle of informed consent, which means that you have the right to determine what will be done to your body.

# Watching the World



## Worldwide Drug Abuse

WHO (World Health Organization) estimates that there are as many as 48 million people worldwide who abuse and misuse drugs. Of that figure, approximately 1.7 million are addicted to opium, 30 million smoke cannabis, and 700,000 use heroin. It is estimated that those who are hooked on cocaine, which is now viewed as the most addictive drug obtainable, amount to several million. According to WHO officials, these figures represent only the tip of the iceberg, since available information from many countries is limited.

## AIDS as a Weapon?

Criminal courts in the United States are now being hit by AIDS-related cases. Prosecutors are filing assault charges against "defendants thought to have the disease who spit on or bite police officers," reports *The National Law Journal*. In three separate cases, prosecutors justified such felony charges because of the risk of spreading the fatal disease. They believe that "AIDS can be transmitted by saliva if it gets into an open cut, the eyes or the bloodstream." One prosecuting attorney stated: "We're not out looking for people to prosecute. But when someone is

using an illness as an offensive weapon, we're not going to tolerate it."

## Middle Eastern Mouse Crisis

A population problem exists along the Israeli-Syrian cease-fire line. Not among humans—the area is sparsely inhabited—but among field mice. An estimated 250 million mice live there. The



mice have been killing themselves en masse by jumping into streams and over cliffs on the Golan Heights. According to the scientists who have observed them, the rodents are behaving instinctively to solve their overpopulation problem.

## Volcano Creates New Island

On Monday, January 20, an island was born 750 miles (1,200 km) south of Tokyo. An undersea volcano erupted in the Western Pacific and formed a new crescent-shaped island. By

Friday the island had "grown" to be about 2,300 feet (700 m) long from east to west and 650 feet (200 m) across at its widest part, and it was still "growing," Japan's Maritime Safety Agency told *Awake!* The newborn island may disappear though. "New islands appeared following volcanic eruptions in the same area in 1907-1908 and in 1914, but they soon vanished," says the *Mainichi Daily News*.

## High-Tech Smuggling

Greed is the prime catalyst behind Americans' smuggling high-technology equipment out of the United States, *The New York Times* reports. Some of it is for use in testing nuclear weapons. Foreign governments do not have to use their own secret service workers to obtain prized U.S. technology illegally, said Richard Roberts, a U.S. Customs Service agent. They just let it be known that their country wants a certain product and that they are willing to pay top dollar for it. "And they get it," he said, because "greed steps in." Who do the smuggling? "Mostly legitimate businessmen who have jumped at a chance to make a great deal of money," said an assistant U.S. attorney, and he added that they are

"well-mannered people who go to church."

### Nicotine Dependency

Recent scientific evidence suggests that habitual use of tobacco leads to actual physical dependence, said a report given at a symposium on tobacco smoking held at the University of Kentucky, U.S.A. Nicotine, a drug found in tobacco, meets the technical criterion of an addictive substance, said a spokesman from a National Institute of Drug Abuse research center. "You can say nicotine is in the category of heroin and the stimulants," he said. This may help explain why the U.S. surgeon general found that more than 80 percent of those who try to stop smoking fail within one year.

□ The U.S. congress passed legislation that requires manufacturers and importers of smokeless tobacco products to have warning labels on their packages. The warning is to consist of three rotating messages that state: Snuff and chewing tobacco (1) "may cause mouth cancer," (2) "may cause gum disease and tooth loss," (3) are "not a safe alternative to cigarettes."

### Baby Formula Alert

Babies with poorly functioning kidneys should not be fed infant formula containing aluminum, research shows. While investigating the deaths of two babies who suffered from kidney dysfunction, Miami University doctors discovered that the brains of the babies contained massive amounts of aluminum as a result of the inability of their

kidneys to cope with the toxic metal. *New Scientist* reports that the infant formula powdered milk drunk by the children "contained 50 times the amount of aluminium found in breast milk."

### Fooling "Mother Nature"

The seven to ten days that bees spend in making wax can now be saved, claims the inventor of a product called Perma-comb. Nine years were spent in



developing the high-density polyethylene combs, and during that time no hives were ever abandoned. Another advantage is that the honey can be extracted from the combs in about one minute using a high-speed centrifuge. Current methods take about half an hour. The plastic combs do not melt or break and are impervious to the damaging wax moth. Pesticides against the moth do not then need to be used, resulting in purer honey. If need be, the artificial combs can be sterilized. The California inventor feels that the new combs will allow beekeeping to become more automated.

### 'No Lottery. No Losers'

When the state of California, U.S.A., recently began its lottery, the chance of winning \$2 million captured the fancy of many people. To help promote the lottery, many stores gave

tickets away to their customers according to the amount of their purchases. But one chain of stores refused to participate. "No Lottery. No Lines. No Losers," read signs in their store windows. Why? "We don't feel the lottery is a good deal for the customer," the chain's merchandising chief explained. "The odds are not that good. And, as for education, it teaches children that they can get something for nothing, which is absolutely wrong." Did sales dip? "The first week after the lottery began we were hurting," he explained. "But now business is stronger than ever."

### Deadly Combination

The combination of contraceptive pills and tobacco smoking increases the risk of heart attack by at least ten times, warns cardiologist Professor Peter Sleight of Oxford, England. Professor Sleight says in the *Sun* newspaper of Sydney, Australia, that smoking is increasing among young women. With what result? Heart attacks in this age group are now becoming commonplace. He believes that the cause is smoking, especially in women who are on the Pill.

### Where Are the Animals?

Tourists visiting African game parks are sometimes disappointed at not seeing enough wildlife. "An area not teeming with a variety of animals," states the South African magazine *Fauna & Flora*, "may be an indication of a healthy balance between the game and the veld [grassland]." Overstocking of animals destroys the grass cover and causes

soil erosion. At one time, game animals had total freedom of movement, which was a protection to the game and to the veld. Now, because of restricted movement, conservationists find it necessary to cull herds so that game animals do not die a painful death from starvation and thirst.

### Ancient Tree

Europe's oldest tree stands in the Bulgarian village Granit near the town Stara Zagora. The oak is 1,640 years old, is over 75 feet (23 m) high, and has a girth of 25 feet (7.5 m), according to the Bulgarian news agency. This would mean that the old tree started to grow about ten years after the death of Roman emperor

or Constantine, who fused pagan religion with Christianity. He died in 337 C.E. But this old oak is a mere youngster compared with the sequoias of California, some of which are twice as old.

### High-Priced Bones

A recent ban on the export of human skeletons from India has seriously affected their supply in Europe, the United States, and Japan, reports *India Today*. Such limited supplies of human skeletons have resulted in higher costs to medical students, who now must pay as much as \$140 for a partial skeleton that previously cost less than \$100. Although India has been the world supplier of human bones for more than 50

years, the ban was imposed because of claims of "body snatching" and other grisly practices committed by those who seek to profit from the dead.

### Allergy Test Credibility

A \$350 blood test offered by Bio Health Centers promised to diagnose an individual's sensitivity to over 187 different substances. *Omni* magazine reports that Frank Golden, an FDA investigator skeptical about the success of such an offer, sent a sample of cow's blood to the center for analysis. Interestingly, the company not only failed to identify the blood as nonhuman but notified the investigator that the donor was allergic to cottage cheese, yogurt, and cow's milk!

about how she kept company with people who were so  
cruel to others that they deserved to go to hell.

#### Affably Left Capital City

A 23-year-old good girl, fleeing from  
800 people (and her boyfriend) to  
dissolve in the anonymity of  
a 10-to-one HZ (Highway  
Zone) city, chose to leave  
her family, friends, job and  
hometown behind to start  
over in a new place.  
She left home, packed up  
her clothes and headed west,  
but she had to leave  
behind her son, who  
had been born in the  
middle of the night.  
She had to leave him  
in the care of her  
parents, who were  
not able to take  
care of him.

She died in 1981, but  
now, 15 years later, the  
woman who was  
left behind has  
come to terms with  
the death of her  
son.

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#### Hip-Hurried Bonus

A person can do a whole lot  
between selection time, delivery  
time and the time it takes  
to learn about the  
product, because there's  
so much to learn.  
The person can't  
possibly learn all  
of the details, but  
they can learn  
enough to make  
them feel good  
about the product.

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