

# Awake!

October 22, 1999

## SUPERSTITIONS WHY SO DANGEROUS?



## Superstitions—Why So Dangerous? 3-11

We live in a skeptical age, yet superstition seems to be as widespread as ever. Why? And can something that appears so commonplace and accepted really be dangerous?



### Living With Cystic Fibrosis 12

Learn about this incurable inherited disorder and how a young man has coped with it.



### The Danube—if Only It Could Talk! 15

The Danube has quite a story to tell—about a rich array of cultures, a patchwork of often bloody history, and the threat of modern-day pollution.

Superstitions—How Widespread Today?	3
Superstitions—Why So Persistent?	4
Superstitions—Why So Dangerous?	8
Rearing Children in Africa During Difficult Times	20
Young People Ask . . . Why Can't I Be More Outgoing?	25
Watching the World	28
From Our Readers	30
Strengthened by His Faith	31
A Picture He Couldn't Forget	32

# SUPERSTITIONS HOW WIDESPREAD TODAY?

IT HAPPENS everywhere—at work, at school, on public transportation, and on the street. You sneeze, and people you've never met, mere passersby, say: "God bless you" or simply "Bless you." There are similar expressions in many languages. In German the response is "*Gesundheit*." Arabs say "*Yarhamak Allah*," and some South Pacific Polynesians say "*Tihei mauri ora*."

Believing that it is simply common courtesy rooted in social etiquette, you may have given little thought to why people say this. Yet, the expression is rooted in superstition. Moira Smith, librarian at the Folklore Institute at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, U.S.A., says of the expression: "It comes from the idea that you are sneezing out your soul." To say "God bless" is, in effect, asking God to restore it.

Of course, most people would probably agree that to believe that the soul escapes your body during a sneeze is irrational. Not surprisingly, therefore, *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* defines superstition as "a belief or practice resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, trust in magic or chance, or a false conception of causation."

Little wonder that a 17th-century physician called superstitions of his day the "vulgar errors" of the uneducated. Thus, as humans entered the 20th century with its scientific achievements, *The Encyclopædia Britannica* of 1910 optimistically foresaw the time when "civilization [would be] freed from the last ghost of superstition."

## As Widespread as Ever

That optimism of some eight decades ago was unfounded, for superstition seems as firmly entrenched as ever. Such durability is characteristic of superstitions. The word "superstition" derives from the Latin *super*, meaning "above," and *stare*, "to stand." Warriors who survived in battle were called, in effect, *superstites*, since they outlived fellow warriors in battle, in a literal way "standing" above them. Alluding to this derivation, the book *Superstitions* states: "The superstitions that still exist today stand above the ages that attempted to obliterate them." Consider just a few examples of the persistence of superstitions.

□ After the sudden death of the governor of a major Asian city, a demoralized staff at his official residence advised the incoming governor to consult a special psychic, who proposed a number of changes in and around the complex. The staff felt that the changes would neutralize the ill omen.

□ A special rock is the constant companion of the president of a multimillion-dollar company in the United States. Since her first successful trade show, she refuses to leave home without it.

□ Before closing major business transactions, Asian business executives often seek the advice of a soothsayer.

□ An athlete, although training extensively, credits his victory to an article of clothing. So he continues to wear it—unwashed—in future contests.

□ A student uses a certain pen to take an exam and receives a high mark. Thereafter, he views the pen as "lucky."

□ On her wedding day, a bride carefully arranges her wedding ensemble so that it includes "something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue."

□ A person opens the Bible at random and reads the text that first meets his eye, believing that those words will provide the particular guidance he needs at the moment.

□ As a jumbo jet roars down the runway for takeoff, several passengers make the sign

of the cross. Another caresses a "Saint" Christopher medallion during the flight.

Clearly, even today superstition is very widespread. In fact, Stuart A. Vyse, associate professor of psychology at Connecticut College, states in his book *Believing in Magic—The Psychology of Superstition*: "Although we live in a technologically advanced society, superstition is as widespread as it has ever been."

Superstition is so well entrenched today that efforts to stamp it out have failed. Why is this so?

# SUPERSTITIONS WHY SO PERSISTENT?

**A**S YOU are probably aware, there are still many who view a black cat crossing their path as a bad omen or who are fearful of walking under a ladder. Many also believe that Friday the 13th is a day of bad luck and that the 13th floor of a building is a dangerous place to be. Such super-

stitions persist even though they are irrational.

Think about it. Why do some people carry a rabbit-foot or knock on wood when expressing some hopeful sentiment? Isn't it because, without sound evidence, they believe that these acts will ensure good luck? The book *A Dictionary of Superstitions* observes: "A superstitious mind believes that certain objects, places, animals, or deeds are lucky (good omens or charms) and that others are

**Awake!**®

**Why Awake! Is Published** Awake! is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

**Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address on page 5.  
Publication of Awake! is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.**

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

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Awake!, c/o Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589. Vol. 80, No. 20 Printed in U.S.A.

unlucky (bad omens or signs of misfortune).” —See Galatians 5:19, 20.

### Efforts to Eliminate It in China

Clearly, superstition has survived modern attempts to eliminate it. For example, in 1995 the People's Congress of Shanghai issued an official governmental decree banning superstition as an outdated relic from the nation's past. The goal was to “eradicate feudalistic superstition, reform funeral customs and promote the construction of a more civilized capital.” But what has been the result?

According to one report, the people in Shanghai remained loyal to their superstitions. In defiance of the official ban on the Chinese rite of burning fake paper money on the grave sites of ancestors, one visitor to a grave said: “We burned 19 billion yuan [about three billion dollars].” He added: “It's the tradition to do this. It makes the gods happy.”

The influential newspaper *Guangming Daily* underscored the ineffectiveness of the ban, observing that there may be as many as “five million professional fortunetellers in China, while the total number of professional science and technology personnel is just 10 million.” The newspaper noted: “The momentum seems to be all in favour of the fortunetellers.”

*The Encyclopedia Americana*, International Edition, says regarding the persistence of superstitions: “In all cultures, some old customs are not only retained, but they are reinterpreted and given new meanings.” A recent edition of *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*

admitted: “Even in so-called modern times, in a day when objective evidence is highly valued, there are few people who would not, if pressed, admit to cherishing secretly one or two irrational beliefs or superstitions.”

### A Double Standard

Apparently many people have a double standard, since they will not admit in public what they practice in private. One author says that this reluctance is due to a fear of appearing silly to others. Thus, such individuals may prefer to call their superstitious customs routines or habits. Athletes,

**There may be five million professional fortune-tellers in China alone**



#### Semimonthly Languages Available by Mail:

Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish,<sup>2</sup> Dutch, English,<sup>2</sup> Estonian, Finnish,<sup>2</sup> French, German,<sup>2</sup> Greek, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,<sup>2</sup> Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Malayalam, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,<sup>2</sup> Swahili, Swedish,<sup>2</sup> Tagalog, Tamil, Ukrainian, Zulu

#### Monthly Languages Available by Mail:

Albanian, Amharic, Chichewa, Cibemba, Ewe, Georgian, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Igbo, Kannada, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Maltese, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Papiamento, Sepedi, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Telugu, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Xhosa, Yoruba

\* Audiocassettes also available.

© 1999 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society  
of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

#### Offices of the Watch Tower Society in selected countries

America, United States of,  
Wallkill, NY 12589

Australia, Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565  
Britain, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN

Canada, Box 4100, Halton Hills  
(Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4

Ghana, P.O. Box GP 760, Accra  
Jamaica, Box 103, Old Harbour P.O.,  
St. Catherine

New Zealand, P.O. Box 142,  
Manurewa

Nigeria, P.M.B. 1090, Benin City,  
Edo State

South Africa, Private Bag X2067,  
Krugersdorp, 1740

Zambia, Box 33459, Lusaka 10101  
Zimbabwe, P. Bag A-6113, Avondale

**Changes of address** should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).



for example, may speak of their behavior as pregame rituals.

A journalist recently made a tongue-in-cheek remark about a chain letter, which is a letter that is sent to several persons with a request that each send copies to many others. Often, one who passes such a letter on is promised good luck, whereas the one who breaks the chain will supposedly experience evil consequences. So the journalist became a new link in the chain and said: "You understand that I am not doing this because I'm superstitious. I just want to avoid bad luck."

Anthropologists and folklore experts feel that even the term "superstitious" is too subjective; they are hesitant to label certain behavior patterns that way. They prefer

the more "comprehensive" but euphemistic terms "folk custom and belief," "folklore," or "belief systems." Dick Hyman, in his book *Lest Ill Luck Befall Thee—Superstitions of the Great and Small*, candidly observes: "Like sin and the common cold, superstition has few advocates but many practitioners."

Yet, by whatever name it is called, superstition persists. Why is this so in today's technologically advanced scientific age?

#### **Why So Persistent**

Well, some assert that belief in superstitions is normal for humans. There are even those who claim that the tendency toward superstition is in our genes. However, there are studies that prove otherwise. The evidence is that people become superstitious as a result of what they are taught.

Professor Stuart A. Vyse explains: "Superstitious behavior, like most behavior, is acquired through the course of a person's life. We are not born knocking on wood; we learn to do so." It is said that people acquire a belief in magic as children and then remain susceptible to superstitious belief long after they have "adopted grownup sensibilities." And where do they acquire many superstitious beliefs?

Many superstitions are closely connected with cherished religious beliefs. For example, superstition was part of the religion of those who inhabited the land of Canaan prior to the Israelites. The Bible says that it was the custom of the Canaanites to employ divination, practice magic, rely on omens or sorcery, bind others with spells, consult spirit mediums and professional foretellers of events, and inquire of the dead.—Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

The ancient Greeks too were noted for superstitions connected with their religion. They believed in oracles, divination, and magic, much as the Canaanites did. The Babylonians would look into the liver of an animal, believing it would reveal the course of

action they should take. (Ezekiel 21:21) They were also noted for their gambling and would look for help from what the Bible refers to as "the god of Good Luck." (Isaiah 65:11) Gamblers to this day are renowned for being superstitious.

Interestingly, a number of churches have actually encouraged devotion to gambling. One example is the Catholic Church, with its promotion of such activities as bingo. In a similar vein, one gambler noted: "I am sure the Catholic Church realizes [gamblers are very superstitious,] for the nuns were always near the racetrack with their collection boxes. How could a Catholic, as many of us were, pass up a 'sister' and expect to have any success playing the horses? So we would contribute. And if we won that day we would then be especially generous, hoping it would bring continued success."

Prominent examples of the close connection between religion and superstition are the superstitions associated with Christmas, a celebration promoted by the churches of Christendom. These include the hope that kissing under the mistletoe will lead to marriage and many superstitious beliefs about Santa Claus.

*Lest Ill Luck Befall Thee* observes that superstition was developed in an effort "to pry into the future." So today, just as throughout history, common folk and world leaders alike consult fortune-tellers and others who profess magical powers. The book *Don't Sing Before Breakfast, Don't Sleep in the Moonlight* explains: "People needed to believe there were charms and spells that would work against the terrors of both the known and the unknown."

Thus superstitious activity has attempted to provide humans with some sense of control over their fears. Says the book *Cross Your Fingers, Spit in Your Hat*: "[Humans] rely on superstitions for the same reasons people always have. When [they] are faced with situa-

tions [they] cannot control—which depend on 'luck' or 'chance'—superstitions make [them] feel more secure."

Although science has in many ways improved the lot of humans, their feelings of insecurity remain. In fact, insecurity has increased because of problems science has created. Professor Vyse says: "Superstition and belief in the paranormal are well-integrated features of our culture ... because our contemporary world has heightened our sense of uncertainty." *The World Book Encyclopedia* concluded: "Superstitions will probably have a part in life as long as people ... have uncertainties about the future."

In summary, then, superstitions persist because they are rooted in fears common to mankind and are backed by numerous cherished religious beliefs. Should we conclude, though, that superstition serves a beneficial purpose, since it helps people cope with uncertainties? Is it harmless? Or is it something dangerous that should be avoided?



**Christmas traditions such as kissing under mistletoe are steeped in superstition**



# SUPERSTITIONS WHY SO DANGEROUS?

CAN superstitions harm you? Some might dismiss this notion or minimize the danger. Still, in his book *Believing in Magic—The Psychology of Superstition*, Professor Stuart A. Vyse warns: "Superstition could lead to diminished quality of life if one spends large sums of money on psychics, fortunetellers, numerologists, or Tarot-card readers, or if one's superstitious rituals help to maintain problem gambling." Allowing superstition to rule our lives can have far more serious consequences.

As we have seen, many superstitions serve to allay fears about the future. It is important to distinguish, however, between superstition and reliable knowledge about what lies ahead of us. Consider an example.

## An Illuminating Story

In 1503, after months of exploration along the coast of Central America, Christopher Columbus managed to beach his last two vessels on what is now the island of Jamaica. At first, the islanders freely shared food with the stranded explorers. In time, however, the misconduct of the sailors caused the islanders to stop supplying them with food. The situation was critical, since it would be some time before another ship would arrive to rescue them.

According to the story, Columbus consulted his almanac and learned that a total eclipse of the moon would occur on February 29, 1504. Playing upon the islanders' superstition, he warned them that darkness would cover the moon unless they supplied

his crew with food. The islanders ignored the warning—until the eclipse started! Then, "with great howling and lamentation," they "came running from every direction to the ships laden with provisions." The explorers were supplied with food for the rest of their stay.

To the islanders, Columbus had performed powerful magic. But their conclusion was the result of mere superstition. In reality, the "prediction" was based on the consistent movements of the earth, the moon, and the sun. Astronomers can reliably predict such things as eclipses long in advance, and this information appears in almanacs. Furthermore, the precise movements of celestial bodies allow astronomers to determine their exact position at any given time. Therefore, when your newspaper announces the time of a sunrise or a sunset, you accept it as fact.



The Grand Creator of the heavenly bodies is, in effect, the source of the information published about the timing of eclipses, sunrises, and sunsets. But the predictions of fortune-tellers, psychics, crystal-ball gazers, and tarot-card readers are from a different source, one that is in opposition to Almighty God. Consider what we mean.

#### A Dangerous Source

At Acts 16:16-19, the sacred record reports that "a certain servant girl" in the ancient city of Philippi furnished her masters with much gain by her "art of prediction." The account plainly says, however, that the source of her predictions was, not the almighty Creator, but "a demon of divination." Hence, when the apostle Paul expelled the demon, the servant girl lost her powers of prediction.

When we understand that such predictions come from a demonic

#### **Superstition and spiritistic practices are closely linked**

source, we see why God's Law to Israel stated: "There should not be found in you . . . anyone who employs divination, a practitioner of magic or anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer, or one who binds others with a spell or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events . . . For everybody doing these things is something detestable to Jehovah." (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) In fact, the Law made such practices a capital offense.—Leviticus 19:31; 20:6.

It may surprise you to learn that evil forces are behind many seemingly harmless superstitious practices. Yet, the Bible says that Satan 'transforms himself into an angel of light.' (2 Corinthians 11:14) Satan and the demons under his control can make dangerous practices appear harmless, even beneficial. At times, they may fabricate portents and make them come true, deceiving onlookers into thinking that such omens are from God. (Compare Matthew 7:21-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.) This explains why some predictions made by those claiming special powers at times come true.

Of course, many, if not most, who claim special powers are fakes, mere charlatans, out to bilk money from the unwary. But whether fakes or otherwise, they are all effectively used by Satan to turn people against Jehovah, blinding them to "the glorious good news."—2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

#### **"Lucky" Charms and Idolatry**

And what of the "lucky" charms and superstitious routines that people use to gain a sense of security and control over random events in life? These present a number of subtle dangers. For one, the superstitious person could in effect be surrendering control of his life to unseen forces. He throws logic and reason to the wind, bowing instead to irrational fears.

One writer cites another inherent danger. He states: "When someone counts on a good



### **God's new world will be free of superstition**

luck charm for protection and the charm fails, that person might have a tendency to blame [his] misfortune on the actions of others, rather than to accept the responsibility himself.” (Compare Galatians 6:7.) Interestingly, essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson once declared: “Shallow men believe in luck . . . Strong men believe in cause and effect.”

The “cause and effect” at work in our lives often amounts to random events—the “time and unforeseen occurrence” that befall us all. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) Random events are not the result of the capricious whims of “bad luck.” Christians know that superstitious routines and magic charms have no effect on the outcome of random events. When they occur, we are reminded of the Biblical truth: “You do not know what your life will be tomorrow. For you are a mist appearing for a little while and then disappearing.”—James 4:14.

Furthermore, true Christians know that reverential attention is often given to

good-luck charms as well as to superstitious rituals or routines. Hence, Christians view all such as forms of idolatry, clearly condemned in God’s Word.—Exodus 20:4, 5; 1 John 5:21.

### **How We Can Know the Future**

This does not mean that Christians are unconcerned about the future. On the contrary, sound reasoning dictates that there is real value in knowing what lies ahead. If we know in advance what is to occur, we can take appropriate action, benefiting ourselves and our loved ones.

There is real need, though, to seek this information from the right source. The prophet Isaiah cautioned: “People will tell you to ask for messages from fortunetellers and mediums . . . You are to answer them, ‘Listen to what the Lord is teaching you! Don’t listen to mediums—what they tell you will do you no good.’”—Isaiah 8:19, 20, *Today’s English Version*.

The correct source of reliable information about the future is the Author of the Bible. (2 Peter 1:19-21) This inspired book contains abundant evidence that prophecies the almighty God, Jehovah, has made are reliable—as reliable, in fact, as the movements of heavenly bodies “predicted” in countless almanacs. To illustrate the detailed accuracy of Bible prophecy, consider this example. Let’s suppose that a prominent person today goes on public record and predicts events 200 years ahead, for the year 2199. His prediction contains these details:

- A great military battle will erupt between nations that are not as yet rival world powers, and the result will change history.
- The strategy to be used involves a tremendous engineering feat that will alter the course of a mighty river.
- The name of the conqueror is given—many years before he is even born.
- The ultimate destiny of the loser is described, extending the prediction many more centuries into the future.

If all these predictions came true, would it not cause people to consider other things this person had said about the future?

What we have just described actually took place. Some 200 years before the overthrow of Babylon by the Medes and the Persians, Jehovah, through the prophet Isaiah, foretold the following:

- A great military battle would erupt between Medo-Persia and Babylon.—Isaiah 13:17, 19.
- The strategy used would involve the drying up of a moatlike river defense. Additionally, the gates to the fortified city would be left open.—Isaiah 44:27-45:2.
- The conqueror would be named Cyrus—foretold some 150 years before his birth.—Isaiah 45:1.
- In time, Babylon would become a total ruin.—Isaiah 13:17-22.

All these predictions came true. Is it thus not worth your while to consider other prophecies Jehovah has made in his written Word?

### **The Grand Future That God Promises**

What does the Bible foretell? The Bible promises that in the new world of God’s making, no one will suffer because of insecurity about the future. Note God’s guarantee to those living at that time: “There will be no one making [my people] tremble.”—Micah 4:4.

The Bible further promises that God will ‘open his hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.’ (Psalm 145:16) Is the fulfillment of that promise a long way off? No! Well in advance the Bible foretold that the very conditions we see on the earth now constitute proof that we are living in “the last days” of the present wicked system.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Soon the loving Creator will bring an end to these evil conditions. He will cause all wars, sources of worldwide insecurity and suffering, to cease. Furthermore, hatred, selfishness, crime, and violence will forever be things of the past. The Bible promises: “The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”—Psalm 37:10, 11.

Among the many blessings that people will enjoy in this new world is good health. Even death and its attendant sorrows will be no more. God himself says: “Look! I am making all things new.”—Revelation 21:4, 5.

At that time no human will be subject to the random events that alter and destroy lives today. Gone, too, will be the wicked demons and Satan, the source of superstitious fears and evil lies. These thrilling truths are found in the Bible.

# Living With Cystic Fibrosis

AS TOLD BY JIMMY GARATZIOTIS

On July 25, 1998, I was rushed to the hospital with agonizing pain in my chest. My heart was fine, but my lungs were so infected that I had extreme difficulty breathing. I was still only 25, and my life was hanging in the balance.

**T**WO days after my birth, doctors told my parents that I had severe jaundice. They said that if I did not have a blood transfusion, I would either die or suffer brain damage. I survived without a blood transfusion—and without brain damage.

The first two years of my life were marked by many perplexing health problems and bouts of pneumonia. A doctor finally diagnosed my condition as cystic fibrosis (CF). At the time, people with this disease lived to an average age of seven years. But because of medical advances, more and more children with CF are reaching adulthood.

## What Is CF?

CF is an incurable inherited disorder. It causes increasingly severe respiratory problems, and often CF patients have extreme difficulty digesting their food.

Approximately 1 in 25 people is a carrier of the CF defective gene. In most instances carriers are not even aware that they carry the gene, since they do not manifest any symptoms of the disorder. If both father and mother are carriers, they have a 1 in 4 chance of having a child with CF.

Mine is one of the rare cases where CF was diagnosed because of the presence of nasal polyps. As a result of these, the doctors were prompted to test the salt content of my sweat, which is the most common test for di-

agnosing CF. Often the presence of salt on the skin is noticed first by parents or grandparents who detect a salty taste on their lips after kissing the child.

The growth of nasal polyps impaired my breathing, so surgery has been done almost yearly on my sinuses to remove polyps. Such operations are uncomfortable, and recovery is painful. They are also dangerous because of the bleeding. But I have had many operations, and all have been performed without the use of blood. How thankful I am for not having to live with or worry about complications that can result from blood transfusions!

## Coping With the Disease

Although my illness limits what I can do, I try to keep as active as possible. A special day in my life was August 1, 1987, when I was baptized in symbol of my dedication to Jehovah God.

When I get up in the morning, I inhale a ventolin solution followed by a saline solution. This helps loosen secretions in my lungs and opens my airways so that I can breathe easier. The treatment lasts about 15 minutes. Afterward I take physiotherapy for from 40 minutes to an hour to loosen and drain the secretions in my lungs. Then I take another inhalation treatment, this time of an antibiotic to fight infection. The whole procedure is repeated in the afternoon and again in the evening.

The three treatment sessions take about four hours each day. I usually eat afterward, since my treatment goes more smoothly if I have an empty stomach. In spite of such a time-consuming daily regimen, I have made it a practice to attend the meetings of the Greek-speaking congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in London, Ontario, Canada. On meeting nights I postpone my therapy until 10:00 p.m. For me the blessings received from attending the meetings far outweigh the sacrifices involved. A regular share in the ministry has also been important to me.

#### **Sharing My Faith**

Hospitalizations have provided me with special opportunities to share my Christian faith. One time I had an opportunity to speak with a Greek Orthodox priest, who was a patient in another room. He remarked that I was a respectful young person and said that he thought that I was a good example for the young people in the Greek community. Little did he know that I was aware that he was spearheading opposition to the ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses among the Greek-speaking people.

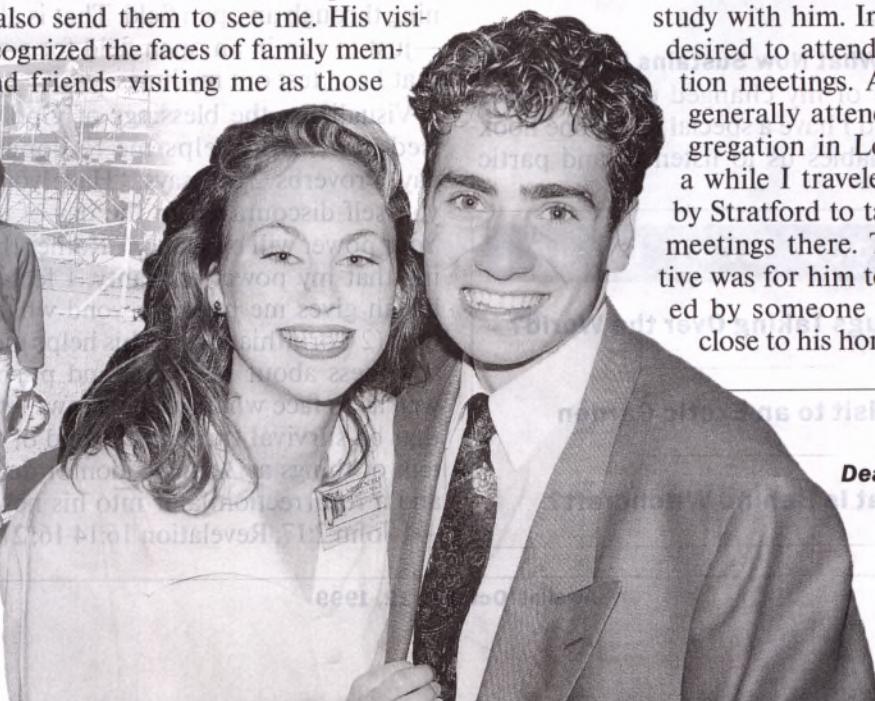
When visitors came to see the priest, he would also send them to see me. His visitors recognized the faces of family members and friends visiting me as those

who had called at their door in the ministry. Some of the priest's visitors stayed, but others returned in surprise to ask the priest why he had sent them to see Jehovah's Witnesses. Even after he learned that I was a Witness, our Bible discussions continued. We discussed such topics as the name Jehovah, the Trinity, and the political neutrality of Jehovah's Witnesses in Greece. As we spoke, I could detect that the walls of his opposition were coming down.

The priest admitted to knowing the truth about some of the Bible topics that we discussed but confessed that he did not teach the truth regarding these things for fear of losing his job. Later Esther, my younger sister, and I visited his home, and he accepted Bible literature. Opposition to our preaching in the territory softened. In fact, many who heard of the priest's receptive ear began to listen. Soon after, though, the priest was reassigned elsewhere.

Another significant development unfolded as a result of sharing my faith during one of my hospitalizations. I spoke with a youth named Jeff, who had come to visit his grandfather. Further conversations led to a Bible study with him. In time, Jeff desired to attend congregation meetings. Although I generally attended a congregation in London, for a while I traveled to nearby Stratford to take him to meetings there. The objective was for him to be assisted by someone who lived close to his home.

***With my wife,  
Deanne, who is a  
great support  
to me***



Regrettably, Jeff yielded to pressure from his family and did not progress spiritually. However, while attending meetings in Stratford, I became reacquainted with Deanne Stewart. We had met when we shared in the construction of a Kingdom Hall. A relationship developed, and we were married on June 1, 1996.

### **My Situation Changes**

Unfortunately, three weeks after getting married, I became very ill. This started a sequence of hospitalizations leading up to the emergency described at the outset. Since then I have been on oxygen 24 hours a day. I cope with fevers, night sweats, pleurisy, loss of sleep from coughing at night, and pains in my joints, legs, and chest. At times I also cough up blood, which is frightening because if it does not stop, it could result in sudden death.

Now, with my dear wife at my side as a companion and helper, I share in witnessing to doctors, physiotherapists, patients, and other health-care workers at hospitals as well as at home when they visit. Difficult though my medical problems are, we view all these occasions as opportunities to praise Jehovah's name.

### **What Now Sustains Me**

Because of my changed circumstances, Deanne and I have a special telephone hook-up that enables us to listen to and partic-

ipate in congregation meetings. This loving provision gives us much encouragement and a feeling that we are still an active part of the congregation, even though we can no longer be physically present most of the time.

In addition, our ministry now includes calling people on the telephone and sharing our Bible-based hope. We have started Bible studies, which we conduct over the telephone. Speaking to strangers about Jehovah and his marvelous provisions for faithful mankind in a new world of righteousness brings us great joy.

The support of my father and mother has been a strengthening encouragement and comfort to me. I am especially indebted to Jehovah for blessing me with Deanne, who has accepted me with my illness and now plays a major role in helping me to endure.

As I reach the final stages of my illness, meditating on my hope for the future keeps me going. Reading the Bible daily with Deanne is a comfort to both of us. I know that in the near future, I will be healthy, with no need for daily therapy just to breathe. In the promised Paradise, when I receive healthy lungs, I see myself running through an open field. That is all I want—just to run in an open field for a while so that I can test out my lungs.

Visualizing the blessings of God's promised new world helps me to cope day by day. Proverbs 24:10 says: "Have you shown yourself discouraged in the day of distress? Your power will be scanty." Rather than feeling that my power is scanty, I feel that Jehovah gives me power beyond what is normal. (2 Corinthians 4:7) This helps me to give a witness about his name and purposes as well as to face whatever he allows—whether that be survival through the end of this system of things at Armageddon or death now and a resurrection later into his new world.

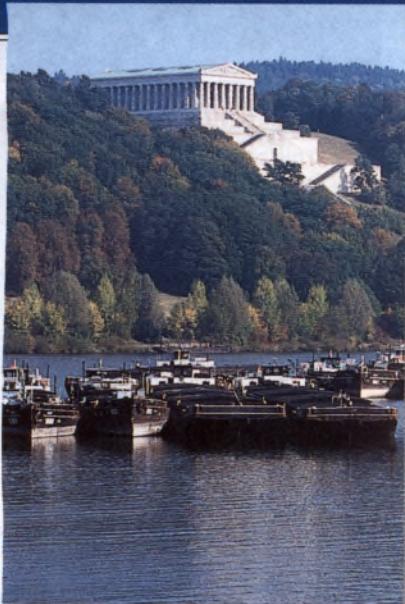
—1 John 2:17; Revelation 16:14-16; 21:3, 4.

### **IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**

**Are Drugs Taking Over the World?**

**A Visit to an Exotic Garden**

**What Is Behind Witchcraft?**



# THE DANUBE IF ONLY IT COULD TALK!

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN GERMANY

For over a century and a half, the most famous Germans of all time have gazed steadily—but blindly—down upon the Danube River. How is that possible? In 1842, Bavarian King Ludwig I completed the Valhalla,\* a Doric marble temple designed to honor prominent deceased Germans.

**O**VERLOOKING the Danube from a hillside near Regensburg, Germany, this German hall of fame—copied after the Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens—contains scores of busts representing men and women of fame.

The setting is appropriate. These princes, poets, artists, politicians, scientists, and musicians—including such luminaries as Beethoven, Einstein, Goethe, Gutenberg, Kepler, and Luther—knew the Danube well. Many of them lived on its banks, crossed its waters, or sang its praises. What a story the Danube could tell—if only it could talk!

### More Than Just Running Water

“Rivers to the geographer are the bearers of sediment and trade,” writes historian Norman Davies. He notes, however, that “to the historian they are the bearers of culture, ideas, and sometimes conflict. They are like life itself.” The Danube flows through or borders on ten different countries—Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova,

\* In German mythology, Valhalla was the dwelling hall of the gods; in Norse mythology, it was the hall of slain warriors.

and Ukraine—so it has seen its share of culture, ideas, and conflict. Not surprisingly, many communities along the Danube have played major roles in European, even world, history.

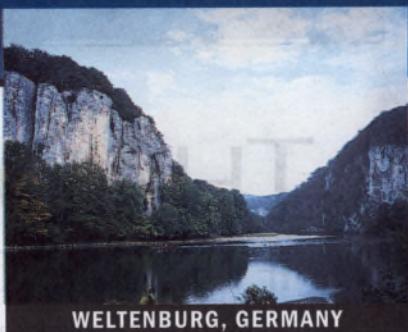
Take Vienna, the capital of Austria, for example. This city has long been one of the undisputed cultural centers of the world, rich in opera houses, theaters, museums, historic homes, and libraries. For centuries it has also been famous for its coffeehouses and taverns. The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra is considered one of the world’s finest. The University of Vienna, founded in 1365, is the oldest in the German-speaking world.

As for ideas, *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* calls turn-of-the-century Vienna “a fertile breeding ground for ideas that—for good or bad—were to shape the modern world.” Among the individuals who were, to some degree, influenced by the years that they spent there are Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism; Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis; and Adolf Hitler, who needs no further description.

(Continued on page 18)

### ULM, GERMANY

In 1879, Albert Einstein, whose scientific discoveries helped shape recent world history, was born in Ulm. It is said that he was "recognized in his own time as one of the most creative intellects in human history"



WELTENBURG, GERMANY

### MAUTHAUSEN, AUSTRIA

This small community on the Danube was the site of a Nazi concentration camp. Some among the tens of thousands of people incarcerated there were Jehovah's Witnesses, including Martin Poetzinger, who later became a member of their Governing Body

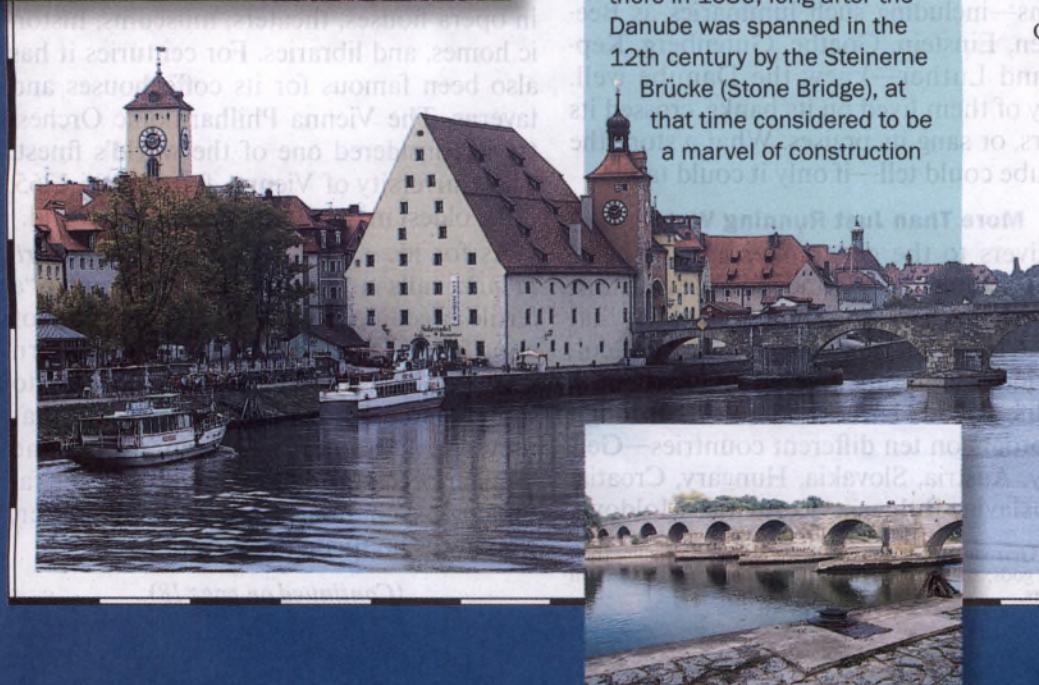


### VIENNA, AUSTRIA



### REGENSBURG, GERMANY

The astronomer Kepler died there in 1630, long after the Danube was spanned in the 12th century by the Steinerne Brücke (Stone Bridge), at that time considered to be a marvel of construction



### CROATIA



BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

## SLOVAKIA

## ALONGSIDE THE DANUBE

•Budapest

## HUNGARY

Belgrade

## YUGOSLAVIA

## BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA

*The World Book Encyclopedia* says that Belgrade experienced "political and military struggles" that lasted "for hundreds of years." Invading armies "conquered and destroyed Belgrade more than 30 times."

## GIURGIU, ROMANIA

In 1869, Romania's first railway line connected Giurgiu with its better-known neighbor Bucharest, some 40 miles to the north. In 1954 a bilevel highway-railway bridge across the Danube connected Romania with Bulgaria and was optimistically named Friendship Bridge.

## ROMANIA

Giurgiu

## BULGARIA

Nikopol

## MOLDOVA

## UKRAINE

Izmail

Danube delta

BLACK SEA

## NIKOPOL, BULGARIA

This town was an important stronghold after the Byzantine emperor Heraclius founded it in 629 C.E. In 1396 the Ottoman sultan Bayezid I defeated King Sigismund of Hungary there, thus beginning five centuries of Turkish rule.

### **Dividing "Civilization From Barbarity"**

"In ancient times, the River Danube represented one of the great dividing lines of the European Peninsula," says Norman Davies. He explains: "Established as the frontier of the Roman Empire in the 1st century AD, the Latin *Danuvius* . . . divided civilization from barbarity."

Several Danube cities played leading roles in the history of the Roman Empire and, later, of the so-called Holy Roman Empire. Bratislava, for example, a cultural center in Slovakia and today its capital, served as the capital of Hungary from 1526 to 1784. And for a time a majestic castle, perched some 300 feet above the Danube, was a residence of the Austrian royal family. When Vienna was threatened by French and Bavarian troops in 1741, Maria Theresa, who later became empress, fled there for protection.

Maria Theresa was of the House of Habsburg. This sovereign dynasty—one of Europe's greatest—is well represented among the busts in the Valhalla.\* This remarkable family, which can be traced back to the 10th century, rose to power in the 13th century and eventually held sway over much of Central Europe—often because of strategic marriages. Francis Ferdinand, heir to the

\* Maria Theresa, Rudolf I, Maximilian I, and Charles V are all so honored.

Habsburg throne, was assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914, causing the spark that set the world aflame.

### **Bloodstained Waters**

Empires have come and gone, subjecting the Danube to continual political change. It was the border of the Byzantine Empire of the 11th and 12th centuries. Later, for most of its length, it flowed within the Ottoman Empire, as Danube cities such as Belgrade and Budapest were swallowed up by the Turks. Even Vienna was unsuccessfully placed under siege in 1529 and again in 1683.

Small wonder, then, that German author Werner Heider says: "No other river in Europe matches the Danube in its historical importance." Another author notes that in the past it served as "the major invasion route to Europe from the east for the Huns, Tartars, Mongols, and Turks."

The Danube has also been violated in wars of more recent vintage. Author William L. Shirer writes: "[In 1941] on the night of February 28 German Army units crossed the Danube from Rumania and took up strategic positions in Bulgaria." In 1945, four years later, "the Russians, having captured Vienna on April 13, were heading up the Danube, and the U.S. Third Army was sweeping down that river to meet them."

### **BUDAPEST, HUNGARY**

Once known as Queen of the Danube, Budapest consists mainly of Buda, on the west side of the Danube, and Pest on the east side. By 1900, nearly one fourth of the population was Jewish—a community almost totally annihilated during World War II



The Danube's story of culture and ideas has too often been a story of conflict, and its waters have too often been sullied by the blood of mankind's wars. But it has been sullied in other ways as well.

#### No Longer Blue

When Johann Strauss, Jr., composed the waltz "The Blue Danube" in 1867, the waters evidently faithfully reflected the blue, sunlit sky. But today?

From its source in the Black Forest of Germany, the Danube winds its way southeast for some 1,770 miles to the Black Sea. After the Volga, it is the second-longest river in Europe. Its drainage system encompasses 315,000 square miles. However, the construction of the Gabcikovo Dam, part of a hydroelectric project located on the Danube between Vienna and Budapest, has had an effect on the environment. According to one source, the dam "has caused a serious drop in the water table along the Danube, dried out thousands of hectares of forest and wetlands and reduced fish catches on some stretches of the lower Danube by 80%."

If it could talk, the Danube of today might well hesitate to tell how human ignorance and greed have turned it into both culprit and victim. Along with the other three major rivers emptying into the Black Sea, the Danube has helped to make the Black Sea "the most polluted sea in the world," according to the Russian newspaper *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*. The same journal speaks of the Black Sea as "undergoing an agonizing death," noting that during the past 30 years, it "has become a sewer for half of Europe—a place for the disposal of huge amounts of phosphorus compounds, mercury, DDT, oil, and other poisonous refuse."

How sad the story of what has happened to the Danube delta! Around Izmail, Ukraine, near where the river loses itself in the Black Sea, the ecological damage is horrendous. The pelicans once typical of the area

have become scarce. The German magazine *Geo* says that the permanent preservation of the area's "opulent variety of plant and animal life . . . is a test case for international environmental control."

#### A Better Story on the Way

In 1902 a new resident arrived in Tailfingen, a town located about 35 miles northeast of the Danube's headwaters, on one of its tributaries. She was Margarethe Demut. "Demut" means "Humility" in German. Because she preached about an imminent "golden age," local residents were soon calling her Golden Gretel. Shortly thereafter, Tailfingen had one of the first congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany.

In 1997 the 21,687 of Jehovah's Witnesses serving in 258 congregations in Danube communities, which are in ten countries, were unitedly preaching this same message of God's established Kingdom.

Since God has decreed that the earth will last forever and will be inhabited, the Danube could well flow on indefinitely. (Psalm 104:5; Isaiah 45:18) If so, how gratifying that after a centuries-long story of imperfect cultures, faulty human ideas, and bloody conflicts, this river will finally have a more welcome story to tell. Happy and healthy people will be living along its banks, no longer divided by political boundaries or by language. All will be lifting their voices in praise of the Grand Creator. And no longer will there be any need for a Valhalla honoring dead humans, since all worthy ones will have been restored to life.—John 5:28, 29.

The thought of such a joyous Danube may well remind us of Psalm 98:8, 9, which says: "Let the rivers themselves clap their hands . . . for [Jehovah] has come to judge the earth. He will judge the productive land with righteousness and the peoples with uprightness." Imagine the thrilling story the blue Danube, once again beautiful, would then be able to tell!

# REARING CHILDREN IN AFRICA DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

AS TOLD BY CARMEN MCLUCKIE

**The year was 1941. World War II was raging. I was a 23-year-old mother from Australia, but here my five-month-old baby and I were in prison in Gwelo, Southern Rhodesia (now Gweru, Zimbabwe). My husband was in prison in Salisbury (now Harare). Our other children—aged two and three—were being cared for by my two teenage stepchildren. Let me explain how I came to be in this situation.**

I LIVED with Mom and Dad at Port Kembla, about 30 miles south of Sydney, Australia.

In 1924, Clare Honisett called on Mother and aroused her interest in Bible teachings by asking her if she understood the meaning of the Lord's Prayer. Clare explained what it meant to hallow God's name, and then she told of how the Kingdom would bring about God's will on earth. (Matthew 6:9, 10) Mom was amazed. Despite Father's opposition, Mother began to delve deeper into such Bible truths.

Shortly afterward, we moved to a suburb of Sydney. From there Mother and I would walk about three miles to reach the meetings of the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called. Although Father never became a Witness, he permitted Bible studies to be held in our home. Two of his brothers—Max and Oscar Seidel—became Witnesses, and so did some members of Max's family as well as my younger brother, Terry, and my younger sister, Mylda.

In 1930 the Watch Tower Society purchased a 52-foot sailboat, which was later renamed *Lightbearer*. For two years this boat was anchored at the foot of our property on the Georges River. There it was repaired so that it could be used by Jehovah's Witnesses in the preaching work on



**With Peter, Pauline, and Estrella, before taking Estrella to prison with me**

the islands of Indonesia. My sister Coral and I would sometimes clean the cabin and deck, and we would borrow the masthead lamp to go prawning.

## To Africa, and Marriage

Australia was hit by a recession in the mid-1930's, and Mother and I traveled to South Africa to see if it would be suitable for our family to settle there. We had a letter of introduction from the Australia branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses to George Phillips, who then had oversight of the preaching work in southern Africa. George was at the docks in Cape Town to meet our ship. He had the Watch Tower Society's book *Riches* tucked under his arm so that we would recognize him. That same day, on June 6, 1936, he introduced us to the five members of the branch staff, including one

Robert A. McLuckie.\* Within the year, Bertie—as we all called him—and I were married.

Bertie's great-grandfather William McLuckie came to Africa in 1817 from Paisley, Scotland. In his early travels, William became acquainted with Robert Moffat, the man who developed the written form of the Tswana language and translated the Bible into that language.<sup>#</sup> In those early days, William and his partner Robert Schoon were the only white men trusted by Mzilikazi, a prominent warrior in the army of the famous Zulu chief Shaka. As a result, William and Robert were the only whites allowed into Mzilikazi's kraal, where the city of Pretoria, South Africa, now stands. Later Mzilikazi became a statesman and in the mid-19th century welded many tribes into a centralized African kingdom.

When I met Bertie, he was a widower with a daughter, 12-year-old Lyall, and a son, 11-year-old Donovan. Bertie had first learned Bible truths in 1927, a few months after his wife Edna died. During the next nine years, he preached the good news of God's Kingdom in the islands of Mauritius and Madagascar as well as throughout Nyasaland (now Malawi), Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique), and South Africa.

A few months after Bertie and I were married, we moved with Lyall and Donovan to Johannesburg, where it was easier for Bertie to find work. For a time I served as a pioneer, as full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called. Then I became pregnant with Peter.

#### Our Move to Southern Rhodesia

Eventually, Bertie's brother Jack invited us to join him in a gold-mining venture near Filabusi, in Southern Rhodesia. Bertie and I traveled there with Peter, then a year old,

while my mother temporarily looked after Lyall and Donovan. When we arrived at the Mzingwani River, it was at flood stage, and we had to cross it in a box pulled on a cable that stretched from one bank of the river to the other. I was six months pregnant with Pauline and had to clutch Peter tightly to my bosom! It was scary, particularly when the cable nearly touched the water in the middle of the river. Besides, it was the middle of the night, and rain was pouring down! After crossing the river, we had to walk a mile or so to reach a relative's house.

Later we rented an old termite-ridden ranch house. Our furniture was sparse—some of it we made from the boxes used for dynamite and fuses. Pauline was frequently ill with the croup, and we couldn't afford medicine. I was heartbroken, but we were thankful that Pauline survived each time.

#### Bertie and I Both Imprisoned

Once a month we traveled to the city of Bulawayo, about 50 miles away, to sell our gold at the bank. We also went to Gwanda, a small town nearer to Filabusi, to get food supplies and to share in the ministry. In 1940, the year after World War II began, our preaching work was banned in Southern Rhodesia.

Not long afterward, I was arrested while preaching in Gwanda. I was then pregnant with my third child, Estrella. While my appeal was being considered, Bertie was arrested for preaching and imprisoned in Salisbury, over 200 miles from where we were living.

This was our situation at the time: Peter was in the hospital in Bulawayo with diphtheria,

**Lyall and Donovan in front of our ranch house near Filabusi**

\* The first-person story of Robert McLuckie appears in *The Watchtower* of February 1, 1990, pages 26-31.

<sup>#</sup> See page 11 of the brochure *A Book for All People*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



and it was doubtful whether he would survive. I had just given birth to Estrella, and a friend had taken me from the hospital to the prison to show Bertie his new daughter. Later, when my appeal was rejected, a wealthy Indian store-keeper kindly paid my bail. In time, three police officers came to the mine to take me into custody. They gave me a choice. I could either take my five-month-old baby to prison or leave her in the care of our teenagers, Lyall and Donovan. I decided to take her.

I was assigned to work at mending clothes and cleaning. Also, a nursemaid was provided to help care for Estrella. She was a young inmate named Matossi, who was serving a life sentence for murdering her husband. Matossi cried when I was released, for she could no longer care for Estrella. The prison wardress took me to her home for lunch and then put me on the train to visit Bertie in the Salisbury prison.

While Bertie and I were in prison, little Peter and Pauline were cared for by Lyall and Donovan. Although Donovan was only 16, he continued our mining operations. When Bertie was released from prison, we decided to move to Bulawayo, as the mine was not doing well. Bertie got a job on the railways, and I supplemented our income by employing my newly acquired skills as a seamstress.

Bertie's work as a riveter on the railways was considered essential, so he was exempted from military service. During those war years, the dozen or so white Witnesses in Bulawayo met for meetings in our tiny one-bedroom house, and a few of our black brothers and sisters met elsewhere in the city. But now, over 46 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses composed of both blacks and whites are found in Bulawayo!

### Our Postwar Ministry

Following the war Bertie asked the railways for a transfer to Umtali (now Mutare), a beautiful town on the border of Mozambique. We wanted to serve where the need for Kingdom preachers was greater, and Umtali seemed a perfect place, since the city had no Witnesses.

During our short stay, the Holtshauzen family, which included five sons, became Witnesses. Now there are 13 congregations in the city!

In 1947 our family discussed the possibility of Bertie returning to the pioneer work. Lyall, who had returned from pioneering in South Africa, was supportive of this idea. Donovan was at the time pioneering in South Africa. Well, when the Cape Town branch office learned of Bertie's desire to pioneer again, they asked him instead to open a literature depot in Bulawayo. So he resigned from the railways, and we moved back there. Soon afterward, the first missionaries to Southern Rhodesia arrived in Bulawayo, including Eric Cooke, George and Ruby Bradley, Phyllis Kite, and Myrtle Taylor.

In 1948, Nathan H. Knorr, the Watch Tower Society's third president, along with his secretary, Milton G. Henschel, visited Bulawayo and arranged for the depot to become a branch, with Brother Cooke as the overseer. The next year, our daughter Lindsay was born. Then, in 1950, the branch was moved to Salisbury, the capital of Southern Rhodesia, and we moved there too. We bought a large house in which we lived for many years. We always had pioneers and visitors staying with us, so our place became known as the McLuckie hotel!

In 1953, Bertie and I attended the international convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York City's Yankee Stadium. What a memorable event that was! Five years later, Lyall, Estrella, Lindsay, and 16-month-old Jeremy were with us for all eight days of the huge 1958 international convention in Yankee Stadium and the nearby Polo Grounds. A record number of more than a quarter of a million attended the public talk on the final day!

### A New Preaching Assignment

Bertie served for about 14 years as a commuter worker at the branch office in Salisbury, but then we decided to serve where the need was greater in the Seychelles. We sold our home and furniture and packed the remainder of our belongings in our Opel station wagon.



**Bertie, Lyall, Pauline, Peter, Donovan,  
and me in 1940**



With Lindsay, 12, and Jeremy, 5, we traveled about 1,800 miles on extremely rough dirt roads through Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), Tanganyika (now part of Tanzania), and Kenya, finally arriving at the port city of Mombasa.

Mombasa was unbearably hot, but it did have beautiful beaches. We left our car with a local Witness and embarked on the three-day boat trip to the Seychelles. When we arrived, we were met by Norman Gardner, a man who had received a basic knowledge of Bible truth from a Witness in Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika. He arranged for us to rent the house on Sans Souci Pass that had been built for the police who guarded Greek Orthodox Archbishop Makarios, who had been exiled from Cyprus in 1956.

Since our house was so isolated, after a month we moved to a house on the beachfront at Beau Vallon. There we invited people to talks that Bertie gave on our veranda. We began a Bible study with the Bind-schedlers, and a couple of months later, Bertie baptized them and their adopted daughter as well as Norman Gardner and his wife. We also traveled with Norman in his boat to Cerf Island, where Bertie gave Bible talks in a boathouse.

When we had been in the Seychelles for about four months, the chief of police told us that we must stop preaching or we would be deported. Our finances were low, and I was pregnant again. We decided to continue our public preaching. After all, we knew that we would be leaving soon anyway. Well, when the next boat arrived from India about a month later, we were deported.

#### A Hazardous Return

On arriving in Mombasa, we collected our car and headed south along the sandy coastal road. When we reached Tanga, our car engine seized up. Our finances were almost depleted, but a relative and another Witness helped us out. While we were in Mombasa, a brother offered to finance us if we would go north to Somalia to preach. However, I was not feeling well, so we just wanted to get back home to Southern Rhodesia.

We crossed from Tanganyika into Nyasaland and traveled down the west side of Lake Nyasa, now called Lake Malawi. I became so sick that I asked Bertie to drop me off at the side of the road to die! We were near the city of Lilongwe, so he took me to the hospital there. Morphine injections provided some relief. Since I was unable to continue the trip by car, Bertie and the children drove on about 250 miles to Blantyre. A relative arranged for me to fly there a few days later to join them. From Blantyre I flew back to Salisbury, and Bertie and the children made the rest of the trip home by car.

How relieved we all were to arrive in Salisbury at the home of our daughter Pauline and her husband! In 1963 our last child, Andrew, was born. He had a collapsed lung and was not expected to live, but fortunately he did. Eventually, we moved to South Africa and finally made our home in Pietermaritzburg.

#### Blessed With a Loving Family

Bertie passed away peacefully at 94 years of age in 1995, and since then I have lived by myself in our home here. But I am by

no means alone! Lyall and Pauline are serving Jehovah along with their families here in South Africa, and some of them live right here in Pietermaritzburg. Lindsay and her family are in California, U.S.A., where they are all active Witnesses. Our two youngest children, Jeremy and Andrew, moved to Australia, where both are happily married and serve as elders in their respective congregations.

All eight of our children have at one time or another shared in the pioneer ministry, and six have served at branch offices of the Watch Tower Society. Donovan graduated from the 16th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in February 1951 and served as a traveling overseer in the United States before returning to work at the branch office in South Africa. He is now a Christian elder in Klerksdorp, about 420 miles from Pietermaritzburg. Estrella lives with her husband, Jack Jones, at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York.

Peter, my firstborn, spent some years in the full-time ministry, both in the pioneer work and at the Watch Tower branch office in Rhodesia. Some years ago, however, I was saddened when he left the association of the Christian congregation.

Looking back on my life, I can say that I am truly happy that as a teenager I went to Africa with my mother. True, life has not always been easy, but it was my privilege to act as a support to my husband and to rear a family who have helped to spearhead the preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom in southern Africa.—Matthew 24:14.



**Carmen and five of her children (clockwise from left): Donovan, when in Gilead in 1951, and Jeremy, Lindsay, Estrella, and Andrew today**

## YOUNG PEOPLE ASK . . .

**"Being shy is paralyzing. It's a gripping fear that you have to deal with. It is so real."—Richard.\***

**"I had a real problem with shyness when I was growing up. It was just like I was in my own little world."—18-year-old Elizabeth.**

"**I**S SOMETHING wrong with me? Why can't I be more outgoing?" Do you sometimes ask yourself these questions? Like Richard, quoted above, you may feel nervous or anxious when you meet someone new. You may cringe when you are around people in authority. Or maybe you worry so much about what others are thinking about you that when you are given a chance to express your feelings or opinions, you clam up. "I find it really hard to go up and talk to people I don't know really well," admits young Tracey.

Just what lurks behind such feelings? Understanding the problem may be the first step in conquering it. (Proverbs 1:5) One woman said: "I never knew why I felt uneasy around people. But now that I have identified what my problem is, I can take it from there." So let's look at a few reasons why some youths may find it difficult to be outgoing.

### The Problem of Shyness

Shyness is probably the most common reason. While an outgoing youth usually enjoys a variety of friendships, a shy, withdrawn

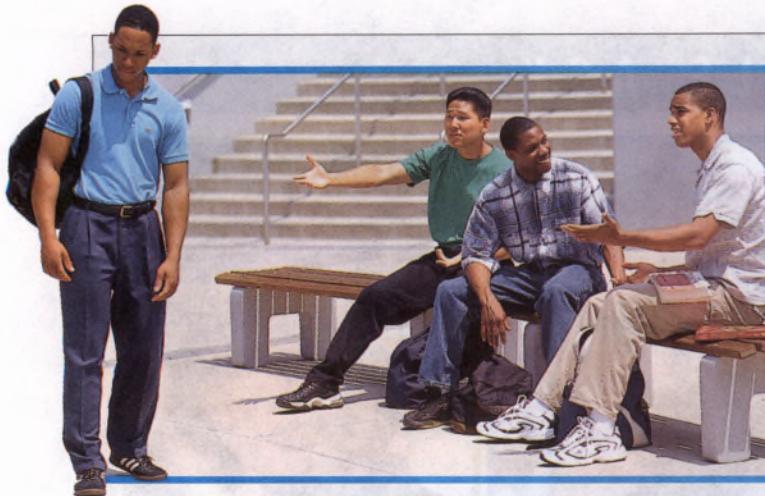


## Why Can't I Be More Outgoing?

youth can feel lonely and isolated. "I had a real problem with shyness when I was growing up," says 18-year-old Elizabeth. "It was just like I was in my own little world." Diane remembers the stresses she faced in her first year of high school. "I didn't like being noticed. I had a teacher who had us rate how important we felt it was to be popular. On a scale of zero to five, zero meant not important at all and five meant important. All the girls who were popular in school put five. I put zero. For me, shyness was almost a fear of being popular. You don't want to be noticed or to be the center of attention because you are afraid others might not like you."

Of course, a tendency to be a bit shy is not altogether a bad thing. Closely related to shyness is modesty—an awareness of our limitations. We are actually commanded in the Bible to be 'modest in walking with our God.' (Micah 6:8) A person who is modest

\* Some of the names have been changed.



### **Shy people are often thought to be aloof**

or even somewhat shy may be easier to be around than someone who is overbearing, aggressive, or demanding. And while it is true that there is “a time to speak,” there is also “a time to keep quiet.” (Ecclesiastes 3:7) Shy people may have little trouble keeping quiet. Because they tend to be “swift about hearing [and] slow about speaking,” they are often appreciated by others as good listeners.—James 1:19.

All too often, though, a youth is so quiet, shy, or bashful that he or she has difficulty making friends. And in some extreme cases, shyness can create what one writer calls “a kind of neurotic self-imprisonment”—social isolation.—Proverbs 18:1.

### **Shyness—A Common Problem**

If you are afflicted with shyness, realize that it is a very common problem. In one study of high-school and college students, “82 percent of the students regarded themselves as shy at some point in their lives.” (*Adolescence*, by Eastwood Atwater) Shyness was a problem for some even in Bible times. Men of stature, such as Moses and Timothy, may have battled with it.—Exodus 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13; 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 1:6-8.

Consider Saul, the first king of the ancient nation of Israel. Normally Saul was a brave man. When his father lost his flock of animals, Saul boldly set out on a rescue mission. (1 Samuel 9:3, 4) But when he was appointed king of the nation, he suddenly had an attack of shyness. Rather than face the cheering crowds, Saul hid among the luggage!—1 Samuel 10:20-24.

Saul’s apparent lack of self-confidence may seem puzzling. After all, the Bible describes him as a striking, handsome young man. Why, “from his shoulders upward he was taller than all the people”! (1 Samuel 9:2) Furthermore, God’s prophet had assured Saul that Jehovah would bless his reign as king. (1 Samuel 9:17, 20) Even so, Saul felt unsure of himself. When told that he would be king, he modestly replied: “Am I not a Benjaminite of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the most insignificant of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? So why have you spoken to me a thing like this?”—1 Samuel 9:21.

If someone like Saul could lack self-confidence, it is little wonder that you might be somewhat lacking in confidence at times. As a young person, you are at a stage of life when your body is changing rapidly. You are

### **Fear of failure causes some youths to withdraw socially**



just beginning to learn how to function in the world of adults. It is only natural, then, for you to feel a bit self-conscious and insecure at times. Dr. David Elkind wrote in *Parents* magazine: "During early adolescence, most young people go through a period of shyness, when they develop what I call an imaginary audience—the belief that others are watching them and are preoccupied with their appearance and actions."

Since young people are often judged on their looks by their peers, many fret about their appearance. (Compare 2 Corinthians 10:7.) Too much concern about one's looks, however, is unhealthy. A young woman in France named Lilia recalls her own experience in this regard: "I had a problem that many young people have. I had acne—pimples! You do not dare to go up to others because you are worrying about what you look like."

### A Vicious Circle

Because shy people are often misunderstood, they can easily be trapped in a cycle of isolation. The book *Adolescence* observes: "Shy adolescents have more trouble making friends because they are often misperceived by others in a negative way. Shy persons tend to be regarded as aloof, bored, disinterested, condescending, cold, and hostile. When treated accordingly, they may feel even more isolated, lonely, and depressed." Inevitably, this causes them to behave even more shyly, which, of course, only reinforces the misimpression that they are snobs or that they are stuck-up.

Of course, since as a Christian you are "a theatrical spectacle to the world," you should be concerned about the impression you give to others. (1 Corinthians 4:9) Do you avoid eye contact when talking to others? Does your posture and body language send out the message that you want to be left alone? Then realize that others may misread

you and tend to avoid you. This can make it all the more difficult to develop friendships.

### Other Factors

Yet another common problem is the fear of failure. True, it is perfectly normal to feel a little insecurity or hesitancy when you are doing something that is new, outside your sphere of experience. But some youths take this to extremes. As a youth, Gail was what she calls a social phobic. She says: "I wouldn't comment in class. And my parents were constantly being bombarded with comments like, 'She doesn't raise her hand. She doesn't speak up.' For me, it was very uncomfortable and stressful to do that. You know, even now it's still hard for me." Fear of failure can be paralyzing. "I'm worried about making mistakes," says a youth named Peter. "I'm not really sure about what I'm doing." Brutal teasing and criticism from peers can aggravate personal fears and cause lasting damage to a youth's self-confidence.

A lack of social skills is another common problem. Perhaps you hesitate to introduce yourself to someone new, simply because you do not know what to say. It may surprise you to know that even older ones feel socially awkward at times. A businessman named Fred says: "In the business world, I know how to do what I do really well. If I just talk about business, I have no reservations about presenting a good image. But when I drift off into social conversation with the same people, I'm hesitant. I might be pegged as boring or bookish or too technical or not very interesting."

Whether you are shy, self-conscious, or just socially awkward, it is to your advantage to learn how to be more outgoing. The Bible encourages Christians to "widen out" and to get to know others! (2 Corinthians 6:13) But how can you do it? This will be discussed in a future issue.

## WATCHING THE WORLD

### Papal Indulgences

In celebration of the millennium, Pope John Paul II has proclaimed the year 2000 a Holy Year and has offered indulgences to those who make a pilgrimage to Rome, reports *L'Ossevatore Romano*. An indulgence is a way for Catholics to be exempted from punishment for sin. The Vatican newspaper says: "Every good work performed under grace merits a reward." However, the same journal notes that the practice also raises some interesting questions, such as, "If God's pardoning grace is offered to all, what need is there for the Church to grant indulgences?" and, "If the Church can grant plenary [absolute] indulgences, why does she bother with partial indulgences?"

### Silent Disease

Osteoporosis is a silent disease that "threatens more than 28 million Americans and about 1.4 million Canadians," reports the *Toronto Star* newspaper. It affects men and women, young and old, and "occurs when older bone cells break down faster than they can be replaced with new bone." Those who have the disease may see no evidence of it until they suffer a bone fracture. Experts believe that excessive dieting by a growing number of teenagers and college athletes is "eroding the very bone they should be building for adulthood. Young dieters often skip foods needed to strengthen their skeletons." According to the report, "about 90 per-

cent of peak bone mass is accumulated by age 18; adults hit their peak by age 30." The report recommends that to maximize bone density, everyone should "get sufficient calcium and vitamin D, exercise regularly, and avoid smoking and heavy drinking."

### Disruptive Fliers



"Plane rage"—out-of-control behavior on the part of airline passengers—"has jumped 400 percent in the past five years," says the magazine *Business Traveler International*. What accounts for the sharp increase? Stress is a major factor. Delayed or canceled flights, congestion, and fear of flying all create anxiety, which can, in turn, lead to eruptions of rage. "Airlines promote air travel as a fast and smooth operation, and it's not like that," says Stuart Howard, of the International Transport Workers' Federation. One major airline representative believes that the advent of nonsmoking flights is another factor in plane rage. According to the report, "frustrated smokers accounted for more than half [the] incidents of disruptive passenger behavior" on one airline in 1997. Another factor is alcohol consumption, the effects of which

may be magnified at high altitudes. What does the report recommend if a fellow passenger is noisy? "Don't call the crew over. Instead, leave your seat and discreetly draw the problem to their attention." It also suggests: "Insulate yourself from possible aggravations by bringing along light reading material or listening to soothing music" on a portable stereo.

### Rising Burial Costs

Increasing numbers of people have been turning to cremation to reduce the cost of burial. According to the National Funeral Directors Association, the average cost of a traditional funeral in the United States was \$4,600 in 1996. In contrast, "cremation costs between \$500 and \$2,000," says the *Chicago Sun-Times*, "depending on the type of container chosen for the cremation itself and the urn that will hold the ashes." Also, cremation does not require a cemetery plot and marker, which can add another 40 percent to the cost of a traditional burial. The paper said that in the United States in 1997, cremation was used in 23.6 percent of all deaths, and the figure is expected to reach 42 percent over the next ten years.

### Endangered Fossils

Fossil sites that have survived for millennia are being threatened by theft, vandalism, and overzealous tourists, reports *New Scientist*. "Some geologists would like to move the

most precious fossils to museums or ban visitors from the sites," the magazine says. Others, though, point to the right of the public to see these fossils in their natural setting. In an effort to solve the problem, the International Palaeontological Association has started drawing up a list of endangered sites worldwide. But so far, only about 50 locations have been put on the list.

#### Pain-Free Dentist?

Many a dental patient would like to see the last of the traditional dentist's drill. According to *FDA Consumer*, to some extent that may soon be the case. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved the use of the erbium:YAG laser for dental surgery. Rather than remove tooth decay with a tiny drill, dentists can now use a laser to remove it, essentially vaporizing decayed tooth tissue, says the magazine. The laser has a number of benefits over conventional drills. For one, laser treatment is usually painless. Thus, many patients will no longer need anesthesia or anesthetic injections. Second, since the dentist does not have to wait for your mouth to become numb, treatment can begin right away. In addition, the annoying vibrations of the high-speed drill are eliminated. However, one important drawback is that the laser can't be used on teeth that already have fillings in place.

#### Nuclear Waste

Since the 1960's, more than 200,000 metric tons of spent fuel have been discarded by the world's nuclear-power indus-

try, reports *New Scientist* magazine. And every year another 10,000 tons is added to the heap. Where does this deadly waste go? "Most is simply stored at the reactor sites," the magazine says. However, these locations were designed to contain radioactive waste for only a few decades. So at some point, the nuclear waste will need to be transferred to long-term disposal sites. But the problem is that no country has successfully established a safe underground storage facility for its radioactive debris. As a result, "the nuclear industry is caught in a trap it set itself," says *New Scientist*.

#### Gesturing for the Right Word



"New research shows that gestures often help speakers access words from their memory banks," reports *Newsweek*. While descriptive gestures are often used to convey an object's size or shape, other gestures, such as "chopping the air in rhythm with one's sentences," serve a different function. Robert Krauss, a professor of psychology at Columbia University, says that these types of gestures "help people retrieve elusive words from their memory" by unlocking what he calls "lexical memory." Researchers compare such memory with the encoding that occurs when a certain

smell, taste, or sound is connected to an event. For example, just as the whiff of a certain perfume may conjure up memories of your grandmother, gesturing may open a similar "door" to a word, according to neuroscientist Brian Butterworth.

#### Work Fatalities

Worldwide, 3,000 people die each day as a result of work-related accidents, reports the French daily *Le Monde*. According to the International Labour Bureau, there are some 250 million employees injured annually, resulting in over a million deaths. "The number of work-related deaths is higher than the average number of deaths per year from road accidents (990,000), armed conflicts (502,000), other violence (563,000), and AIDS (312,000)," states the newspaper.

#### Oral Cancer Epidemic

In Delhi, India, the incidence of oral cancer is four times that of Los Angeles, California, reports *The Indian Express*. Presently, 18.1 percent of all new cancers among Delhi's male population are oral cancers—up from 10 percent in 1995. Chief causes of oral cancer are chewing tobacco, bidis (Indian cigarettes), and *pan masala* (a mixture of tobacco, crushed betel nut, and other ingredients), which is rolled in a leaf and chewed. The newspaper called the increased use of *pan masala* by unsuspecting schoolchildren alarming. One expert warned that the whole of India is heading toward "an oral cancer epidemic."

## FROM OUR READERS

**God's Existence** I cannot describe how helpful I found the series "Does God Really Exist?" (February 8, 1999) It showed me the God whom I have heard so much about but had been unable to find. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for illuminating the path of truth for people like me.

C. P., Brazil

**Useful Despite Blindness** Thank you for the life story of Polytmiki Venetsianos, "Useful and Happy Despite My Blindness," in the February 8, 1999, issue. Her courage and steadfast faith in God have deeply touched my heart. On the one hand, the life of this exceptional woman has been filled with loss and hardship. But on the other hand, it is rich in priceless benefits. I believe that her story will serve as a great help and encouragement to all who have got tired during this hard race for life.

K. R., Russia

**Clothing** I am 11 years old, and I do not have words to express my thanks for the excellent instruction in the article "The Kind of Clothes We Wear—Does It Really Matter?" (February 8, 1999) Previously I wanted to dress like my classmates. But this article helped me to see that my clothing should be neat—not outrageous or extreme.

A. S., Estonia

I sometimes feel sad when others say that my clothes are old-fashioned or formal. Your article was very encouraging because it confirmed that following Bible principles is worthwhile.

R. L., Brazil

For many years my feelings toward Jehovah's Witnesses were a mixture of pity and amusement. Then a friend gave me a copy of the February 8, 1999, issue of *Awake!* Reading the magazine was great fun and changed

my opinion of the Witnesses. What particularly impressed me was the article on clothes, which described my own behavior when it comes to buying clothes. In the future, I will not be so set on designer clothes. And I will ask my friend to get me more of your magazines to read!

U. B., Germany

**Pesticides** My wife and I were really pleased with the article "Chemical Pesticides Kill More Than Bugs." (February 22, 1999) As environmentalists, we have tried to combat the poisoning of this earth. It is reassuring to find that there are people in Brazil, China, and other countries who are also concerned and who are doing something constructive.

W. G., Canada

**Gossip** Many thanks for the article "Young People Ask . . . What's So Bad About Gossip?" (February 22, 1999) Some time ago, when someone spread the rumor that I would be the next person disfellowshipped from the congregation, I discovered personally just how painful gossip can be. That lie hurt so much! The person responsible apologized, but my trust in him ended.

R. M., Switzerland

Gossip is rampant in my school, so the article was very encouraging and strengthening to me. I'm ashamed to say that I have gossiped to make others look really bad. And when friends have spoken against others, I have listened and have even joined in the conversation. So when I went through the article, I was shocked and felt that every sentence was counseling me on things I was doing. I'm very ashamed of all the gossiping I have done. I know the gossip will continue at my school, but I'm determined to be strong enough not to be a part of it.

M. W., Japan

# Strengthened by His Faith

A 17-year-old girl wrote to the office of the Watch Tower Society in Moldova, a former republic of the Soviet Union, to express appreciation for an article that appeared in the June 8, 1998, *Awake!* The article was entitled "My Choice Between Two Fathers," and it related the personal experiences of an Armenian youth.

"While I was reading the article," the girl explained, "my eyes filled with tears because his story is similar to mine." She continued: "When I was 15, I started to study the Bible, and my parents did not object at first. But when I began attending the meetings of Jeho-

vah's Witnesses, they strongly disapproved. Then, in 1997, when I started to share what I was learning with others, they told me: 'Go to your Witness friends and let them feed you, dress you, and give you a job. You are a very bad daughter!' My parents even punished me physically, banging my head against the wall.

"That was a difficult test for me. I often had the feelings expressed by that Armenian youth, who said that he sometimes wondered whether Jehovah was pleased with him. I thought to myself, 'Am I good for nothing? Will Jehovah forgive me for my former sins? Does Jehovah love me anymore?'

"It was very difficult, especially when I thought that Jehovah did not love me anymore. I often implored Jehovah in my prayers, with tears in my eyes, to help me, to strengthen me so that I would never leave him. And, indeed, I saw that Jehovah heard my prayers and answered my supplications. He gave me steadfastness, resoluteness, and courage. Especially did he do this through his Word, where the psalmist confidently proclaimed: 'In case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up.'—Psalm 27:10.

"On September 27, 1997, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by being baptized at a circuit assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kagul. I can clearly see that Jehovah, our loving heavenly Father, fulfills his promise spoken about at Psalm 84:11: 'Jehovah God is a sun and a shield; favor and glory are what he gives. Jehovah himself will not hold back anything good from those walking in faultlessness.'

"I am very thankful to that Armenian youth who shared his faith-strengthening story in the *Awake!* magazine. I hope that my parents and his will eventually show interest in the teachings of the Bible."



KAREN, who has been one of Jehovah's Witnesses for over two decades, found that her father was never interested in talking to her about religion. Recently, though, that changed.

He spent time in a hospital, recuperating from surgery. One day, out of sheer boredom, he read an entire newspaper. He was horrified. Later, after returning home, he called his daughter. Karen relates: "On the phone Dad said to me, 'Karen, the world has gone to pot.' He was especially upset by the ways that children are mistreated.

"Before I even had a chance to encourage him, he suddenly said: 'Two ladies came to my house today. I'm usually out back in my garden, but they caught me when I was out front. One lady showed me a picture of a beautiful garden. I wanted to tell her, 'Well, you should see my backyard—it's a beautiful gar-

## A Picture He Couldn't Forget

den,' but I didn't. Then she said that soon the whole world will have peace. She said it will be like that garden, for everyone to enjoy. I didn't take the book. But after they left, I couldn't get that picture out of my head. I just kept thinking about it and the idea of peace for everyone. Do you know what book I mean? Can you get me a copy?"

