

# WorldWatch

by Staff

*Forerunner*, "WorldWatch," May 1998

## Earthquakes

- » For the fourth week in a row, a devastating earthquake hit northeast Afghanistan, the latest being a 6.4 magnitude quake on February 20.
- » A 6.6 temblor struck south-central Iran March 14, killing 5 and seriously injuring 60.

## European Union

On March 25 the EU recommended Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain to join in the European Monetary Union, which will begin using the euro on January 1, 1999.

## Israel

During visits to six Western European capitals, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai made a concerted effort to bring key EU members into the Middle East peace process "as co-facilitators and partners with the U.S."

## Religion

- » Evangelist Billy Graham told *Today* show viewers that he forgives President Clinton of his sexual peccadilloes because "I know the frailty of human nature. . . . He has such a tremendous personality that I think the ladies just go wild over him." Mr. Graham also said that Clinton would make a good preacher!
- » Frank Griswold III, recently elected presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, wrote in a 1994 signed statement that sexual orientation is "morally neutral" and that "faithful, monogamous, committed" relationships among gays are "worthy of honor."

## Technology

- » James Leach, House Banking Committee Chairman, said in his opening remarks at hearings on the Year 2000 computer problem: "I was intrigued by a statement Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan made a couple of weeks ago. He pointed out that 99 percent readiness for the Year 2000 will not be enough. It must be 100 percent. Thus, the message seems clear: all financial institutions must be ready; federal and state regulatory agencies must be ready; data processing service providers and other bank vendors must be ready; bank customers and borrowers must be ready; and international counterparties must be ready."
- » A Cal-Tech biochemist is trying to "reenact" evolution at warp speed to develop new medicines and materials. She first mutates the organisms to create variations, selects the

best of them, then breeds or recombines them sexually to produce a new, improved generation. She has bred one strain of enzyme to remain stable at 140°F and perform 100 times better than its natural cousin.

## **Violence**

In Jonesboro, Arkansas, a 13- and an 11-year old boy, dressed in camouflage and armed with rifles and handguns, ambushed a group of classmates and staff members as they filed from their school during a fire drill. Five girls and a teacher were killed. Two days later a 14-year-old North Carolina boy was picked up by deputies for questioning after he threatened to carry out a similar attack.

## **Weather**

» On March 20 a severe storm ripped across northeast Georgia and killed at least 11 people and injuring 80. Later that day, the same storm spawned a tornado that flattened one square mile of Stoneville, North Carolina, killing 2 and injuring 21.

» A twister hit India's east coast on March 24, killing 200 and injuring 3,000. It lifted a crowded boat 20 feet into the air before dashing it into a riverbank. It also hurled a bus filled with 50 people into a canal.