

Awake!

April 22, 2001



**RELIGION IN RUSSIA
WHAT IS ITS FUTURE?**

Average Printing 20,682,000
Published in 83 Languages

Religion in Russia —What Is Its Future?

3-15

Consider the attempts that were made to suppress religion and how the churches survived when persecuted.

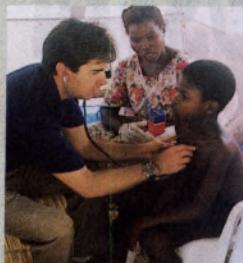
Learn about the resurgence of religion and what the future holds.

COVER: SuperStock



Why Should I Get to Know My Grandparents? 16

Grandparents are often neglected. Why is it important to give them consideration?



Mozambique's Floods —How Christians Cared for Victims 24

Read how true faith triumphed in the face of disaster.

The Soviet Attack on Religion	3
A Focus of the Soviet Attack	4
How Religion Survived	9
What Is the Future of Religion?	13
Though Deaf and Blind, I Found Security	19
Watching the World	28
From Our Readers	30
The Tower of Crest	31
"Planetary Overload" —Is There an Answer?	32

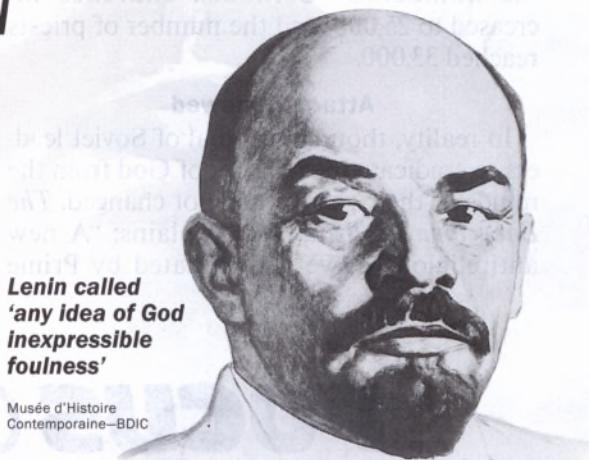
THE SOVIET ATTACK ON RELIGION

THE Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was formed in 1922, with Russia being by far the largest and most prominent of its original four republics. It eventually expanded to include 15 republics and nearly one sixth of earth's land surface. But in 1991 the Soviet Union was suddenly dissolved.* Significantly, it was the first State to attempt to eradicate belief in God from the minds of its people.

Vladimir Lenin, the first head of the Soviet Union, was a disciple of Karl Marx, who portrayed Christianity as a tool of oppression. Marx called religion "the opium of the people," and Lenin later declared: "Any religious idea, any idea of any god at all, . . . is the most inexpressible foulness."

When the Russian Orthodox Patriarch Tikhon died in 1925, the church was not permitted to elect another patriarch. The attack on religion that followed resulted in most church buildings being either destroyed or converted to secular uses. Priests were condemned to slave-labor camps, where many perished. "Under the rule of Joseph Stalin in the late 1920s and '30s," explains the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "the church suffered a bloody persecution that claimed thousands of victims. By 1939 only three or four Orthodox bishops and 100 churches could officially function."

* The following are 15 independent countries that were formerly Soviet republics: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.



*Lenin called
'any idea of God
Inexpressible
foulessness'*

Musée d'Histoire Contemporaine—BDIC

Practically overnight, however, a remarkable change occurred.

World War II and Religion

In 1939, Nazi Germany, then an ally of the Soviet Union, invaded Poland, thus beginning World War II. Within a year the Soviet Union had absorbed the last 4 of its 15 republics—Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Moldavia. In June 1941, however, Germany launched a massive attack on the Soviet Union, which took Stalin totally by surprise. By the end of the year, German troops had reached the outskirts of Moscow, and the fall of the Soviet Union appeared imminent.

In desperation, Stalin sought to mobilize the nation for what the Russians called the Great Patriotic War. Stalin recognized that he needed to make concessions to the church to win the support of the people for the war effort, since millions of them still remained religious. What was the result of the

spectacular reversal of Stalin's policy toward religion?

With the cooperation of the church, the Russian people were mobilized for the war effort, and by 1945 a dramatic Soviet victory over the Germans was realized. After the Soviet attack on religion was suspended, the number of Orthodox churches increased to 25,000, and the number of priests reached 33,000.

Attack Renewed

In reality, though, the goal of Soviet leaders to eradicate the concept of God from the minds of their people had not changed. *The Encyclopædia Britannica* explains: "A new antireligious move was initiated by Prime

Minister Nikita Khrushchev in 1959-64, reducing the number of open churches to less than 10,000. Patriarch Pimen was elected in 1971 following Alexis' death, and, although the church still commanded the loyalty of millions, its future remained uncertain."*

Later we will discuss how the Russian Orthodox Church succeeded in surviving the renewed Soviet attack. But how did other religions in the Soviet Union fare? Of these, which one became a chief focus of the attack, and why? This will be discussed in the following article.

* The names of Alexis I, Russian Orthodox patriarch from 1945 to 1970, and Alexis II, patriarch from 1990 to the present, are also at times spelled Alexy, Aleksi, Aleksei, and Alexei.

A FOCUS OF THE SOVIET ATTACK

DESPITE concessions made to the Russian Orthodox Church in order to win World War II, the Soviet Union maintained a stranglehold on the church's activities. Therefore, as *The Sword and the Shield*, a book written in 1999 about the history of the KGB (the Soviet State Security Committee), observed, "the KGB was far more concerned by the 'subversive' activities of those Christians over



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.

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.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **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). **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, c/o Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Vol. 82, No. 8 Printed in U.S.A. © 2001 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

Semimonthly ENGLISH

whom it had no direct control." Which religious groups were these?

The largest was the Greek Catholic Church of Ukraine, which is now the Ukrainian Catholic Church. It had some 4,000,000 adherents. According to *The Sword and the Shield*, "all but two of its ten bishops, along with many thousands of priests and believers, died for their faith in the Siberian gulag [work camps]." Other targets of the KGB were the unregistered Protestant churches, which were also outside direct State control. In the late 1950's, the KGB estimated that these Protestant groups had a combined total of some 100,000 members.

The KGB considered Jehovah's Witnesses to be a Protestant group, whom they estimated in 1968 to number about 20,000 in the Soviet Union. Up until the beginning of World War II in 1939, the Witnesses had been small in number. Thus, little or no note had been taken of them. But the situation changed dramatically when thousands of Witnesses suddenly appeared in the Soviet Union. How did this occur?

Dramatic Increase Begins

In his book *Religion in the Soviet Union*, published in 1961, Walter Kolarz noted two factors responsible for this dramatic increase. One, he noted, was that "the territories annexed by the Soviet Union in 1939-40"—Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Moldavia—had within them many "active groups of Jehovah's Witnesses."

vah's Witnesses." In addition, parts of eastern Poland and Czechoslovakia, which included over a thousand Witnesses, were also annexed by the Soviet Union, becoming part of Ukraine. Thus, all these Witnesses were transplanted overnight, as it were, into the Soviet Union.

Further increase, "unbelievable as it may sound," Kolarz wrote, came from "the German concentration camps." The Nazis had imprisoned thousands of Witnesses for refusing to support Hitler and his war of aggression. Kolarz explained that Russian prisoners in these camps "had admired the courage and steadfastness of the 'Witnesses' and probably for that reason had found their theology attractive." As a result, many young Russians from these camps returned to the Soviet Union with a newfound faith in Jehovah God and his wonderful purposes for the earth.

—Psalm 37:29; Revelation 21:3, 4.

Because of such factors, there quickly came to be thousands of Witnesses in the Soviet Union. By early 1946, there were at least 1,600, and by the end of the decade, well over 8,000. This growth was observed with alarm by the KGB, which, as noted before, was especially concerned about the "activities of those Christians over whom it had no direct control."

Attacks Are Initiated

Despite the relatively small number of Witnesses in the Soviet Union, their zealous

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

Semimonthly Languages Available by Mail:

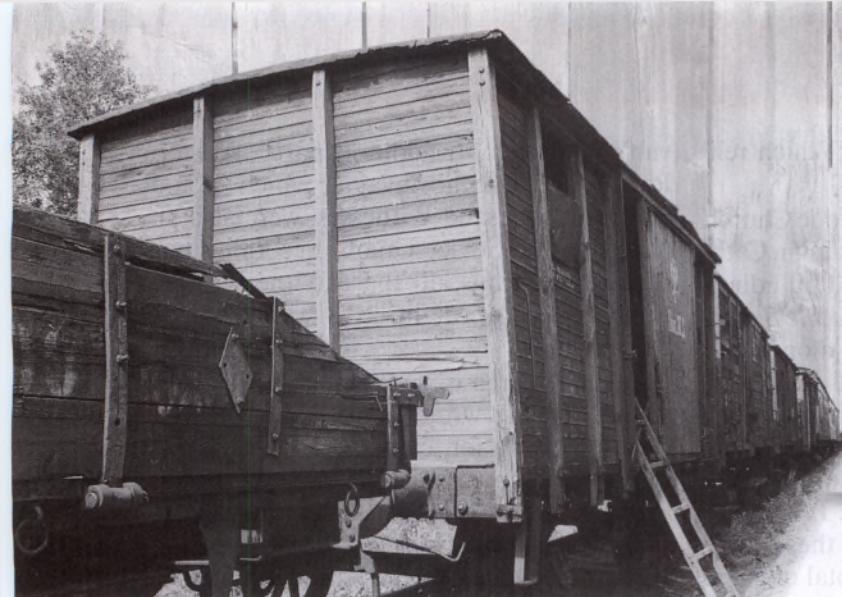
Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,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

Monthly Languages Available by Mail:

Albanian, Amharic, Bulgarian, Chichewa, Ciembba, Ewe, Georgian, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Igbo, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Nepali, Papiamento, Sepedi, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhala, Tamil, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Urdu, Xhosa, Yoruba
Audio cassettes also available.

Offices of the Watch Tower Society in selected countries

America, United States of, Wallkill, NY 12589	New Zealand, P.O. Box 75-142, Manurewa
Australia, Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890	Nigeria, P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Edo State
Britain, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	South Africa, Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740
Canada, Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4	Zambia, Box 33459, Lusaka 10101
Ghana, P.O. Box GP 760, Accra	Zimbabwe, P. Bag A-6113, Avondale
Jamaica, P.O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine	



"The Most Harshly Persecuted"

A Concise Encyclopaedia of Russia of 1964 stated that Jehovah's Witnesses were "extremely active in proselytizing" and were "the most harshly persecuted religious community in the Soviet Union."

**Thousands were transported
to Siberia in freight cars**

preaching activity soon came under attack by Soviet authorities. In Estonia the attack began in August 1948 when the five individuals taking the lead in the work were arrested and put in prison. "Soon it was apparent that the KGB wanted to arrest everyone," noted Estonian Witness Lembit Toom. This was true wherever Witnesses were found in the Soviet Union.

The Soviets depicted Witnesses as the worst of criminals and as a major threat to the atheistic Soviet State. So, everywhere, they were hunted down, arrested, and imprisoned. *The Sword and the Shield* observed: "The Jehovah's obsession of senior KGB officers was, perhaps, the supreme example of their lack of any sense of proportion when dealing with even the most insignificant forms of dissent."

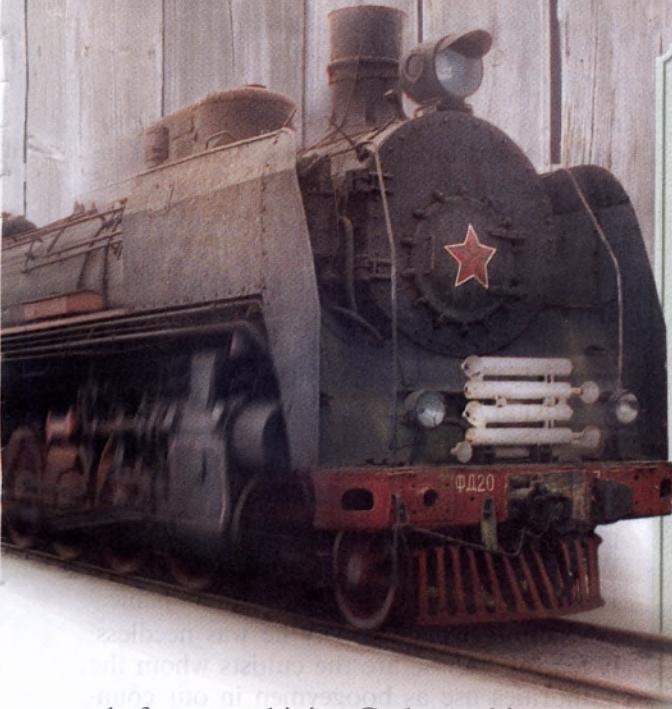
This obsession was dramatically evidenced by the well planned attack carried out against the Witnesses in April 1951. Just two years ago, in 1999, Professor Sergei Ivanenko, a respected Russian scholar, observed in his book *The People Who Are Never Without Their Bibles* that in early April 1951, "more than 5,000 families of Jehovah's Witnesses from the Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Moldavian, and Baltic Soviet republics were sent to 'a permanent settlement' in Siberia, the Far East, and Kazakhstan."

Worthy of Remembrance

Can you imagine the effort involved in that attack—in one day rounding up thousands of families of Witnesses throughout such a large area? Think of coordinating hundreds, if not thousands, of personnel—first of all to identify the Witnesses and then, under cover of darkness, to carry out simultaneous surprise raids on their homes. Following that, there was the work of loading the people into carts, wagons, and other vehicles; taking them to railroad stations; and transferring them to freight cars.

Think, too, of the suffering of the victims. Can you imagine what it was like to be forced to travel thousands of miles—for up to three weeks or more—in overcrowded, unsanitary freight cars that had only a bucket for toilet facilities? And try to imagine being dumped off in the Siberian wilderness, knowing that in order to survive, you would have to eke out an existence in that harsh environment.

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the April 1951 exile of Jehovah's Witnesses. To tell the story of their faithfulness despite decades of persecution, the experiences of survivors have been videotaped. These reveal that—even as was the case with first-century Christians—attempts to prevent peo-



ple from worshiping God are ultimately doomed to failure.

What the Exile Accomplished

The Soviets soon learned that stopping the Witnesses from worshiping Jehovah would be much more difficult than they had imagined. Despite the protests of their captors, the Witnesses sang praises to Jehovah while being forced into exile and hung signs on their railway cars that said: "Jehovah's Witnesses on Board." One Witness explained: "At the railroad stations along the way, we met other trains carrying those being exiled, and we saw the signs that were hung on the railway cars." What encouragement this provided!

So rather than being disheartened, those being exiled reflected the spirit of Jesus' apostles. The Bible says that after these were flogged and ordered to stop preaching, "they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ." (Acts 5: 40-42) Indeed, as Kolarz said about the exile, "this was not the end of the 'Witnesses' in Russia, but only the beginning of a new chapter in their proselytising activities. They even tried to propagate their faith when

ONE OF THOUSANDS

Fyodor Kalin Describes His Family's Exile

Our family lived in the village of Vilshanitsa, in western Ukraine. In the morning darkness of April 8, 1951, officers with dogs came, woke us up, and told us that by a decree from the government in Moscow, we were being sent to Siberia. But if we signed a document saying that we were no longer Jehovah's Witnesses, we could stay. Our family of seven, including my parents and siblings, were determined to remain Witnesses. I was then 19 years old.

One officer said: "Take along beans, corn, flour, pickles, cabbage—otherwise how are you going to feed the children?" We were also allowed to

butcher some chickens and a pig and to take the meat with us. Two horse-drawn carts were brought, and everything was loaded into them and taken to the town of Hriplin.

There, about 40 or 50 of us were crammed into a freight car, and the door was shut.

The car had a few planks for us to sleep on—not enough for everyone—and a stove with some coal and wood. We cooked on the stove, using cookware we had brought. But there was no toilet—we simply used a bucket. Later, we made a round opening in the floor, fixed the bucket in it, and hung blankets around it for some privacy.

We lived cramped together in that freight car as we slowly made our way thousands of miles to an unknown destination. At first, we were somewhat downhearted. But as we sang Kingdom songs together—with such vigor that later we could hardly speak—we felt joyful. The commander would open the doors and tell us to stop, but we would not stop until we had finished. When we stopped at stations along the way, many learned that Jehovah's Witnesses were being sent into exile. Finally, after 17 or 18 days in that freight car, we were dropped off in Siberia near Lake Baikal.

I am standing in the back row, right



ARMAGEDDON

A Soviet Propaganda Film

The Soviets produced the film *Armageddon* in an effort to discredit Jehovah's Witnesses. It featured the fictional story of a love affair between a boy in the Soviet army and a girl who was enticed to join the ranks of the Witnesses. At the film's end, the little sister of the girl died in an accident caused by a Witness overseer, who was portrayed as a tool of the American espionage service.

Commenting on the film, which stirred the feelings of audiences, the Ukrainian newspaper *The Red Flag* of May 14, 1963, said: "In such a way atheistic propaganda is effective, convincing, and it can be used in other villages of the country where similar films are shown."

they stopped at stations on their way into exile."

When the Witnesses arrived at their various destinations and were dropped off, they gained a good reputation for being obedient hard workers. Yet, at the same time, in imitation of Christ's apostles, they, in effect, told their oppressors: 'We cannot stop speaking about our God.' (Acts 4:20) Many listened to what the Witnesses taught and joined them in serving God.

The consequence was just as Kolarz explained: "In deporting them the Soviet Government could have done nothing better for the dissemination of their faith. Out of their village isolation [in the western Soviet republics] the 'Witnesses' were brought into a wider world, even if this was only the terrible world of the concentration and slave labour camps."

Efforts to Cope With Growth

In time, the Soviets tried different methods to stop Jehovah's Witnesses. Since vicious persecution had failed to produce the desired

results, a well planned program of lying propaganda was initiated. Books, films, and radio programs—as well as the infiltration of congregations by trained KGB agents—were all tried.

The widespread misrepresentation caused many people mistakenly to view the Witnesses with fear and distrust, as evidenced by an article in the August 1982 *Reader's Digest*, Canadian Edition. It was written by Vladimir Bukovsky, a Russian who was allowed to immigrate to England in 1976. He wrote: "One evening in London, I happened to notice a plaque on a building that read: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES . . . I couldn't read any further, I was stupefied, almost to the point of panic."

Vladimir explained why he was needlessly fearful: "These are the cultists whom the authorities use as boogymen in our country to scare children . . . In the U.S.S.R., you meet flesh-and-blood 'Witnesses' only in prisons and concentration camps. And here I was in front of a building, a plaque. Could anyone actually go in and have a cup of tea with them?" he asked. To emphasize his reason for alarm, Vladimir concluded: "The 'Witnesses' are pursued in our country with as much fury as the Mafia in theirs, and the mystery that surrounds them is the same."

Yet, despite vicious persecution and lying propaganda, the Witnesses persevered and increased in numbers. Such Soviet books as *The Truths About Jehovah's Witnesses*, with a printing in Russian in 1978 of 100,000 copies, suggested the need for stepped up anti-Witness propaganda. The author, V. V. Konik, who described how the Witnesses were carrying on their preaching in the face of severe restrictions, advised: "Soviet researchers on religion should learn more effective methods for overcoming the teachings of Jehovah's witnesses."

Why the Focus of Attack?

Simply put, Jehovah's Witnesses were the chief focus of the Soviet attack because

they imitated Jesus' early followers. In the first century, the apostles were ordered "not to keep teaching upon the basis of [Jesus'] name." Yet, later their persecutors complained: "Look! you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching." The apostles did not deny that they had been preaching despite orders not to, but instead they answered respectfully: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:27-29.

Jehovah's Witnesses today also take seriously Jesus' command to his followers "to preach to the people and to give a thorough witness." (Acts 10:42) In his book *The Kremlin's Human Dilemma*, Maurice Hindus explained that it was the Witnesses'

"irrepressible zeal for evangelizing" that made them "particularly onerous to Moscow and [brought] them into continual clash with the Soviet police." He added: "There is no stopping them. Suppressed in one place, they bob up in another."

"As far as I know," wrote Russian historian Sergei Ivanenko, "the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses was the only religious organization in the USSR that increased in numbers despite the ban and persecution." Of course, other religions also continued to function, including the most prominent of all, the Russian Orthodox Church. You will find it interesting to learn how the church and the Witnesses were both able to survive the Soviet attack.

HOW RELIGION SURVIVED

BY THE time Nazi Germany invaded Russia in June 1941, the Soviets had practically annihilated the Russian Orthodox Church. But after the Nazi invasion, the Soviets began to change their attitude toward religion. What prompted this?

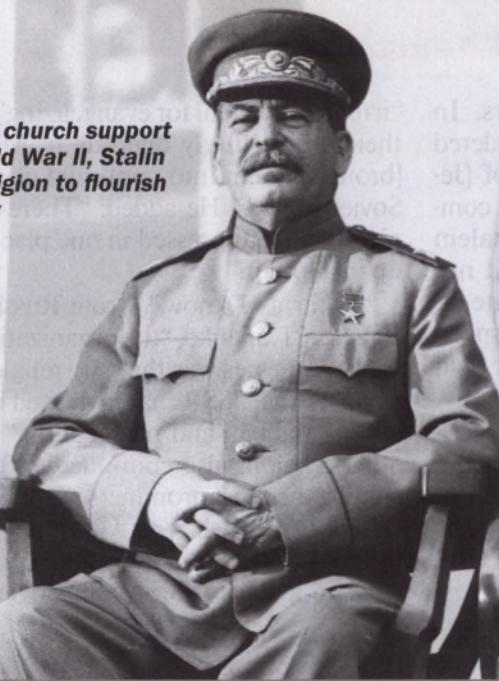


Richard Overy, professor of modern history at King's College, London, explained in his book *Russia's War—Blood Upon the Snow*: "Metropolitan Sergei [Sergius], head of the Church, appealed to the faithful on the very day of the German invasion to do everything to bring about victory. He published no fewer than twenty-three epistles in the next two years, calling on his flock to fight for the godless state they lived in." So, as Overy continued, 'Stalin allowed religion to flourish again.'

In 1943, Stalin finally agreed to recognize the Orthodox Church by appointing Sergius as its new patriarch. "The Church authorities responded by raising money from the faithful to fund a Soviet armored column,"

The Vovchuk family were deported to Irkutsk, Siberia, in 1951 and continue as faithful Christians today

Because of church support during World War II, Stalin allowed religion to flourish temporarily



Central State Archive regarding the film / photo / Union documents of Saint-Petersburg

Overy noted. "Priests and bishops exhorted their congregations to observe the faith, God's and Stalin's."

Describing this period of Russian history, the Russian religious scholar Sergei Ivanenko wrote: 'The official publication of the Russian Orthodox Church, *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, praised Stalin as the greatest leader and teacher of all times and nations, sent by God to save the nation from oppression, landowners, and capitalists. It called upon believers to give their last drop of blood in defending the USSR from its enemies and to give their all to build Communism.'

"Highly Valued by the KGB"

Even after World War II ended in 1945, the Orthodox Church remained useful to the Communists. *The Soviet Union: The Fifty Years*, edited by Harrison Salisbury, revealed how this was so: "With the war's end, church leaders fell in with the Cold War demands of Stalin's foreign policy."

The recent book *The Sword and the Shield* describes how church leaders served Soviet

interests. It explains that Patriarch Alexis I, who had succeeded Sergius as patriarch in 1945, "joined the World Peace Council, the Soviet front organization founded in 1949." The book also notes that he and Metropolitan Nikolai "were highly valued by the KGB [the Soviet State Security Committee] as agents of influence."

Remarkably, in 1955, Patriarch Alexis I declared: "The Russian Orthodox Church supports the totally peaceful foreign policy of our government, not because the Church allegedly lacks freedom, but because Soviet policy is just and corresponds to the Christian ideals which the Church preaches."

In the January 22, 2000, issue of *The Guardian* of London, England, dissident Orthodox priest Georgi Edelshtein is quoted as saying: "All the bishops were carefully picked so that they would work with the soviet government. All were KGB agents. It is well known that Patriarch Alexy was recruited by the KGB, under the code-name of Drozdov. Today, they are preserving the same politics that they had 20 or 30 years ago."

A Handmaiden of the Soviet State

Regarding the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the Soviets, *Life* magazine of September 14, 1959, observed: "Stalin gave some concessions to religion, and the church treated him like a czar. Orthodoxy's collaboration is ensured by a special government ministry and the Communists have utilized the church ever since as an arm of the Soviet state."

Matthew Spinka, an authority on Russian church affairs, confirmed the existence of a close Church-State relationship in his 1956 book, *The Church in Soviet Russia*. "The present Patriarch Alexei," he wrote, "has deliberately made his Church a tool of the government." Indeed, the Orthodox Church, in effect, survived by becoming a handmaiden of the State. 'But is that so reprehensible?' you may ask. Well, consider how God and Christ view the matter.

Jesus Christ said of his true disciples: "You are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world." And God's Word pointedly asks: "Adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God?" (John 15:19; James 4:4) Thus, as the Bible presents it, the church made itself a religious harlot with whom "the kings of the earth committed fornication." It has shown itself to be part of what

the Bible calls "Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth."—Revelation 17:1-6.

How the Witnesses Survived

In contrast, Jesus Christ revealed how his true followers would be known, saying: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) This love was a key factor in the survival of the Witnesses in the former Soviet Union, as indicated by the following report in *The Sword and the Shield*. "Jehovists extend assistance of all kind to their co-religionists who are in the [labor] camps or in internal exile, supplying them with money, food and clothing."

Included in the "food" provided for those in prison camps was that of a spiritual kind—Bibles and Bible literature. The Bible contains 'utterances of God,' which Jesus said we need in order to sustain our spiritual lives. (Matthew 4:4) The literature was smuggled into the camps at great personal risk, since anyone found doing this was severely punished.

Helene Celmina, a Latvian, was imprisoned in the Potma penal camp in Russia from 1962 to 1966. She wrote *Women in Soviet Prisons*, a book in which she explained: "Many Jehovah's Witnesses receive ten years of hard labor merely for having a few issues

Church Collaboration With the Soviets

In his 1945 book, *Russia Is No Riddle*, Edmund Stevens wrote: "The Church took great care not to bite the hand that was now feeding it. It fully realized that in return for the favors bestowed the State expected the Church to give its firm support to the system and to operate within certain limits."

Stevens went on to explain: "The tradition of centuries as

the official State religion was deeply rooted in the Orthodox Church, and it therefore slipped very naturally into its new role of close collaboration with the Soviet Government."

The Keston Institute thoroughly researched the past collaboration between the Soviets and Alexis II, today's patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. Its report conclud-

ed: "Aleksi's collaboration was nothing exceptional—almost all senior leaders of all officially-recognised religious faiths—including the Catholics, Baptists, Adventists, Muslims and Buddhists—were recruited KGB agents. Indeed, the annual report that describes Aleksi's recruitment also covers numerous other agents, some of them in the Estonian Lutheran Church."

of the magazine *Watchtower* in their apartments. Since people are arrested for possession of these writings, the anxiety and exasperation of the administration over the presence of this literature in camp is understandable."

Surely, risking personal freedom and safety to provide spiritual help was an evidence of Christian love! But while this was an important factor in the survival of the Witnesses, there was an even more important one. "No one could understand," Helene Celmina noted, "how this land of barbed wire and limited human contact could be penetrated by forbidden literature." It seemed impossible, since everyone entering the prison was thoroughly searched. "It was as if angels at night flew over and dropped it," this author wrote.

Indeed, God promised that he would not leave, or desert, his people. So Jehovah's Witnesses in the former Soviet Union readily acknowledge, as did the Bible psalmist: "Look! God is my helper." (Psalm 54:4; Joshua 1:5) Indeed, his help was important to the survival of the Witnesses in the former Soviet Union!

Reaching Those in the Camps

Viktors Kalnins, a Latvian journalist, spent most of his ten-year sentence (1962-72) in the Mordovian camp complex, about 250 miles southeast of Moscow. In an interview with an *Awake!* writer in March 1979, Kalnins was asked: "Do the interned Witnesses know about what is going on here in the United States or other countries with regard to the organization?"

"They do," Kalnins responded, "and it is through the literature that they receive. . . . They even showed me their magazines. I never knew where the literature was hidden; this changed from time to time. But everyone knew the literature was in camp. . . . The guards and the Jehovah's Witnesses were like Tom and Jerry, trying to hide the literature and trying to find the literature!"

To the question "Did Jehovah's Witnesses try to talk to you about their beliefs?" Kalnins responded: "Oh yes! They are very well-known. We know all about Armageddon . . . They talked a lot about sickness ending."

How Circumstances Changed

On March 27, 1991, Jehovah's Witnesses became a legally recognized organization in the Soviet Union with the signing of a legal charter that includes the following declaration: "The purpose of the Religious Organization is to carry on the religious work of making known the name of Jehovah God and his loving provisions for mankind through his heavenly Kingdom by Jesus Christ."

Among the ways listed in the charter for carrying on this religious work are preaching publicly and visiting the homes of the people, teaching Bible truths to those who are willing to listen, conducting free Bible studies with the help of Bible study publications, and distributing Bibles.

Since the signing of that document over ten years ago, the Soviet Union has been dissolved, and the situation of religion has changed substantially in the 15 former Soviet republics. What can be said about the future of religion there as well as throughout the rest of the world?



**Witnesses In the
Mordovian camps courageously
shared Bible truths**

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF RELIGION?

THE resurgence of religion has been dramatic in the countries of the former Soviet Union. In Russia alone, 50 percent of the population now declare themselves to be Orthodox, and millions are adherents of other religions. Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism are among the long-established ones, and Jehovah's Witnesses also have a long history there.

As early as 1891, representatives of the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were known before 1931, visited Kishinev, Russia (now Chisinau, Moldova). There meetings were held with fellow believers. In 1928, George Young, a special representative of the Bible Students, met with Soviet officials in Moscow, Russia, to seek permission to publish Bible literature in the Soviet Union. Later, the Witnesses became well-known as a result of Soviet attempts to eliminate them.

When the Soviet Union was suddenly dissolved nearly ten years ago, people started to wonder, 'Why did the Soviets try to eliminate religion?' Many who had been indoctrinated in atheism for decades became curious as to what religion might have to offer. Could the Bible, which had been suppressed as forbidden literature, actually contain answers to the problems facing mankind? Russians began to investigate for themselves.

A Different Religious Problem

The interest of so many in the Bible created a different kind of religious problem in the former Soviet Union. The *Guardian* newspaper of London, England, observed

last year: "The 'war on God' may have ended, but just a decade after the humiliating defeat of the world's first avowedly atheist state, a new religious cold war in Russia may only be beginning." What is this so-called religious cold war that the newspaper refers to?

As noted in our preceding article, the Russian Orthodox Church worked hand in glove with Soviet leaders in order to survive and receive privileges. *The Guardian* describes the continuation of such a relationship, explaining: "The last 10 years have also seen the church form an uncomfortably close relationship with the largely unreformed state that once suppressed it, regularly supporting the Russian government (the Patriarch's endorsement of the war in Chechnya) and wielding in return considerable political influence."

The *Los Angeles Times* of February 10, 1999, drew attention to the exercise of the church's political influence when commenting on the Law of Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations. The *Los Angeles Times* said that this law, signed by then President Boris Yeltsin in September 1997, was "promoted by the Russian Orthodox Church." The law gave the church preferred status as a "traditional" religion, along with Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism. Among other things, the law required that religious organizations in Russia reregister.

The New York Times of February 11, 1999, reported that after this law was passed, "the Orthodox Church kept pressures on

its rivals." The *Times* added: "Last August, Aleksei II, Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, called for a ban on proselytizing faiths, particularly those that try to lure people away from the 'religions of their ancestors.'" Since then, efforts to ban the so-called proselytizing faiths have continued, resulting in what has been characterized as a "religious cold war."

One of the Targets

Jehovah's Witnesses have been one of the chief targets of the attack led by the Russian Orthodox Church. On June 20, 1996, the Moscow prosecutor's office began to consider a lawsuit initiated by the anticult Committee for the Protection of Youth From False Religions. Although the case was recessed time and again because of absence of evidence of criminal behavior on the part of the Witnesses, each time it was revived.

In the meantime, the Witnesses became the objects of a barrage of propaganda. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, a Russian newspaper with a circulation of 1,200,000, noted in its issue of November 21, 1998: "Over a period of only two years, the Russian Orthodox Church has released more than ten books, brochures, and handbooks 'dedicated' to the Jehovah's Witnesses community." Why has the church focused on trying to discredit the Witnesses?

"Likely," *Komsomolskaya Pravda* continued, "it is primarily because just over the last seven years the number of the organization's members has grown tenfold, and the Russian Orthodox Church, like any hierarchical organization, doesn't like competitors."

Early in 1999 when the court case against the Witnesses was again reopened, it received worldwide attention. A *New York Times* headline of February 11 read: "Moscow Court Weighs Jehovah's Witnesses Ban." The article noted: "The case now before a Moscow civil court, heard in a small courtroom, is being closely watched by religious and human rights

groups as the first significant attempt to use the [Law of Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations] to restrict worship."

Lyudmila Alekseyeva, president of the International Helsinki Federation, explained why the Witness trial was being closely watched. She said that if those who are trying to suppress Jehovah's Witnesses "are successful in this case," then "they will feel free to attack other groups" that are also characterized as nontraditional religions. The trial, however, was suspended yet again on March 12, 1999. But the following month, on April 29, Russia's Ministry of Justice granted a certification of registration for the "Administrative Center of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia."

Despite this recognition by the government, attacks against the Witnesses and other religious minorities have continued in Russia and other former Soviet republics. Lawrence Uzzell, director of the Keston Institute in Oxford, England, noted that "it always pays to watch the Jehovah's Witnesses" because what happens to them serves "as an early warning signal." Indeed, vital religious liberties for tens of millions of people are at stake!

The Attack Unjustified

In the first century, the chief priests and other religious leaders persecuted Jesus' followers. (John 19:15; Acts 5:27-33) As a result, it was said of Christianity: "Truly as regards this sect it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against." (Acts 28:22) It should not be surprising, therefore, that true Christians today would also be maligned, as Jehovah's Witnesses have been.

Yet, after examining evidence against early Christians, Gamaliel, the famous Pharisee and teacher of the Law, advised: "Do not meddle with these men, but let them alone; (because, if this scheme or this work is from men, it will be overthrown; but if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them;) otherwise, you may perhaps be



*The trial held in Moscow in February 1999.
The defense (left), the judge (center), and the prosecution (right)*

found fighters actually against God.”—Acts 5:38, 39.

Careful investigations of Jehovah’s Witnesses have also been conducted by critics today. With what results? Sergey Blagodarov, himself a professed Orthodox, noted in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*: “Over a period of more than a hundred years, not a single country of the world has been able to prove either criminal acts on the part of the community’s members, or the illegality of its existence.”

What Is Religion’s Future?

The Bible speaks of “pure religion,” or “worship that is clean and undefiled.” (James 1:27a; see also *King James Version*.) As noted in the preceding article, the Bi-

ble describes the world empire of false religion as a “great harlot . . . with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication.” This symbolic religious harlot—“Babylon the Great”—is said to be “drunk with the blood of the holy ones and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.”—Revelation 17:1-6.

How aptly this description fits religion that has worked closely with the political leaders of the world to preserve its own position of privilege! Yet, the future of this great symbolic religious harlot is sealed. “In one day,” the Bible says, “her plagues will come, death and mourning and famine, and she will be completely burned with fire, because Jehovah God, who judged her, is strong.” No wonder the angelic warning is urgent: “Get out of her . . . if you do not want to receive part of her plagues”—Revelation 18:4, 7, 8.

When the disciple James described “pure religion,” he identified it as being “without spot from the world.” (James 1:27b) Moreover, Jesus Christ said of his true followers: “They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.” (John 17:16) Can you see, therefore, why Jehovah’s Witnesses keep free from the corrupting influences of this world’s political affairs? They do so because of their complete confidence in the Bible’s promise: “The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever.”—1 John 2:17.

***The Bible describes
the future of all religion***

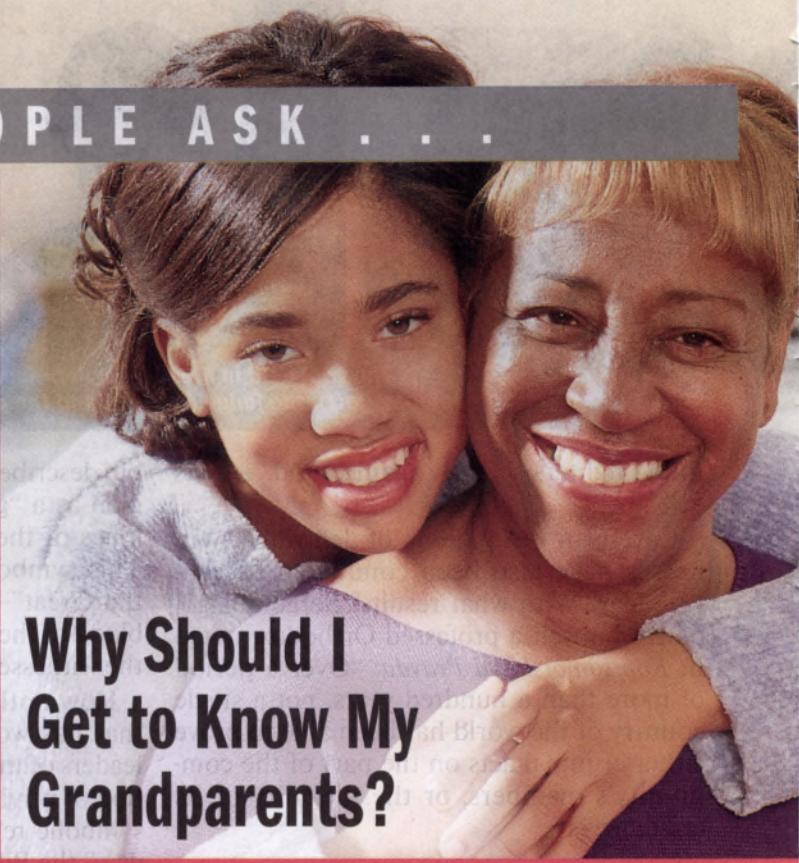


"When my mother and I had trouble communicating, Grandma helped us to work things out."—Damaris.

THROUGHOUT history, grandparents have been the key to family harmony and continuity." So writes Dr. Arthur Kornhaber in his book *Grandparent Power!* He adds: "As teachers, supporters of parents, historians, nurturers, consultants, and even entertainers, their psychological, social, and spiritual functions were of paramount importance. I wondered how our society had possibly come to dismiss this powerful, multifaceted grandparent role."

In bygone days, grandparents were a foundation stone of family life, particularly among worshipers of Jehovah God. The Bible commanded the Israelites to respect and esteem older ones. (Leviticus 19:32) Grandparents were considered especially worthy of honor.—1 Timothy 5:4.

Sad to say, times have changed. Long distances often separate families, and many youths have little contact with their grandparents. Attitudes have also changed. In many parts of the world, older ones—including relatives—are no longer treated with due respect. (2 Timothy 3:1-3) What used to be called a generation gap now seems more like a chasm. Many youths think of their grand-



Why Should I Get to Know My Grandparents?

parents as old and out of touch. They cannot imagine that these older ones could possibly understand the pressures and problems youths face today.

If that is the way you feel, be prepared to think again! For there is great value in getting to know your grandparents—especially if they are God-fearing. And if you have not got to know them, you may very well be missing out. How so?

A Source of Wisdom and Advice

Many young people have discovered that grandparents can serve as a shelter during the stormy years of youth. *Seventeen* magazine observed: "With decades of experience in living, they are often more helpful in dealing with problems than friends your age, who are struggling with the same concerns you are. You and your peers are in the throes of your first life transitions; your grandparents

have weathered many such passages. They are often wise as well as smart." This advice merely echoes what the Bible said centuries ago, namely: "Gray-headedness is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness."—Proverbs 16:31.

True, your grandparents may have grown up in a world quite different from the one in which you now live. But you can be sure that at one time or another, they have felt the very same feelings that you are struggling with now. While you may still be relatively inexperienced in handling such feelings, your grandparents have had a lifetime in which to come to terms with them. (Proverbs 1:4) "Is there not wisdom among the aged and understanding in length of days?" asked the righteous man Job. (Job 12:12) Yes, and for that reason grandparents can often be a real asset when a youth needs some balanced advice, encouragement, or support.

Young Damaris' grandmother, for example, lived with Damaris and her mother in the same urban apartment. "When my mother and I had trouble communicating," Damaris recalled, "Grandmom helped us work things out. She would show me a different way of looking at things."

Alexandria had a similar experience when her family moved and she had to change schools. "My new teacher was hard and occasionally lost her temper," Alexandria said. Adjusting to her new school was therefore difficult for Alexandria. However, her grandmother proved to be an ally. She helped Alexandria to adjust by encouraging a more positive outlook toward the situation. "Now I like school and my teacher," says Alexandria.

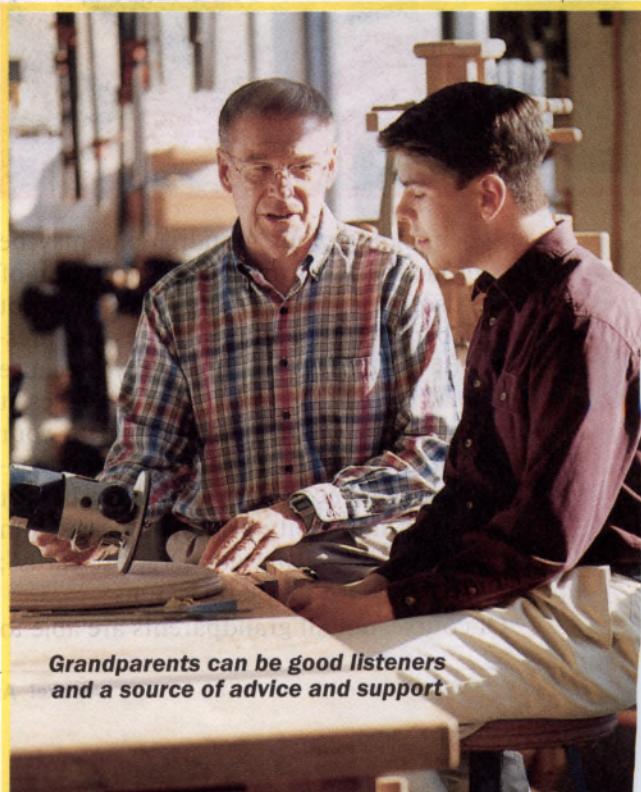
A young man in Brazil named Rafael reflects on the help that his grandparents gave him when he received some supplementary education after high school: "They gave me much counsel about association and how to resist problems with drugs." Rafael now serves as a full-time evangelizer.

In her book *Grandparenting in a Changing World*, Eda LeShan relates her own experience as a grandparent. She writes: "My granddaughter called me one day and said, 'Grandma, I need help with peer pressure.' Some of her classmates were trying to get her to date boys, some of whom were calling her on the phone." As a result of her granddaughter's request for help, the grandmother was able to offer advice that provided needed assistance. You may similarly find that a brief conversation with a loving grandparent can be a source of real moral support.

Grandparents are often particularly helpful during times of family crisis, such as illness or death. After young Lacey lost her father to a serious illness, her grandmother helped her cope. "We have bonded even more than before," says Lacey.

A Special Bond of Love

Your relationship with your grandparent may also be free of some of the tensions that youths sometimes experience with their



Grandparents can be good listeners and a source of advice and support

parents. Why might this be so? For one thing, grandparents often enjoy a special bond with their grandchildren. The Bible says: "Old men are proud of their grandchildren."—Proverbs 17:6, Today's English Version.

Remember, too, that it is your parents—not your grandparents—who must bear the heavy responsibility of raising you "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) Because their role is

provide such gifts, but they may still demonstrate their interest in you, perhaps by offering you praise and encouragement or by giving you a hearing ear from time to time. This can forge deep bonds of friendship between you. Damaris says regarding her grandmother: "She makes me feel at ease, and I can go to her and talk to her at any time because she is always willing to listen—even if I am not making sense at the time." A youth named Jônatas similarly enjoys freeness of speech and the opportunity to talk about serious subjects with his grandparents.

An Interchange

While grandparents can offer you their wisdom and love, they can also benefit from your youthful energy and companionship. How so? Well, there are likely a number of ways in which you can be of help and support to your grandparents. Oftentimes, their physical strength is fading. Or they may be battling ill health. No doubt they would be encouraged if you helped them with shopping and household chores.

Many grandparents are widows or widowers and feel lonely at times. By taking an active interest in them, you can do much to help them to combat feelings of loneliness and to maintain their zest for life. Doing so is one way to follow the Bible command that you "keep paying a due compensation to [your] grandparents, for this is acceptable in God's sight."—1 Timothy 5:4.

No doubt about it, drawing close to your grandparents can enrich your life—as well as theirs! Maybe you have not been close to them up till now. Perhaps you want to change that but are not sure where to start. It may be that your grandparents live far away or that your parents are no longer together and this has distanced you from your grandparents. A future article will offer some practical suggestions on how you might deal with such situations.

Be of help to your grandparents



less demanding, your grandparents may be less prone than your parents to be critical of you. Also, one's grandparents are usually not encumbered by the responsibilities and pressures of the daily care of a family. Because they may be relatively free of such stresses, it may be easier for them to respond to your needs or to pay attention to you. Seventeen-year-old Tom recalls the attention he got from his grandparents. They would send him "little gifts for getting good report cards"; they even paid for his piano lessons.

Of course, not all grandparents are able to

Though Deaf and Blind, I Found Security

AS TOLD BY JANICE ADAMS

From birth, I was virtually deaf, yet I learned to manage in a hearing world. Then, while in college, I was shocked when I was told that I would become blind. My well-meaning college counselor gave me an article about living without sight and sound.

Immediately, my eyes caught the phrase that those both deaf and blind are the loneliest people in the world. I burst into tears.

I WAS born in Des Moines, Iowa, U.S.A., on July 11, 1954, the only child of Dale and Phyllis Den Hartog. Little did my parents realize that both of them were carriers of a genetic condition known as Usher's syndrome, which is characterized by congenital deafness with progressive visual loss.

My parents did not at first suspect any problem with me. Perhaps this was because I had a little residual hearing of low frequencies and would sometimes respond to sounds. However, when I did not develop speech, they knew something was seriously wrong. The doctor finally diagnosed my deafness when I was about the age of three.

The news devastated my parents. Yet, they were determined that I receive the best possible education. I was put in an excellent preschool for the hard-of-hearing. But since I was nearly deaf, I failed miserably. My frustration was sometimes displayed by banging my head against the wall.

Sent Away to a Special School

My parents chose to enter me in the Central Institute for the Deaf (CID), in



St. Louis, Missouri. Despite the great financial cost and the heartbreak of sending me away at the age of five, they figured that this was my best hope for a successful, happy life. My parents and I really could not communicate at that time.

I watched Mother pack my clothes in a trunk. The journey by car seemed endless. At CID, I remember seeing the

other little girls with no mothers and thinking, 'Oh, I won't have to stay here because I have a mommy and a daddy.' When it came time for my parents to leave, they tried to explain that they would come back in a few months. I cried and cried and held onto them tightly, but the housemother pried me away so that they could leave.

I felt abandoned. Alone with the other girls on our first night at the school, I tried to comfort a crying girl by pretending to talk to her, although I couldn't actually speak at the time. The housemother scolded me and set up a divider between us so that we could not try to communicate. The wall remained there from then on. The isolation was crushing.

Gradually I figured out that all of us were there because we could not hear. Perhaps my parents loved me after all, but I reasoned that it was my fault that I had failed preschool. I was determined to succeed this time and one day return to my family.

The education at CID was excellent. Although we were not allowed to use sign language, we were given lots of individual instruction in lipreading and in speaking. All the subjects taught in regular schools were emphasized as well. While I believe that the oral-only approach, as it is called, does not work well for many deaf children, it worked for me, and I felt successful. With my hearing aids, I learned how to make sense out of the mouth movements and muffled sounds of others' speech. Most hearing people were starting to understand my improved, though imperfect, speech. My parents and the school were extremely satisfied with my success. Still, I longed to be back home.

Each summer vacation I would beg my parents to let me stay home and go to school in Iowa, but there were still no local programs. After I returned to school, Mother would send me a letter each day and include a stick of chewing gum. How I treasured that gum because of the love it represented! Rather than chew it, I would save each piece, and I especially cherished them when feeling depressed.

Home Again, but Problems Arise

Finally, when I was ten, my parents brought me home. I was so happy and felt so secure to be with my family! I enrolled in a local special school in Des Moines for children with hearing loss. Eventually I was mainstreamed into regular classes because I was a fairly good speech-reader and had developed intelligible speech. Yet, there were many challenges with my new situation.

In the dormitory at CID, I had felt accept-

ed by my deaf peers. But now, when I had to interact with more than one person at a time, my speechreading skills could not keep up with the fast communication. So I would be left out. I wanted so badly to be accepted!

This led to my seeking the approval of teenage boys, which resulted in becoming involved in compromising situations. And I didn't know how to say no. When I was 14, I was raped; but I told no one. Although my parents were always concerned and loving, I felt isolated and lost.

With my hearing aids, I could enjoy music somewhat, but my choice of music was questionable. I listened to loud acid rock. I also became a regular marijuana user and withdrew more and more. I still feel deep regret when I look back on what I did during those turbulent years and on the pain it caused my family and me.

Efforts to Improve My Life

Throughout this period, I had a continuing thirst for learning and a desire to be creative. I read constantly, painted, sewed, and embroidered. I wanted more out of my life than what the future held for my friends who were only into drugs. So I registered in a regular college near home to pursue my interest in art. About this time I decided to learn sign language because I was frustrated at being left out socially.

Eventually I transferred to the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, New York, to major in ceramic art. Although my eyesight was progressively getting worse—a fact that I somehow refused to recognize—I felt as though my life was heading in the right direction. But then my college counselor made me face reality by telling me that I would soon go blind.

The institution was ill prepared to handle my needs, and I had to leave. What would I do now? Although saddened by the prospect of soon becoming blind, I was determined to

find a way to live independently and not end up as, in the words of the article the counselor gave me, 'one of the loneliest people in the world.' I returned home to Iowa to learn how to read Braille and how to use a cane for mobility.

Move to Washington, D.C.

Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., the world's only liberal arts college for the deaf, had specialized services for deaf-blind students. I transferred there and graduated with honors in 1979. Once again, I felt good to be able to succeed academically.

Yet, I still felt socially isolated from my peers. Robbed by my visual loss, I had learned sign language just in time to start to feel as though I belonged to a group, the Deaf community. The sign language I use is the same as the one other deaf people use. However, because I must put my hands on theirs to understand them, some deaf people avoided me out of awkwardness. I began to wonder if I would ever be truly accepted by any group of people.

Search for True Religion

Religion had not provided me with comfort while I was growing up. And in college, even though I took a course in religion, I never received answers to my many questions. After graduating from college, I continued to look for answers. During this time I was unhappy with my relationships, so I began to pray to God for his guidance.

In 1981, I moved back to Gallaudet University to get my master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. I continued to pray for help to find the right church. Several people offered to take me to their churches, but for one reason or another, they did not follow through. Then I met Bill, who could hear normally and was also in graduate school. He discovered, quite by chance, that I shared his interest in the Bible, and he told me that

he was learning all kinds of amazing things from Jehovah's Witnesses.

My first impression was that Jehovah's Witnesses were some Jewish cult, an opinion that I found to be common to many deaf people. Bill assured me that they were not, and he said that the best way to find out about them would be to attend one of their meetings. I really did not want to go, but I remembered my prayer. I reluctantly agreed, on the condition that we sit in the back row so that we could escape if they put any pressure on us.

I Felt Right at Home

I was very nervous as we drove to the meeting. We both wore blue jeans and flannel shirts. I was glad we arrived a little late because then we did not have to interact with anyone before the meeting. Bill interpreted in detail all the things I could neither see nor hear. Although I did not fully understand what was going on, I was impressed by two things: The speaker frequently used the Bible, and the children, who sat with their parents, actively participated in the meetings. After the meeting, far from being pressured, we were warmly welcomed, in spite of our clothing and different racial background.

We were the only two white people in the Kingdom Hall. Although I was not aware that I had any prejudice against blacks, I

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Can Prisoners Be Reformed?

Could the Holocaust Happen Again?

On Safari in Ghana

was initially uncomfortable being there. However, the message of Bible truth was too compelling to let my discomfort stop me. We started to attend the meetings regularly. Even more of a challenge for me was that there were no deaf people in that congregation. So when we heard about another congregation that had some deaf attending, we started to go there. Again, at this new congregation, we were the only whites in attendance. Yet, we were made to feel right at home.

We accepted an offer of a Bible study. Finally, I was getting answers to my questions. I did not always understand the answers right away, but they were Scriptural. With more research and meditation, I eventually got the sense of the Bible truths. For the first time in my life, I came to feel close to Jehovah as the true God. At the same time, Bill and I became close friends. I knew that he liked me, but I was surprised when he asked me to marry him. Happily, I said yes. Bill was baptized shortly after our wedding, and I followed him a few months later, on February 26, 1983.

Finding the Security I Sought

Initially I feared that I would be isolated because our congregation had only two other deaf people and they were not adept at communicating with someone both deaf and blind. I could tell that our congregation was loving and warm, yet I could not at first communicate directly with them. This saddened me. Many times I felt discouraged and lonely. However, a kind act of a spiritual brother or sister would touch my heart and lift my spirits. Bill also encouraged me to persist in my ministry and to pray to Jehovah to bring more deaf people into association with the congregation.

I decided to get a guide dog so that I could be more independent. The dog also helped to dispel my feelings of isolation. When Bill

was at work, I could walk to the Kingdom Hall to meet the group that met to share in the Christian ministry. Over the years I have had four guide dogs, and each has been like a member of the family.

Although a guide dog was helpful, I longed for more human contact. In time, Jehovah blessed our efforts to develop interest in Bible study among the deaf. The interest grew to the point where a sign language congregation was formed in Washington, D.C. Finally, I could communicate with each member of the congregation!

Bill qualified to serve as an elder and was appointed the presiding overseer of the sign language congregation. I found great pleasure in conducting Bible studies with other deaf and deaf-blind people, a number of whom are now serving Jehovah faithfully. I also tutored hearing sisters in sign language so that they could be more effective in the deaf ministry.

A Time of Testing

In 1992 major depression that was associated with the abuse I suffered as a youth overwhelmed me. For a couple of years, I could barely function. I felt handicapped—not by my deafness or blindness—but by my intense emotional turmoil. Many times I did not think that I could bear to go to the meeting or out in the ministry, and I would beg Jehovah to give me the strength to keep integrity. As a result, I rarely missed a meeting, and I remained regular in my ministry during those dark years.—Matthew 6:33.

In 1994 we moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, to help with the formation of another sign language congregation. The move was not an easy one. I left behind a familiar city with many dear friends. Even though I was still not over the depression and anxiety, the joy of seeing a new congregation formed in Vancouver made all the sacrifices worthwhile. I made dear friends in

the new congregation, so that it came to feel like home.

Blessed by Our Loving Father

In 1999 my husband and I and two other Witnesses visited Haiti for six weeks to help in the deaf ministry. Working in conjunction with the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses there, we taught a sign language class to the members of the congregation and preached with them in the relatively untouched deaf territory. In a

Signing into my hand



few weeks, over 30 Bible studies were started with interested deaf ones! I returned home with renewed spiritual vigor and began the full-time ministry as a pioneer in September 1999. With the help of Jehovah, my dear husband, and a supportive congregation, bouts of depression have not robbed me of joy.

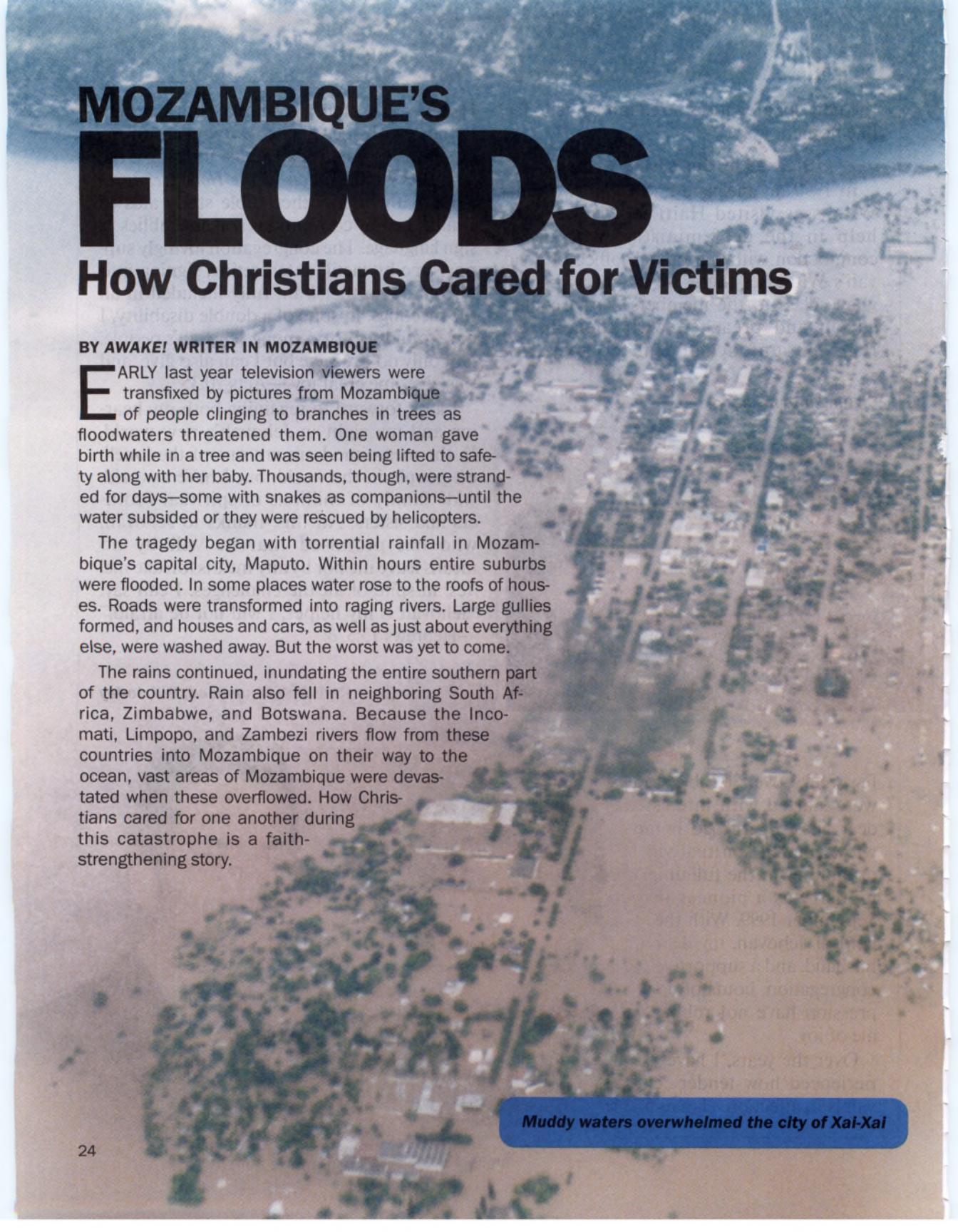
Over the years, I have experienced how tender Jehovah is in affection. (James 5:11)

He takes care of all his people—but especially those with special needs. By means of his organization, I have been able to receive the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* along with many other Bible study aids in Braille. I enjoy conventions and assemblies in sign language. The congregation lovingly supports me by tactile interpreting, signing into my hands, so that I am fully included in all the meetings. In spite of a double disability, I have found security among Jehovah's people. Not only do I receive but I can also give, and this gives me great joy.—Acts 20:35.

I look forward to regaining both my hearing and my sight in Jehovah's new world. In the meantime I am not one of the loneliest people in the world, but I have a worldwide family of millions of spiritual brothers and sisters. All this, thanks to Jehovah, who has promised that he will by no means leave me nor by any means forsake me. Yes, in spite of all the challenges, I can say: "Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid."—Hebrews 13:5, 6.

With my husband, Bill, today





MOZAMBIQUE'S FLOODS

How Christians Cared for Victims

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN MOZAMBIQUE

EARLY last year television viewers were transfixed by pictures from Mozambique of people clinging to branches in trees as floodwaters threatened them. One woman gave birth while in a tree and was seen being lifted to safety along with her baby. Thousands, though, were stranded for days—some with snakes as companions—until the water subsided or they were rescued by helicopters.

The tragedy began with torrential rainfall in Mozambique's capital city, Maputo. Within hours entire suburbs were flooded. In some places water rose to the roofs of houses. Roads were transformed into raging rivers. Large gullies formed, and houses and cars, as well as just about everything else, were washed away. But the worst was yet to come.

The rains continued, inundating the entire southern part of the country. Rain also fell in neighboring South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana. Because the Incomati, Limpopo, and Zambezi rivers flow from these countries into Mozambique on their way to the ocean, vast areas of Mozambique were devastated when these overflowed. How Christians cared for one another during this catastrophe is a faith-strengthening story.

Muddy waters overwhelmed the city of Xai-Xai

Assessing the Early Damage

On February 9 last year, two representatives of the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Maputo left to visit the north. About nine in the morning, they passed the city of Xinavane, where the level of the Incoluane River was very high. They decided to continue on to Xai-Xai, the capital of the province of Gaza. However, they observed that near the city of Chókwè, where the worst flooding often occurs during storms, there were no signs of problems. So they decided to return to Maputo.

However, as they approached Xinavane on their return, they were stopped by a police barrier. "The floodwaters from South Africa have arrived and cut off the national road," the police warned. "Neither buses nor trucks are able to pass." The same section of road that they had crossed in the morning was now completely under water! Since rivers farther north were also rising, the area was isolated from the rest of the country.

The two decided to spend the night in nearby Macia. During that night the situation worsened. The entire city of Xinavane was flooded, and people there lost everything. Arrangements were made to help the Witnesses in the area get to a Kingdom Hall in Macia, where a makeshift refugee camp was set up. Witnesses immediately went to warehouses and bought such basic items as rice, beans, flour, and oil.

Concern now focused on fellow Christians in Chókwè and the nearby cities. The overseers in congregations in Chókwè met together and organized a mass evacuation. The message was spread: "Leave immediately, and go to Macia!" It was soon learned, however, that many from Xinavane had not arrived. So Witnesses were sent to check on them. It was also learned that a Christian elder had drowned inside his house. His burial was arranged, and the rest of the Witnesses, some on rooftops, were located and helped to get to Macia.

After these arrangements were made, the representatives from the branch went to Bilene, a small city on the coast, where they chartered a plane for

Maputo. As far as the travelers' eyes could see, the region was flooded. It was reported that in the province of Gaza alone, 600,000 people had been affected.

The Situation Worsens

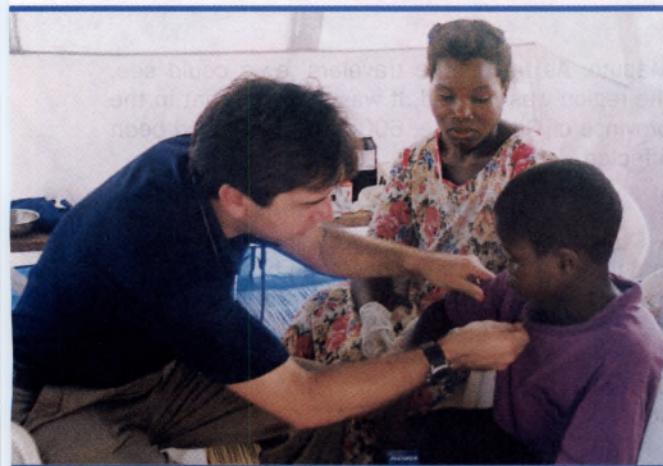
During the next few days, the rains intensified, and the central provinces of Mozambique were also devastated. Then an enormous tropical cyclone named Eline formed. On February 20 it dumped devastating rain on the provinces of Inhambane, Sofala, and Manica. Further flooding, death, and destruction resulted.

Then, toward the end of February, the city of Chókwè and the entire surrounding region were flooded in a way that had never been seen before. Close to midnight on Saturday, February 26, floodwaters arrived like a great avalanche, washing away everything in their path. "We were awakened by a neighbor shouting through the window," relates Luis Chitlango, a 32-year-old Witness.



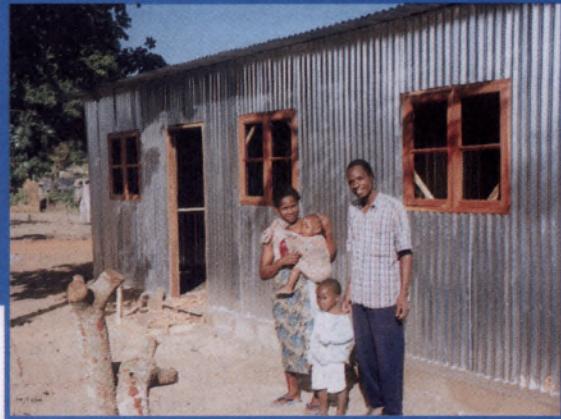
Chitlango explained: "As we jumped out of bed, we could hear the loud roar of the water. As we fled, we encountered many snakes. At six o'clock, we arrived at higher ground, but later in the morning when floodwaters had risen on all sides, we had to climb into the trees. Our group included 20 people."

"The men climbed into the trees first. Then the women handed the children to them, and these were tied to tree branches. The women followed with their babies. Every now and then, we climbed



The Witness relief team set up an infirmary

New homes continue to be built



down from the trees and probed the ground beneath the water for peanuts, which we knew were grown in the area.

"After three days it was decided that we all should walk to Chókwè. The water reached our chests, and we contended with strong currents. Along the way we found many people in trees and on rooftops. The next day the floodwaters had subsided enough for trucks to reach the city and take people to Macia."

The Witness Refugee Camp

On March 4 the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses chartered a plane and flew representatives to the disaster area. A large part of the population had fled to Macia, which had been transformed into an enormous camp for refugees. Many flood victims suffered from flu, malnutrition, malaria, and other afflictions.

The scene was like a war zone. Helicopters sent by various countries filled the sky over the city and landed on improvised runways to unload provisions.

When the Witness relief team arrived in Macia, they not only made arrangements for feeding victims but also set up an infirmary. First, however, they obtained the approval of local authorities, who applauded their initiative.

Every morning at the Witness camp, which accommodated nearly 700 Witnesses as well as others, a Bible text was considered at 6:30 a.m. When the food prepared by Christian sisters was ready, the names of family heads were called. Each would indicate with his fingers how many plates he needed, and the food would be delivered.

Every aspect of life in the camp was well organized. Some people were assigned to purchase food; and others, to safeguard sanitation of drinking water, to clean latrines, and so forth. The good organization did not go unnoticed by government officials, who commented: 'It is worth it to be here.'

The largest refugee camp held 100,000 people



Nobody goes without food, and there is no quarreling.' A local authority said: 'Everyone should visit the camp of the Witnesses to see how things should work.'

One day the relief committee called Christian elders together and informed them that the branch office had made arrangements to rebuild houses and Kingdom Halls as well as to provide other basic items for flood victims. The following morning during the consideration of the day's Bible text, announcement was made regarding these plans. The applause was prolonged.

Even though the authorities had donated two large tents, many in the camp were still sleeping in the open air. So a team from among the flood victims was organized to construct a large Kingdom Hall on the plot of land belonging to the local congregation. It was built from reeds and corrugated zinc sheets—Mozambican style—to accommodate 200 people. It was completed in just two days!

Locating Isolated Ones

In the meantime, on March 5, after the floodwaters had subsided somewhat, a relief team was formed to travel to the town of Aldeia da Barragem, located in one of the first regions to be flooded. It had a congregation of some 90 Witnesses, and nothing had been heard from them.

En route, the team passed Chihaquelane, a large refugee camp of about 100,000 people. On both sides of the road, which in places was washed away, the region was flooded as far as the eye could see. One member of the team commented: "When we arrived in Chókwè, a desolate scene met our eyes. Many houses at the entrance of the city still had water up to the rooftops. The majority of the houses were submerged in the floodwaters. It was getting dark, and we still had 15 miles to go before we reached Aldeia da Barragem."

During the night, the team finally reached their destination. A member of the team recalls: "We stopped and wondered what to do next." Then people appeared, shouting: "Brothers!" and there was loud, happy laughter. When they had seen the lights of the two vehicles, the local Witnesses had immediately thought that it might be their brothers, and they told others this. The observers were very impressed, saying: 'These people really have love. They bring food and even come to visit!'

Providing Continued Care

The brothers from Aldeia da Barragem were helped to reach the camp in Macia, where they were given food, accommodations, and medical treatment. Meanwhile, the situation in Macia was becoming critical. Food, medicine, and fuel were scarce, since they were being sent in by air. There was an urgent need to restore a land link with Maputo. This was done by March 8.

The large city of Xai-Xai had been completely flooded. Its center was under water to a depth of nine feet in some places! The Witnesses formed a relief committee to care for their brothers there. In addition, committees were organized to care for those in need in the provinces of Sofala and Manica.

Relief provisions came from Witnesses in other countries. The South Africa branch, for example, arranged for tons of clothing, blankets, and other items to be sent in. And the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, in Brooklyn, New York, made funds available to care for those affected by the disaster.

When the floodwaters subsided sufficiently and an accounting had been made of those who had lost their homes, the work of rebuilding houses and Kingdom Halls began. A reconstruction committee was established and was supported by dozens of volunteers, who immediately set to work. Since then, more than 270 houses as well as at least five Kingdom Halls have been rebuilt.

When the first houses constructed by Witness volunteers began to appear, people took notice. One neighbor commented: 'You worship a God who is alive. Our pastors fail to remember their sheep who are suffering. However, you are receiving these beautiful houses.' In such areas many have been receptive to the Kingdom message preached by Jehovah's Witnesses, and a number of Bible studies have been started.—Matthew 24:14; Revelation 21:3, 4.

Although many Witnesses lost all their material possessions, none lost their faith. Instead, their faith in Jehovah God and in their worldwide association of fellow believers was strengthened. They are grateful to their loving international brotherhood, which was so prompt in its response to this terrible disaster. They have experienced in a personal way Jehovah's tender care and protection, and they will always remember the Bible expression: "Jehovah is great."—Psalm 48:1.

WATCHING THE WORLD

"Pester Power"

Britain's shopping districts "are being invaded by a new generation of free-spending, highly sophisticated, fashion-conscious youngsters," reports *The Times* of London. "Aged 10 to 13, they are mature enough to make independent decisions about what to buy but young enough to use 'pester power' to get their parents to pay for expensive items of their choice," the newspaper adds. Piers Berezai of Data-monitor, a market research company, observes: "With divorce increasing and more women working, parental guilt plays an increasing role with money replacing time spent together. Children are realising that pestering is a very effective tool to get what they want. Parents, who only see their children periodically, are more prone to giving in and are more likely to indulge their kids."

Adults Eating Baby Food

More and more baby food is being consumed by adults, reports the German news agency dpa-Basisdienst. Ten percent of the production of a major German baby food manufacturer is sold to households without children. People of all ages and from all walks of life love milk pudding and stewed fruit prepared for babies. Since a serving may have only 100 calories, many weight-conscious adults choose baby food for a snack. Manufacturers cater to the trend by recommending their products for "young and old"

and by providing recipes that include their products. The German Nutrition Society, however, is not happy about the trend. According to its spokeswoman Anette Braun, grown-ups do not need such specially prepared foods unless they are sick. They should chew their food. "After all, that is why we have teeth," says Braun.

Smoking Addiction Can Start Quickly



Researchers at the University of Massachusetts have confirmed that some people show evidence of addiction "within days of their first cigarette," says an Associated Press report. The study tracked the smoking habits of 681 youths between 12 and 13 years of age for a year and recorded symptoms that indicate addiction. "There's been a suspicion that many people become addicted very quickly," states Dr. Richard Hurt, "but this is really the first hard evidence that we've had that this occurs." Says the director of the research team, Dr. Joseph DiFranza: "The really important implication of this study is that we have to warn kids that you can't just fool around with cigarettes or experiment with

cigarettes for a few weeks and then give it up."

Churches Admit Using Forced Labor

Recently, the German public was aghast to learn that during World War II, both the Catholic and the Evangelical churches made use of forced labor. According to a spokesman for the German Catholic Bishops' Conference, "laborers worked on estates run by the church—in the fields of monasteries as well as in vineyards and hospitals," reports the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. The Evangelical Church's largest welfare and social institutions in Europe "employed forced laborers during the whole of the second world war," says the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Both the Catholic and the Evangelical churches have pledged several million deutsche marks to compensate surviving forced laborers, most of whom were civilians from Eastern European countries.

Can Zinc Lozenges Shorten Colds?

For years researchers have debated whether zinc helps people to fight off colds. One recent study found that "[zinc] lozenges taken every few hours at the start of a cold slash its average duration nearly in half," reports *Science News*. Moreover, participants in the study who took zinc lozenges every two to three hours for four or five days "reported significantly less coughing and nasal discharge" than those who

took placebos. However, some people taking zinc experienced side effects such as constipation and mouth dryness, says the magazine.

Importing Priests

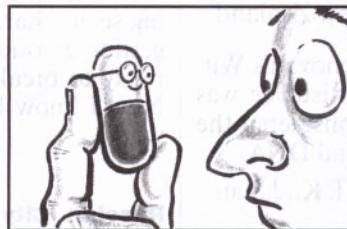
Concerned about a shortage of priests in the developed world, the Catholic Church has begun importing priests to fill the need, reports the Italian magazine *L'Espresso*. "In Italy, Europe, and North America, seminaries are becoming infertile and the dioceses are no longer able to replace their priests," the magazine says. To fill vacant parishes, priests from Brazil, India, and the Philippines are being imported. "The trend is just beginning," reports *L'Espresso*, "but it is transforming the church. . . . In Italy, there are already 1,131 priests from outside the European Union on the payroll of the Bishops' Conference, that is, 3 percent of the total." Italy is thus becoming 'missionary territory,' the magazine notes.

Dried Pet Treats Can Make You Ill

"Pet treats made from the dried ears, hooves, lungs, and bones of pigs and cows have been implicated in *Salmonella* poisoning in humans," reports *FDA Consumer*. According to Canadian health officials, over a one year period, more than 35 Canadians were treated for *salmonella* poisoning after handling dried pig ears. Gloria Dunnigan, director of the Division of Compliance for the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine, suggests that con-

sumers handle dried animal parts just as they would raw meat. "In other words, wash your hands with soap and hot water after handling, avoid putting the treats on food contact surfaces (such as kitchen countertops), and don't allow children to touch their mouths after handling [them]," says the magazine.

Capsules That See



An Israeli company has developed a capsule that after being swallowed acts as a tiny video camera for studying ailments of the small intestine, reports the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior*. The minicamera transmits signals to a special belt that the patient wears around the hips. The images are then processed by a computer and studied by specialists. The small camera is expelled by natural means. According to Dr. Blair Lewis, one of the advantages of this method of examination is that it is painless. One of the capsule's inventors, Professor Paul Swain, says that "it will be possible to obtain an image of the lower part of the small intestine without having to sedate the patient and even while he is walking about." The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has given approval for the capsule to be tried on 20 patients in New York and London.

Rising Depression at Work

"Stress, anxiety and depression on the job affect as many as one in 10 workers worldwide," reports the Paris daily *International Herald Tribune*. A study by the UN International Labor Organization found that work-induced stress costs Europe and the United States over \$120 billion a year. The rise in job-related depression is said to be due, in part, to the technology revolution, which has put additional stress on workers. The *Tribune* reported that in the United States, some "200 million working days are lost annually due to work-related mental health problems" and that in Finland over half the work force suffers from stress-related problems. Additionally, some 30 percent of workers in Britain are said to have mental-health problems, and 5 percent suffer from major depression.

Temple's Mixed Flock

An old Buddhist temple in Japan is attracting more than worshipers. Since the temple underwent restoration work in 1955, woodpeckers have been flocking to it. The small holes that they have made in the temple "are so numerous that some tourists think they are part of the design—to allow sunlight to filter in, brightening up the inside," says *Asahi Evening News*. The chief priest laments that until now all attempts to keep the birds away from the temple have failed. Built in 1286, the main hall of Daizenji Temple in Yamanshi Prefecture is officially recognized as a national treasure.

FROM OUR READERS

Proof of Creation Working among scientists for many years, I was always irritated by their claims that belief in creation was too simplistic. The series "Seeing More Than Your Eyes Can See" (August 22, 2000) is the perfect answer to such claims. In just a few pages, you provided convincing proof of creation. *Awake!* is to be commended for the caliber of its writing and research.

B. E., New Zealand

I am studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, and my faith in God's existence was definitely strengthened when I considered the information about atoms, cells, and DNA.

T. K., Japan

Now I can explain why we have rainbows, why grass is green, and what an atom is! Although *Awake!* is not a science magazine, it points to scientific evidence that supports belief in a Creator.

M. F., United States

Recovery Without Blood Transfusion The article "A Matter of Conscience" (August 22, 2000) touched me deeply. I found myself in exactly the same situation when I was given a diagnosis of acute promyelocytic leukemia. What happened to me thereafter was almost identical to what happened to Darlene. I was told that I had only a few days to live. That was three years ago.

A. B., Germany

Sexual Harassment I would like to express my appreciation for the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Deal With Sexual Harassment?" (August 22, 2000). In school they used to call me a flood of names because I didn't indulge in immoral behavior. After finishing high school, I thought the harassment would stop, but a number of girls have made suggestive comments to me. Letting my Christian beliefs become common knowledge has helped me to resist such ad-

vances. Thank you for providing us with this spiritual food.

H. C., Zambia

The article has been a big help. A boy in my third-grade class won't stop looking at me. Now I know just what to do.

H. K., United States

It came at exactly the right time! I am suffering sexual harassment at my workplace. I was getting emotionally drained. Just when I was ready to break down, this article popped up. Now I know how to deal with the people at work.

L. T., United States

Russian City Since my company has international business, I enjoy reading articles about various countries. A coworker has a son living in Russia, so I told her about the article "A Visit to 'Russia's Oldest City.'" (August 22, 2000) She was thrilled to receive it, and after reading it she asked for another copy of *Awake!* I gave her the May 22, 2000, issue with the article "A Unique Clock in Prague." This led her to accept a subscription to *Awake!* Thanks for providing such valuable information.

S. O., United States

Watery Goulash? I thought that I would try the recipe for Hungarian goulash in the article "The Spice That Came From Halfway Around the World." (September 8, 2000) Everything was going great until it said to add two quarts of water. My goulash looked like soup instead of the stew that the picture shows. Did I misunderstand the recipe?

L. P., Canada

No, we erred in calling it a stew, since the recipe is actually for a Hungarian goulash soup. Some cookbooks suggest using less water than we recommended. Interestingly, though, some readers tried the recipe and have written to say how much they enjoyed it!—ED.

The Tower of C R E S T

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN FRANCE



HISTORIC towers come in all shapes and sizes and have served many purposes. Some were built to guard strategic locations, and others were used as prisons; however, most are now tourist spots. The tower that dominates the little town of Crest on the banks of the River Drôme in southeast France has filled all three roles.

The imposing size of the Tower of Crest makes it visible from afar. With its northeast face measuring 170 feet, it is one of France's tallest. From the top, the panoramic view of the foothills of the Vercors, the mountains of the Ardèche, and the Rhône valley is truly splendid.

The origins of the tower are not known exactly, but initially it served as a fortress. During the Albigensian Crusade in the 13th century, the Catholic troops of Simon de Montfort, aided by Catholic bishops, took that castle. It was then used as a base for fighting the Albigenses.

During the Wars of Religion (1562-98), the castle came under attack by Protestants on several occasions but was never taken. The tower narrowly escaped destruction in 1633 when all but its strongest and surest part was demolished by order of King Louis XIII. From then on, it was used as a prison for common criminals and opponents of the monarchy as well as for Huguenots. The imprisonment of these French Protestants coincided with the period when the Edict of Nantes, which had brought about a degree of religious tolerance in France, was gradually cast aside. The prison walls still bear the graffiti of some of these religious prisoners.

Today the Tower of Crest is a historical monument that receives, on average, 30,000 visitors per year. In 1998 it was included in events commemorating the 400th anniversary of the Edict of Nantes. Its walls are a grim reminder of what can occur when a climate of religious intolerance is allowed to develop.

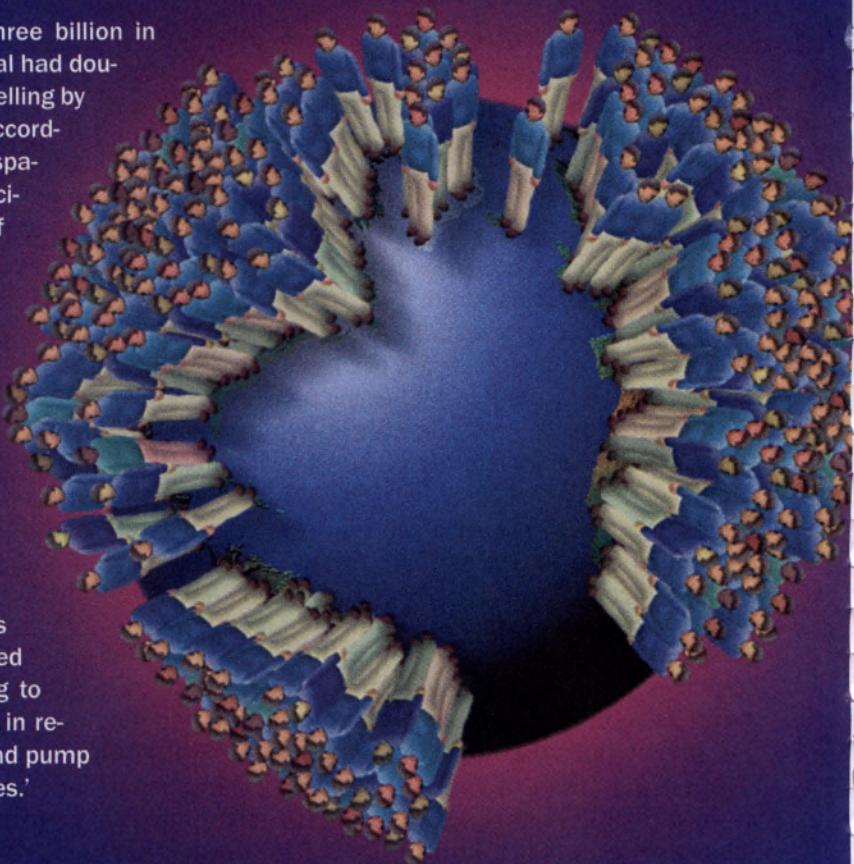


"PLANETARY OVERLOAD"

Is There an Answer?

Global population reached three billion in 1960. By the year 2000, that total had doubled. "The tide of humanity is swelling by five new births every second," according to the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper. The world now has 23 megacities with populations in excess of ten million inhabitants, and by 2025 the world's population is projected to reach ten billion!

Scientists express concern over the stress that such growth will have on earth's already fragile ecosystems. Each new citizen of the world requires food, water, and shelter, and as the population grows, consumption and waste increase. The challenge is that of managing the uncontrolled growth of supercities. According to the *Sun*, these supercities 'suck in resources from vast hinterlands and pump out vast quantities of toxic wastes.'



KNOWLEDGE
That Leads to Everlasting Life

