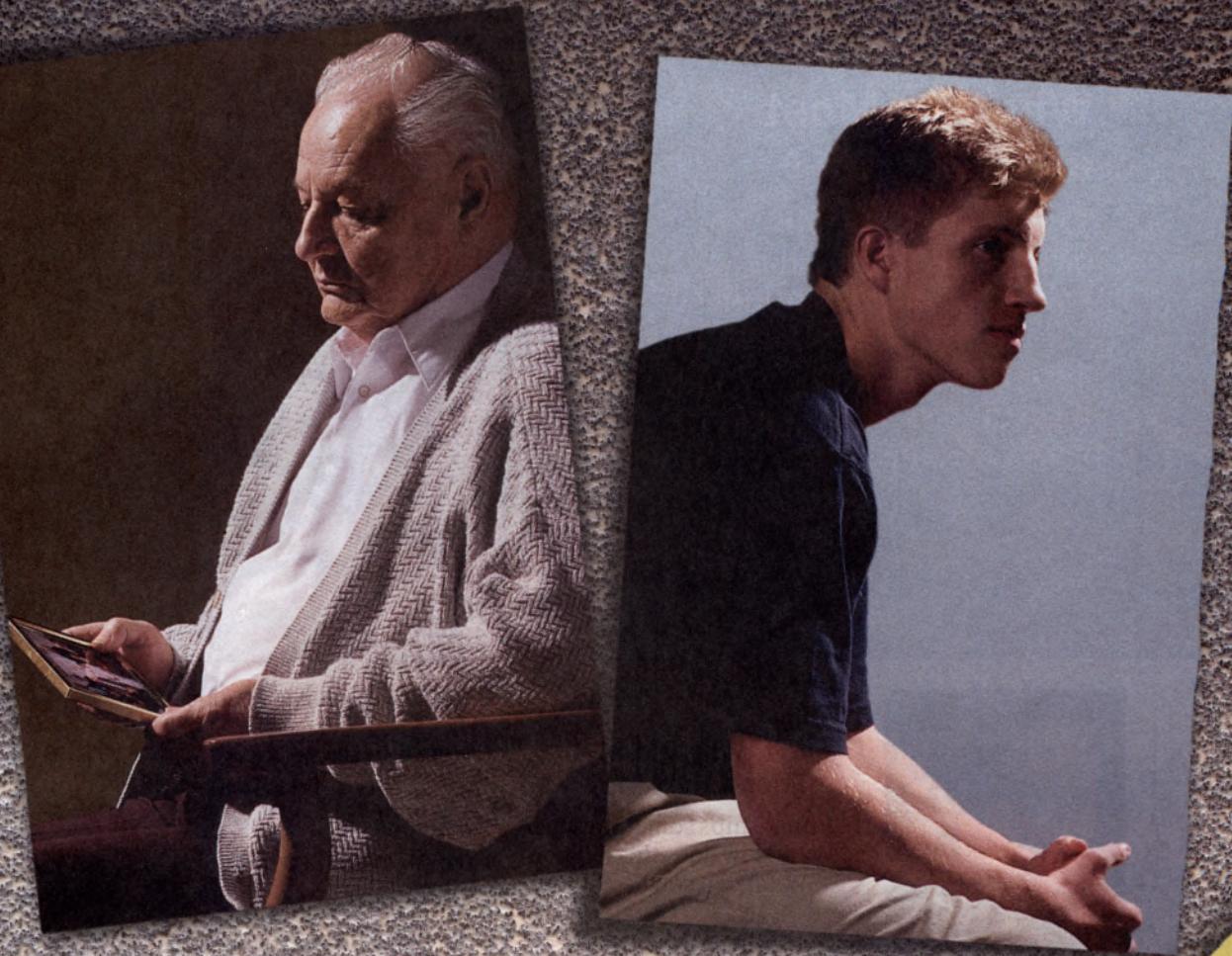


# Awake!

February 22, 2000



## Suicide Who Are Most at Risk?

RUSSIANS TREASURE  
FREEDOM OF  
WORSHIP

Average Printing 20,381,000  
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The modern tragedy of teenage suicide has gained public attention. Yet, you will find the story about a group that is even more at risk to be very revealing.



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# SUICIDE

## The Hidden Epidemic

**J**OHN AND MARY\* are in their late 50's and live in the rural United States in a small house. John is slowly dying of emphysema and congestive heart failure. Mary simply cannot imagine life without John, and she cannot stand the pain of seeing him fade away, one gasping breath at a time. Mary has health problems of her own and has suffered for years from depression. John has been alarmed lately because Mary has been talking about suicide. Her thinking is increasingly confused because of the depression and all the medication she takes. She says that she cannot bear the thought of being alone.

The house is full of medicine—heart pills,

\* Names have been changed.

antidepressants, tranquilizers. In the early hours one morning, Mary goes into the kitchen and just starts taking pills. She doesn't stop until John finds her and takes the pills from her. He calls the rescue squad as she slips into a coma. He prays it is not too late.

### What the Statistics Reveal

Much has been written in recent years about increasing numbers of suicides among the young—and rightly so, for what greater tragedy is there than the needless death of a young person, full of life and promise? Yet, overlooked in the headlines is the fact that the suicide rate in most countries rises steadily with age. This is true whether the overall suicide rate in a given country is

**Suicide Rates per 100,000 Persons, by Age and Sex**

Ages 15 to 24		Ages 75 and Up	
Men/Women	Country	Men/Women	
8.0 / 2.5	Argentina	<b>55.4</b> / 8.3	
4.0 / 0.8	Greece	<b>17.4</b> / 1.6	
19.2 / 3.8	Hungary	<b>168.9</b> / 60.0	
10.1 / 4.4	Japan	<b>51.8</b> / 37.0	
7.6 / 2.0	Mexico	<b>18.8</b> / 1.0	
53.7 / 9.8	Russia	<b>93.9</b> / 34.8	
23.4 / 3.7	United States	<b>50.7</b> / 5.6	

high or low, as the box on the preceding page shows. A glance at those statistics also reveals the global nature of this hidden epidemic.

In 1996 the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reported that the number of suicides among Americans aged 65 and older had jumped by 36 percent since 1980. Some of this increase was due to the greater numbers of elderly Americans—but not all of it. In 1996 the actual rate of suicide among those over 65 also went up, by 9 percent, for the first time in 40 years. Of injury-related deaths, only falls and motor-vehicle crashes killed more elderly Americans. Actually, even these alarming figures may be too low. "Suicide is suspected of being grossly understated in the statistics based on cause-of-death certification," observes *A Handbook for the Study of Suicide*. The book adds that some estimate the actual figures to be twice as high as the reported statistics.

The result? The United States, like many other countries, is suffering from the hidden global epidemic of senior-citizen suicide. Dr. Herbert Hendin, an expert on the subject, notes: "Despite the fact that the suicide rate in the United States rises consistently and markedly with age, suicide among older people has received little public attention." Why is that? He suggests that part of the problem is that since the suicide rate for older people has always been high, "it has not created the sudden alarm accompanying the dramatic increase in youthful suicide."

### A Terrible Efficiency

These statistics, although shocking, are just cold numbers. They cannot convey the loneliness of life without a cherished mate, the frustration of lost independence, the despair of a lingering disease, the emptiness of chronic depression, the hopelessness of a fatal illness. The sad truth is that while young people may attempt suicide as a reckless reaction to temporary problems, older people are usually faced with problems that seem to be permanent and unsolvable. As a result, they often approach suicide more determinedly than the young and carry it out with a terrible efficiency.

"Not only is suicide significantly more prevalent among older persons, but the suicidal act itself reflects important differences between old and young," notes Dr. Hendin, in his book *Suicide in America*. "In particular, the ratio of attempted to actual suicides shifts quite markedly among older persons. Among the population as a whole, the ratio of attempted suicides to actual suicides has been estimated to be 10 to 1; among the young (15-24), it has been estimated to be 100 to 1; and among those over 55, it has been estimated to be 1 to 1."

What sobering statistics! How depressing to grow old, lose physical strength, and suffer pain and sickness! Little wonder so many commit suicide. Yet, there is powerful reason to treasure life—even under very difficult circumstances. Consider what happened to Mary, who was mentioned in the introduction.

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# Given a Desire TO LIVE

MARY suffered from clinical depression as well as some other health problems. However, she was not isolated from her family, nor did she abuse alcohol or drugs. Mary's case well illustrates the point that not all risk factors need to be present for a serious suicide attempt to take place.

For a time it seemed that Mary would become another statistic testifying to the efficacy with which older people end their lives. For days she remained in a coma, unresponsive, in the intensive care section of the local hospital, her vital signs flickering. Her distraught husband, John, was rarely far from her side. The doctors warned John and the family that Mary might not survive and that they could expect her to suffer permanent brain damage even if she did pull through.

Mary was visited daily by a neighbor, Sally, who is one of Jehovah's Witnesses. "I urged the family not to give up hope," says Sally. "My mother, who is diabetic, was in a coma for weeks a couple of years ago. The doctors told our family that she would nev-

er survive, but she did. I would take Mary's hand and talk to her, as I did with my mother, and it seemed to me that I could detect a feeble response." By the third day, the response was stronger, and Mary seemed to recognize people, although she could not speak.

### 'Could I Have Prevented It?'

"John was so terribly guilt-ridden," says Sally. "He was sure that it was all his fault." This is a common response to the suicide or attempted suicide of a loved one. "I reminded him that Mary was being treated for clinical depression. She was sick and could not help being depressed any more than he could help being physically sick."

Those whose loved ones commit suicide are often tormented by the question, What could I have done to prevent it? Alertness to warning signs and risk factors may avert an attempt. But if not, remember that *you are not responsible for another person's self-destructive act.* (Galatians 6:5) This is especially important to remember in those cases where the suicidal family member

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## Risk Factors and Warning Signs

"Risk factors for suicide among older persons differ from those among younger persons," observes *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. Those risk factors include "a higher prevalence of alcohol abuse and depression, greater use of highly lethal methods, and social isolation. In addition, older persons . . . have more physical illnesses and affective disorders." The book *Suicide*, by Stephen Flanders, lists the following risk factors, any of which deserve attention.

### **Chronic depression:**

"Researchers report that 50% or more of those who kill themselves have a history of serious depression."

**Hopelessness:** In some studies, even people who did not seem depressed were much more likely to be suicidal if they had no hope for the future.

**Alcoholism and drug abuse:** "It is estimated that between 7% and 21% [of alcoholics] kill themselves, compared to less than 1% of the general population."

**Family influence:** "Studies reveal that members of a family touched by a suicide are at a greater risk for committing suicide themselves."

**Illness:** "Fear over physical decline, leading to possible institutionalization, can be enough to precipitate a suicidal response among some older people."

**Losses:** "The loss may be tangible, such as a mate or friend, a job, or a person's health. It can also be something intangible. Examples include self-worth, status, or a sense of security."

*In addition to these risk factors, Flanders' book lists the following warning signs that should never be taken lightly.*

### **Previous suicide**

**attempt:** "This is the single best indicator of possible suicide."

**Talk of suicide:** "Statements such as 'They won't have to worry about me much longer' or 'They'd be better off without me' are examples of obvious threats."

### **Final arrangements:**

"Such behavior includes making a will, giving away prized possessions, and making arrangements for pets."

### **Personality or behavior change:**

When this is "accompanied by expressions of worthlessness or hopelessness," it can be "a sign of depression severe enough to lead to self-destructive behavior."

deliberately seeks to inflict guilt on others. Dr. Hedin, quoted earlier, notes: "It should be kept in mind that fatal suicide attempts are often made by people who are hoping to influence or manipulate the feelings of other people even though they will not be around to witness the success or failure of their efforts."

Dr. Hedin goes on to point out: "In the case of older people who are suicidal, there are often grown children as well as siblings or marital partners whom the patient wishes to influence, control, or force to assume a

more protective role. The demands of the patient are often impossible to meet, the patient is often uncompromising with regard to them, and suicide attempts that are not serious are often followed by attempts that are."

Family members in these circumstances may feel that they are truly under extreme pressure, beyond their strength. Yet, never forget that Jehovah God raises up the dead and that this might well include our loved ones who because of depression, mental illness, or despair took their own lives.—See

"The Bible's Viewpoint: Suicides—A Resurrection?" in *Awake!* of September 8, 1990, pages 22-3.

While suicide cannot be justified, it is comforting to remember that the future prospects of our loved ones rest with a God who fully understands that weaknesses and frailties could push one to such desperate action. The Bible says of Jehovah: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, his loving-kindness is superior toward those fearing him. As far off as the sunrise is from the sunset, so far off from us he has put our transgressions. As a father shows mercy to his sons, Jehovah has shown mercy to those fearing him. For he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust."—Psalm 103:11-14.

#### A Happy Outcome

For two days Mary teetered between life and death, but she survived. Gradually her mind cleared, and John took her home, to a house with all medicine safely under lock and key. Mary now has regular follow-up visits with mental-health social workers and says that she is unable to explain or even remember the dark compulsion that so nearly cost her her life.

Now Sally, John and Mary's neighbor, has a weekly Bible study with them. They have learned from the Bible that the very problems that seem so insoluble, especially to older ones, will be solved by God

very soon. "Of course, by itself, a Bible study is no panacea," explains Sally. "You have to prove to yourself from the Scriptures that these promises are real, and then you have to apply what you learn. But I think John and Mary are getting a real hope for the future."

If your future looks bleak and you would like a real hope, why not get in touch with Jehovah's Witnesses? Let them prove to you, as they did to John and Mary, that there are no problems that God cannot and will not solve in the near future. No matter how bad things may look right now, there is an answer. Please consider with us the sure hope for the future that has provided many with a renewed desire to live.



**Survivors often need help to cope with a mate's suicide**

# A SURE HOPE

**N**EARLY 2,000 years ago, Jesus, often called the greatest man who ever lived, was unjustly sentenced to death. While he hung on a torture stake, an evildoer hanging next to him said derisively: "You are the Christ, are you not? Save yourself and us."

At that, another evildoer who was also being executed rebuked the man: "Do you not fear God at all, now that you are in the same judgment? And we, indeed, justly so, for we are receiving in full what we deserve for things we did; but this man did nothing out of the way." Then he turned to Jesus and petitioned: "Remember me when you get into your kingdom."

Jesus replied: "Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise."—Luke 23:39-43.

Jesus had a marvelous hope set before him. The apostle Paul noted the effect that this hope had upon Jesus, observing: "For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame."—Hebrews 12:2.

Included in "the joy" set before Jesus was living with his Father again in heaven and eventually serving as Ruler of God's Kingdom. Moreover, he would also have the joy of welcoming into heaven proven and trusted followers of his that would rule with him as kings over the earth. (John 14:2, 3; Philippians 2:7-11; Revelation 20:5, 6) What, then, did Jesus mean when he promised the repentant evildoer that he would be in Paradise?

## What Hope for the Evildoer?

That man did not qualify to rule with Jesus in heaven. He is not included among

those to whom Jesus said: "You are the ones that have stuck with me in my trials; and I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom." (Luke 22:28, 29) Yet, Jesus promised that the evildoer would be in Paradise with him. How will that promise be fulfilled?

The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were placed by Jehovah God in Paradise, a garden of pleasure called Eden. (Genesis 2:8, 15) Eden was on earth, and God purposed that the entire earth be a paradise. However, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were put out of their beautiful home. (Genesis 3:23, 24) But Jesus revealed that Paradise would be restored and that it would come to include the entire earth.

When the apostle Peter asked Jesus what reward he and his fellow apostles would receive for following him, Jesus promised: "In the *re-creation*, when the Son of man sits down upon his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also yourselves sit upon twelve thrones." (Matthew 19:27, 28) Significantly, in Luke's account of this conversation, instead of saying "in the re-creation," Jesus is quoted as saying "in the coming system of things."—Luke 18:28-30.

Thus, when Jesus Christ sits down in heaven upon his glorious throne, along with those who will rule with him, he will establish a righteous new system of things. (2 Timothy 2:11, 12; Revelation 5:10; 14:1, 3) By means of Christ's heavenly rule, God's original purpose for the entire earth to be a paradise will be fulfilled!

During this Kingdom rule, Jesus will fulfill his promise to the criminal who died



***Keep the marvelous  
hope of God's new world  
close in mind***

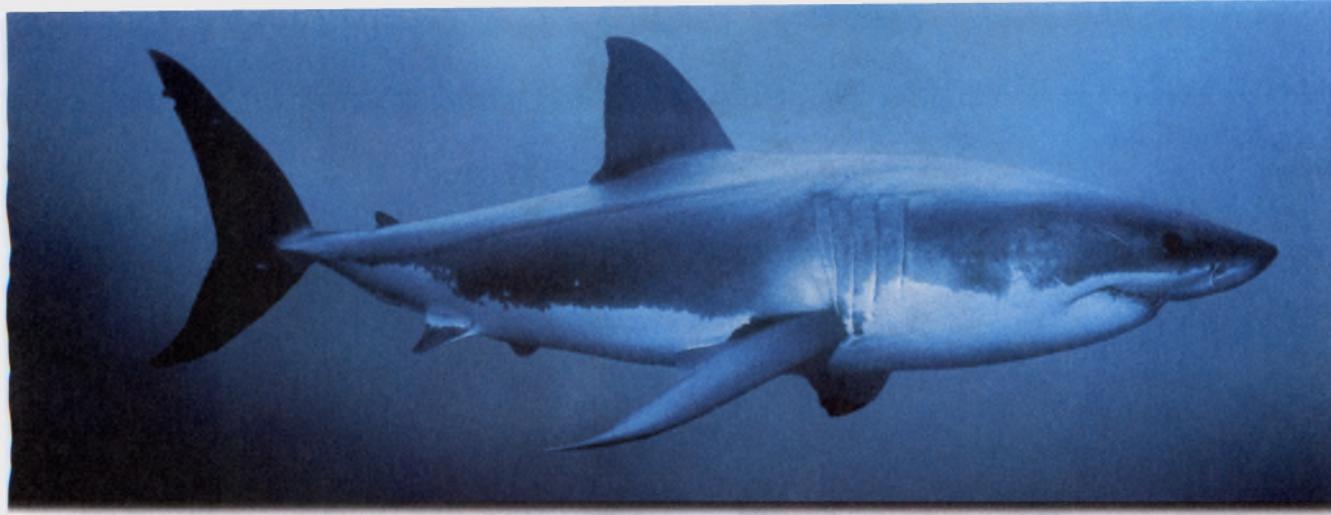
alongside him. He will resurrect him, and that man will become an earthly subject of Jesus. Then the evildoer will be given an opportunity to meet God's requirements and live forever under the rule of the Kingdom. Surely we can rejoice in the Bible-based prospect of living forever in Paradise on earth!

**Life Can Have Meaning**

Imagine the meaning that such a grand hope can give to our lives. It can help protect our minds from the disastrous results of negative thinking. That hope was likened by the apostle Paul to a vital piece of spiritual armor. He said that we must put "the hope of salvation" on "as a helmet."—1 Thessalonians 5:8; Psalm 37:29; Revelation 21:3, 4.

That hope is life sustaining. In the coming Paradise, loneliness will give way to tears of joy as cherished loved ones are brought back to life by "the God who raises up the dead." (2 Corinthians 1:9) Then the frustration of physical frailty, pain, and immobility will be forgotten, for "the lame one will climb up just as a stag does." A person's 'flesh will become fresher than in youth,' and he will "return to the days of his youthful vigor."—Isaiah 35:6; Job 33:25.

At that time, when "no resident will say: 'I am sick,'" the despair of a lingering disease will be merely a fading memory. (Isaiah 33:24) The emptiness of chronic depression will be turned into "rejoicing to time indefinite." (Isaiah 35:10) The hopelessness of a fatal illness will vanish along with death itself, mankind's ancient enemy.—1 Corinthians 15:26.



# THE GREAT WHITE SHARK

## ***Under Attack***

▼Photos by Rodney Fox Reflections



The largest carnivorous fish in the world, the great white shark is perhaps more frightening to humans than any other living thing. Yet, now it is a protected species in all or some of the waters surrounding Australia, Brazil, Namibia, South Africa, and the United States as well as in the Mediterranean Sea. Other countries and states are also considering extending protection. But why protect a known killer? The issue, as we shall see, is not that simple. Nor are public perceptions of the white shark always based on fact.

**A** LONG with the killer whale and the sperm whale, the great white shark\* is at the top of the marine food chain. In the shark family, it is the king, the supershark. It will eat anything—fish, dolphins, even other sharks. But as it gets older, bigger, and slower, it develops a preference for seals, penguins, and carrion—especially dead whales.

In locating their food, most sharks use all their senses, including excellent vision. As for their sense of smell, let's just say that the metaphor of a swimming nose is most ap-

propriate! Yet, in addition, little escapes their ears—so little that sharks could also be called swimming ears.

The ears of the shark are aided by pressure-sensitive cells along each side of its body. Nothing escapes this eavesdropping system, which is especially attuned to the vibrations of struggle—a fish thrashing at the end of a spear, for example. Thus, it is prudent for underwater spear fishermen to get bleeding, thrashing fish out of the water as soon as possible.

Sharks also have a sixth sense. Thanks to the ampullae of Lorenzini—tiny ducts peppered around their nose—they can detect the weak electrical fields emanat-

\* The great white shark, or white shark, has a variety of common names. In Australia, for example, it is sometimes called the white pointer; in South Africa, the blue pointer.

ing from the beating heart, the gill action, or the swimming muscles of potential prey. In fact, so keen is this sixth sense that it may even sensitize sharks to the interaction of the earth's magnetic field with the ocean. As a result, sharks may know which way is north and which way is south.

### **Identifying the White Shark**

Though it is called the great white shark, only its underside is white or pale. Its back is normally a dark shade of gray. The two colors abut along the side of the fish in a ragged line that varies from shark to shark. This feature enhances camouflage, but it also helps scientists to recognize individual sharks.

How big do white sharks grow? "The largest white sharks accurately measured," says the book *Great White Shark*, "range between 19 and 21 feet."

Fish this size can weigh in at over 5,000 pounds. Yet, thanks to swept-back triangular appendages that fuse with a torpedolike torso, these monsters glide through the water like missiles. Their nearly symmetrical tail, built for power, is another rarity in the shark world, as most other species of sharks have distinctly asymmetrical tails.

The white shark's most distinguishing as well as fearsome assets are its huge conical head, its cold black eyes, and its mouth bristling with razor-sharp, serrated, triangular teeth. As these double-edged "knives" chip or drop out, a dental 'conveyor belt' nudges replacements forward.

### **Powered by Warmer Blood**

The circulatory system of the Lamnidae family of sharks, which includes the mako, the porbeagle, and the white, is dramatically different from that of most other sharks.

Their blood temperature is about 5 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit above water temperature. Their warmer blood speeds up digestion and adds to their strength and endurance. The mako, which feeds on fast pelagic fish, such as tuna, can speed through the water at 60 miles per hour for short bursts!

When sharks swim, they get lift from their two pectoral fins. If they swim too slowly, they stall and sink just like an aircraft, and this in spite of a buoyancy-inducing cache of oil stored in a liver so big that it may account for one quarter of the shark's total weight! In addition, many species of sharks must keep swimming to breathe, for in this way they drive oxygen-rich water through their mouths and gills. This accounts for their perennial cold grin!

### **A Man-Eater?**

Of the 368 species of sharks presently known, only about 20 are dangerous. And of these just four are responsible for most of the some 100 attacks on humans that are reported worldwide each year.

About 30 of these attacks are fatal. The four guilty species are the bull shark, which may have taken more human lives than any other shark, the tiger shark, the oceanic whitetip shark, and the white shark.

Surprisingly, at least 55 percent—and in some parts of the world, about 80 percent—of those attacked by the white shark have lived to tell the story. Why have so many survived an attack by such a feared predator?

### **Bite and Spit**

The white shark is known to spit out its wounded prey after an initial, powerful bite. Then it waits for the victim to die before



**These sharks have large and fearsome mouths**

eating it. When humans are the victims, this behavior provides an opportunity for rescue. This, at times, has been achieved by courageous companions, thus demonstrating the wisdom of the advice never to swim alone.

However, such rescue attempts would be practically suicidal were it not for another white-shark behavior. The smell of blood does not drive it into a feeding frenzy as it does certain other sharks. But why does the white shark use a bite-and-spit strategy?

It is because of its eyes, speculates one scientist. Unlike other sharks, the white has no eyelidlike membrane to protect its eyes; rather, it rotates them in their sockets when collision is imminent. At the moment of impact, the eye is left exposed, perhaps to the flaying claws of a seal. Therefore, for the white shark, a quick, mortal strike and release is common behavior.

Keep in mind, too, that white sharks behave much like human babies—everything goes straight into the mouth for an initial evaluation! “Unfortunately, when a big white [test] bites there can be disastrous consequences,” explains John West, a marine biologist in Sydney, Australia.

Though the white shark is a dangerous animal, it is not a demon craving human flesh. One abalone diver who spent 6,000 hours in the water saw only two white sharks, and neither of them attacked him. In fact, the white shark has often fled from humans.

While diving off the Cape Verde Islands, ocean explorer Jacques-Yves Cousteau and a companion chanced upon a massive white shark. “[Its] reaction was the least conceivable one,” Cousteau wrote. “In pure fright, the monster voided a cloud of excrement and departed at an incredible speed.” He concluded: “In pondering all of our experiences with the white shark, I was continually struck by the great gulf between what the

public imagines the creature to be and what we saw it to be.”

### The White Shark as Prey

The public image has been greatly colored by the 1970’s novel *Jaws*, which was turned into a popular movie. Overnight the white shark became evil incarnate, and “whole gaggles of trophy hunters raced to see who among them would be first to display the head or the jaws of the maneater over the fireplace,” says the book *Great White Shark*. In time, a mounted white shark tooth would fetch up to \$1,000 (in Australia); and a full set of jaws, over \$20,000.

By far the majority of white sharks, though, die in commercial fishing nets. In addition, millions of other sharks are caught annually to satisfy the burgeoning market for shark products, especially fins. In recent years, as the numbers taken have diminished, alarm bells have been ringing worldwide, especially for white sharks.

### Understanding Is Coming

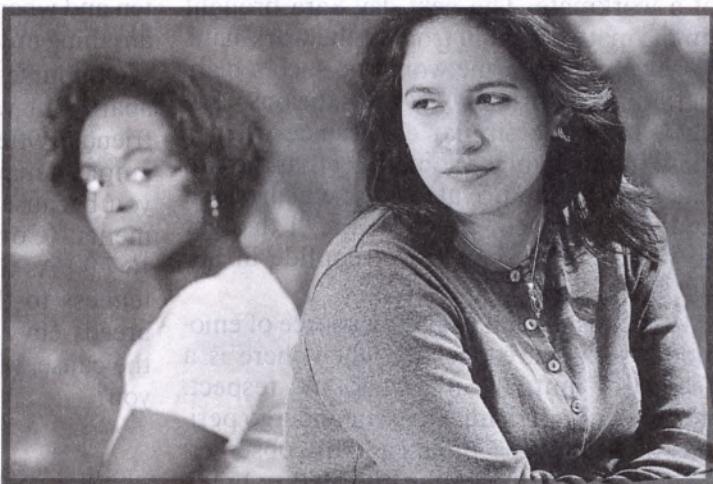
Sharks are known to scour the seas for the sick, dying, decrepit, and dead. Thus, a healthy shark population means healthy, hygienic oceans.

Recognizing the threat to the survival of sharks, the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature has set up a Shark Specialist Group to study the whole shark problem. Studying the white shark, however, is not easy—they are not prolific, and they die in captivity. So they must be studied in their natural habitat.

As humans have gained greater understanding of sharks, their attitude toward these fascinating creatures has changed. But that doesn’t change the great white shark. Though not a fiend, it is, nonetheless, a dangerous animal and should be treated with caution and respect. A lot of respect!

## YOUNG PEOPLE ASK . . .

"I had a couple of friends . . . Then they started being friends with one other girl and if I'd walk up to them, they'd stop talking. . . . They started excluding me from everything. It really hurt my feelings."—Karen.\*



IT CAN happen to the best of friends. One day the two are inseparable; the next day they aren't even talking to each other. "A friend is supposed to be somebody you can rely on and trust, somebody you can turn to no matter what," says 17-year-old Nora. Sometimes, though, your best friend may start acting like your worst enemy.

### Friendship Under Fire

What causes a sweet friendship to turn sour? For Sandra, the trouble began when her friend Megan borrowed one of her favorite tops. "When she returned it," says Sandra, "it was dirty and there was a little rip in the sleeve. She didn't even mention it, like I wasn't going to notice." How did Sandra feel about Megan's lack of consideration? "It drove me crazy," she says. "It felt as if she had no respect for my things . . . or my feelings."

Hurt might also be caused if a close friend does or says something that humiliates you. This happened to Cindy when she told a group of her schoolmates that she had not

## Why Did My Friend Hurt Me?

yet read a book for her book report. Suddenly, her friend Kate started to scold her. "She embarrassed me in front of a bunch of our friends," recalls Cindy. "I was so mad at her. Things really changed after that."

Sometimes a rift occurs when a friend starts spending time with new companions. "I had a good friend who became a member of this little clique," says 13-year-old Bonnie. "She started ignoring me." Or it may be that you begin to detect ulterior motives in a friend's companionship. "Bobby and I were really good friends," says Joe, 13. "I thought he liked me for me, but I found out that he only liked me because my dad is in advertising and could always get good tickets to games and concerts." How does Joe feel now? "I'll never trust Bobby again!" he says.

In some cases a friend might reveal information to others that you wanted kept

\* Some names in this article have been changed.

confidential. Allison, for example, talked to her friend Sara about the personal problem of a workmate. The next day Sara brought up the matter right in front of the workmate. "I never dreamed she would be such a blabbermouth!" Allison says. "I was furious." Rachel, 16, had a similar experience when a close friend divulged something that the two had discussed in private. "I felt embarrassed and also betrayed," Rachel says. "I thought to myself, 'How can I ever confide in her again?'"

A friendship can provide a source of emotional support, especially when there is a feeling of mutual care, trust, and respect. Yet, even close friendships can undergo periods of strain. The Bible candidly observes: "There exist companions disposed to break one another to pieces." (Proverbs 18:24) Regardless of the cause, it can be devastating when you feel that you have been betrayed by a friend. Why does this happen?

### Why Friendships Falter

No human relationship—whether between youths or adults—is problem free. After all, it is just as the Christian disciple James wrote: "We all stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man, able to bridle also his whole body." (James 3:2; 1 John 1:8) Since everyone makes mistakes, it is only to be expected that sooner or later a friend will do or say something that hurts you. You may even recall a time when you caused hurt to that person as well. (Ecclesiastes 7:22) "We're all imperfect, and we're going to rub one another the wrong way once in a while," says 20-year-old Lisa.

Besides human imperfection, there are other factors that could be involved. Remember, as you grow and mature, your interests—as well as those of your friends—tend to change. Thus, two people who once shared much in common may find that they are slowly but steadily growing

apart. One teenager lamented regarding her best friend: "We don't call each other very often and when we do talk, we hardly agree on anything anymore."

Of course, it is one thing simply to grow apart. But why do some people hurt their friends? Often jealousy is involved. For example, it may be that a friend starts to resent you because of your talents or accomplishments. (Compare Genesis 37:4; 1 Samuel 18:7-9.) As the Bible states, "jealousy is rottenness to the bones." (Proverbs 14:30) It breeds envy and contention. Regardless of the cause, what can you do if a friend hurts you?

### Making Amends

"First," says Rachel, "I would observe the person and try to determine if what he or she did was intentional." When you are the victim of some word or deed that you feel is insulting, do not react merely on the emotion of the moment. Instead, be patient and think the matter through. (Proverbs 14:29) Will your reacting rashly over the perceived insult really improve the situation? After considering matters, you may choose to follow the advice of Psalm 4:4: "Be agitated, but do not sin. Have your say in your heart, upon your bed, and keep silent." Then you may choose to let 'love cover a multitude of sins.'—1 Peter 4:8.

What, though, if you feel that you cannot simply dismiss the hurtful conduct? In such a case, it might be best to approach the person. "Get together, just the two of you, and talk out what happened," says 13-year-old Frank. "If you don't, you'll hold a grudge." Susan, 16, felt similarly. "The best thing to do," she says, "is tell them that you trusted them and they let you down." Jacqueline too prefers to handle things on a personal basis. "I try to get things out in the open," she says. "Usually, the person is straight with you and you can fix things practically on the spot."

Of course, you should be careful not to approach your friend in a fit of anger. The Bible states: "An enraged man stirs up contention, but one that is slow to anger quiets down quarreling." (Proverbs 15:18) So wait until you are calm before attempting to resolve the situation. "You're mad at first," admits Lisa, "but you should allow yourself to cool down. Wait until you're not intensely angry at the person. Then you can go to the person and sit down and discuss things in a peaceful manner."

The key word is "peaceful." Remember, your objective is not to give your friend a tongue-lashing. It is to settle matters amicably and, if at all possible, to restore the friendship. (Psalm 34:14) So speak from the heart. "You can say, 'I'm your friend, and you're my friend; but I just need to know what happened,'" suggests Lisa. "You need to know the *reason* behind the action. Once you do, it's usually not so hard to deal with."

**You may restore a friendship by talking about what happened**

It would certainly be wrong to try to retaliate, perhaps by gossiping about the person and trying to get others to side with you. The Christian apostle Paul wrote to the Romans: "Return evil for evil to no one." (Romans 12:17) Really, no matter how deep the hurt may be, lashing back will only make matters worse. "Revenge is not worth it," says Nora, "because you'll never become friends again." In contrast, she adds that doing your best to repair the relationship "makes you feel like a better person."

But what if your friend is unresponsive to your attempts at reconciliation? In such a case, remember that friendships come in varying degrees. "Not every friend will be a close one," says family counselor Judith McCleese. "Learn that you can have different kinds of relationships." Still, you can be comforted in the fact that you have done your part to restore peace. The apostle Paul wrote: "If possible, *as far as it depends upon you*, be peaceable with all men."—Romans 12:18.

Storms will pass through even the best of friendships. If you can weather the storm without letting it destroy your view of others or your self-worth, you are well on your way to becoming a mature adult. Although some may be "disposed to break one another to pieces,"

the Bible also assures us that "there exists a friend sticking closer than a brother."—Proverbs 18:24.





**Orchid Lace**

# The Gladiolus

## A Remarkable Flower of Fragile Beauty

**A**lmost everyone is awed by the delicate beauty of flowering vegetation, an outstanding example of which is the gladiolus. Because it is so popular, the gladiolus is grown commercially in several countries, including Israel and the Netherlands. There are also gladiolus farms in the United States that ship their products to flower-growing enthusiasts around the world.

The wondrous gladiolus family has increased to include more than 2,000 varieties, which come in every imaginable color, hue, and texture. How has this seemingly endless variety of the same flower been developed by flower growers?

### Creating New Varieties

The grower uses an instrument, such as a camel-hair brush, to remove pollen from the stamen, the male part, of a flower and transfer it to the stigma, the female part, of a different flower. The pollen is usually placed on the lowest florets, or blooms, of the host plant. Once this is done, the flower is tied shut to prevent natural pollinators, such as bees or flies, from altering the results. To obtain a particular color or appearance, one type of gladiolus is crossed with a different one having the desired features.

This does not mean that the new variety, or hybrid, is a new kind of flower. The potential for such variety has been there all along, locked up in the gladiolus' complex genetic code. Through selective breeding, gladioli in colors ranging from dazzling white to

black-red or dark purple can be achieved. There are also gladioli with blotches, spots, frills, and double florets. Some even have a slight fragrance.

### Delicate Beauty

Look closely at the flowers illustrated here, and note the many varieties of glads. What a delight is the one seen here called Pulchritude! As its petals stretch out, they reveal soft, ruffled, lavender edges with darker lavender at their tips. On the bottom petals, leading into the throat of each floret, is a delightful splash of dark rose and purple.

Another variety, called Orchid Lace, also seen here, gives the impression that it is so fragile that the slightest touch would bruise it. Its florets lie back against the stem, while long stamens rise from the center of each colorful throat. Other varieties bear such evocative names as Glittering Star, Dream's End, Red Alert, Peerless, and Silver Moon.

### Growing Gladioli

In addition to obtaining seeds from the flowers, gladiolus farmers harvest the corms, the bulblike bottom part of the flower's stem. They also collect the cormels, small secondary corms that grow on the main corms.

Cultivated gladioli have been developed mostly from African species. Thus, they have



**Coral Dream**



**Monet**

**Dream's End**

**Sunsport**

their roots in the tropics, so to speak, and are quite sensitive to climate. They may not survive the cold winters of some lands, but they do well during the warm summer months.

In colder climates the corms should be dug up at the end of the growing season and carefully cleaned. A new corm will have formed, and removing the old, dead corm at the very bottom of the stem will make it easier for the new corm to put down roots. In addition, the pea-sized cormels that lie clustered on each corm must be removed. During cold weather both cormels and corms should be kept in a dry, cool place with temperatures above freezing.

When planted, each cormel will put out thin leaves, and by the end of the growing season, the cormel will have become a mature corm. When these corms are planted the following season, they will grow into luxuriant, flower-bearing adult plants.

In temperate climates, planting can begin in the early spring. Planting time is not so critical in warmer climates. Ideally, the cormels and corms should be planted in moist, slightly acidic soil. They should be located where they will get bright sunlight, as gladioli do not do well in shade.

Cormels may be sprinkled into a three-inch-deep furrow and then covered with earth. Corms, on the other hand, should be planted at a depth of five inches. To prevent overcrowding in a home garden, medium-sized corms should be planted about three inches apart

and larger corms four to five inches apart. If you clean and plant your gladiolus corms carefully, after a few months, you should be rewarded with an indescribable display—the rich, fragile beauty of the gladiolus.



# A Bright Outlook Despite Infirmities

***AS TOLD BY KONSTANTIN MOROZOV***

*When I was born on July 20, 1936, there were no developed bones in my body other than my skull and spine. My entire skeleton was made up of flimsy cartilage no firmer than the cartilage of an adult human's ear. I weighed less than a pound. The only signs of life manifest were a weak heartbeat, soft breathing, and a few movements.*

I WAS the seventh of nine children in a family that lived in the village of Sara, in Ul'yanovsk Oblast, in the heart of Russia. When I was three weeks old, my parents took me to church to be baptized. The priest hurriedly sprinkled me with water and told my parents to take me home as quickly as possible, since he said I would die in a few hours.

In January 1937, my parents took me to the city of Kazan', capital of the Russian republic of Tatarstan, to show me to some specialists. By this time I could say "Mama," "Papa," and "Babushka" (Grandma), and I knew the names of my brothers. After the doctors examined me, they told my parents that I would die within a year. They recommended that I be put to death and preserved in a glass flask as an exhibit to be used as a visual aid for medical students. How thankful I am to my dear parents that they decisively refused!

## **A Childhood of Suffering**

For as long as I can remember, my body has been constantly racked with pain. Yet, even as a child, I strove to maintain a positive frame of mind

and tried to laugh often and enjoy life. This is the disposition that I have maintained. My skeleton gradually got stronger, and I was able to sit up and crawl a little. I did not grow as normal children do and was badly misshapen. But I was a capable student, and by five years of age, I was able to read and write.

In May of 1941, my mother took me to church a second time. There were a number of people there, and all were on their knees praying. A female attendant came up to Mother to inquire why she had not knelt down. When Mother showed me to her, she went to speak with the priest. On returning, the attendant escorted us to the exit and suggested that Mother leave me outside the door and come in alone. She claimed that because of my parents' sins, I had been given to them by "the unclean one." Mother returned home with tears in her eyes. I thought about this for a long time. I wondered, "Who is this "unclean one"?"



In 1948, when I was 12, Mother took me to the village of Merenki in the Chuvash Republic, about 50 miles from our home. There were medicinal springs there, and Mother hoped that I might be cured by the water. Among the conditions that the priests set for my being cured was that I wasn't to eat for three days. I also had to receive Communion in the church. Although I didn't have much trust in the church, I agreed to the conditions. The trip for me was long and arduous, but I endured, trying to occupy myself with the beauty of the landscape.

The church was full of people. While Mother was carrying me through the crowd, an old woman handed me a piece of candy. I took it and put it in my pocket. When my turn came to receive Communion, the old woman cried out: "Father, don't give Communion to him! He just ate a piece of candy!" I explained that the piece of candy was in my pocket, but the priest shouted: "You insolent freak! Must you lie as well? Remove him from the church!" The next day, however, another priest performed the Communion ritual and washed me with "miraculous" water. Yet, there was no miracle. My infirmities remained.

#### Intellectual Achievements

Although I was severely handicapped physically, during my teens I pursued many academic and intellectual goals. In 1956, I joined the *Komsomol* (Young Communist League) and, in time, taught *Komsomol* history to younger people. I was a member of the Home and Cultural Commission at a home for the disabled, and I also served there as radio director and announcer.

In addition, I was librarian of a mobile library of recorded books for the blind, and I was elected to membership in the Judge's Commission for the Fight Against Alcohol Abuse. I also participated in an amateur artists' club, sang, and played several musical instruments.

#### At the Home for the Disabled

In 1957, when I turned 21, my physical infirmities forced me to enter a home for the disabled. Yet, I wasn't about to give up. In October of 1963, I left for the Prosthetic Science Research Institute of Moscow. There I eventually underwent 18 operations to straighten my legs.

First, my legs were stretched. Then, after eight days, an operation was performed. Following that, a cast was put on my legs to hold them in place until the next operation. The nurse would cry when she saw how much I was suffering.

During the next four months, I learned to walk with crutches. With crutches I can raise myself up until I am nearly three and a half feet tall. I weigh a little over 60 pounds. Once I mastered walking with the crutches, I returned to the home for the disabled in 1964. Unfortunately, my weak leg bones could not hold up under the weight of my body, and soon I was once again forced to move around by crawling or with the aid of a wheelchair. The wheelchair is my main means of getting around to this day.

I never went to church again. The claim that I was born of "the unclean one" continued to wound my soul. I loved my father and mother very much, and I just could not accept that they and God were at fault for my condition. I tried to keep my chin up. I wanted to do good to others and, most of all, to prove to myself that even I was capable of doing so.

#### Living an Independent Life

In 1970, I married Lidia, who has been partially paralyzed since childhood. We acquired a small house, which we lived in for 15 years. During that time we both worked for our living. I learned to repair watches and other small, fine-tuned devices.

For a while I used a trained dog to perform a number of valuable services. In fact,



a dog trainer and I invented a specially constructed harness. I had two dogs—one named Vulkan and the other Palma. Palma was a faithful companion for many years. At the store she would pick up food products for me. The only thing she didn't like to do was to stand in line when we paid. She would carry my wallet in her teeth, and she had a small hook on her collar for my shopping bag.

In 1973 my mother fell seriously ill. Since I was always at home, my wife and I decided to bring her to live with us. By that time my father and five of my brothers had died, and my other three siblings lived in other parts of Russia. While Mother lived with us, I tried to do what I could for her. Eventually she died at the age of 85.

In 1978, I decided to construct a vehicle for myself. After working on several experimental vehicles, I ended up with a suitable one.

The local State Automobile Inspectorate allowed me to take a driving test and to register my vehicle. I named it *Osa* (Wasp). My wife and I made a small trailer for it that could carry up to 660 pounds. The two of us were able to get around in it and carry things with us. This motorized vehicle served us until 1985.

About this time I went blind in my left eye, and the vision in my right eye began to deteriorate. Then Lidia became ill with heart trouble. In May of 1985, because of our limitations, we were forced to move into a home for the disabled in the city of Dimitrovgrad.

#### **Why My Life Is So Happy Now**

In the summer of 1990, Jehovah's Witnesses visited our home for the disabled. I found what they taught to be very interesting. They showed me the passage in the Gospel of John about the man born blind. Regarding him, Jesus said: "Neither this man sinned nor his parents." (John 9:1-3) It was explained to me that we have inherited sin and illness from our ancestor Adam.—Romans 5:12.

Most of all, however, I was struck by the fact that eventually God will heal all who attain to life under the Kingdom rule of his Son, Jesus Christ, when Paradise will be restored on earth. (Psalm 37:11, 29; Luke 23:43; Revelation 21:3, 4) Tears of joy streamed down my face, and I whispered: "I have found the truth, the truth, the truth!" I studied the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses for a year, and in 1991, I underwent water baptism in symbol of my dedication to Jehovah God.

Although I developed a strong desire to serve Jehovah and to preach about his wonderful purposes, I faced a number of obstacles. Previously, I had little need to get around, but now I needed to get out to share my faith with others. My first territory for preaching was our home for the disabled,

where over 300 people lived. So that I would come in contact with as many people as possible, I asked to be assigned to serve in the room for household matters.

Every morning I seated myself at my workplace and took care of my assignments. In the course of my work, I have made many new friends with whom I have interesting discussions on Bible topics. A number of them have accepted books and magazines that have helped them to understand the Bible. Visitors have become used to having me read to them from the Bible and Bible-based publications. At lunchtime, there are often so many people in the room where my wife and I live that at times no one else can enter.

My Christian brothers and sisters from the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses have helped me a lot in the preaching work. They bring me Bible literature and spend time with my wife and me. They also help me to get to the Kingdom Hall for congregation meetings. One Witness bought a motorcycle with a sidecar for the very purpose of carrying me around. Others, who have cars, gladly come and pick me up during the cold winter months.

Thanks to such loving care, I have been able to attend well over a dozen conventions, or educational seminars, of Jehovah's Witnesses. My first one was the large international convention in Moscow in July 1993, where there was a peak attendance of 23,743, from over 30 countries. For me to attend that gathering meant making a trip of about 650 miles. Since then I have not missed a convention of Jehovah's people.

The administration of our home for the disabled has deep respect for me, for which I am very thankful. My spouse, Lidia, with whom I have lived in harmony for 30 years, also supports and helps me, although she does not share my religious views. But most

**Teaching a student  
In our home for  
the disabled**



of all, Jehovah supports me with his strong hand and endows me with his magnificent blessings. Not long ago, on September 1, 1997, I was appointed as a pioneer, as full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called.

There have been several occasions in my life when my heart could have stopped and I would have died. How happy I am now that that didn't occur and that I have come to know and to love the Source of life, Jehovah God! I want to continue to serve him along with my spiritual brothers and sisters worldwide as long as my heart continues to beat.

**IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**

**Modern Slavery—Its End Is Near!**

**Athens' Famous Past and  
Challenging Future**

**Noah—He Walked With God  
—How the Video Was Made**

# RUSSIANS TREASURE FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

SINCE THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SOVIET UNION IN 1991, PEOPLE LIVING THERE HAVE ENJOYED GREATER FREEDOM TO WORSHIP GOD. SUCH FREEDOM HAS ALSO BEEN TREASURED BY THOSE WHO HAVE EMIGRATED TO OTHER COUNTRIES.

FOR many who live in the former Soviet Union, the freedom to assemble openly to worship God is a cherished delight—one that they were deprived of for many decades.

After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, it became dangerous in Russia to read the Bible, and few people risked their freedom to do so. Jehovah's Witnesses were an exception. In fact, *Newsweek* magazine of April 16, 1956—nearly 44 years ago—quoted a youth in East Germany as saying: “Nobody but Jehovah's Witnesses reads the Bible.” Yet, for holding Bible study meetings and for preaching the Bible's message, Witnesses were put in prisons and labor camps. Wherever they went, however, they focused attention on their Bible-based hope, as the accompanying box shows.

When the Soviet Union began to dissolve in 1991, the Witnesses there held seven conventions featuring a program of Bible in-

struction. Altogether, 74,252 attended. In 1993, just two years later, 112,326 assembled at eight such conventions in 4 of the 15 former republics of the Soviet Union.\* Many of those thousands had spent long years in Soviet prisons and labor camps. These faithful Christians were extremely grateful for their freedom to worship God without hindrance.

Every year since 1993, people from the former Soviet republics have treasured the privilege of meeting freely at Christian gatherings in their homeland. Last year, for example, a total of 282,333 Jehovah's Witnesses and their friends were delighted to worship together at 80 “God's Prophetic Word” District Conventions held in former Soviet republics. And a total of 13,452 were baptized.

\* The following are the 15 republics, which are now independent countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

## Russians Who Love the Bible

Professor Sergei Ivanenko, a respected Russian religious scholar, described Jehovah's Witnesses as people truly devoted to Bible study. In his recent book in Russian, *O lyudyakh, nikogda nye rasstayushchikhsya s bibliy* (The People Who Are Never Without Their Bibles), he wrote of their early history in the Soviet Union: “Even when they ended up in prison for their faithfulness to their beliefs, Jehovah's Witnesses found ways to make use of the Bible.” To illustrate this, he related the following experience.

“It was forbidden for prisoners to have a Bible. Bibles were confiscated during searches. In one of the northern camps, one of Jehovah's Witnesses was an electrician and he kept Bible books in a transformer unit where there was very high voltage. Each part of the Bible was tied with a string to a particular wire, and only that man knew which string had to be pulled to pull it out—for example, the Gospel of Matthew—without getting a deadly shock. Of course no search, no matter how hard the guards looked, yielded results, and so this unique Bible was not discovered.”



**The first Russian-language district convention in the United States**

Surprising as it may seem, last year there were also Russian-language conventions in other countries in the world. A total of 6,336 persons attended four such gatherings in countries *outside* the former Soviet Union! Where were these held? And why do so many Russian-speaking people have an intense interest in the Bible? Let us first briefly consider the latter question.

#### **They Recognize a Spiritual Need**

Russia has a rich religious history. Its ornate cathedrals, built centuries ago, are among the most famous in Christendom. Yet, the Russian Orthodox Church, like the Roman Catholic Church, has kept people in ignorance of the Bible.

"The Bible," explains the recent book *The Russian Tragedy—The Burden of History*, "has never been a principal part of Russian Orthodoxy." The result, according to Russian religious scholar Sergei Ivanenko, is that "the lack of Bible knowledge of Orthodox believers has led to the fact that many parishioners of Orthodox churches are more susceptible to the influence of superstitions, occultism, and magic than unbelievers."

The famous Russian writer Tolstoy made a similar observation. He wrote: "I convinced myself that the doctrine of the [Russian Orthodox] church was in theory a cunning and

harmful deceit, and in practice a collection of the grossest superstitions and sorcery, which completely conceals the whole meaning of the Christian teaching."

This situation proved to be a fertile ground for the rise of Soviet Communism with its atheistic propaganda and well-known refrain: "Religion is the opium of the people." Yet, Communism itself soon became a form of religion, often called the Red Religion. But the Red Religion did not last. When the Soviet State collapsed in 1991, millions of people were confused and wondered where to turn. With the encouragement of Jehovah's Witnesses, many thousands of Russians looked for answers in *the Bible*.

As a result of a fine educational system, Russians had come to be among the most literate people in the world. Thus, many Russians became not only Bible readers but also lovers of its teachings. At the same time, especially during the decade of the 1990's, hundreds of thousands of people from the former Soviet Union migrated to other countries, such as Germany, Greece, and the United States. With what results?

#### **Free to Worship In Germany**

In the 18th and 19th centuries, many Germans moved to Russia. The most famous was



#### **Bible drama presented in New York by the Russian Congregation of Los Angeles**

15-year-old Sophie, who in 1762 succeeded her husband as ruler of Russia. During her long reign, Sophie, later known as Catherine the Great, invited German farmers to live in Russia. Then, when Germany attacked the Soviet Union during World War II, most of those of German descent were transported to Siberia and to such Soviet republics as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Recently many Russian-speaking Germans, as well as others from the former Soviet Union, moved to Germany to enjoy better economic conditions.

In December 1992 the first Russian-speaking congregation in Germany was formed in Berlin. By last year, 52 congregations and 43 smaller groups had been formed into three Russian-speaking circuits in Germany. There was a peak attendance of 4,920 at the Russian-language "God's Prophetic Word" District Convention in Cologne, held from July 30 to August 1, where 164 were baptized to symbolize their dedication to Jehovah. Earlier, on April 1, in Germany's Russian-language congregations, 6,175 were present for the celebration of the Memorial of Jesus' death.

#### **Russians in the United States**

The United States too has experienced an influx of Russian-speaking people from the former Soviet Union. *The New York Times* reported: "Between 1991 and 1996, Russians were Brooklyn's fastest-growing immigrant group. During the same period, the Immigration and Naturalization Service admitted more than 339,000 immigrants to the United States from the former Soviet Union."

Later, the *Times* of January 1999 said that during the previous decade, some 400,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union had immigrated to New York City and the surrounding area. In addition, Russians by the thousands have settled in other parts of the United States in recent years. For example, northern California has had an influx of some 35,000 new Russian immigrants, making it the third-largest center of immigrants from the former Soviet Union after New York and Los Angeles. These Russian-speaking people have also responded to the opportunity to study the Bible, and hundreds of them have become worshipers of the true God, Jehovah.

On April 1, 1994, the first Russian-language



**These 14 baptized in New York are from six former republics of the Soviet Union**

congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in recent times in the United States was formed in Brooklyn, New York. Eventually, Russian congregations were started in Pennsylvania, California, and Washington. Study groups were begun in many other parts of the country.

#### **A First in the United States**

Last August 20 to 22, a peak attendance of 670 from throughout the United States and Canada were thrilled to attend the first Russian-language district convention held in New York City. All the talks were delivered in Russian, and a full-costume drama, featuring the Bible account of Jacob and Esau, was presented by members of the Russian Congregation of Los Angeles, California. It was truly a highlight of the convention.

Another convention highlight was the baptism of 14 persons, all of whom appear in the accompanying photograph. Several traveled some 2,500 miles from Portland, Oregon, and from Los Angeles and San Francisco, California, to be baptized at the convention in New York City. Previously, these 14 had lived in the former Soviet republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. Their experiences reveal how much

they treasure the knowledge of God and the freedom to worship him.

Svetlana (front row, third from the left) was raised in Moscow. At 17 she married a famous singer many years older than she, and in 1989 they came to the United States with their infant son. Her husband traveled extensively, and five years later they were divorced.

When Svetlana met a Witness coworker, her friends warned her about getting involved with what they told her was "a sect that would take control of [her] life and take all [her] money." Yet, she wanted to learn what the Bible teaches. About being shown God's name in the Bible, she says: "I was greatly impressed that the Witnesses were the only ones making it known."

As a youth, Andrei (back row, third from the left) left his home in Siberia for advanced training as an athlete in what today is St. Petersburg. Soon afterward, the Soviet Union dissolved, and in 1993, Andrei, at age 22, immigrated to the United States. He explains: "I began to think about God and started going to the Russian Orthodox Church. Once, during the Russian Easter celebration, I stayed in church the entire night seeking to draw close to God."



About this time Svetlana met Andrei, and she told him about what she was learning from her Bible study. He agreed to accompany her to a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses, and afterward he accepted a Bible study. In January 1999 they were married. After their baptism at the convention, they were radiant.

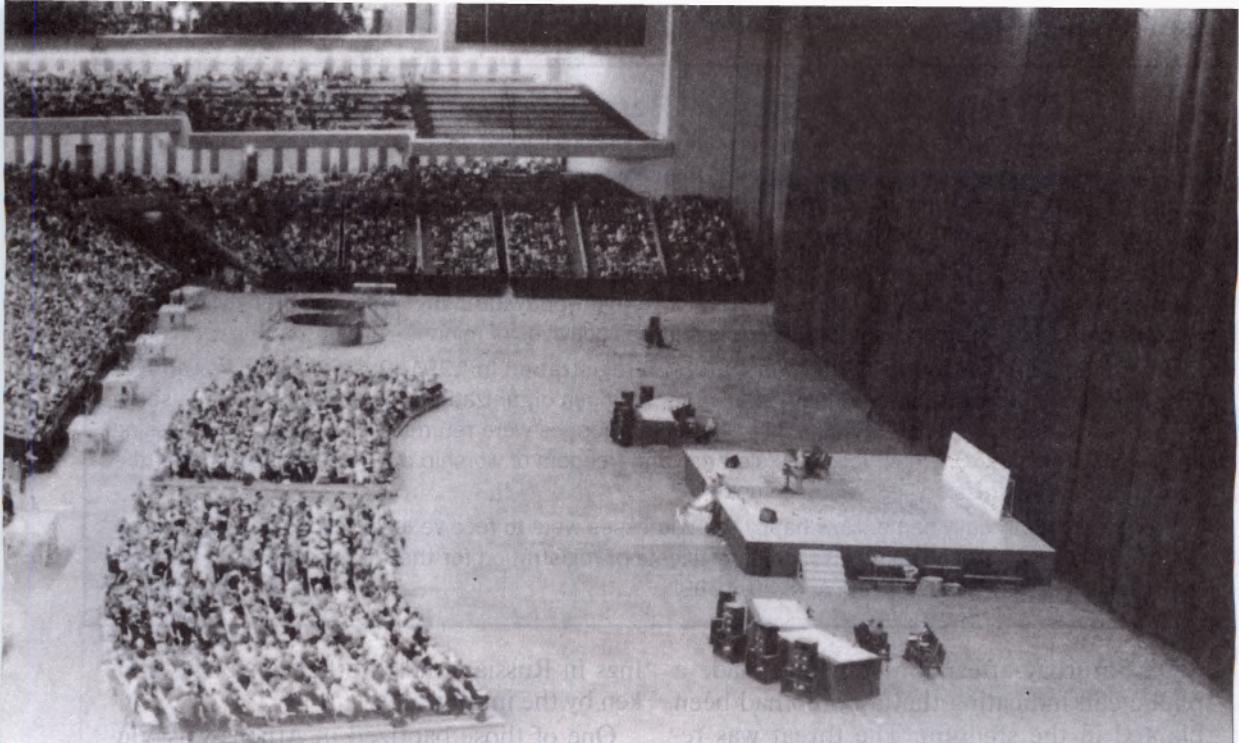
Pavel (back row, fourth from the left) was born near Qaraghandy, Kazakhstan, but later moved to Nal'chik, Russia. This large city is close to Chechnya and Dagestan, where so much fighting has occurred. Pavel first met Witnesses there in August 1996, but he migrated to San Francisco the following month. He was involved in drugs and had fathered a daughter, who was left in Russia with her mother.

Immediately after arriving in the United States, Pavel contacted Jehovah's Witnesses and accepted a Bible study. He straightened out his life and wrote to the mother of his daughter about his newfound beliefs. She is now studying with the Witnesses, and there are plans for her to come to the United States

so that she and Pavel can marry and serve Jehovah together in California with their daughter.

George (back row, second from the left) was born and raised in Moscow. He came to the United States in 1996, and the following year he married Flora, who was originally from Azerbaijan. George attended the Russian Orthodox Church, but after reading a copy of the *Watchtower* magazine, he had questions about the Trinity doctrine. In response to his letter to the Watch Tower Society, he received the brochure *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* In 1998 both he and Flora began to study the Bible. Now she also plans to be baptized.

Another convention highlight was receiving greetings from Moscow, where 15,108 had assembled for their convention during the same weekend. How thrilled delegates in New York City were to hear the announcement that 600 had been baptized there! That was particularly true in view of the ominous newspaper and television reports that had



**Over 15,000 met in Moscow's Olympic Stadium**

begun to appear in the United States and elsewhere in the week leading up to the convention date.

#### **What Was Happening in Moscow**

On July 21, 1999, the Witnesses signed a contract for the use of the Olympic Stadium located near the center of Moscow and right next to a large Russian Orthodox church. But a week before the convention was to begin, it was clear that there was going to be opposition. By Wednesday, August 18, permission to use the stadium had still not been granted, even though the rental fee had already been paid. It was emphasized to officials that, as the box on page 28 shows, Jehovah's Witnesses are a legally recognized religious organization in Russia.

Because about 15,000 convention delegates were preparing to attend on Friday morning, Witness representatives were becoming anxious. Some delegates were traveling to Moscow from cities and towns many miles away. Finally, after some hours of discussion, about 8:00 p.m., on Thursday, Au-

gust 19, the stadium management was delighted to inform Witness representatives that the convention could proceed. The city administration had advised that they had no objection to the convention.

The next morning thousands flooded into the stadium. Witness volunteers had worked all night to prepare for their arrival. Also present that first morning were members of the press, who had been notified earlier about the opposition to holding the convention. "Congratulations!" one of them exclaimed. "We're glad to hear that your convention is going ahead."

#### **Example of Orderly Conduct**

The stadium management felt that it would be prudent to take security measures. Thus, security people with metal detection equipment such as is used to screen passengers at airports were stationed at all entrances. Policemen were also stationed throughout the inside of the stadium. The convention proceeded in an orderly manner despite a serious threat.

## Jehovah's Witnesses Reregistered in Russia

Jehovah's Witnesses have been actively proclaiming God's Kingdom in Russia for more than a century. Because of governmental restrictions, however, the Witnesses did not first receive legal recognition until March 27, 1991. At that time, they were registered under the name Administrative Center of the Religious Organizations of Jehovah's Witnesses in the U.S.S.R.

On September 26, 1997, a law entitled "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Association" was enacted. This new law received extensive press coverage worldwide. Why? Because many viewed the passage of this law as an attempt to restrict the religious activities of minority religions in Russia.

Thus, in spite of Jehovah's Witnesses' hard-won registration in 1991, Russia's new Freedom of Conscience law required them, as well as all other religious organizations, to reregister. This raised a number of questions. Did this indicate that Russian authorities were returning to a policy of oppressing Jehovah's Witnesses? Or would religious tolerance and freedom of worship that is guaranteed under the Constitution of the Russian Federation be upheld?

The answer eventually came. How happy the Witnesses were to receive legal recognition once again when Russia's Ministry of Justice issued a certificate of registration for the "Administrative Center for Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia," on April 29, 1999!

On Saturday afternoon someone made a phone call indicating that a bomb had been planted in the stadium. The threat was received shortly before the end of the next-to-last talk of the day. So, at the request of the stadium management, a brief announcement was made to evacuate the stadium immediately. When everyone did so in an orderly fashion, stadium officials and the police were amazed. They had never seen anything like it! They asked whether it had been rehearsed.

No bomb was found, and the following day the program was extended to include what had not been presented on Saturday. The stadium management was pleased with the convention.

### In Greece and Elsewhere

During the last weekend of August and the first one in September, Russian-language district conventions were also held in Greece—in Athens first and then in Thessalonica. A total of 746 attended, and 34 were baptized. There are 8 Russian-speaking congregations in Greece and 17 smaller groups made up of immigrants from former southern republics of the Soviet Union. These have their meet-

ings in Russian and in other languages spoken by the immigrants.

One of those baptized in Athens was Victor. He had been an atheist, but in August 1998 he attended the international convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Athens, where his wife was baptized. He said that he was so impressed by the love manifested by the delegates that he was moved to study the Bible.

A man named Ighor received a copy of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* and after reading it threw away his icons. He even began to introduce himself as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. After writing to the branch office in Athens and receiving a visit by the Witnesses in November 1998, he immediately attended his first congregation meeting and has not missed one since. Now, after his baptism, Ighor's goal is to be a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Russian-speaking people have immigrated to a number of other countries in the world that we have not mentioned. Many of these people too rejoice in their freedom to study the Bible and to assemble openly to worship God. To them this privilege is a cherished delight!

## WATCHING THE WORLD

### Under Stress

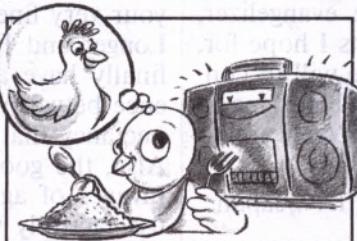
"Almost one half of Canadians complain they are experiencing moderate to high levels of stress trying to balance their jobs and their home life," reports the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper. "That's twice as many as a decade ago." Why the increase? A survey released by the Conference Board of Canada revealed a rise in the percentage of Canadian workers who are caregivers for family members. More are having children later in life, and these are often faced with the challenge "of caring for both children and parents at the same time." Although 84 percent of survey respondents still felt satisfied with their jobs, the report notes that when balancing the demands of home and work becomes a problem, "most cut back first on their own time, including sleep time." The Conference Board notes: "Stress results, and health suffers."

### Teaching Respect for Authority

"Today's parents demand so little respect for authority that we actually may be lowering our children's self-esteem," says a report in *The Toronto Star*. "Knowing their limits actually appeals to children's need for predictability and security—which in turn helps them feel higher self-esteem," notes behavior specialist Ronald Morrish. "It's children with no sense of rules and responsibility who grow up feeling less secure and confident." He adds: "I see 6-year-olds who set their own bedtime. I see 3-year-olds whose mothers try to persuade them not to misbehave by ex-

plaining how it makes Mommy feel." Children need to learn to comply with family rules, and the idea that they naturally become less cooperative as they get older is wrong, says Morrish. "We expect children to build their academic knowledge cumulatively each year. So why don't we also expect kids' behaviour to improve each year?" he asks. "If you won't do what it takes to get a toddler to pick up a toy, you won't have a teenager who makes his curfew."

### Recordings for Barnyard Dining



Canadian scientists have discovered that baby farm animals can be encouraged to eat by playing recordings to them, reports *New Scientist*. "We recorded the sound a mother hen makes when she finds something she wants her chicks to eat," says Luis Bate of the University of Prince Edward Island. When the recordings were played back over speakers placed near food, chicks ate even though their mother was not present. But the sounds must be just right. Observes Bate: "When we played them the sound a mother hen makes after chicks hatch, which to my ear sounds identical to the feeding call, the chicks became immobile." The scientists' goal is to speed up the animals'

growth, and in initial experiments chicks grew as much as 20 percent faster than normal during their first three weeks. In similar experiments, turkey chicks and piglets could also be encouraged to eat more often.

### Prescription for Danger

"Medicines claimed more lives in Germany last year than traffic accidents did," reported the newspaper *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*. Reportedly, some 25,000 people died in 1998 from wrongly prescribed drugs. This is three times as many as were killed in traffic accidents during the same period. Self-medication is said to play only a secondary role. The main problem seems to be a lack of information and training among doctors about the medicines and their effects. Pharmacologist Ingolf Cascorbi said that according to one estimate, "in Germany each year, 10,000 deaths and 250,000 cases of persons suffering from serious side effects could be avoided if research and training were optimized," states the report.

Similarly, the French magazine *Sciences et avenir* reports on a recent study in France revealing that of 150,000 prescriptions given to people over 70 years of age, some 10,700 were either wrong or ineffective. Nearly 1 in 50 was potentially dangerous because of possible reactions with other prescribed drugs or other risks. In France elderly people spend an estimated one million days each year in the hospital as a result of negative reactions to medicine.

## FROM OUR READERS

**Unhealthy Life-Styles** Over the past few months, my health has been very poor, so it was heartening to learn that we can improve our health by changing our life-style. Reading through the series "Is Your Life-Style Killing You?" (July 8, 1999) made me see that I need to reduce my intake of certain foods and to have a more balanced diet that includes more fruits and vegetables.

E.P.M., Brazil

**Delayed Reaction** I was encouraged by the article "Seeds That Bore Fruit Many Years Later." (July 8, 1999) This is my third year of service as a full-time evangelizer, and when I don't get the results I hope for, I get disappointed and lose the will to continue. Reading this article has helped me to do my best now, leaving the results up to Jehovah.

T.N., Japan

**Taunted** I enjoyed the June 22, 1999, article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Cope With Being Taunted?" Ever since kindergarten, schoolmates have asked me questions about my beliefs. Sometimes the way they ask hurts my feelings. Many times I have almost lost my patience. I realize now that these are just tests of faith. Besides, there are others in school to whom I have witnessed successfully.

L.C., United States

I too have been ridiculed for refusing to celebrate certain religious holidays or to share in patriotic ceremonies. I have also been harassed for being honest and for upholding the Bible's moral standards. Taking in accurate knowledge has helped me make a defense. This helps me to speak up without feeling shy about revealing my beliefs.

H.C., Zambia

Although I'm long past being a teen—I'm over 50!—I appreciated the article. There are times when the opposition we meet in the ministry takes us aback and we may feel like retaliating. That's why I appreciated the reminder that "an insulting comeback, no matter how witty it may seem, will only add fuel to the fire and may even encourage further taunts." I try to make a defense without appearing to be retaliatory, and this reminder convinced me of the need to continue to do so.

A.F., United States

**Live Longer** I am compelled to respond to your very fine series entitled "How to Live Longer and Feel Better." (July 22, 1999) I finally have an explanation for the difference between average life span and life expectancy that I can wrap my brain around. Also, the good advice on how to curb the ravages of aging are reminders that I can use tactfully to help my 88-year-old grandfather, who fights bouts of self-pity.

T.N., United States

**Hearing Dog** I want to thank you for the article "My Dog Hears for Me!" (July 22, 1999) Knowing that people with hearing problems have to face such serious difficulties has helped me to be more understanding toward them. I also love dogs, and I was happy to learn how they can give help and support to many people.

L.B., Italy

I too have an assistance canine. I spend much of my time in a wheelchair, as I have a fused spine and fibromyalgia. There are not enough words to describe all the things my dog does for me. She helps me when I shop or clean the house. She even helps me in the Christian ministry by carrying my literature.

K.W., United States



## 'Our World Would Be Different'

The effort to cancel a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow last August drew considerable attention. (See pages 27 and 28 for details.) Andrei Zolotov, Jr., reported in *The Moscow Times* of August 21, 1999, that "Vladimir Kozyrev, deputy director of the sports complex, said the administration was not against holding the Jehovah's Witnesses congress. He said he did not know where the order [to cancel it] was coming from."

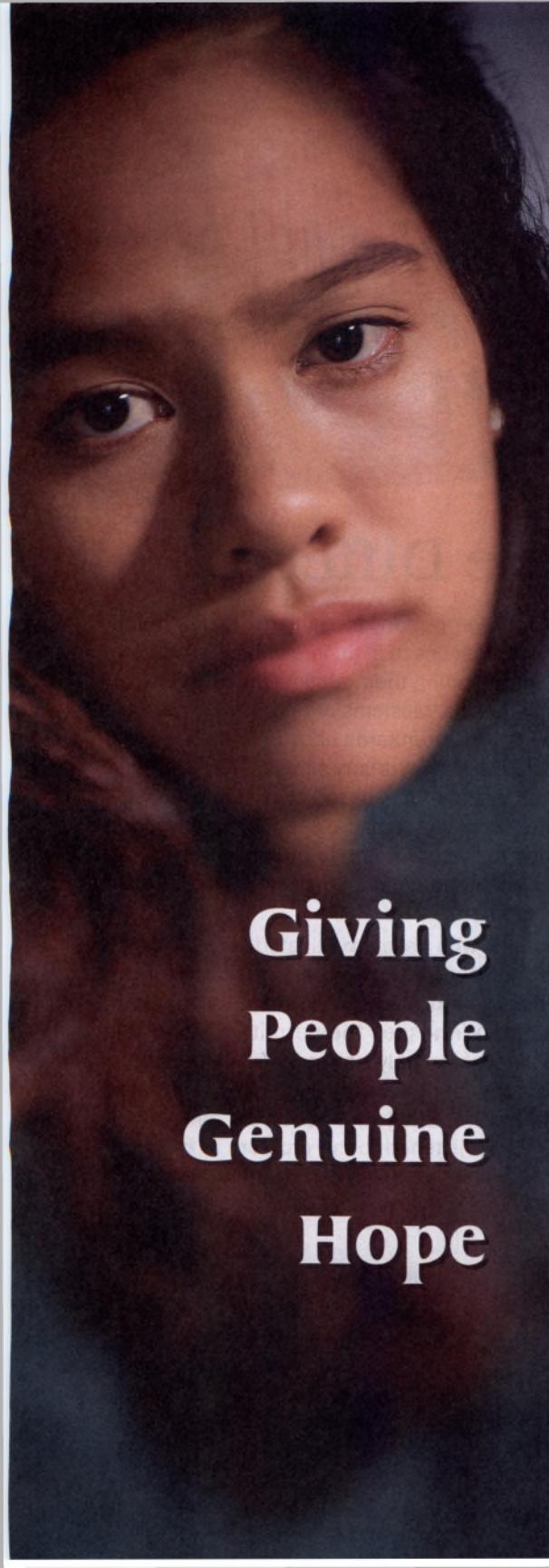
In a letter published in *The Moscow Times* one week later, a reader complimented the paper for publishing the "truly unbiased" article and said that it "really deserved readers' attention." He observed: "Your story on the tremendous difficulties which were faced by Jehovah's Witnesses in preparation for their annual convention [exposed their] unjust treatment."

Then the writer of the letter noted that Jehovah's Witnesses "are well known in the world (and now in Russia as well) . . . They are . . . well known as very nice, kind, and meek people who are very easy to

deal with, never put any pressure on other people and always seek peace in their relationship with others notwithstanding their religious beliefs be it Orthodox Christians, Moslems or Buddhists. There are no bribe-takers, drunkards or drug addicts among them, and the reason is very simple: They just try to be guided by their Bible-based convictions in everything they do or say. If all the people in the world at least tried to live according to the Bible the way Jehovah's Witnesses do, our cruel world would be absolutely different."

Authorities who have investigated Jehovah's Witnesses and deal with them directly confirm the above description. Such authorities, for example, granted the Witnesses the permits to build this beautiful new Assembly Hall in St. Petersburg, Russia. At its dedication last September 18, the hall was filled with 2,257 joyful observers, and an additional 2,228 listened to the program at Kingdom Halls in St. Petersburg and at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in nearby Solnechnoye.





# Giving People Genuine Hope

A 17-YEAR-OLD youth from the former Soviet republic of Moldova wrote to the office of Jehovah's Witnesses there to express appreciation for the September 8, 1998, Awake! cover series "What Hope for Today's Youths?" The writer explained:

"I could hardly suppress my tears, and I simply had to write to thank you. The articles made me recall feelings that I had a short time ago. When I was about to commit suicide, Jehovah's Witnesses saved me, without their realizing it. Talking to them about hope for the future and strengthening my confidence in the Creator's mercy helped me recover little by little from a state of despair....

"Your helping people to learn about God's purpose to bring better living conditions is a true manifestation of love toward your neighbor. It is evident that these efforts are not without results. Your efforts in highlighting the most important problems of society are praiseworthy. Keep on doing this useful work. I will be waiting for each new issue of this magazine."

In the paragraph "Why Awake! Is Published," which appears on page 4 of every issue, it says: "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." The Bible-based promise of God has given millions of people around the earth strength to face the problems of these troublesome times.

