



International Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics

Volume 21, Number 2 (2024)

ISSN: [2790-6345](https://doi.org/10.55521/10-021-200)

DOI: [10.55521/10-021-200](https://doi.org/10.55521/10-021-200)

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Commentary from Russia/Ukraine: Part 3

DOI: [10.55521/10-021-202](https://doi.org/10.55521/10-021-202)

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International Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics • Volume 21(2), Copyright 2024 by IFSW

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Editor's Note: Following is part three of an anonymous commentary written by a friend of our journal. Part one can be found at <https://doi.org/10.55521/10-020-102> while part 2 can be found at <https://doi.org/10.55521/10-020-202>. Anonymity is required as a safeguard for this person. Because of the political situation, it is not safe to include any names or gender identification. The author is a professor of human services in Russia but is Ukrainian. The person's family lives in Kiev and it is an emotionally troubling time for all of them. This letter has not been copy edited and is a translation from Russian by the use of Google translator.

Circles of Hell

February 24, 2022 – present day

- Bogdan, what's going on with you? They don't tell us anything. But we understand that something is wrong.

- They are killing us.

- What? Who???

- Russian troops are bombing Kyiv, there is a massacre in Bucha.

- Impossible to believe!!! How to find out and be in the know? Is everything okay with you and your family? How are Angelina, Aunt Tanya, and your relatives?

- Everyone is still alive, but under fire. I am in the defense industry, there is a shortage of medicines in hospitals and on the front lines. I'll send you a few links to telegram channels, follow the links, subscribe. These are our Kyiv channels, they contain fresh and objective news.

- Write, at any time, even at night, I'm always in touch.

- I will create a telegram chat, it will be a private, secure connection. We'll communicate there.

Sometime after this dialogue, my Facebook page, from which I corresponded with my brother, who was under fire in the city of Kyiv, was banned. To unlock it, you had to provide your passport information and take a photo against the background of the blocked page. As you understand, I refused to do this.

In a telegram chat, Angelina wrote to me:

- They are coming to us.

- Who?

- Russian troops. We call them "orcs"

- Can't you leave?

- No, this is our land, we must protect it. Our relatives, children, homes are here. My men serve in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Bogdan serves in the defense forces. My mother is already elderly, she can't stand the move and doesn't want to leave Kyiv, and my husband's mother is bedridden, she just had heart surgery, she can't move. We won't be able to leave them and go away.

- How will you live? How to defend yourself?

- We have a cocktail bar on the edge of the village¹.

For a moment, after reading this, I thought that everything was fine with them, imagining an evening bar and people who meet after work for a glass of alcohol and calm music. But very soon I realized what kind of "bar" we were talking about.

¹ One of the villages near Kiev, for security reasons I will not list its name

- Each resident of the village has two “gun barrels” and three boxes of cartridges². And in our bar they pour a chic “Bander smoothie (smooth-drink)” - Molotov cocktails. Let them come, we will meet them!

I was plunged into absolute horror again!

- Should I just give up? – not finding anything else in my head, I wrote nonsense, using at least some version of protection from imminent death.

- No, either they will leave, or they will have to kill us all. We will not give up! When their tank column was passing through our village, the priest of our church came out to talk to them. They simply shot him and calmly moved on. We have nothing to talk about with them and we will not give up!

Here I realized that this might be the last time I would communicate with them. My throat tightened, tears blurred my eyes, I remembered their faces, imagined the horror they faced. Kill a harmless, unarmed priest who came out just to talk? WHAT?.. What's going on? Who are these animals? Is this my country's army? Is this really true??? Thoughts pressed on my temples, rushing through my head at incredible speed. I imagined myself in the basement, with a machine gun in my hands. Nearby are elderly people and children who have nothing to eat and drink, nowhere to go to the toilet, nowhere to wash. Two boxes of ammunition and the brutally murdered priest of my church, whom I had known for many years, to whom I came for good advice and help... Yes, I will shoot until the last bullet. And when I run out of cartridges, I will start cutting them with knives and tearing them with my teeth when they grab me. And I will only calm down when they tear out my hands and tear off my head. I understood them and never again during these two years that this war has been going on, have I suggested such nonsense: “surrender”! I wrote that I understood them and wished them victory over their enemies or death with weapons in their hands, I wrote that in fact there is no death, because there will be a resurrection of the dead, which is written about in the Bible.

² Firearms (colloquial slang)

It was a moment, but when I came to my senses, it turned out that about half an hour had passed. I was supposed to take an academic course; I studied at Moscow University. I realized that I was late to connect to Google meet. I needed advice. It is impossible to explain my psychological state in which I was. I was shaking, my palms were sweaty, and it was difficult to breathe. The temples were being squeezed as if in a vice. I felt that I was close to some kind of attack, I urgently needed to find a way out!

I entered Google-meet. Fortunately, the couple was led by a psychiatrist, Doctor of Medical Sciences. We could not help but discuss the alarming situation, which, moreover, obligated us to transfer face-to-face learning to distance learning. Being a high-class specialist, the doctor asked: "Which of us present at the couple is currently experiencing an anxious state in connection with the events taking place?"

I answered:

- I have.

She asked to describe the situation. I told it like it is, I was never afraid to tell the truth. A little later you will understand why.

After carefully listening to my entire story about relatives in the Kyiv region, and about the fact that they will resist and will not surrender, and about weapons, and about Molotov cocktails in their local "bar", and about how a column of Russian occupiers passed through their village, and about how the Russian military shot and killed a local priest.

At the same time, about 30 people were present at the academic couple; they immediately learned the truth about what was happening in Ukraine. The doctor asked the same question as me:

- Don't they want to give up?

"No," I answered. – And I understand why.

- I understand too, but still, this would be a more reasonable decision.

But you and I are not there, so we can only talk about it, and of course they make the decision. What can we do in this situation? How can I help them? Now I'm not talking about the entire village, but only about your family. – She asked with genuine sympathy.

And then I remembered: indeed, Angelina wrote to me about her granddaughter, who needed the help of a psychiatrist, since after the explosions the girl had symptoms of post-traumatic disorder with fixation of the reflex arc. When the explosions stopped and she was already safe, the slightest knock or unexpected sound like a blow or bang (for example, when doors are closed) would cause her to have a panic attack and vomit. Because of this, the child could not live normally: sleep, eat, do homework, read, communicate, etc. I told our psychiatrist teacher about this. She immediately suggested a treatment plan:

- Do you remember what desensitization is? Let them do the following: when the girl is not waiting, they make claps (for example, soft knocks on the door), to which she will react. And gradually let this sound move away from her. When it is possible to establish a distance at which the child will no longer react to sounds, let them repeat these sounds at the same distance at different times of the day and night, but only let them carefully monitor that there is no reaction of the reflex arc. And then, after 5-7 days, let them begin to reduce this distance. But this needs to be done gradually. There is no way to do this without drug treatment, so let them get the drug Atarax. Let them read the instructions carefully about what doses a child of this age should take³. And let them contact a psychiatrist as quickly as possible, if possible.

I thanked her for her help and participation, it became much easier for me - a mission to save a child appeared, and from this my problems and the problems of all adults faded into the background. I waited impatiently for

³ Attention! This prescription from this psychiatrist is not a guide to your treatment, since it was given on an individual basis in a specific situation for a specific child with certain symptoms. It is real, it can be kept in mind, but before you apply this treatment regimen, seek the advice of a practicing specialist: a psychiatrist or a medical psychologist and describe YOUR situation and symptoms of the disease. The use of a particular treatment regimen depends not only on your age/symptoms/body weight and associated comorbid disorders, but also on the etiology of the disease, i.e. depending on how you received it.

the end of the academic couple and wrote about everything that the psychiatrist said to Angelina. They applied the treatment and it helped. Soon this girl, together with her mother, the wife of Angelina's son, moved from Ukraine to the USA, now they live quietly in North Carolina. And thanks to the kind person who provided them with his home to live in.

When all the problems with Angelina's family faded into the background, I returned to the situation at the front. We were together again: we sent each other photos, videos, shared our impressions of this spring, supported each other.

These days of communication flew by unnoticed, at first I could not focus on the problems that they had, this required complete immersion, and I was actively studying at the university and often participated in scientific conferences. But at the same time, I started watching news from telegram channels in the city of Kyiv every day.

And then the nightmare began!!!

I remember it in some fragments - psychological defense and repression are triggered. Be patient, dear readers, understand that it is still difficult for me to describe it. Memories come, but also in fragments.

I remember how I was going to the university in Moscow, getting on the metro, waiting for the train, and when it approached, stepping over the threshold and moving towards the handrail near the door opposite the exit, I fell through time and space, transported in my mind to where I saw the girls on the news who spent the night in the same metro train, only in Kyiv, right on the floor. They spread blankets there, put pillows, toys, their school bags and backpacks, did their homework there, ate some food and told how they had been living there for several days, because Kyiv and the region were being bombed. I looked at this place on a Moscow metro train and couldn't understand: HOW???. How is this possible? To sleep here, right on the hard, cold floor, in the cold, half-starved, half-naked in front of everyone?.. I woke up a few minutes later, I wanted to look into the eyes of the people sitting and standing around me to understand: do they FEEL THIS? Or is this just my reaction to what I saw in the Kyiv news? And you know, I SAW the same reaction. Not for everyone, but for many. Do you know what

it looked like? People looked straight ahead at one point. The look was at the same time empty, emotionless and, at the same time, somehow doomed. And this is the reaction I was looking for. It was remorse, regret, sympathy, disappointment. And I calmed down a little: because next to me, everywhere every day, I saw people who silently asked for forgiveness from God and the Ukrainians for what their government and army were doing. If these people had not been there, I don't know how I would have managed to control myself. I probably would have committed some kind of criminal offense and would already be in a Russian prison.

Once, when I was traveling on the subway, I saw a man - a tall, slender, handsome middle-aged man with gray hair, who was crying right on the train. This was my first experience when I saw a man crying like that, in a public place. My heart sank, I still think: how could I help? Maybe I should have spoken to them?.. But I didn't dare.

Then there was a boy, I think, from Mariupol, who lost his mother during the bombing, she died. And due to the fact that it was impossible to bury the dead in cemeteries, they were buried right on children's playgrounds and houses. Often in sandboxes, where just a few months ago children were happily playing their games. Now his mother was buried in such a sandbox. He came to his mother's grave, to this playground, where a few months ago he had walked and played with her, and now he was picking wildflowers somewhere and bringing them to her grave. People gave him food: cans of condensed milk, cookies, bread - whoever had what. But you know, one day they noticed that he took everything that he was given to eat to his mother and put it on the hillock of this sandbox. When asked: "What are you doing?" He answered: "This is for mom; she also wants to eat." And people, realizing that the boy treated his mother as if she were still alive, and that it would not be possible to convince him otherwise, began to give him two portions of food so that he could leave one at the grave for his mother, and the second he could eat. It was simply unbearable. I still cry when I write about this.

Then there was a man who, during the evacuation from Irpen⁴, lost his family: his wife and two children. They were killed by one bomb, they walked together, and he walked away from them for a few minutes to find out which bus to leave with. At that time, the mother and children stood at a distance with their things. An explosion thundered, the man turned around, and they were already torn to pieces. He was interviewed a short time after this event. It is impossible to express in words how this man felt. As a future specialist, I saw what kind of emotional and psychological state he had - he would never again fill this void in his soul. Everything that was good, beautiful and creative was stolen from her. What's left? You understand yourself. And it's scary.

After that, Angelina sent me a video where they pulled out a small dead child from under the rubble of a bombed-out residential building. It was so strange to see how they cleared away the rubble and after a few seconds they pulled out an absolutely pale, lifeless little body, limp and very white. They pass it from hand to hand, the women scream, there is silent hatred on the faces of the men, and endless rage in their eyes. The death of a child is always something special, because not only a new life has ended, but the very hope for the future, its prospect, has died. And this always has a very strong impact on the psyche of those who survived. They will never be the same again.

Every time I get my nails done, I think of that girl whose body photo was spread all over the world. Remember this photo? Yes, you remember it, I have no doubt: a manicured hand, lifeless, stained with blood and dirt, next to the bicycle. I remember a video shot from a drone using video recording: here she is, still alive, going out to her home street on business on

⁴ One of the cities in the Kyiv region that was attacked by Russian troops. The site of war crimes by the Russian military. In this city, after its liberation from Russian invaders, mass graves were discovered containing bodies of people of all ages and genders, with their hands tied behind their backs. They were shot point-blank, many of them were brutally tortured before death.

a bicycle. It is possible that someone was waiting for her at home or she went to work, or to buy groceries at the store, or somewhere else, as each of us does every day. Here she turns the corner to continue her journey. And then a tank comes out from around the corner of a nearby street and fires a salvo from its gun...

Thoughts flash one after another: “Creatures! Who are you shooting at??? These are civilians!!!”; “This is right near Kiev, Angelina, Bogdan and their whole family are there!!!”; “How to enroll in the Armed Forces of Ukraine? I want to kill these freaks, I just can’t do it anymore, they all need to be destroyed, such animals have no place in the sun!!!” I start to pray. And suddenly I receive clear guidance. Instead of aggression and the desire to destroy everything around, wise, good thoughts come, they become organized, and I already know what to do.

Then there was a lot more that you could write a whole book about: there was the Drama Theater in Mariupol, there were cities and towns wiped off the face of the Earth, which the Russian military for some reason called “strategic military targets” of some “nationalists” and much more. . But I need to focus now on the main thing: on the mechanism by which the devil and demons transform the human essence into a demonic one. And they know a lot about this, believe me. They act through the eyes: it is enough for a person to see the injustice being committed, especially if it is associated with the gravest atrocity, and the person, out of mercy (!!!), since he feels sorry for the victim, himself turns into a beast. Oooh, don't be fooled! This is their stroke of genius!!! With its help, they very quickly turn the divine creation into a beast that knows no mercy.

I really want to end this part of the story with one parable, remember it, I ask you. You will find it in your Bibles in the book of Matthew, chapter 12. Jesus Christ, explaining how this happens, told his disciples one parable: ⁴³When an unclean spirit comes out of a person, it goes through dry places in search of shelter, but finds nothing. finds. ⁴⁴Then he says, “I will return to the house from which I came,” and when he arrives, he sees that the house has been swept, decorated, and unoccupied. ⁴⁵Then he goes and finds seven other spirits more evil than himself. They enter that house and stay there to

live. And the person becomes even worse than he was at the beginning.”⁵ There is one very important idea in this parable: evil multiplies if there is no divine principle in the soul, that which God has invested in every person (conscience, faith, goodness, mercy). Demons understand that such a devastated soul is an easy prey! Have you noticed how those people, some Ukrainian military personnel and those who suffered from Russian aggression, at the beginning of the war said in all interviews and reports: “We are not like them (Russian military), we do not kill defenseless civilians.” And then they supported the bombing of Donbass cities and terrorist attacks in St. Petersburg and Moscow. This is the metamorphosis of metaphysical Evil! Rebirth occurs unnoticed, it is covered with false slogans about fair retribution, although there is no justice in this. And now man, God’s magnificent creation, supports, or, worse, personally participates in the murder of innocents. He begins his journey through the circles of HELL, unaware that he is already caught alive in Satan’s trap⁶. You can only be freed from it by knowing the truth of the Good News. That’s why I consider this work the most important. Let me explain why.

Jehovah Witnesses

August 1992 - present day

- Hello! I wanted to share with you one very wise thought from the Bible! – near my husband, when he was on his way to work on a city bus, a conversation arose between two passengers. The husband turned around. On the next seat sat two people: one in a classic suit and tie, the other in a tracksuit and cap. The man in the tie, a charming young tall blond with blue eyes, continued:

⁵ Bible, Gospel of Matthew, chapter 12, verses 43 to 45

⁶ Bible, 2 Timothy chapter 2, verses 25, 26

- Look at what is written in the book of Matthew, in the 24th chapter: “6 You will also hear about wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not horrified, for all this must come to pass, but it is not yet the end: 7 for nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be famines, pestilences and earthquakes in places; 8 after all, this is the beginning of illness. 9 Then they will hand you over to torture and kill you; and you will be hated by all nations because of my name; 10 and then many will be offended, and will betray each other, and will hate each other; 11 and many false prophets will arise and deceive many; 12 and, due to the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold; “He who endures to the end will be saved.” And further, verse 14: “14 and this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come.” – everyone on the bus became quiet for a minute, listening to the verses from the Bible⁷.

The preacher, smiling and not at all embarrassed by the ensuing silence, continued:

-Have you paid attention to what Jesus Christ said to his disciples in response to their question: “When will this system of things end?” He said that before such difficult times come, the Gospel must first be preached. This is what I do. If you want, I can come to you at any time convenient for you and study with you... - he did not have time to finish his sentence, he was interrupted by a man in a tracksuit, to whom the preacher was addressing.

- Fuck you with your Bible! – he suddenly shouted unexpectedly sharply and completely without reason. “If we weren’t sitting on the bus, I would put this Bible on your head right now!” Sectarian! – the man rose sharply from his seat and began to move towards the door of the bus, preparing to get off at the stop.

The young preacher was not at a loss and answered in a calm voice:

⁷ Bible, Gospel of Matthew, chapter 24, verses 6 to 14

- Don't worry so much, I won't bother you anymore. "He looked around, met my husband's eyes and said, smiling and shrugging his shoulders. - Doesn't want to listen...

My husband immediately replied:

- And I want! Can you tell me what will happen after the Gospel is preached throughout the earth?

The preacher, smiling, handed my husband a Watchtower magazine and said:

- I'm getting off the bus now, it's already my stop, I'm going to work. But we can still meet. We now have very few such publications; they come to Russia from abroad. We gather on Sunday mornings at 10 o'clock at the local Palace of Culture. Will you come? There will be a very interesting spiritual program there. If you have a spiritual interest, you will enjoy it.

My husband replied:

- Yes, I will definitely come.

The next day, I was returning home from a short trip, and my husband told me about how he met a Jehovah's Witness on the bus, and how he invited him to a meeting on Sunday at the rented Palace of Culture. Without hesitation, I agreed to go, since I had long been interested in spiritual issues that were raised by my school biology teacher and my grandmother. They were opponents, I wrote briefly about this in a previous article, and I really wanted to know: which of them was right, the biology teacher who firmly believes in the theory of Charles Darwin, or my grandmother who tells me about the miracles of Creation. In addition, I directly encountered some circumstances in my life that clearly hinted at the presence of spiritual forces. I'll tell you a little about this, since the entire further narrative will not carry any real emotional and psychological load without explaining my feelings and attitude towards God as a really existing person.

So, from the event described above, we now have to move back a few years ago, to the moment when my husband and I met in the same military unit, when we were doing compulsory military service. I will not go into detail, since I described some of the circumstances associated with serving at the headquarters of the strategic air force of the USSR in a previous article.

So, at that time I was a radio operator in the Air Force. Our duty lasted 12 hours with breaks on weekends. And in the evenings, when it was quiet in the closed, isolated and guarded radio room, I loved to read books. And then one day I came across Mikhail Bulgakov's brilliant novel "The Master and Margarita". There was a main character who amazed me with his spiritual and moral strength. If you open this novel and start reading it, pay attention to such a character in the story as Yeshua Ha-Notzri. And try to understand how a person who had never held a Bible in his hands could feel⁸.

If you open chapter 2 of the novel, which is called "Pontius Pilate," and read it, perhaps you, like me, will be amazed by one very curious phenomenon. This chapter describes a completely unusual, amazing person who values human life and each person as an individual so much that even after cruelty was shown to him, he calls such people "Kind Man." When I imagined myself in his place, I involuntarily realized that I would have behaved completely differently, and at the end of the novel, having learned even more about him, I finally realized that responding with good to evil is an unprecedented example of courage, honor, high dignity and morality!!! And I also realized that this was some completely different person, that all people on Earth were not like him (which made my heart very sad), and that he, as Bulgakov's wrote, was the Son of God! When he was executed on the stake, and Levi Matthew, his disciple, tried to stab him to death before execution in order to save his Teacher from torment, and he failed, I scolded him so much that my heart hurt. In the dream, I imagined that I was running with a knife in my hand and trying to penetrate the dense ranks of the Roman

⁸ Such ignorance for young people in the USSR was an absolute norm, since for carrying, reading and storing the Bible or its individual books in the USSR they could easily be imprisoned or sent to distant camps, accused of any mortal sins, or fabricated any criminal case. Such people were objectionable to a system based on a totalitarian unity of opinions. And such a person as GOD - the Lord of the Universe, could compete with the idols of communism: the party, V.I. Lenin, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR (the position of the leader of the country) and so on.

legionaries who were guarding Yeshua on the way to Golgotha, and I imagined how I would plunge this knife into the very heart of Yeshua so that he would never know the torment to which he subjected. And a little later, reading the novel again, it was me, instead of Levi Matthew, in the pouring rain during a storm that broke out in Jerusalem, who ran to Golgotha in sandals on my bare feet and wet burlap to remove his body and bury it until the crows pecked out his eyes and liver! It was I who climbed the clay mountain on which stood the pillars of the executed, my nails dug into this dirt softened by the rain, I scolded God for allowing his Son to die, who first taught me that “all people are kind, no evil people in the world!!!” YES!!! YES, my Teacher, I always knew this, my believing grandmother told me about this, because evil is the devil and demons, and not man himself!!! After all, man is the crown of God’s creation, and only the devil and his demons disagree with this! This novel shook me to the core. He just made me a different person.

The second moment of my spiritual rebirth, which is important to understand my further decision, is the spiritualistic practices that my childhood friend and I became interested in. This happened at the same time. We always gathered at her house and played the piano, since we both graduated from music school. But now in our evenings by candlelight, in addition to Bach and Beethoven, we began to include a spiritualistic séance. At that time, Viktor Tsoi had just died, and we constantly evoked his spirit along with others. We had fun, asked him various questions: about marriage, children that we will have in the future, about their names and appearance, and so on. At first, we considered the fact that the spirits answered us to be simply mischievous. For example, when I sat and watched the gypsy needle move in a circle, I thought that my friend was just having fun, swinging it in the direction where the word “Yes” or “No” was located⁹.

⁹ The spiritualistic circle of the Slavs is not a board with inscriptions, but a large hand-drawn circle, around the perimeter of which there are letters and numbers,

When I sat down at the needle, it seemed to me that everything that was happening was just a coincidence. But one evening we asked our spirit (or one of them) to write poetry for us. And imagine our surprise when, moving in a circle, the needle began to stop, against the laws of physics, on the letters that formed the words, resulting in a beautiful poem! We checked this several times, changing places with each other - everything happened again!!! We suddenly realized that our spiritualistic practices were no joke! We became scared. Even then we understood that communication with evil spirits is bad; adult women: mothers, sisters told us about this. Their warnings looked like this: "If you see spilled rice, sugar or millet near the door, don't clean it up yourself, wait for me. And under no circumstances should you step on it, step over it carefully and close the door." Sometimes, during the first snow, somewhere in October-November, on our streets you could see an expensive new snow-white downy shawl neatly spread across the sidewalk, which everyone carefully walked around without stepping on it. We knew that witches lived in our city. Spoilage was a common phenomenon in our city, and doctors in this case were not able to diagnose a disease from which in a short time a young beautiful woman, blooming and

and on a surface divided in half, the word "Yes" is written on top, and the word "No" on the bottom. Exactly in the middle of the sheet, a dot is placed into which a "gypsy needle" is placed, which has never been sewn (it is called a gypsy needle because such a large steel needle was used to sew mainly horse saddles and other leather products, since gypsies mainly used to keep horses). A black wool thread had to be threaded into the needle. It was for her that, sitting above the spiritualistic circle, the medium held a needle, which, when the thread was slightly released, began to move in different directions, answering the questions of the medium. The ritual of summoning the spirit is accompanied by a special spell, which must be recited both before and after the session. It is believed that if you do not cast a spell after and do not say goodbye to the spirit, it remains in the house, and this can lead to unpleasant consequences for the medium and his family and friends, as well as everyone who is in the house. During the entire session, from its very beginning to its end, the windows in the room must be open so that the spirit can "leave" at any moment. The entire session is carried out with the electric light turned off, using candles.

bursting with health, could become an old woman literally in weeks and die without receiving any help from doctors.

We knew all this, and there were other reasons why my friend and I still had the intelligence and prudence to leave spiritualism. But I must say that after that the demons did not leave us for a long time, and I have been fighting them all my life. And my friend, to my great regret, did not accept the Good News and blasphemed. I continue to pray for her, before God's Judgment comes, there is hope!

Thus, by the time I arrived home from my short trip to my husband, I had long been ready to accept the Good News, and I had a lot of spiritual interests and problematic issues that I intended to resolve. So, from the first meeting with Jehovah's Witnesses, we ended up in their Kingdom Hall, and never missed a single meeting or Congress until Russia adopted a ban on their activities, violating the constitutional rights of Russian citizens to freedom of religion¹⁰. Our children: a son and a daughter, were also baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses. They later chose their own path, but remained believers forever, and this greatly affects their lives in a positive way, both in their studies, in work, and in relationships with others.

We were lucky enough to meet these amazing people immediately after the collapse of the USSR, when our country, stability, peace, happiness and future were taken away from us. For some time, we found ourselves in real hell. I will not repeat the fact that Russians began to be killed in all the republics of the former USSR in previous issues of the magazine. Unrest also began in Russia itself. Bandits and corrupt officials seized power. All rights were taken away from us: to free medical care, to free education (including higher education), to free housing (in the USSR everyone was provided with free comfortable apartments). Food products disappeared from store shelves, there was nothing to eat, and hunger began. Those who worked

¹⁰ Constitution of the Russian Federation (adopted by popular vote on December 12, 1993, with amendments approved during the all-Russian vote on July 1, 2020) // Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation of 2014, No. 31, Art. 4398, art. 28

were not paid wages, because local managers stole money, invested it in goods, and sold it. And people sat without money and waited for this product to be sold and their salaries to be returned to them. If a leader who stole the wages of his subordinates became bankrupt and lost these funds, then people were left with nothing. Sometimes money was simply stolen and hidden abroad, more often in EU countries. This is how the oligarchs appeared. Almost all the rich people from the former USSR, no matter who they are by nationality, are simply dishonest officials, businessmen, bankers and bandits who robbed their own fellow countrymen and betrayed their country. It is impossible to describe the horror of what is happening. To do this, it would be necessary to write a book in five volumes of a thousand pages, and not one paragraph in a short article. But I think that if you are not indifferent to the history of human civilization and the search for the cause of the events taking place today, you can raise historical facts about the so-called “perestroika” after the collapse of the USSR and draw your own conclusions.

Years of preaching the Good News as baptized Jehovah's Witnesses have shown me, my husband and our children that everything written in the Bible is true. We are still, even under the ban, trying to fight our demons, and we know for sure that this is not just evil in our soul - they are REAL! And those who do not understand this are in great danger!!!

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In 2017, six months before the official ban, at the last openly held Congress of Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow, Russia and the bloc of states that support it in the rapidly approaching war of God, Armageddon, were declared the “King of the North.” This block of East Asian states, led by the Russian Federation, opposes the “King of the South” (Anglo-American World

Power)¹¹. At the end of this confrontation, the King of the North, having gained a seeming advantage for a short time, LOSES the fight. This is how the Bible speaks about this inglorious end: “And he will plant his royal tents between the grand sea and the holy mountain of Beauty; AND HE WILL COME ALL THE WAY TO HIS END, AND THERE WILL BE NO HELPER FOR HIM.”¹² This is the main idea that I would like to draw the reader’s attention to.

We learned about these 5 years before the open attack of the King of the North on Ukraine. And, although this was a terrifying event, it cannot be said that it greatly surprised us: “Forewarned is forearmed,” as the wise proverb says. But those feelings, thoughts, desires that overwhelmed me after that - that’s what was really difficult for me to cope with. I mean my military training, my oath and my family in the city of Kyiv, which was under attack. I took the oath to the USSR - the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, one of which was Ukraine. I took the oath to Ukraine! And as a person liable for military service, she had to be there and use her abilities to protect the innocent, defenseless civilians being killed. But at the same time, I was already a Jehovah’s Witness. I had an agreement with God, and He, for his part, fulfilled it very exemplarily. We lived all this time without needing anything. Our congregation helped us, we found peace and tranquility in our souls, we had a mission that God himself entrusted to us! This is the preaching of the Good News of the Kingdom that will very soon destroy all earthly governments and rule over the Earth. There will be no more wars in this earthly Paradise, because everyone who wants to participate in them will be destroyed. The devil and demons will be imprisoned in Tartarus and will no longer be able to harm people. For a thousand years after Armageddon,

¹¹ The author asks you to take into account that he gives all comments and explanations of biblical prophecies based on his own understanding, and asks those who want to know the official version to turn to the original source of information

¹² Who Is “the King of North” Today?/URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/watchtower-study-may-2020/Who-Is-the-King-of-the-North-Today/>

people will come to perfection, be healed, resurrected, become young and build Paradise on Earth, which was lost due to the sin of Adam and Eve. The book of the prophet Ezekiel talks about how, after God's war "Armageddon", the people who remain alive will burn weapons - this process will last several years!!! Imagine how important this is for Jehovah God: people who have just escaped from Armageddon will first of all deal with the destruction of weapons. And no one else will ever dare, for one reason or another, to destroy the life that God himself created in the womb of a woman! This means this question is the most important for Him.

In addition, there was one more principle that did not allow me to simply leave for Ukraine without looking back and join the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - this is a passage of Scripture from the book of Isaiah, chapter 2 from verses 2 to 4, which says that the peoples who will come to worship Jehovah "They will no longer learn to fight" (book of the prophet Isaiah 2 chapter, 4 verse). Weapons will be converted into working tools for cultivating the land, growing fruits and bread, and for other peaceful purposes. And those who were baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses were obliged to follow this principle, as having entered into a covenant with God already now!

There was one more circumstance that left me no alternative - this was the mission that God entrusted to his servants. We must preach the Good News. (maybe someone imagines Jesus Christ and his apostles with machine guns in their hands, but for me personally this is completely unthinkable! And since being baptized, every Jehovah's Witness takes upon himself the responsibility to follow Christ, to be his disciple and follower - he is simply having no right to do otherwise, since by declaring himself a Christian, he is obliged to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Or he must renounce his discipleship and make his own choice. These things: weapons that kill people and the Bible are incompatible! God has already put a weapon in our hands - this is the spiritual sword, the Word of God, the Bible: "because we have a struggle, not against blood and flesh, but against the

governments, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places..¹³

Therefore, I ask you: when you learn about someone who, being a Jehovah's Witness, cannot take up arms, treat this with respect, such an act testifies to courage and unusually strong faith. We know in advance the outcome of the battle; we know who will win. But we also know that this world is coming to an end, and our task is not to run across battlefields with a machine gun in our hands (other people will do this for us), but to save people by preaching the Good News to them. Purify their hearts and souls, heal them spiritually, and also explain and warn about the disaster that is approaching our planet. It is very important here to have a warm heart and a cool head in order to understand that everyone is good in their OWN place.

So, the final decision has not yet been made, but I continue to fight. I decided not to remain silent, despite the consequences. I was able to tell the truth about the events taking place in Ukraine not only to my student group, but also to our teachers: professors, doctors of science, and other representatives of academic circles. I also try to use every opportunity to preach the Good News. In the conditions of the ban on Jehovah's Witnesses, I even have some advantage, since after moving to Moscow and entering the university, I have not attended meetings for a long time and am not under the "cap" of the special services. I decided to take advantage of this situation. Thus, my mission has been enriched and expanded to include the salvation of souls: I help people understand what is happening in Ukraine, so that they can remain humane in these terrifying conditions; and at the same time, I try to use every opportunity to tell them that Armageddon is coming. I am quite satisfied with this situation. And, of course, I told my dear family from the city of Kyiv about everything. Fortunately, they turned out to be deeply religious Orthodox people, and when we correspond, we have a lot to talk about on spiritual topics. The Bible not only answers many questions that are unclear to most people today, but also gives hope for the future.

¹³ Bible, Ephesians, chapter 6, verses 12

When I close my eyes, I see two girls holding hands and walking through a golden wheat field. They sing a song, their eyes are directed forward, full of hope and expectation of happiness, their wreaths, woven from chicory and daisies, adorn their heads. The sun floods the golden rye with light and at some point they disappear somewhere beyond the horizon against the background of the blue sky. But I am no longer afraid for them, because they are in PARADISE on Earth, which our God Jehovah promised us. I just know what it will be. And I just know that it's us: me and Angelina. Throughout my entire difficult and eventful life, God has never lied to me! How can I doubt that He will fulfill His promises? Don't doubt it either!

I ask you: when you meet Jehovah's Witnesses, take just 10-15 minutes to listen to them. It could save the life of you and your family in the fast-approaching war of Armageddon. And thank you for taking the time to read my life.

With gratitude, Stranger.