



Interview with Sister Lida Ceban of Merenii Noi, Moldova conducted by Sister Cher-El Hagensick - 2011

History

In the days before communism fell, life was very different. Bibles were forbidden, as were religious books. Not even Hymn books or Mannas were allowed. The only churches allowed were those which were registered with the Government. The *Securitate* (Secret Police) then sent their agents to “control” those meetings.

Orthodox, Pentecostals, and most sects of Baptists chose to register and were given the freedom to obey their consciences, have meetings, and raise their children in the faith. However no one who wanted a white collar job was allowed to attend any kind of church – not even to enter a church for a wedding. Children who were raised as “*Credincios*” (believers)¹ were ridiculed and mocked by other children – as were the adults. *Credincios* did not participate in any of the state holidays nor in any of the forms of the Communist Party, including the organizations for children.

The brethren and the JWs did not believe in registering with the government. At this time, Sr. Lida and her family were still with the “*Opozitie cu Revistele Vechi*” (Opposition with old Watchtowers – a segment of Jehovah’s Witnesses which only used JW writings through 1948).² They did not have any of Br. Russell’s writings or anything earlier than 1918. They were told that these works had been revised and all the good in them was accepted and used in the *Revistele* (Watchtowers) and that which was wrong was rejected. Things written prior to 1918 was considered moldy and putrid food (“*hrana mucida si putrida*”).

There were not many who remained with the “*Opozitie cu Revistele Vechi*”.³ Most of the brethren stayed with a different group of “Opposition” which held to the JW writings through about 1968.

Arrested!

“When I was a young girl, maybe 13 or 14, we went to a meeting in the village of Zimbreni – a village about 8 km (5 miles) from our home. We were a group of about 6 adults and 2 children. When we left the meeting and went to the bus stop, a brother came running after us. He told us not to wait for the bus but to leave right away. I started off immediately with one of the brothers, but the rest of the brethren were arrested. My father, Br. Pavel, had a Bible with him and was afraid it would be confiscated. Bibles were very hard to find and he treasured his.” The brethren were taken to the Police Station. Before they were taken in for interrogation, a sister told Br. Pavel to quickly give her his Bible and she would find a way to save it.

As the brethren were taken in for interrogation, the sister began to lean forward. Clutching her abdomen she told the policeman that her stomach hurt and she couldn’t wait any longer and had to go to the toilet immediately. He asked if she couldn’t just wait until they were done, but she said the matter was urgent and she couldn’t wait any longer. So he went with her outside into the cold winter night. Since she was a woman, he kept a good distance from her while she squatted down near a fence. She quickly took the Bible and pushed it under the fence, deep in the snow of the neighbor’s yard. Then she stood

up and returned to the Police Station for questioning.

The police found only a Hymn book and some notes in a notebook. They confiscated these and finally let the brethren start their 5-mile walk home. Br. Pavel got home late at night. He took his oldest son with him and returned to the Police Station by 4 AM. They found the Bible and the son returned home with the Bible while Br. Pavel remained at the Police station waiting for them to open.

The Wrath of Man Praises God

The police took them to the regional government to be interrogated further. The man who took them there and guarded them was from their own village. He was with the Chief of Police and the interrogation began. When it was Br. Pavel's turn to be questioned, this policeman began to yell at him – calling them lice and saying they should be crushed to death. He said that if he could, he would shoot them all. He was very offensive... so offensive that the Chief of Police threw him out of the room.

The end result was that the Chief of Police was merciful to the brethren. He let them go with only a warning to not have more meetings in that village (Zimbreni). Of course, they continued to have meetings there, but they were more careful after that.

The Light Grows Brighter

There were a group of brethren who believed differently than the "*Opozitie cu Revistele Vechi*". They had some of the Volumes and treasured them. They were called "*Russellisti*" or "*Millenisti*". These brethren had gotten a hold of some of the Volumes which had been photographed by the brethren in the north of Moldova. These brethren had Volume 1, Volume 7, Harp of God (or Harp with 10 strings as it is called in Romanian), Biography of Br. Russell, Tabernacle Shadows, Hymn books, and maybe some other books. They studied them and found doctrines which convinced them that here was the Truth. They tried to convince the "*Opozitie cu Revistele Vechi*" but had little success.

Years had passed and Sr. Lida had grown up. She married Br. Petrica Ceban and after one year they had twin girls. They continued to study with the "*Opozitie cu Revistele Vechi*". By this time there were only 11 brethren in all of Moldova which held to these views. The rest of these brethren had stayed with the *Opozitie* movement which believed the JW writings through 1967 or 1968. In their village there were only 3 brethren – the two of them and Br. Gavril.

Once, while they were having a study on Elijah and Elisha, they heard dogs barking. Two *Russellisti* were coming up the path to the house. They continued their study with the *Russellisti*. After the explanation from the *Revista*, the *Russellisti* asked Br. Petrica to read in II Kings up to the verse where it said Elisha saw Elijah ascend into heaven (as the *JW Revista* said). Br. Petrica kept on reading because the Bible didn't state that anywhere... even after the second reading. Then the *Russellisti* asked if there was a Scripture which showed that Satan was thrown out of heaven in 1914, as the *Revista* had said. They said there was no Scripture that said that, but that through prophecy they understood that. Then the *Russellisti* showed Br. Petrica the verse from Ezek. 28 which says Satan was thrown down in Eden, when unlawfulness was found in him. Br. Gavril didn't have a good answer. Sr. Lida was disappointed since she had hoped he'd have a good answer.

He was an older brother and she thought he should be able to give good Scriptural Support. She said the children needed to go home and they left quickly. They had no Scriptures to support their view, but the *Russellites* had given Biblical proofs.

When they met with others from their group and told them how the *Russellisti* had given Biblical proofs but they didn't have any, they were told not to talk with *Russellisti* – not even to say good morning to them, and not to let them in their home. But Sr. Lida felt this was wrong... that the light should not be afraid of the darkness. She didn't like it but kept these thoughts in her heart.

The *Russellisti* did come back. They even gave Sr. Lida a First Volume, but since she didn't read it, they took it back.

Finding the Truth in Russia

Three years passed. Two *Russellisti* went to Russia to work. Along with them was Br. Gavril's son, who did not have any interest in the Truth.

The *Russellisti* brethren had taken a photographed copy of "*The Truth About Hell*" with them and had been reading it in the hotel where they were staying. They left for home earlier than Br. Gavril's son and they accidentally left the book behind. Since it was in Romanian, the cleaning lady did not recognize what the book was. She gave it to Br. Gavril's son to take back to them when he returned home.

When Br. Gavril's son returned home, he gave the book to his father. Br. Gavril wanted to read the book before returning it to the brethren – but the photographed pages were in bad condition... as were his eyes.

He asked Br. Petrica to read the book to him after the study each week. He wanted to find the errors in book, since he was sure that the "*Russellisti*" who had photographed the book were in error.

At first, Br. Petrica and Sr. Lida did not see the point to the book. It was not very interesting to them since they already did not believe in hell and the definitions of *sheol* and *hades* didn't have any importance for them. They found the book boring, but they had too much respect for Br. Gavril to tell him.

Once they got beyond the definitions, though, they found the explanation of the parables more interesting: the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus and the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. The explanations were different than in the *Revistele* but seemed more logical. By the time they'd finished the book, Br. Gavril asked if they'd found any errors in it. They said that they hadn't – and neither had he.

He decided to bring another book and see if they could find errors in that one. He brought Volume 7. They didn't find any errors there, either. The JW's didn't have any explanation for the first 11 chapters of Revelation, but once they got to chapter 12, they found a difference and they were shocked. They had been taught that the man child of Rev 12 was Jesus... but Volume 7 said it was Papacy. Volume 7 had such strong proofs and was so detailed that they were convinced it was correct. Again, the Jehovah's Witness explanation was not strong enough.

Days of Tears, Days of Joy

The separation was very painful. It tore them away from their parents, their siblings – in addition to their brethren. Br. Petrica's parents said it was all Sr. Lida's fault – that she had destroyed their son and taken him out of the Truth. By this time they had four children, and that only made the separation more painful. They talked at great length with their families, and with tears. Their families thought they were going into second death and taking the grandchildren with them. By the time the separation was through the only ones who believed as Br. Petrica and Sr. Lida were her parents and Br. Gavril.

In Moldova, people are friendly and communicative. While waiting for the bus, they would begin to talk with the other people there. The brethren would witness at these bus stops. If someone said "Praise the Lord", they would be asked if they were "*Credincios*" (Believers). In the villages of Moldova, people know the people of their village. They also know people in other nearby villages. Soon the word had traveled that these brethren had fallen from the faith. Br. Gavril went to his friends in a nearby village. They had heard that he had gotten a hold of books and had new ideas. They were very happy to welcome him because they were curious about what he believed. They invited their children and others to come and bring questions and discuss the Scriptures.

The house was filled with brethren – they all had questions and wanted to hear more. So they decided to have another meeting in another village, Tintareni, and then another meeting in a nearby forest. These were not official meetings and the Secret Police was already losing power. It was now 1987 and only 2 years before communism fell in Moldova. It was not as dangerous as in the days of Brezhnev.

These meetings of questions and answers continued on a regular basis. The fellowship grew. Br. Costea Gronic was very active in visiting Jehovah's Witnesses and telling them that he had found the Volumes and a better Truth. Some listened to him and some did not – but the Volumes continued to find their way into the hands of those who had interest.

The brethren would lend and borrow volumes and other books with each other. These were photographed pages from books – with the photographs glued back to back to make a book. They were thick, heavy, and sometimes hard to read. Regular books did not arrive until Br. Bologna came to Moldova in the early 90s and got addresses of the brethren. He began to send books on a regular basis to Moldova. Each person now could have their own Volume 1, their own Tabernacle Shadows, Manna, Hymn book. They were filled with so much joy.

International Brethren

In 1991, brethren from the north of Moldova went to Romania searching for brethren who still believed the Volumes. They came back with a report of Romanian brethren ... and the Moldova brethren soon invited brethren to come from Romania.

The first ones who came were Br. Vasile Intea from Cluj, Br. Costel from Okna Mures & fr. Miklos from Cluj. Brethren organized a meeting in Balti. They rented a large hall and over 100 brethren came from all over Moldova. The first two discourses were very nice, but when Br. Costel began to speak, the brethren couldn't believe their ears. He was talking about how wonderful it was to be part of the bride of Christ, a part of his church.

The Moldovan brethren said these brethren have different ideas. They asked the Romanians many questions. The older brethren didn't want to have any connection with these brethren from Romania and their strange ideas. But as the brethren fellowshiped, they exchanged addresses.

One day in 1992, a letter came from Cluj to Br. Costea Iachim. He read it in the meeting. The brethren from Moldova were invited to select representatives of their classes and to come to Romania. The brethren didn't understand that they were looking only for brothers, those who led the classes. They only expected brothers but all wanted to come. They made plans to rent a bus and go and meet the brethren in Romania.

In the north, one brother received the same letter. But he didn't read it in the meeting. He called the brethren in south and told them that these are not our brethren. He encouraged them to cancel the bus and to stay home. However, two carloads of brethren went anyway, and a few went by train. In total about 10 brethren arrived in Cluj.

By 5 AM they had arrived in Cluj and now the search for the brethren began. The address they had was not helpful since it turns out that only one building on the street still went by the old street name. They searched for four hours but they could find no street with that name. Then Sr. Lida looked across the street from where they were, and saw a sign with the address they were looking for.

The brethren were so happy to walk into the meeting. Right away Sr. Lida noticed that no sisters were there except for those sisters who were in the kitchen preparing food. It turns out that this was a business meeting and only brothers were invited. However, they allowed the sisters to stay too. They were discussing whether or not to elect elders in their classes. Sr. Lida was very happy to discover that there were sisters on the next day, at their regular meeting.

The brethren who had gone to Romania returned home to plenty of criticism. They were criticized for reading the letter in the meeting. They were criticized for attending the meeting.

But the doors were open and brethren began to come. They came from the US, from Romania, and from France. Br. George & Sr. Ruth Wilmott came with Sr. Beti. Br. Jerome Gruehn, Br. Adolphe Debski, and others came and with them came more and more ideas about the narrow way still being open.

Separations

Now the discussions started. There was so much tension as they struggled to come to an understanding of the Truth. They received Volume 1 and began comparing the writings with the events; trying to put everything together. Some said brethren from other countries should not be invited anymore. When Br. Gruehn and Br. Debski visited, a few of the brethren became so aggressive that the Romanian sisters said they would not return again. Sr. Lida assured them that not all of us are like those who are shouting in the meeting. Come again because there are brethren who want to hear more.

In 1995 there was another separation. There was to be a meeting at Br. Costea's home in Tintareni. Before the meeting, three brethren came to a study. They said that anyone who wants to go to the meeting in Tintareni can go, but that they would make their own meeting in Piatra Alba. The last meetings before the separation were very hard.

Looking Backward

2011 is drawing to a close. Those days of struggle to come to a better knowledge of the Truth have come to an end... or at least a pause. The brethren have good relationship now with one another and the separation is no longer so painful. Few brethren in the Chisinau area still believe the door is closed. And there is cooperation between the two classes when there are funerals and young people's meetings.

End Notes

- 1.** *Credincios* – Believer, or Faithful. This is more than just the fact of believing – it implies a Christian who takes his faith seriously
- 2.** *Opozitie* – (pronounced opozitsie) Opposition. In much of Eastern Europe, the Jehovah's Witnesses were divided into several segments. There is the "*Canal*" (channel) which is the mainstream JW's like we have here. They allow many things which "*Credincios*" (Believers or Faithful) find objectionable. There are several break off groups which all seem to be called "*Opozitie*". These hold by JW writings through the 1950s or 1960s. The group of *Opozitie* that Sr. Lida was in only accepted the JW writings through the late 40s. They have a much stricter code of ethics: no makeup, no jewelry, no "worldly" activities (such as dancing or movies), women have their heads FULLY covered from a very early age and maintain modest dress. I believe there are also restrictions on what kind of work they do, not serving in the army, and being completely separate from the government.
- 3.** *Revistele* – (literally magazine). This term refers to the Watchtowers – both the Watchtowers from Br. Russell's day as well as the Watchtowers that the JW organization put out after Br. Russell's death. Not knowing how to distinguish between the two, I left it untranslated and explained in parentheses.

Interview with Brother Gheorghe Bivol of Costesti, Moldova conducted by Sister Cher-El Hagensick - 2011

History

Until 1940 Moldova was together with Romania, and there were Bible Students in Moldova as well as Romania. In 1940, Moldova was annexed by the USSR and the persecution against all Christians began. Those Christians who were not willing to join the army and obey the laws of the government received the greater persecution.

In 1949, many brethren were sent to Siberia – Bible Students, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and others who refused to register with the Government. In the area where we live, central Moldova – the area surrounding Chisinau – all Bible Students, JW’s and others like them were sent to Siberia. Those who were left behind fell from the faith. Along with these brethren, many criminals were also sent to Siberia and some of those got to know the Truth through the brethren there.

Br. Casian’s Story

Starting with 1951 but even more so in 1953 when Stalin died, there began to be a liberation of the brethren in Siberia. Among those criminals turned Jehovah’s Witness, was a man from Costesti. He began to witness to the people in his village about the Truth. Among the ones who learned the Truth from him was Br. Casian Bivol. He, along with his wife and five children, was zealous to learn more of the Truth. They received some literature written by Br. Russell and Judge Rutherford, including the Photo-Drama, Volumes 1 & 7, a Hymn book, and some booklets from Rutherford.

Br. Gheorghe was very young at the time but remembers the studies they had. “Brethren were so courageous. They were exceptionally wise. This brother was a good orator. As they learned and developed, other brothers joined him in being elders and leading the meetings. He quickly gathered people from the village and had a meeting with them. Whole families came – about 40-60 people.”

They did not have many books and were not allowed to have any contact with other countries. In their meetings, they would read Volumes 1 and 7. They were very interested in what was written and would ask questions from the Volumes – but were told that the literature of Br. Russell was old and that they should only believe what was in the *Revistele* (Watchtower magazines). Because they had no contact with brethren from other places, and did not have sufficient literature from Br. Russell, they lacked the support they needed to stay with Br. Russell’s teachings. They began to accept what was written in the *Revistele*.

Not only were there brethren at the meetings, but also agents from the KGB and their spies. They wrote down who were the elders and what was said in the meetings and reported back to the KGB.

In 1961, following a decree from Moscow, Jehovah’s Witnesses who were not registered were categorically forbidden from meeting and from having religious books, including the Bible. They began to be called in for questioning by the KGB. They were told to either register or to sign a declaration that they had resigned from the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Many brethren signed the declarations and fell from their faith. They didn't come to meetings any more. Those who were unwilling to sign the declarations, saying "I will never forsake God" began to be persecuted. In order for the authorities to have a motive to arrest them, they began to search homes seeking for literature. Anytime they found a notebook written with Latin letters (Romanian) instead of Cyrillic (Russian), they would take that notebook as evidence. They could make surprise inspections at any time, night or day coming in and searching, leaving everything topsy turvy. Brethren could never leave any books out in the open since they never knew when someone would come.

Br. Casian received books via the underground. They would read the books and share them with others. When the books were not being read, they were hidden in tubes or well wrapped in plastic so that they would not get wet. They were then buried in the garden.

The KGB Gets Involved

One day it was pouring rain. It rained so hard that it uncovered their Bible, some *Revistele* and other books which had been hidden in the garden. A 10-year old child passing by saw the books and brought them home to his father. His father was a good communist: he recognized what they were and turned some of the books in to the Police, saying that they were found on Br. Casian's land. Br. Casian was called in for questioning but he said he did not recognize the books. The Police came and searched the house. They found some *Revistele* and that was enough to arrest Br. Casian. All the books he had: Bible, Volumes, other Truth literature, *Revistele* were confiscated. It was June 8, 1963. Br. Casian's middle child, Gheorghe, was 11 years old.

When other brethren were called in for questioning, they were asked, "Who brought you into this faith? Who is the most important in your class? Who brought you these books?" Four of the brethren said Br. Casian Bivol brought them into this faith. Br. Casian was sentenced to 5 years in prison for "anti-Soviet propaganda". He was accused of "having a connection with America".

The KGB tried to destroy the entire class. The brother who had brought the Truth to the brethren in their village was also arrested and sent back to Siberia. The first time he was in Siberia, he found his faith. This time he was sent there for his faith and returned home without it. He went a JW and returned a worldly man: smoking and drinking. He deserted his wife and 4 children and moved to another village.

A year after his arrest, Br. Casian's wife died of stomach ulcers. She was only 39 years old. (Earlier, Br. Casian had gone to Western Ukraine to bring some food as there was a great famine in Moldova and people were dying. While being there, his wife didn't have proper food to eat and made soups with many hot peppers (the only food she had), and in a few years she died.) With their father in prison for his faith, and their mother dead at such a young age, the five children were left with no one to raise them. They ranged in age from 7 to 17.

The director of the prison then went to Br. Casian and told him that his wife had died. If he would renounce his faith, then they would give him the freedom to attend his wife's funeral. (Another brother was in prison at the same time, and that brother signed the declaration. But when that brother went home he continued to attend meetings. He was arrested immediately and sentenced to double time.)

Days of Hardship

The children were left without someone to take care of them. The oldest child, a son, went to work. The only daughter was left to take care of the home. She was only 13, but all the responsibilities of the family fell on her shoulders. For 15 months she had to work, to wash all the clothes – by hand – for the 5 of them, to bake bread, cook, clean, garden, take care of the animals... with no one to help her. They had no electricity in their home; there was no indoor plumbing. There were no luxuries of any kind. The closest well was 500 meters away. The younger boys helped to the best of their ability. They were very poor.

In the fall of 1964, the oldest son was arrested for refusing to serve in the army because of his faith. The daughter was left alone at home to fend for herself – but the three youngest sons were taken to an orphanage. It was a very hard time and there was no one to help. The neighbors had their own struggles. A great famine in 1946 and 1947 had killed one third of Moldova's population – including the grandparents and some uncles and aunts. There was no one left to help.

There was a tradition in the Soviet Union that if a president dies or is replaced, they grant amnesty to prisoners, or at least reduce their sentence. When Khrushchev was dismissed, Br. Casian's sentence was reduced by 2 years. In 1966, on June 8, he was set free.

Br. Gheorghe's Story

When Br. Casian came home from prison, he took the boys out of the orphanage and brought them back home to their village. After a year, he married again and moved to his wife's village, bringing his two youngest sons with him. The oldest son was still in prison; the sister had moved to Chisinau; only the middle son, Gheorghe, was left behind. He was 14 years old.

In 1967, Gheorghe finished 8th grade. There was no opportunity to attend school in his village after that. He was able to find a job helping a man who drove a tractor. He had the privilege of doing all the hard work: connecting the various farm implements to the tractor; aligning the ploughs, making sure the seeder didn't clog, etc. There was a need for people to work with tractors and after a year he also learned to drive a tractor.

During all this time he continued to go to the meetings. They were told that the high calling was not open for them, yet he loved the Lord and tried to live according to His will. His siblings also went to the meetings as much as possible.

When Br. Gheorghe was 18 years old, in 1970, he was called into the Russian army. With all the problems that happened, the years of being alone with little or no support from others, he didn't have the courage to refuse as his brother had. He told them that he was *Credincios* (a believer) and would not go into the army – so they said he could go to work in Russia instead of the army. For two years he didn't come home at all.

Changes

In 1972 he came home and returned to the meetings. In November, 1973 he married Sr. Pelaghia, who was also with the Witnesses. Her father didn't want her to marry since they thought Armageddon would take place in 1975. That didn't happen and this error helped them to recognize that the Jehovah's Witnesses did not have the Truth.

Br. Gheorghe & Sr. Pelaghia were with the *Opoziție* (the Opposition) segment of the Witnesses. In 1977, Br. Costea Gronic, Sr. Maria Neagu, and Br. Fedea from Edinet came to the General Meeting of the entire Chisinau Zone, bringing with them certain books, including: Harp of God, Photo-Drama, and Volume 1. After the meeting they began to ask several questions in regard to the Plan of God. These were things which the Witnesses did not know.

These brethren showed them certain things from the Truth which separated them from the beliefs of the Witnesses.

Br. Gheorghe says, "I remembered the books written by Br. Russell that my Dad had before he was arrested: Volume 1, Harp of God, Volume 7, and the Photo-Drama. I began to collaborate with them. I continued going to the meetings, but also gathered together with other brethren who were interested in knowing about the writings of Br. Russell. We also met with the brethren from the North of Moldova. Those brethren from the North began to make extra copies of the Volumes by photographing them and pasting the pages together to make thick books.

The elders of the *Opoziție* did not appreciate the fact that we were looking for Br. Russell's writings. They didn't like it when we asked questions in regard to Israel, salvation for all, ransom price, or other questions regarding the Truth. In the fall of 1982 we were disfellowshipped from the *Opoziție*."

There was a meeting of separation between *Opoziție* and those who appreciated the Volumes. It was a large meeting – a meeting of discussion. Some held to the Jehovah's Witness views, others to the Volumes. All the leaders from the Jehovah's Witnesses came. One of the JW leaders asked, "How do you know the brethren from the north?" Br. Casian answered. "I don't know them, but I know the books which they brought."

They continued to meet with the brethren who appreciated Br. Russell's writings. They had meetings in various nearby villages, rotating to different homes of those who also appreciated the Volumes.

It was still forbidden for them to have meetings, so they met in the forest. Once, in the early 1980s, the Secret Police invaded one of these forest meetings. Br. Gheorghe was reading from Volume 1 when the Secret Police came. He quickly dropped the Volume on the ground and with his feet covered it with leaves. The Police gathered up all the brethren and took them away in a military transport covered with tarp. They confiscated all the Bibles and Volumes. Then they searched through the leaves until they found the Volume Br. Gheorghe had been reading and they took that too. It was a time when the power of the Soviet Empire was already beginning to wane and they only confiscated the books but let the brethren go.

These brethren didn't have all of Br. Russell's writings. They only had translations of Volumes 1 and 6 which were translated from older originals. They did not believe that the forewords were written by Br. Russell but thought they were added later. Once the original Watchtowers (Reprints) began to be translated into Romanian, they did not believe that they were accurate.

After brethren began to come from other countries, they remained with the brethren who didn't believe that the high calling was open until 2002 or 2003. Then their 3rd daughter, Lena, was studying English in a University. We asked brethren for the original Volumes. We laid the Volumes side by side – English with Romanian. I read the Romanian. She read the English. We saw that the translations had been accurate and that Br. Russell really had written the forewords. We brought the Volumes to the meeting. Many brethren accepted the fact that the High Calling is still open.

In August 29, 2004 our whole family recognized that the high calling is still open and our whole family was immersed.

Br. Gheorghe concluded: “Through all I've lived through, I have arrived at the Truth which will not need to be changed. We are thankful for the Truth we have. We are sure that God will fulfill His Plan which He purposed before us.

Epilogue

Br. Casian passed on to his reward in 1992. He never stopped loving the Volumes. He was one of the first ones who received these Volumes. He had remembered the books he had before and determined they were true. Before he died he had accepted the high calling.

He left behind a wife and five children, plus many grandchildren. All of his children remained zealous for the Lord, though not all came to appreciate the Volumes. The oldest son remains a Jehovah's Witness. The daughter married and stopped going to meeting. Two of the sons are consecrated and understand that the door is still open. One son believes that the door is shut but is still happy to study the Truth. A good number of his grandchildren are consecrated.

Br. Casian was known for his soft character. But it was not always this way. At one time he was known for his strength and the young people of the village had treated him with respect and a bit of fear. During and after the war, there had been a kind of anarchy which reigned in Moldova until the Russians took control. Discarded weapons were easy to come by and gangs sprang up which terrorized the villages. But even they treated Br. Casian with a wary respect. Once he had heard the Truth from the man from Siberia, he completely changed and became very patient. The Truth changes people from the inside out.

When Br. Casian had returned from prison, in 1968, he returned to his village. There he met the man who had betrayed him to the Police. That neighbor came to him and gave him his Bible back. He had only turned in the *Revistele* to the Police... but the Bible he saved for Br. Casian's return.

Br. Casian: The communists could take away his books; illness could take away his wife; circumstances could take away his children – but nothing could break his faith.

