

A STRANGE & WONDERFUL LOVE STORY

Carol Hartman, CFAR Missionary to Ukraine

by Paul Carden

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*And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written,
"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!"
Romans 10:15*

I want to tell you a strange and wonderful love story.

Once upon a time there was a woman named Carol. She endured nearly 40 years as an active Jehovah's Witness. Then she spent nine years in the spiritual wilderness.

And then, in 1988, she surrendered her heart to Jesus Christ.

As time went by, Carol's love for Jesus grew. But so did another love — an abiding, passionate love for Jehovah's Witnesses.

Carol's love for the Jehovah's Witnesses increased to the point that she was willing to do something extraordinary: She left the comforts of her home in San Diego to cross the ocean and spend three months in the former Soviet Union to tell JW's who don't even speak English about the hope and freedom that Christ alone can offer them.

And strangest of all, the people whom Carol loves have been (in the words of Oscar Hammerstein) "carefully taught" to "hate and fear" people like her — that is, people who have left the Watchtower Society.

But that didn't stop Carol. In July of 2003 she packed her bags and headed for Ukraine.

When she arrived in Kyiv to serve her first term as a CFAR missionary, Carol knew that she wanted to share the love of Christ with Jehovah's Witnesses and help former JW's who hadn't yet come to Jesus. What she didn't know was that so many Christians would want to hear her, too — Christians who wanted to understand the difference between the Watchtower "gospel" and the biblical Gospel, who wanted to know how to express God's love to the Witnesses.

In three months, Carol gave her testimony of God's love in two dozen churches in twenty cities and villages in Ukraine and Poland. And by the time she returned to the States, requests were coming in steadily from churches in other cities and villages — so many that she could easily fill every Sunday from now till the end of the following year (and a lot of days in between).

Of course, Carol also witnessed to Jehovah's Witnesses who she met on the street and on her doorstep, sharing the Good News and planting powerful seeds that we believe

God will use to bring them to Christ.

How can you witness to a Witness? Carol offers these four practical steps:

- **Ask God to use the Holy Spirit to help you speak to this individual.**

(Each Witness is different!)

- **Be friendly — get acquainted!**

(Find out about the person's family, how he or she became a Jehovah's Witness, etc.)

- **Don't attack the Watchtower's errors right away.**

("People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.")

- **Give your testimony!**

(The Witness has no experience of a personal relationship with Christ, and His work in your life sends a powerful message).

One of Carol's most poignant memories was of the afternoon she spent with Irina, a Ukrainian woman who left the Watchtower to follow Jesus. What made the encounter so special was that Irina had never met anyone else who had left the Witnesses and become a true follower of Jesus Christ. Irina's eyes were shining as she and Carol opened God's Word together and she basked in this rare moment of fellowship.

This strange and wonderful love story doesn't stop there.

Carol plans to return to the former Soviet Union next year for at least six more months of life-changing ministry alongside Genna Gomenyuk of CFAR Ukraine. The Watchtower Society has over a quarter of a million adherents in Ukraine alone! If the Lord carries and her health holds up, she hopes to go back and minister every year of her life from now on.

It wouldn't be possible without the prayers of the Body of Christ. God bless you for helping to make His love real to those trapped in the cults around the world! 🙏



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