

Jehovah's Witnesses —Who Are They?



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“‘You are my witnesses,’ declares
Jehovah, ‘and I am God.’”

—Isaiah 43:12

Jehovah's Witnesses live, work, and practice their faith in 240 lands. They are an international religious community of some 8.5 million people from all ethnic backgrounds and segments of society.

Jehovah's Witnesses view the Bible as the inspired Word of God. The Witnesses see this holy book as a guide to modern living. In their daily lives, they strive to apply Bible laws and principles and to observe the teachings of Jesus Christ. Many Witnesses have found that applying the Bible's teachings in their life has improved their character, their physical and emotional health, their family life, and their personal relationships. Because they have benefited so greatly, they feel motivated to share such practical knowledge with others.



WHAT DO THEY DO?

The Witnesses are well-known for their educational work of sharing the positive message of the Bible. Their public ministry—following the pattern of Jesus and the early Christians—is an integral part of their worship. Jehovah's Witnesses have distributed billions of copies of Bibles and Bible-based literature without charge. The Witnesses' official website, jw.org[®], offers content for people of all ages in more than 1,000 languages—including more than 100 sign languages for the hard of hearing. They also produce braille publications in about 50 languages.

When Jehovah's Witnesses share their beliefs with others, they respect the right of each individual to decide whether or not to engage in conversation with them. All religious activities are performed by volunteers and financed by voluntary donations rather than by tithe or collections. There are no salaried clergy among Jehovah's Witnesses.

**Jehovah's Witnesses are a well-known
Christian religion around the globe**



One scholar described Jehovah's Witnesses as "supranational." He stated that among the Witnesses "ethnicity plays no role, and language is nothing but a vehicle to understanding God's word."



The name Jehovah's Witnesses was adopted in 1931 to reflect their foremost mission to make God's name, Jehovah, and his purposes known to others

(Isaiah 43:10)



Another essential aspect of their worship is to meet together. Their meetings are designed to help people to understand the Bible better and to apply its principles in their lives. Their religious services are free, dignified, and open to the public.

When natural disasters strike, the Witnesses respond in a well-organized manner in order to care for the physical and emotional needs of their fellow Witnesses and other members of the community. In addition to providing practical assistance, the Witnesses make special efforts to provide Scriptural comfort to all in need.

BIBLE PRINCIPLES

"'You are my witnesses,' declares Jehovah, 'and I am God.'"

—*Isaiah 43:12*

"All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching."

—*2 Timothy 3:16*

"For all the things that were written beforehand were written for our instruction."

—*Romans 15:4*



HOW ARE THEY ORGANIZED?

The religious activity of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide is overseen by an administrative body, which Jehovah's Witnesses refer to as "the Governing Body." This group follows the pattern of the first century "apostles and elders" in Jerusalem, who shared Bible-based information and enabled individual believers to make their own decisions. (Acts 15:2) The Governing Body recognizes that each individual "will carry his own load" and respects his right of free will to make decisions, as he will bear the responsibility for the results.—Galatians 6:5.

Jehovah's Witnesses have no paid clergy, and there are no class distinctions. In many countries, Branch Committees, composed of a small number of Witnesses, oversee the activities of the local Witness community. They supervise the translation of Bible-based materials, organize religious meetings and conventions, and manage the construction of places of worship called Kingdom Halls. Qualified traveling ministers regularly make pastoral visits on local congregations. In the congregations, elders assist individual Witnesses by providing spiritual support and guidance. These men coordinate the evangelizing activity, provide comfort to Witnesses who have suffered loss, and encourage and assist Witnesses who are in need. They seek the well-being of the congregation in harmony with the precept:



"Not that we are the masters over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy."—2 Corinthians 1:24.

This organizational structure has served the Witnesses well. Sociologists have noted a high degree of unity among the socially and ethnically diverse congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. The Witnesses consider themselves to be members of a family and call each other brother and sister. They attribute their unity to their willingness to be instructed by the Scriptures: "All your sons will be taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant."—Isaiah 54:13.