



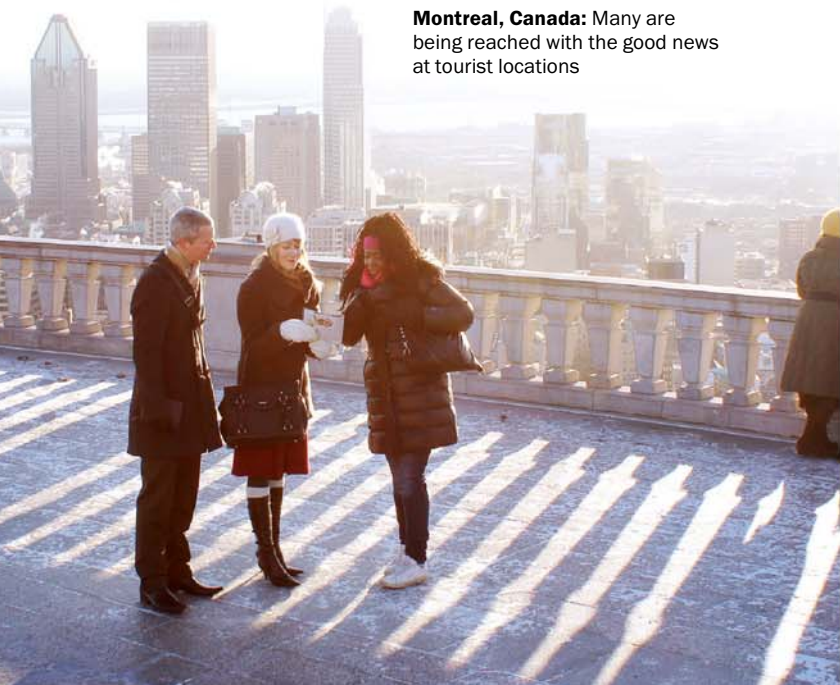
# 2013

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Yearbook of  
Jehovah's Witnesses

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**Montreal, Canada:** Many are being reached with the good news at tourist locations

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A member of the Yangon  
Disaster Relief Committee  
repairing damage caused by  
Cyclone Nargis (page 163)

# My Spiritual Goals for 2013

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Bible Reading and Study

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Preaching and Teaching

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Christian Living and Qualities

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Assignments and Responsibilities

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Leg-rowing fisherman on  
Inle Lake in Myanmar





This book belongs to

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2013

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Yearbook of  
Jehovah's Witnesses

Containing the Report for the  
Service Year of 2012

**“Be courageous and strong. . . . Jehovah your God is with you.”**

Joshua 1:9

In 1473 B.C.E., the Israelites were poised to enter the Promised Land, but powerful enemies stood before them. “Be courageous and very strong,” God commanded Joshua. If he remained faithful, Joshua would be successful. “Do not suffer shock or be terrified,” he was told, “for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go.” And God did prove to be with him, for the Israelites conquered their enemies in just six years.—Josh. 1:7-9.

True Christians are soon to cross into the promised new world, so they need to be courageous and strong. Like Joshua, we face powerful enemies who strive to break our integrity. The battles we fight are waged, not with spears and swords, but with spiritual weapons, and Jehovah trains us to use them skillfully. Whatever situation you may face, be assured that if you are courageous, strong, and faithful, Jehovah will be with you to make you victorious.





# A Letter From the Governing Body

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Our heavenly Father, Jehovah, is the personification of love. Hence, the Bible states: “God is love.” (1 John 4:8) Even though Jehovah is the Almighty, his Word never says, “God is power” or, “God is might.” He bases his rule primarily on love. How this attracts us to him!

Happily, Jehovah does not force us to serve him. He is not a dictator. He wants us to serve him out of love from our heart. When we do this, we show that we want his rulership because we believe that the way he rules is right and loving. This has been evident from the beginning of human history.

Rather than compel Adam and Eve to obey him, Jehovah gave them the opportunity to make their own choice. If they had really loved Jehovah and appreciated what he had

done for them, they would have resisted Satan's efforts to cause them to rebel.

Later on, Moses said in his parting speech to the nation of Israel: "See, I do put before you today life and good, and death and bad." (Deut. 30:15) The people had the freedom to decide how they wanted to live. Similarly, Joshua said to the Israelites: "If it is bad in your eyes to serve Jehovah, *choose* for yourselves today whom you will serve." In reply, the people answered Joshua: "It is unthinkable, on our part, to leave Jehovah." (Josh. 24:15, 16) That is how we feel today as well. Because we love Jehovah, it is "unthinkable" for us to leave him.

Within the Christian congregation, we clearly understand the matter of free will. While elders are authorized to counsel and even to discipline, they do not seek to dominate or to control the life or faith of others. The apostle Paul wrote: "Not that we are the masters over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy, for it is by your faith that you are standing."—2 Cor. 1:24.



How satisfying it is to do something because we *want* to do it instead of being forced to do it! Jehovah invites us to do what is good out of love. The importance of that is seen in Paul's inspired words: "If I give all my belongings to feed others, and if I hand over my body, that I may boast, but do not have love, I am not profited at all."

—1 Cor. 13:3.

What joy it brings to Jehovah—what praise—to see millions of our brothers and sisters serving him because they love him with all their heart!

Jehovah, in turn, dearly loves all his servants, including all you children and teenagers who show that you love Jehovah rather than the world and the self-gratification it offers. Be assured, too, that we love you dearly.—Luke 12:42, 43.

Out of love for Jehovah, last year you brothers, sisters, and young people spent 1,748,697,447 hours proclaiming the good news. Prompted by love, 7,782,346 shared in

the field ministry worldwide. We rejoice in the fact that 268,777 new ones, among them many young ones, symbolized their dedication to Jehovah through water baptism. This means that 5,168 were baptized on average each weekend. How this touches our heart!

In this time of the end, God's people have to cope with many problems, challenges, persecution, sickness, and some have to contend with old age. But we are determined never to "shrink back" or to "give up." We love you all very much.—Heb. 10:39; 2 Cor. 4:16.

Your brothers,

*Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses*

On August 28, 2012,  
the redesigned [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org)  
Web site was launched



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# Highlights of the past year

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The earthly part of Jehovah's organization is irresistibly on the move! We invite you to read about exciting developments that have taken place over the past months.



à la Carte



## Properties Bought and Sold

### **A New Location for World Headquarters**

In July 2009, Jehovah's Witnesses purchased a plot of land in the state of New York, U.S.A., with plans to relocate their world headquarters. The 253-acre property is located about 50 miles northwest of the existing facilities, which have been in Brooklyn, New York, since 1909.

Some 800 Bethelites will live and work at the new facility, which will include an office building, a services building, maintenance buildings, and four residence buildings. A modest museum documenting the modern-day history of Jehovah's Witnesses is also planned for the site.



The facility will take up 45 acres of the purchased property, leaving the surrounding forest and wetlands undeveloped. The landscaping will not include any large lawn areas. Instead, the buildings will harmonize with the site's wooded location. To conserve resources, architects have designed the buildings to be energy efficient, which will result in minimal environmental impact and low operating costs. For example, the roofs of the buildings will be covered with hardy, low-maintenance plants, both to decrease the runoff of rain and to stabilize temperatures inside the buildings. The office design takes advantage of natural light for illumination. Water conservation is also a priority.

What prompted the planned move? Branch offices in other parts of the world now share in the printing of Bibles and Bible-based literature, which was once exclusively done in Brooklyn. In 2004, printing and shipping operations in the United States were moved to Wallkill, New York, about 90 miles northwest of Brooklyn. Cost too is a consideration. It is expensive to operate and maintain the aging and scattered facilities in Brooklyn. By relocating to a compact facility, we can make better use of donated funds.

### **Branch Offices Consolidated**

As of September 2012, the oversight of more than two dozen branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses has been transferred to larger branches. There are two main reasons for the changes:

**1. Technology has simplified the work.** In recent years, improvements in communications and printing

technology have reduced the number of personnel needed at larger branches. With fewer people serving at larger branches, room became available to house some who were working in smaller branches in other countries.

Now, from key locations, a pool of experienced Witnesses cares for the work of Bible education. For example, the preaching work in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama has come under the supervision of the Mexico branch. Consequently, the branch offices in those six countries were closed. Forty Bethel family members from those branches were reassigned to the Mexico branch. About 95 others remained in their native countries, where they took up the full-time ministry.

Others in those Central American countries continued work in translation offices under the supervision of the Mexico branch. For example, about 20 translators in Panama translate Bible publications into indigenous languages. In Guatemala, 16 Witnesses translate publications into four local languages. The reorganization efforts in Central America have reduced the number of Bethelites from 300 to about 75.

**2. More full-time workers available for preaching.** Because of the mergers, brothers who had been serving in small branches can now concentrate on preaching the good news. One brother in Africa, who was reassigned to the preaching activity, wrote: “Adjusting my lifestyle to suit the new circumstances was a challenge during the first few months.



ALASKA BAHAMAS HAWAII	→ <b>UNITED STATES</b>
BURKINA FASO TOGO	→ <b>BENIN</b>
GUYANA	→ <b>TRINIDAD</b>
URUGUAY	→ <b>ARGENTINA</b>
NEW ZEALAND SAMOA	→ <b>AUSTRALIA</b>
ANTIGUA	→ <b>BARBADOS</b>

AUSTRIA LUXEMBOURG SWITZERLAND	→ <b>GERMANY</b>
CYPRUS	→ <b>GREECE</b>
CZECH REPUBLIC	→ <b>SLOVAKIA</b>
FRENCH GUIANA GUADELOUPE MARTINIQUE REUNION	→ <b>FRANCE</b>
IRELAND	→ <b>BRITAIN</b>

DENMARK ICELAND NORWAY SWEDEN	→ <b>SCANDINAVIA BRANCH</b>
BELIZE COSTA RICA EL SALVADOR GUATEMALA HONDURAS NICARAGUA PANAMA	→ <b>MEXICO</b>

However, being in the ministry daily has brought me joy and blessings beyond measure. Presently, I am conducting Bible studies with 20 people, and some of them now attend congregation meetings.”

### **A Longtime Brooklyn Landmark**

Day and night for more than 40 years, the 15-foot-tall red letters atop the world headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses have been a familiar sight to residents of New York City, many of whom depend on the sign’s useful display of the time and temperature.

A sign was originally installed more than 70 years ago by the previous owner of the building. Jehovah’s Witnesses changed the sign to its present form after purchasing the building in 1969.

To make it more efficient and accurate, the sign has been modified several times. In the mid-1980’s, a display of the temperature in Celsius was added to the alternating display of the time and temperature in Fahrenheit.

Eboni, who can see the sign from her apartment in Brooklyn, said: “It’s nice just to look out the window to see the time and temperature before I go to work. It keeps me on time and helps me dress for the weather.”

Will the sign remain there for another 40 years? With the planned relocation of Jehovah’s Witnesses’ world headquarters, that decision will rest with the future owners of the building.







## Spreading the Word

### Something New for Manhattan

In November 2011, a group of Jehovah's Witnesses began to acquaint people in Manhattan with the Bible's message by means of attractive display tables and carts. This initiative is taking place in the southern part of Manhattan, the busiest and oldest borough of New York City. The area was divided into four zones. Each zone has several locations where those passing by can stop at a well-arranged table or cart stocked with Bible literature and attended by a local pioneer. Most displays can be found in or near transportation hubs, through which tens of thousands of people pass each day.

At these locations, people can learn the Bible's answer to many questions. People who do not wish to linger can pick up a publication to read later. Literature is available in many languages. If a publication is not available in a desired language, it may be ordered and picked up a few days later.

The public as well as the authorities have welcomed this initiative. One police officer said: "What took you so long? You really have what people need." One man stopped abruptly when he saw the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* He said that he noticed people on the subway reading the book and wondered where they had obtained it. Now he knows.

One young man walked past one of the tables every day for six weeks on his way to work. Eventually he stopped and said, "I need help." Those manning the table were happy to assist. They gave him a Bible and showed him how to benefit from it. Enthusiastic passersby have stopped to discuss spiritual matters, and in eight months' time, 1,748 expressed a desire to study the Bible. By June 2012, this initiative had allowed the public to obtain 27,934 magazines and 61,019 books.

### **Our Magazines—Fewer Pages, More Languages**

Beginning with the January 2013 issues, *Awake!* and the public edition of *The Watchtower* were reduced from 32 pages to 16 pages. Because the

magazines contain less material, translation teams will be able to make them available in more languages. Presently, *Awake!* is translated into 98 languages and *The Watchtower* into 204. The study edition of *The Watchtower* will continue to be a 32-page magazine.

Some of the content previously featured in the magazines now appears only on the [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org) Web site. This includes “For Young People,” “My Bible Lessons,” and the Gilead graduation report from the public edition of *The Watchtower* and “For Family Review” and “Young People Ask” from *Awake!*

In addition, a series of online articles available only on the Web site provides clear, concise answers to questions about the Bible and about Jehovah’s Witnesses. The printed material is also available for download online. With a computer or mobile device, users can quickly access our publications at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org) in over 440 languages.

## **Our Web Site Gets a Face-Lift**

During the past few months, dozens of Jehovah’s Witnesses at world headquarters in New York have been working to make [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org) more attractive and easier to navigate from either a computer or a mobile device. In addition, they have revamped the Web site, with two goals in mind:

**1. To merge our Web sites.** Three Web sites managed by Jehovah’s Witnesses have been consolidated into one official Web site—[www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org). The other two, [www.watchtower.org](http://www.watchtower.org) and [www.jw-media.org](http://www.jw-media.org), have been discontinued. Consolidation of Web content provides a one-stop source for those who look



for information from or about Jehovah's Witnesses. For example, you can read, listen to, or print pages of the Bible and related publications in many languages.

**2. To add information.** The updated Web site has answers to Bible questions and information about the preaching work, branch offices, Kingdom Halls, and conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses. A "News" section reports on events affecting our brothers worldwide. There are also interactive features for families, teens, and children.

On a typical day, several hundred thousand people read our publications online. They download close to half a million audio, EPUB, PDF, or sign-language video files. Daily, a hundred people request that someone study the Bible with them.



## Help for People of All Sorts

### **The Six-Foot Bible**

The complete *New World Translation*—available in English, Spanish, and Italian Braille—ranges from 20 to 28 volumes and requires a minimum of six feet five inches of shelf space! Other Braille formats require less room than a Bible on embossed paper. For example, Braille notetakers enable the blind to take notes and to access electronically stored information by means of a portable device that raises and lowers pins to produce Braille symbols. The blind can also locate and listen to publications with the help of screen readers, which convert written text into the spoken word.



For more than 100 years, the Witnesses have produced Bible-based publications for the blind, and these are now available in 19 languages. Though interested blind people can have these publications without charge, many make a voluntary donation.

The Witnesses have developed a computer program that is capable of transcribing text into Braille in many languages. After a conversion table is set up containing both the vernacular print and the Braille characters, the program is able to convert text into Braille. It also formats the publication in a way that makes it easy for the blind to read. This automation will make it possible to produce Braille publications, including the Braille Bible, in virtually any language that has Braille characters, including those that use nonroman scripts.

Previously, when a new publication was released at a convention, the audience was told that the releases in Braille could be ordered later. Last year, the United States branch office surveyed the congregations to find out which conventions blind individuals planned to attend and which format (embossed paper, electronic notetaker, or electronic screen reader) they preferred.

Embossed paper copies were shipped to the conventions that had blind individuals in attendance, which made it possible for them to receive the new releases at the same time as everyone else. A

week after the convention, electronic formats were e-mailed to each person who desired them.

A blind sister said: "It was a wonderful privilege to receive the literature along with everyone else. Psalm 37:4 says that Jehovah will give us the requests of our heart. He did that this weekend!" Another blind Witness began to weep and said, "Thanks to Jehovah for caring for us so well!"

### **Thousands Learn to Read and Write**

In 2011, Jehovah's Witnesses helped more than 5,700 people to become literate. This is what has been happening in some countries:

**Ghana:** During the past 25 years, we have helped more than 9,000 learn to read and write.

**Mozambique:** More than 19,000 have learned to read over the past 15 years. A student named Felizarda said: "It makes me happy now that I can read Bible texts to others. That was very difficult for me before."

**Solomon Islands:** The branch office writes: "In the past, many living in isolated areas did not have access to schools. Also, very few girls received a formal education. Therefore, women in particular have benefited from the literacy classes. After completing the course, many have more confidence in themselves."

**Zambia:** Since 2002, nearly 12,000 have improved their literacy skills. Agnes, who is 82 years old, says: "When congregation literacy classes were announced, I was happy to enroll. At the first lesson, I learned to write my own name!"

HOVA  
SU  
SEFA





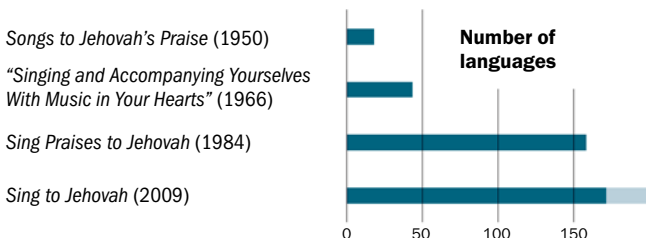
## Songs of Praise in Many Languages

Jehovah's Witnesses are already translating Bible literature into some 600 languages. Translating an entire songbook of 135 songs is a particularly daunting task. Yet, within three years the entire new songbook, *Sing to Jehovah*, was translated into 116 languages. An additional 55 languages have a 55-song version of the songbook, and dozens of other language editions are on the way.

Translators of songs aim to produce lyrics that are meaningful, beautiful, and memorable. Additionally, the wording used in a song of praise should be simple enough for the singer to grasp the meaning and

**Solomon Islands:** A congregation singing in Solomon Islands Pidgin

.....



intent of each phrase. In every language, the words and music need to combine and flow naturally, as if they are the words of the singer.

How do the translators achieve that goal? Rather than produce phrases that are translated literally from the original English lyrics of *Sing to Jehovah*, they write new lyrics for the music that capture the essence of the original song. While striving to adhere closely to the Scriptural thought behind each song, translators use common expressions in their language that are easily understood and remembered.

The first step is to make a literal translation of the English song. Next, a Witness with skill in writing song lyrics works on turning the translated text into colorful yet meaningful lyrics in the new language. Always conscious of maintaining Scriptural accuracy, the translation team and proofreaders then examine the work of the lyricist. Although it takes a huge amount of work to translate our songbook, Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world have been overjoyed to sing songs of praise in their own language.



## Remote Translation Offices

The book of Revelation prophesied that the anointed ones in our day would invite people to come and “take life’s water free.” (Rev. 22:17) This invitation would be extended to “all . . . peoples and tongues.” (Rev. 7:9) Until recently, most translators worked at their branch office, even if their language was spoken in other areas of the territory. It was a challenge for them to keep up with their language and to reach the hearts of those reading the translated publications. Now, though, many teams of translators are being relocated to offices in the areas where their language is spoken. This has proved to be a blessing in many ways, as is shown by the following comments from translators.

Luo translation team  
in **Kisumu, Kenya**

.....

Worldwide, translation teams for over 100 languages now work from remote translation offices located in regions where their language is predominately spoken



.....

A Maya translator in Mexico stated: “I felt like a little plant that was put back into its own soil, its natural environment.” A translator in southern Russia said: “Having the office located in a place where people speak the language is paradise for the translators. How the language is used on television, in books, and on the Internet differs greatly from how people speak in everyday life. In our case, the only way to translate naturally is to hear live speech.”

A Tshiluba translator in Congo observed: “We speak our language every day—in our daily activities, such as shopping and conversing with our neighbors, in our preaching work, and at Christian meetings. We study what we have translated, and

we use the Tshiluba publications in the ministry, so we can see firsthand whether people understand the language used by the translators.”

A Lhukonzo translator in Uganda said: “You cannot imagine how happy we are when we attend meetings conducted in the language we speak and translate. We also enjoy the field ministry more, since we now talk to people in the language of our heart.”

There have also been benefits to the congregations to which translators have been assigned. Regarding the Maya translators, one sister said: “The translators encourage us by their fine words and example. It is like having a part of Bethel with us, and that is something very special.”

The interchange is mutually encouraging. A translator in Kenya said: “With very little published material in Luo, people here never imagined that they would see such high-quality publications in their own language. Therefore, many are thrilled to receive them. When I observe this reaction, it really encourages me and gives me more reason to continue in my assignment and to do my best.”

Many of these translators have served for years, even decades, at a branch office. Their fine spirit and willingness to put the interests of Jehovah’s sheep ahead of their own is greatly appreciated, and this spirit is being blessed. A Xhosa translator in South Africa summed up the feelings of many: “The decision to set up these translation offices is an excellent decision made by the Governing Body. We were happy at Bethel, but we are happier in the translation office.”



**Lagos, Nigeria:**  
After the plane  
crash



## Dispatches

### News From Around the World

#### “The Brothers Took Good Care of Us”

On Sunday, June 3, 2012, there was a tragic air disaster in **Nigeria**. A plane carrying 153 persons crashed in a crowded suburb of Lagos, Nigeria’s largest city, killing all on board and an unknown number on the ground.

Collins Eweh and his family lived on the top floor of the three-story apartment building that was hit by the plane. When the accident occurred, the family was attending a congregation meeting at the Kingdom Hall.

At about 3:35 p.m., during the *Watchtower* Study, Collins and his wife, Chinyere, noticed several calls on their cell phones, which they did not answer. As soon as the meeting finished, Chinyere answered her phone. Neighbors informed her that her apartment building was on fire. On arriving there, the Ewehs saw that the plane had crashed through their building and landed on a nearby building, where it burst into flames.

“If we had been at home,” said Chinyere, “we would surely have died. After the disaster, we were left with only our meeting clothes, but we have our lives. The circuit overseer immediately set up a relief committee, and the brothers took good care of us. We are very grateful.”

Collins said: “My relatives who had been opposed to my being a Witness have changed their minds. One of them told me: ‘Your Jehovah answers prayers. Hold on to your God because he helps you.’ Another person said: ‘Whatever you have been doing to serve God, continue to do it whole-souled.’ We have truly seen Jehovah’s hand in our case. I am very happy.”

### **Parliament Approves Church Registration**

On February 27, 2012, the government of **Hungary** adopted an extension of the Church Law recognizing Jehovah’s Witnesses as a registered religious community. This legal status will be of further help in preaching the good news in Hungary. It also gives Jehovah’s Witnesses tax-free status and allows them to accept donations and to make pastoral visits in prisons and hospitals.

## The Memorial in a Special Setting

A special pioneer from Rundu, **Namibia**, reported on the Memorial that he attended in a nearby village. Interest had been found there, so the brothers decided to hold the Memorial in the local language, Rumanyo, for the first time. He wrote: “The setting was beautiful, outdoors under the full moon, with paraffin lamps and two battery lights.” It made the group feel close to Jehovah. The only publisher in the area started preaching in March, but the Memorial was attended by 275!

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**Budapest, Hungary:** Our brothers witness to visitors wherever they can be found





## Branch Dedications Honor Jehovah

The date November 19, 2011, holds a special place in the history of Jehovah's organization in **Central African Republic** and **Chad**. On that day, 269 brothers and sisters assembled in front of the newly completed branch facilities. It was a pleasure to have Samuel Herd, a member of the Governing Body, present to dedicate the new Bethel complex to Jehovah for use in His service. During the program, the history of the preaching work in the two countries was recounted. It started in 1947 in Central African Republic and in Chad in 1959. The next talk gave details of the construction and all that

was involved in completing the buildings. After greetings from numerous countries were conveyed, the audience enjoyed the dedication talk

## **It was the first branch dedication in Congo**

delivered by Brother Herd. The 42 members of the Bethel family appreciate having eight translation offices, a kitchen, a dining room, and a laundry that meet their needs. With 22 residence rooms and other facilities, such as a reception area, administrative offices, and a shipping area, the Bethel family can function very well.

Saturday, May 26, 2012, saw a momentous event for Jehovah's Witnesses in **Congo (Kinshasa)**. After eight years of construction and renovation, the branch facilities were dedicated. This occasion was special because, although a branch office has existed in Congo for almost 50 years, this was the first branch dedication program ever held in the country. Geoffrey Jackson of the Governing Body was present to give the dedication talk on the branch property before an audience of 2,422, the majority of whom had been baptized for more than 40 years. There were 117 guests from 23 countries. Some missionaries who had served in Congo many years earlier shared encouraging experiences with the audience. All were thrilled and pleased to resolve to use these buildings solely for the worship of Jehovah.



## Legal Report

On June 30, 2011, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that the government of **France** violated the rights of Jehovah's Witnesses when it imposed a 60 percent tax on all religious donations made to Jehovah's Witnesses in France between 1993 and 1996. Although the Court invited the parties to settle the matter amicably, the government insisted that the excessive taxation was not illegal, so a friendly settlement was not possible. Thus, in a decision issued on July 5, 2012, the ECHR ordered the French government to remove "all consequences" of the tax. In addition to returning 4,590,295 euros (\$5,749,440 U.S.) that were con-

**India:** One of our brothers standing outside the courthouse before he was taken to prison

.....

fiscated when the taxation was imposed (plus interest accrued since the money was confiscated), the government is to pay the Witnesses an additional 55,000 euros (\$68,890 U.S.) for legal expenses.

Jehovah's loyal servants in **Eritrea** have been stripped of their citizenship because of their faithful stand on neutrality. (Isa. 2:4) Over the past 17 years, many have been arrested, and at present about 50 brothers and sisters, including elderly women and children as young as two years old, are in prison. Sadly, in July 2011, Brother Misghina Gebretinsae became the first Witness to die in Eritrea's prisons. Prior to his death, he was in solitary confinement in a sheet-metal container for a week; he is alleged to have died under "mysterious" circumstances. Our brothers continue to make efforts to meet with officials to help them understand that our peaceful nature and desire to remain neutral are not in conflict with our respect for the government of Eritrea.

Jehovah's Witnesses in **India** continue to endure mob violence while engaging in their ministry. Men, women, minors, and even a 60-year-old grandmother and an 18-month-old baby have experienced verbal and physical assaults. Some have been stripped of their clothing and even threatened with death. Police inaction and prejudice have added to the victimization of Jehovah's Witnesses. Instead of prosecuting the perpetrators, the police have incarcerated the Witnesses under falsely based criminal charges. Those arrested are often subjected to

unreasonable bail conditions and verbal and physical assaults by the police and are refused medical attention, food, and water. Thereafter, they endure years of litigation as criminal defendants before they are exonerated. Several human rights complaints have been filed with the National Human Rights Commission in the hope that it will come to the aid of our brothers.

In November 2011, the ECHR unanimously concluded that **Turkey** had violated the right of freedom of conscience of Yunus Erçep, one of Jehovah's Witnesses who was convicted and imprisoned for his conscientious objection to military service. Since March 1998, Brother Erçep has been called up for military duty 39 times and has been prosecuted over 30 times. Brother Erçep has been fined, imprisoned, and confined to a psychiatric hospital for "religious paranoia."

In October 2004, Brother Erçep filed an application to the ECHR. In its judgment, the Court stated that "the applicant, as a member of Jehovah's Witnesses, sought to be exempted from military service not for reasons of personal benefit or convenience but on the ground of his genuinely held religious convictions."

Feti Demirtaş is another one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Turkey who refused military training when he was called up in 2005. He was arrested, beaten, prosecuted, and imprisoned for 554 days until his release in June 2007. Because Brother Demirtaş would not compromise his Bible-based beliefs, a report was prepared to classify him as having a mental illness. In its judgment against Turkey,



the ECHR found that Brother Demirtaş suffered inhumane treatment at the hands of Turkish authorities and that his right to freedom of conscience had been violated.

The above two ECHR decisions closely follow the landmark judgment of July 2011 (*Bayatyan v. Armenia*) in which the Grand Chamber of the ECHR confirmed that the European Convention protects the rights of conscientious objectors. These rulings are binding on all member states of the Council of Europe, including Turkey.

The ECHR also issued judgments against **Armenia** in the cases *Bukharatyan v. Armenia* and *Tsatouryan v. Armenia* in January 2012, confirming the violation of religious freedom of two of Jehovah's

.....

**Turkey:** Despite the hardships he has suffered, Brother Feti Demirtaş continues to preach zealously



Witnesses who conscientiously objected to military service. In rendering its judgments, the Court cited its landmark *Bayatyan v. Armenia* judgment.

Despite these historic judgments against Armenia, though, the government continues to prosecute, convict, and imprison conscientious objectors. Amendments to the Law on Alternative Service, approved by the government of Armenia in March 2012, have yet to be considered by parliament. It is hoped that the Armenian government will implement the ECHR judgments by releasing brothers who are still imprisoned as conscientious objectors.

Jehovah's Witnesses in **Azerbaijan** continue to face governmental pressure: raids and arrests for attending religious meetings, censorship of religious literature, deportation of foreign members, physical and verbal abuse by the police, and the threat of deregistration. Since the State Committee for Work with Religious Associations turned down the Witnesses' application for reregistration, police have increasingly disrupted the Witnesses' peaceful meetings for worship, interfered with their ministry, and restricted the importation and distribution of their Bible literature. Courts have imposed heavy fines on Jehovah's Witnesses for distributing religious literature and attending religious meetings. For example, one sister was fined \$1,909 (U.S.) for attending a meeting in the city of Ganja. Because these punitive actions violate the right to worship freely as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights, numerous applications have been filed with the ECHR in the hope of bringing an end to the harassment and persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Azerbaijan.

Law-enforcement officials in various parts of **Russia** continue to harass and persecute Jehovah's Witnesses and press the courts to condemn the Witnesses for exercising their freedom to worship God. On the basis of a widely criticized law on extremism, the Russian courts have declared at least 64 publications of Jehovah's Witnesses to be extremist. Recently, a prosecutor requested that *Learn From the Great Teacher*, a book that teaches children about Jesus Christ, be declared extremist. In many parts of Russia, the courts have also blocked access to Jehovah's Witnesses' official Web site. They have granted law-enforcement officials permission to carry out covert surveillance of congregation members, including secret video surveillance and interception of mail. As a result, the police regularly interview opposing neighbors, search the homes of Witnesses, and confiscate religious literature and other personal items. Witnesses have been apprehended while walking on the street, driving their car, or getting off a train. Christian meetings have been disrupted by the police, and elders have been prosecuted for their spiritual shepherding activities in the congregation. In some regions, prosecutors are trying to get the courts to order the liquidation of Local Religious Organizations (LRO) of Jehovah's Witnesses.

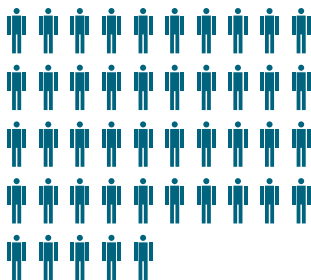
In May 2012 in the city of Taganrog, 17 Witnesses were charged with organizing and participating in criminal activity merely for practicing their faith. It was in this region that the LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses was liquidated in 2009 by court order and the Kingdom Hall was confiscated because of alleged extremism. Denied the use of their Kingdom Hall,

the Witnesses met in private homes or rented halls, but now the authorities are trying to prevent all organized worship. In July 2012, a pioneer couple in the Siberian city of Chita was found guilty of incitement to hatred because they distributed the allegedly extremist Bible study book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* while sharing their faith with others. They were each sentenced to 200 hours of compulsory labor, but they are appealing their conviction.

Although the ECHR has rendered two resounding victories for Jehovah's Witnesses against Russia—*Kuznetsov and Others v. Russia* in 2007 and *Jehovah's Witnesses of Moscow v. Russia* in 2010—the Russian authorities continue to ignore these decisions from this prestigious Court. Consequently, Jehovah's Witnesses have another 19 applications pending before the ECHR in the hope that further decisions from the ECHR will move Russian authorities to cease persecuting Jehovah's people and to allow them to “go on leading a calm and quiet life with full godly devotion and seriousness.” —1 Tim. 2:2.

**South Korea** continues to imprison young brothers because of their Christian neutrality. Each month about 45 young brothers are convicted and sentenced to one and a half years in prison. As a result, about 750 brothers are currently suffering imprisonment in Korea. This is the largest number of Jehovah's Witnesses imprisoned for their faith in any country of the world. Since 1950, some 17,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses have been sentenced to a total of more than 32,000 years of prison time.

**In South Korea, each month about 45 young brothers are convicted and sentenced to one and a half years in prison**



In 2012, the authorities stepped up their repression of Witness conscientious objectors by sentencing to prison terms—for the first time—individuals who conscientiously objected to their call-up as reservists. In the past, these individuals were only fined for refusing reservist military training. Because there are several reservist call-ups over the years, those who object to reservist duty will face multiple trials. For example, in November 2011, Ho-jeong Son was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment. Then, in June 2012, he was again tried and this time sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He was detained immediately after the second trial and released on bail after 29 days, pending the outcome of his appeal. He now faces a prison sentence of 14 months.

On several occasions, the United Nations Human Rights Committee has condemned South Korea for violating the right to freedom of conscience. New applications are currently pending before this Committee and before the South Korean Constitutional Court in an attempt to resolve the matter.

# Worldwide

LANDS

239

PUBLISHERS

7,782,346

TOTAL HOURS SPENT  
IN THE FIELD MINISTRY

1,748,697,447

BIBLE STUDIES

8,759,988



# Preaching and Teaching Earth Wide

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**Maine, U.S.A.:** Following Jesus' example, our brothers are "fishers of men"






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LANDS

**58**

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POPULATION

**968,989,710**

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PUBLISHERS

**1,312,429**

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BIBLE STUDIES

**2,999,639**

## Africa

### No Abortion for Her

In Addis Ababa, the capital city of **Ethiopia**, there lived a shop owner named Saba. One day, two sisters approached her with an *Awake!* magazine that featured a discussion on abortion. Saba took the sisters inside and tearfully told them that she was thinking about having an abortion. As they discussed the matter, all three became so overcome with emo-



**Kaokoland, Namibia:** Appealing teaching aids attract the attention of all ages. *Listen to God and Live Forever* is now available in 452 languages!

.....

tion that they began to weep. That day, Saba decided to keep her baby and firmly told her husband why. In time, she gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. She also started studying the Bible and got baptized. She is now a happy pioneer. Her husband also studied and became our brother, and in April 2012, their two other children were baptized.

### **‘Would It Be Possible to Speak With Him?’**

A circuit overseer in **Ethiopia** was preaching from house to house with another brother. At one door, they met the housemaid and asked her if they could speak to the man of the house. When she replied that this was not possible, they asked her if they could leave some literature for him. She went to ask his permission, returned, and said that he wanted to see it first.

So the brothers gave her a magazine to show him. After a few minutes, she came back and said that he agreed to read it. Then one of the brothers said, “If he can’t come out, would it be possible for us to go in and speak with him?” Again, the maid went to ask him. This time she stayed away longer than before, and the brothers wondered whether she would come back at all. Eventually she returned and invited them inside. Now the brothers learned that the householder, Yirgu, was an elderly man who had been bedridden for ten years, unable to get out of bed or even to sit up. The reason the housemaid had

taken so long was that she had helped him to get dressed and had tidied up the room.

The brothers presented the good news. Pleased with what he heard, Yirgu accepted a Bible study. As the study progressed, his health improved. After a while, he was able to get out of bed and move around in a wheelchair. Soon he began attending meetings and was baptized at a recent district convention.

### **The Church of His Father's Books**

Calvin, who lives in **Zimbabwe**, was four years old when his father died, leaving him only a bag containing a *New World Translation* and the book *Isaiah's Prophecy—Light for All Mankind*, Volume 1. “Stick to the church of these books,” he had told Calvin. “It teaches the truth.”

When his mother died, Calvin was taken in by his grandmother. For nine years Calvin refused to go to his grandmother's church, insisting that one day he would find “the church” of the publications that his father had given him.

One day, the boy's grandmother met one of our sisters. Not knowing that she was a Witness, the grandmother mentioned to the sister that she had a stubborn grandson who would not go to her church. Instead, he spent Sundays reading a book that had been left to him by his father. The sister asked the name of the book. The grandmother said that she thought it was “one of those crazy books of the Watchtower.”

The sister said that she would like to meet the boy. When they met, Calvin was overjoyed. Right away, the sister started a Bible study with him, using the

book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* and he immediately began to attend meetings despite fierce opposition from his grandmother. He is resolved to stick to the truth and looks forward with great anticipation to the time of the resurrection when he hopes to be reunited with his mother and father. Calvin was baptized in August 2012.

### **“The God You Are Serving Is Strong”**

Caro lives in **Uganda**. Just a month after she began to study the Bible, her husband, Martin, who practiced witchcraft, began to oppose her bitterly. “Because of your books, the ancestors can no longer enter the house,” he claimed. He mistreated her and threatened to kill her if she did not quit her Bible study. He also stopped providing for the family. Caro remained composed, provided for the family from the garden that she cultivated, and continued to take in accurate knowledge. Later, when it became clear that her life was actually in danger, Caro fled the home. She struggled to support herself. Yet, when she heard that the children were sick, she took the little money she had earned and bought medicine for them.

After some time, Caro received a phone call from her husband. “I want you to come back home,” he said. “I have seen that the God you are serving is strong and that he has been with you. I want you to tell those people who are teaching you to come and teach me too. I really want to change my life.” Martin was serious. The family is now united and happy. Both Martin and Caro were baptized at a convention in August 2012.

## **A Lone Preacher in a Remote Town**

While living in a town far away from his home in **Kenya**, David began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Before long, though, he had to return to his home village of Lokichar, in a remote area of northwestern Kenya. The nearest congregation was about 100 miles away in the town of Lodwar. For four years David had little contact with the Witnesses, yet he preached to his neighbors and relatives, sharing with them the things he had learned during the brief time he had studied the Bible. Some responded positively, and soon he was conducting several Bible studies. In 2007 he contacted the brothers in Lodwar and resumed his study, making the trip twice a month by motorbike, taxi, and minibus.

As his knowledge grew, so did David's zeal for the ministry. Still unbaptized, he built a temporary mud-walled "Kingdom Hall" with a thatched roof near his home, where he conducted meetings with the interested ones. However, not all in the village were happy with his preaching activity, and for two years he was subjected to verbal and physical abuse. Once, some villagers beat him senseless, accusing him of introducing "Devil worship" to the village. However, after David sought the assistance of the district administration officer, the violence stopped, and David continued preaching. "The truth is my life," said David. "No amount of opposition can stop me."

In 2009, David was baptized, and he now serves as a ministerial servant and a regular pioneer. He and his 15-year-old son are the only publishers in the area, but in April 2012, some 60 villagers attended

the Memorial of Christ's death, held in the temporary hall near David's home.

### **"Prove From the Scriptures That She Is Wrong"**

Janet, a regular pioneer sister in **Ghana**, was reading the *Bible Teach* book during a long bus trip. A preacher got on the bus, preached a sermon, and then invited the passengers to contribute money for his ministry. Janet said to him: "You say that Jesus is the same as God. Who, then, spoke to Jesus at his baptism?"

The preacher said, "It is a mystery."

Janet opened to chapter 4 of the *Bible Teach* book, selected some scriptures, and invited a few of the passengers to read the verses. She explained the difference between Jesus and the Almighty God, Jehovah.

"You are a witch," said the preacher.

At that, the passengers rallied to her defense, saying, "You should prove from the Scriptures that she is wrong rather than calling her a witch." In anger, the preacher got off the bus at the next stop. A young woman sitting beside Janet said to her: "I thought Jehovah was the name of the church building of the Witnesses. I did not know that it was God's name until your discussion with that preacher."

A conversation followed, and Janet took the woman's phone number and promised to contact her. When the woman got home, she related the incident to her grandmother. The grandmother too was surprised to learn that God's name is Jehovah. Janet later arranged for some Witnesses to continue discussions with the woman and her grandmother. Both are now attending meetings.



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LANDS

57

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POPULATION

946,087,916

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PUBLISHERS

3,861,145

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BIBLE STUDIES

4,196,922

## The Americas

### She Found the Truth in the Last Place She Expected

The prison guards in **Bolivia** wrestled 20-year-old Andrea into the courtyard of the jail while she screamed profanities and threats. Violent and strong, she cut an imposing and intimidating figure. Leidy, one of Jehovah's Witnesses who had been falsely accused and imprisoned, did not fear Andrea but felt pity for her. Every morning Leidy

had the custom of reading aloud a song from our songbook. When Andrea heard this, she asked, “Are you one of Jehovah’s Witnesses?”

When Leidy replied that she was, Andrea said: “My mother is one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, and I used to attend the meetings with her. She studied the Bible with me.” Andrea broke down and cried. During the next few days, Leidy had deep spiritual conversations with Andrea, and when it came time for Andrea’s hearing, they prayed together for Jehovah’s help and guidance. Andrea was released and continued to learn about Jehovah. She quickly qualified to be an unbaptized publisher, and she is now preparing for baptism.

Leidy took advantage of her wrongful imprisonment and started 21 Bible studies before she was released. She now returns to the prison three days a week to cultivate the interest.

### **It Was the [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org) Web Site**

One Sunday in the spring of 2011 when a well-dressed couple and their two young children entered a Kingdom Hall in **Canada**, everyone thought that they were Jehovah’s Witnesses visiting from another city. Dominic, a ministerial servant in the congregation, and the visiting husband recognized each other immediately. Dominic had studied the Bible with the man 17 years earlier. For the past two years, Marc-André and Josée, his wife, had been downloading and reading the *Watchtower*

and *Awake!* magazines from the [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org) Web site and had realized that the entire family should go to the Kingdom Hall. A Bible study was started immediately, and the family began to attend all the meetings. After only two months of Bible study, the family started to have their own weekly Family Worship evening. They continue to make fine progress, and Josée gave her first student talk in the Theocratic Ministry School in May 2012.

### **‘He Gave Me His Lunch and His Hat’**

While attending the 2010 district convention in **Chile**, ten-year-old Marcelo noticed that the older gentleman who had sat down beside him didn’t have any literature.

“The man doesn’t have a Bible,” he whispered to his mother.

“Share yours with him,” she whispered back. So Marcelo moved over and shared his Bible with the man, named Victor, looking up each of the cited texts with him. As the intermission began, Marcelo turned to his mother and said, “He doesn’t have a lunch.” She suggested that he share his lunch with Victor. So Marcelo gave him a sandwich and a cup of hot tea. While Victor ate his lunch, Marcelo showed him all the Bible texts he could remember.

By the afternoon, the sun was beating down on them. Marcelo turned to his mother once again and said, “He doesn’t have a hat.”

His mother replied, “Give him yours.” So he did. After the program ended, Marcelo and Victor said their good-byes.



At the following year's district convention, Marcelo looked around to see if Victor had come. To his delight, there he was, and this time he was wearing a tie! When Victor saw Marcelo, he announced: "I am here today because of this young man. Last year, I received an invitation to the convention, and I came. This boy shared his Bible with me and gave me his lunch and his hat. Now I'm studying the Bible!" Victor has become an unbaptized publisher.

### **Praise From a Journalist**

In her newspaper column, a well-known journalist in **Venezuela** described her experience with the customer service of a national phone company that she had called for technical assistance. She was left none the wiser by the curt and impolite operator who took her call. Her second attempt was answered by a young man who identified himself as "Misael" and handled her inquiry politely and efficiently. She wrote: "The kindness, respect, willingness to help, and cooperative spirit that this young man showed throughout the whole process was exceptional. With his help, I was able to solve the problem and I also learned how to handle future cases."

When the woman commended him, he explained that as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, he endeavors to treat his neighbor in the manner taught by Jesus. The journalist asked to speak to Misael's supervisor. She praised his employee's outstanding service. In her article, she stated that Misael is an exemplary Venezuelan and one of Jehovah's Witnesses. She concluded her column by saying: "We need people like him in all areas of public contact."

## **“Don’t Be Stubborn!”**

Fifteen-year-old Gabriela, who is deaf, was thrilled to get baptized in October 2011 at the sign-language district convention in **Ecuador**. She was so excited that when she returned to her high school on Monday, she asked her teacher if she could make a brief announcement to her classmates. The teacher consented, and Gabriela stood before her class and enthusiastically said in sign language: “I’d like to announce that this past Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, I was at a convention where I was baptized as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. I would also like to tell you that we are living near the end of this system of things. There is little time left! It is urgent that you make the neces-

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**Mexico City, Mexico:** Many of the over one million Bible studies in the country were started by publishers engaging in street witnessing



sary changes. So don't be stubborn. Fear God!" Her classmates were impressed.

Later that day, during lunch, Katty, an inactive deaf Witness, approached Gabriela to ask about the convention. Gabriela replied frankly: "It was beautiful! But now as a baptized Witness, I want to stay faithful to Jehovah. So I must let you know that I can't be your friend anymore because you live an unclean life. Being your friend can affect my friendship with God. You need to change. It's important to pray to Jehovah and also to talk with the elders. I know you can change for the better." Thanks to Gabriela's forthright but loving admonition, Katty talked with the elders, received spiritual help, and became active in the ministry once again.

### **She Used Her Teacher's Laptop**

A 16-year-old sister in the **United States** had the whole class asking her about her religion, but she had no literature with her, not even her Bible. Wanting to use scriptures to answer her classmates' questions, she borrowed her teacher's laptop and accessed the [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org) Web site. Not only did she answer all their questions but she also showed them how to make use of the site. She explained that whenever they had Bible questions and there were no Witnesses around to help them, they could always go to the Web site themselves to obtain the answers. As the week progressed, she noticed that her classmates had fewer questions than before. When she asked why, some responded that they had regularly been checking out the Web site from their phones. Even her teacher had been doing so!



## Asia and the Middle East

### Village Conflict Avoided

On their way to attend a funeral, a group of Witnesses traveled through a small village in **Indonesia**. A pioneer noticed some young people at the roadside. He talked to them and left the brochure *Listen to God and Live Forever*. Sometime later, a sister passed by the same place on her way back home. A man

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LANDS

48

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POPULATION

4,222,869,785

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PUBLISHERS

674,608

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BIBLE STUDIES

662,736

who was holding the *Listen and Live* brochure in his hand approached her and thanked her for giving it to his children. “This saved my children’s lives!” he said. The sister, not aware of the initial conversation, asked what had happened. The father explained that the youngsters had planned to attack a certain village. In accord with local custom, they intended to avenge an assault on one of their friends. However, when the boys read the brochure, they learned that people who fight with others will not inherit the coming Paradise. So they calmed down, abandoned their plan, and went home. A potentially dangerous conflict had been avoided because of the Bible’s message in the brochure.

### **A Transvestite Makes Changes**

Rek grew up in a traditional family in **Cambodia**, but from a very young age, both he and his twin brother felt that they were female. They played with dolls and were interested in dressing in girls’ clothing. Their mother was confused and ashamed and did not know how to stop them. They would leave for school dressed as boys but immediately change into girls’ clothing once they got there. At the age of 16, the twins entered a beauty contest for transvestites and were noticed by the entertainment industry. This led to their being featured in television shows and comedy acts. Soon, Rek adopted a homosexual lifestyle and associated with other transvestites.

Rek's mother began attending church and made Rek go with her. Although he agreed to wear men's clothing, he refused to cut his long hair. The pastor often made demeaning comments to Rek and ridiculed his lifestyle. Even so, Rek thought that he would try to study the Bible at the church. The first week, he got up early and cycled several miles to the church, but the pastor did not feel up to teaching and excused himself. Rek was disgusted when the pastor did not even show up the second week.

However, when Rek got home, his twin brother told him that a woman had visited and offered a free home Bible study. She had left the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* The twins began studying with the sister and her husband. After six months, Rek's brother felt that he was not ready to change his lifestyle, and he stopped studying. Rek, on the other hand, was deeply affected by 1 Corinthians 6: 9, 10, and saw clearly what he had to do. By means of diligent study, Bible reading, prayer, and meeting attendance, he was able to clean up his life. Rek's mother is also studying and making good progress. When Rek was baptized, his mother said, with tears in her eyes, "I'm so happy to see my son get baptized as a man." He now serves as a regular pioneer.

### **A Spiritist Changes Her Ways**

Or-Ya was a practicing spiritist, healer, counselor, and fortune-teller. A special pioneer couple serving in Haifa, **Israel**, met her in the house-to-house ministry. She greeted them with the words: "If it's about God, come in!" Her home was full of items connected with spiritism and mysticism. She claimed that

she received messages from God, some through the “spirit” of a deceased rabbi.

**“You’ve got just two months to get me ready for baptism!”**

The offer of a home Bible study in the *Bible Teach* book appealed to her. Just two days before the couple called at her home, she had prayed to God to send her someone who could teach her the Bible free of any rabbinical interpretations. Within a month, she asked, “Are there other people who share your beliefs?” She attended a congregation meeting and was impressed by the warmth and love shown to her. She has attended regularly ever since.

After two months of study, Or-Ya asked about an upcoming assembly: “Isn’t it at assemblies that one can get baptized? If so, you’ve got just two months to get me ready for baptism!” As a first step, she threw out all her expensive spiritistic paraphernalia. She then quit working in that field and began witnessing to others, presenting the *Bible Teach* book and magazines to all her former patients and clients. When she fell sick, she refused to turn to her previous healing methods. Giving up her former profession left her without an income for four months. Yet, she set certain conditions for work—four days a week, six hours a day—to allow for theocratic activities, and she eventually found suitable employment. Then she sold her large house and rented a small apartment.

In due course, Or-Ya qualified for baptism, but a week before the assembly, she broke her leg. Undaunted, she was baptized anyway, but with her

leg in a cast. Today Or-Ya is an active publisher, witnessing to former clients and conducting Bible studies.

### **A Cult Member Finds the Truth**

A Bible study was started with deaf twin brothers in a remote mountain area of the **Philippines**. Both belonged to a cult that believed that weapons could not harm the members as long as they wore certain amulets and scarves for protection. They had been trained in the use of knives, bolos, and guns and had participated in many battles against rebel groups in the mountains. The cult allowed them to study the Bible with the understanding that the Witnesses would not force them to leave the cult.

The brothers, of course, encouraged the twins to make their own decision based on what they were learning from the Bible. One of the twins felt that he could not make the necessary adjustments in his life in order to serve God acceptably. The other, however, kept studying. To encourage him, the brother studying with him opened the Bible and explained in sign language: "Your name, Samuel, is in the Bible. The Samuel in the Bible served the true God, Jehovah, until he was very old. You too can faithfully obey Jehovah." This touched Samuel's heart. "If my name is in the Bible," he reasoned, "then I too must take Jehovah's side." He informed the cult that he was leaving the mountains, and he burned all his amulets and spiritistic items and made rapid progress. He is now a baptized servant of Jehovah, zealously helping other deaf ones to learn Bible truth.





**Erdenet, Mongolia:** A Bible study is conducted with a woman living in the remote open plains

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## **A Child Faces Persecution**

Rajiv lives in a remote village in northern **India**. When he was nine years old and in the fourth grade, his schoolteacher, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, taught the children moral standards with the help of the book *Learn From the Great Teacher*. Rajiv drank in this information and began to apply it. He told his teacher that he had stopped telling lies and fighting with his schoolmates and was sharing his food at lunchtime with those who had none.

**“You have forced my head to bow in front of this statue, but you will never bow my heart”**

As he learned more about the promise of Paradise on earth, he began to tell this good news to others in his village and to people he met while traveling on

the train. This annoyed and embarrassed his parents. They told him to stop talking about Jehovah and Jesus. When he continued, they began to beat him, and his mother would take away his clothes when he returned from school so that he could not go out and talk about his newfound hope. His parents did not allow him to sleep on his bed, and they restricted his food. When these measures also failed, they called a priest to change the boy's thinking.

The priest stayed in the home for several days and tried to force Rajiv to bow down to an idol. When Rajiv said that the idol was just stone and was not a living god, the priest replied that the boy should 'see through the heart.' Only then would he "see" god in the statue. Rajiv took a piece of paper and wrote on it "100 rupees." He gave it to the priest and asked him to buy some chocolates and bring back the change. The priest said that he was not a fool; this was just a piece of paper and had no value. "If you look at this through your heart," replied Rajiv, "you will see real currency in this piece of paper." Angri-ly, the priest pushed the boy's head down in front of the idol. "You have forced my head to bow in front of this statue," said Rajiv, "but you will never bow my heart." Finally the priest left, saying that it was impossible to reform the boy and that if he stayed any

longer, he himself would lose his faith. Rajiv's parents then moved him to another school. But he has not stopped talking to everyone who will listen to what he says about Jehovah and the promise of Paradise. Now ten years old, he continues to rely on Jehovah for help to keep his faith strong.

### **She Found the Bible She Was Looking For**

While Larisa was witnessing to an employee at a bookstore in **Armenia**, a woman entered and asked the saleswoman for the "New World" Bible. The saleswoman said that she did not have such a Bible but could offer her a local Armenian translation. "Is it easy to understand?" asked the customer. The saleswoman read a few verses and said, "It seems understandable." Unconvinced, the customer insisted that she needed to find the "New World" Bible. Larisa suddenly remembered that she had her own Armenian Bible in her purse. She showed it to the woman and asked her to read the title. The woman read, "*New World Translation*." It was the very Bible she had been looking for!

The customer explained that her daughter and son-in-law in Greece had just started to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Since they had not yet learned Greek, they asked their mother to bring with her an Armenian *New World Translation* on her next visit. Our sister handed the Bible to the woman and said, "Please give this to them and tell them that it is a gift from Jehovah." The woman was elated when Larisa also offered to help her study the Bible. They exchanged telephone numbers so that the woman could start studying as soon as she returned from Greece.



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LANDS

47

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POPULATION

738,679,198

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PUBLISHERS

1,595,888

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BIBLE STUDIES

841,260

## Europe

### She Returned the Wallet

Nina, a regular pioneer sister in **Bosnia**, studies with a Roma family. While walking down the street one day, the ten-year-old daughter of the family found a wallet containing money, credit cards, and documents. Before learning the truth, she would have viewed the find as a precious gift, but after consulting with her mother, she decided to

hand it over to the police. The decision was noteworthy because the family was poor and did not even have enough money to buy bread. About two hours after handing the wallet to a surprised policeman, they received a call asking them to return to the police station. The owner of the wallet was waiting there to thank them and to offer a reward. He gave them the equivalent of about \$30 (U.S.), equal to two days' wages.

### **The Title Intrigued Him**

Nihad, who lives in **Bosnia**, had finished field service. As he approached his car, he found a man standing next to it. When Nihad greeted him, the man said: "Excuse me, I noticed a magazine in your car with the title, 'How to Be a Good Father.' I would really like to have a copy. I have been waiting here for about an hour for someone to come. May I please have it?" Nihad was very glad to give him the magazine and took the opportunity to give the man a witness.

### **A Tanker Crew Receives Comfort**

When a couple preaching in the Rotterdam harbor territory in the **Netherlands** visited a tanker, they met a somber crew. With tears in his eyes, the chief engineer told them that the ship had experienced a string of calamities, including near-collisions, and had sustained damages. So he asked, "Won't you pray for us?" The couple offered to give the crew an

encouraging Bible talk. The next day at seven in the evening, the publishers along with two other couples were welcomed to the ship's bridge. Assembled there were 15 of the 16-member crew. After an opening prayer, a brother gave a talk on the subject "Disasters—An Act of God?" The crew was able to read the cited Bible verses because the publishers had brought extra Bibles and helped everyone to look up the scriptures. After the concluding prayer, all the crew remained seated and talked with the brothers. The sailors felt relieved and thankful. One of them said, "This is an answer to our prayers." The crew took 20 books as well as Bibles and other publications, after which the captain handed the publishers an envelope containing \$200 (U.S.) as a contribution for the literature.

### **She Prayed That She Could Help**

Irene, who lives in **Sweden**, wrote: "I am 80 years old, and because of pain I am unable to go out in field service. I prayed to Jehovah that I might help someone whom I visited long ago and who would now be willing to have conversations or visits.

"One day, our telephone rang, and my husband answered. It was a woman who said to him: 'Excuse me, you were the only ones I could remember, so I made this call. Would your wife like to visit me to discuss God's Word? I studied 15 or 20 years ago, but my late husband was opposed, so I quit the study.'

"I remembered that I had visited the woman with another sister, who studied with her. To my astonishment, the woman remembered me. Delighted, I arranged to meet with her. Since then, we have had a study each week. She attended the Memorial and

the special talk. She has also been attending meetings. I thank Jehovah every day for answering my prayer.”

### **No Chocolate for the Contribution Box**

Eight-year-old Sergio, who lives in **Italy**, wanted to convince the elders that he was ready to become an unbaptized publisher. One day, he went with his father who, for work, had to repair a lock for a couple in their 70's. Sergio brought a set of magazines with him. “While my dad was working,” he explained, “I offered the magazines to the husband, who was so surprised that he called his wife and showed them to her. Then I made a note of their name, address, and telephone number so that I could call again. The wife gave me all this information and handed me a big bar of chocolate.” A few days later, Sergio and one of the elders made a return visit on the couple. Sergio rang the bell, and when the wife answered, he explained that he wanted to give them the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* The woman was happy to accept it. She gave him another bar of chocolate. “I couldn't put the chocolate in the contribution box, so I ate it,” said Sergio, who then added, “The elders finally understood how much I wanted to become an unbaptized publisher.”

### **The Pastor Wanted to Learn More**

Simeon was the pastor of a church in Gurkovo, **Bulgaria**, where there are no Witnesses. His study of the Bible had made him aware of the differences between what the Bible teaches and what the church teaches. One day, he received some of our magazines while traveling by train.

**“I have understood more in one hour than in 30 years of going to church”**

Simeon was thrilled to learn that Jehovah is the true God and that there is no Trinity. Eager to learn more, he wrote to the branch office and to all the churches he

knew. Only one church replied, telling him not to concern himself with “such nonsense.” In contrast, the branch office arranged for two Witnesses to travel about 20 miles from Kazanlūk. They started a Bible study with Simeon and his family. Simeon loved what he was learning, and he invited his neighbors and friends to attend. Soon 25 people were attending the weekly Bible study. After attending one of the

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**Georgia:** Witnessing in a vineyard





Bible discussions for the first time, a 75-year-old neighbor said with tears in her eyes, “I have understood more in one hour than in 30 years of going to church.” Up to 60 people attend the meetings that the brothers from Kazanlūk conduct in Gurkovo every month, and 79 attended the Memorial.

### **“Please Keep Up This Way of Life”**

Valya, a 15-year-old sister in **Ukraine**, noticed that her teacher came to school dressed in black and that she had been crying. Upon learning that the teacher’s mother had died, Valya decided to comfort her with scriptures about the resurrection. Valya took a Bible and two brochures, *What Happens to Us When We Die?* and *When Someone You Love Dies*, and decided that after her classes, she would approach the teacher. She said: “While I was waiting at her office door, I was very nervous, so I prayed to Jehovah to help me.”

When Valya entered the teacher’s office, the teacher asked, “What do you want?”

“I want to comfort you because I can understand how you feel. Some years ago I lost my grandfather.”

The teacher was touched by Valya’s concern. Tearfully, she said that neither her relatives nor her colleagues had shown her such sincere compassion. Valya then read and explained Revelation 21:3, 4, after which the teacher accepted the brochures, saying, “You are very different from the other pupils.”

Valya explained, “I make an effort to read the Bible and to live according to it, and I listen to my parents.”

At the teacher’s request, Valya later brought her a Bible and the *Bible Teach* book. The teacher again

expressed appreciation and said to Valya: “Your religion is the true religion, and you have very good parents who teach you what is right. Please keep up this way of life.”

### **She Dialed the Wrong Number**

On the first day of the 2011 district convention held in Malakasa, **Greece**, Natalie used her cell phone to call her father concerning a bus ride to the convention grounds. However, she dialed the wrong number, and no one answered. A little later, the person whom she had accidentally called saw the number and returned the call to find out who it was. However, the convention program had begun, and although Natalie had intended to turn her cell phone off, instead she somehow connected the call. So unbeknownst to her, the man was able to listen to part of the chairman’s talk, which triggered his interest.

Later, the man sent a text message, asking: “Who are you? Are you a priest?” At the end of the morning session, Natalie saw the message and replied: “I’m not a priest. I am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, and I am attending a convention.”

The man called again on Saturday to ask if the convention was still under way. Natalie’s father was able to give him a witness, after which the man explained, “In a matter of minutes, the talk I heard over the phone answered many questions that had been troubling me.” As it turned out, the man’s family had been experiencing demon attacks and had no idea who the spirits were and why this was happening. He explained: “I have never been willing to speak to

Jehovah's Witnesses until now, but if possible, I would like to talk to the man who gave the lecture."

Of course it was possible. The man came to the convention on Sunday and was astonished by what he saw there—well-dressed families and happy faces. There was no rubbish lying around, no bad language, no smoking. "I had no idea that people like you existed on this planet!" he said. "I feel as if I've entered another world." Natalie's father took him to the chairman's office, where he talked with the chairman. The convention itself and the answers he was given made quite an impression on the man. He accepted the *Bible Teach* book, a Bible, and some magazines, and arrangements were made for a return visit.

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**Pittenweem, Scotland:** Preaching at a harbor





## Oceania

### **“The Most Beautiful Song I Have Ever Heard”**

In Savaii, **Samoa**, a typical school day begins with the whole school assembling to sing a hymn. But Celina, aged five, and Levaai, aged six, respectfully told the principal that they could not join in because they were Jehovah’s Witnesses. Taking such a stand could result in severe punishment. However, the principal evidently thought

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LANDS

**29**

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POPULATION

**38,495,300**

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PUBLISHERS

**94,924**

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BIBLE STUDIES

**59,431**

**Timor-Leste:** This formerly war-torn country has experienced a 9 percent increase in publishers

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that he could embarrass the children into complying, so he said, “Well, if you can’t sing our song, sing one of yours.”

**“From now on,  
I will ask you to sing,  
not our songs,  
but yours”**

In response, Celina and Levaai sang song number 111, “He Will Call,” which they had recently learned during a Family Worship evening. When they finished, the principal had tears in his eyes. He said: “That is the most beautiful song I have ever heard. Please sing it again.” They did. He then told them, “From now on, I will ask you to sing, not our songs, but yours.”

### **All His Life He Prayed to Jesus**

A man in **Fiji** who was a minister at a local church decided to sit in on another person’s Bible study. During the study, he heard that Jesus is not God. He was so troubled by this that he could not sleep. On seeing his agitation, his wife said, “Don’t go back to listen to those people!” However, he could not get the matter out of his mind. The next week, he attended the Bible study again. Within days of this second study and without yet having his own study, he went to his church and quit his job as minister. This caused his relatives and church members to be shocked and angry. Not only was he leaving the church but he was turning his back on a well-paying job. From the Bible, he could easily see the truth

about Jesus, but it was difficult for him to pray to Jehovah because all his life he had prayed to Jesus. After many months, he was finally able to pray to Jehovah. Now he shares the good news with others and helps them come to know and love Jehovah.

### **A Small Community Responds to the Truth**

Only 62 people live on the South Pacific island of Makatea. A congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in **Tahiti** takes care of the spiritual needs of these people. Nine of the inhabitants are having a regular Bible study by telephone. Up to 15 people meet in the home of one of the Bible students and listen to the meetings, which are held in Tahiti. Among those now studying the Bible is a young woman who was a pillar of her church and was expected to be appointed as a deaconess. Not long ago, she went back to her church to explain why she no longer attended services there. She showed from the Bible why a woman must not teach in the congregation. She also explained the role of Jesus Christ and the meaning of the Lord's Supper, which should be observed once a year and not every Sunday. Furthermore, she was able to explain that only 144,000 will be with Christ in heaven and that only they should partake of the Memorial emblems. Encouraged by her example, another woman left the church and is now regularly studying the Bible with the Witnesses.

### **The Family Accepted the Invitation**

In an effort to invite inactive ones to the Memorial of Christ's death, two elders in the **Solomon Islands** visited Joshua, who had not been to meetings since

1998. Along with 20 members of his family, Joshua walked two hours to attend the Memorial. The warm welcome they received from the congregation moved Joshua to tears. Many in the family also came to the special talk, after which they informed the elders that they would like to have a Bible study. Arrangements were made to study with 15 of them.

### **He Knew the Answer**

Of the more than 1,000 islands and atolls in the branch territory of **Guam**, over 100 are inhabited. However, only 13 of these islands are near a congregation. Because so many islands have never been visited by Jehovah's Witnesses, the

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**Kingston, Norfolk Island:** Witnessing on the main street, Quality Row



brothers continue to look for ways to reach them. In April 2012, a group of publishers traveled by sailboat to Polowat, one of the most isolated islands. Polowat is virtually untouched by the outside world. Men wear loincloths, build dugout canoes, and live off the land.

One of the visiting publishers asked a young man there, "What happens when we die?"

"I know the answer to that question!" the islander exclaimed. He then sprang to his feet, grabbed the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* in Chuukese from his shelf, and opened it to the table of contents. Pointing to chapter 8, entitled "What Happens at Death?" he eagerly explained what he had learned from the book.

How, though, did he get the book? In 2009, publishers on the main island of Chuuk preached at the docks in an effort to reach people who were traveling to remote outer islands and placed *Live Forever* books with them. Someone going to Polowat had gladly agreed to take a box of books to distribute to his neighbors, one of whom was the young man.

Before leaving Polowat, the brothers visited the young man several more times to encourage him and to show him how to benefit from a study program. They also taught him how to look up scriptures and note key points in the margins of his book.

How heartwarming to know that even on remote islands where there is no television, radio, newspaper, or Internet, our literature is helping people to learn the truth in their mother tongue!



### Three Bullets, Three Reasons

Anna was an unbaptized publisher in her early 20's when the Bougainville civil war intensified in **Papua New Guinea**. In 1991 she was part of a Witness group of six adults and seven children from the Arawa Congregation who were forced to escape into the bush with only a few possessions. For two years, they lived in abandoned homes and foraged for food. They held their meetings using the only two books they had, Anna's Bible and a copy of *United in Worship of the Only True God*. They prayed together, sang Kingdom songs, and preached to those whom they met.

**"Nothing can stop  
Jehovah's work, not  
even a civil war"**

Members of the revolutionary army found them and wanted the two brothers in the group to join the army, but they respected the Witnesses for their neutral stand. A soldier once showed Anna three bullets and told her, "Marry me or die." She gave him *three* reasons—one for each bullet—why she could not marry him, the foremost being that the Bible says to marry "only in the Lord." (1 Cor. 7:39) The man turned and walked away.

In 2012, after hearing of the great need for Kingdom publishers in Arawa, Anna, now serving as a regular pioneer, returned there with her pioneer partner to help establish an isolated group. She was asked if it bothered her to go back to the place where she had seen so much carnage and experienced such hardship during the war. "I only feel joy coming back here," she replied. "Nothing can stop Jehovah's work, not even a civil war."





# Myanmar (Burma)

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NESTLED between Asian giants India and China, Myanmar is a land of fascinating contrasts.\* Yangon (formerly called Rangoon), its largest city, boasts multistory buildings, crowded shops, and bustling traffic. But beyond Yangon lies a land of villages where water buffalo till the soil, people view foreigners with wonder, and time is measured

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\* Myanmar was formerly called Burma, after the Bamar (Burmese) tribe, Myanmar's largest ethnic group. The country was renamed the Union of Myanmar in 1989, to represent the many ethnic groups in the country. We will use the name Burma for events prior to 1989 and the name Myanmar for events after that year.

**For nearly 100 years,  
our brothers in  
Myanmar have built  
up a record of  
unwavering faith  
and endurance**

in the passing of the seasons.

Myanmar today echoes the Asia of yesteryear. Here rickety buses bounce along potholed roads past ox-carts hauling crops to market and goatherds tending their flocks in the fields.

Most Myanmar men still wear a traditional wraparound skirt (*lungi*). Women apply tree-bark paste (*thanaka*) to their faces as makeup. The people are deeply religious. Buddhist devotees revere monks more than celebrities and daily daub gold-leaf offerings on gleaming statues of the Buddha.

The people of Myanmar are gentle, considerate, and inquisitive. Eight major ethnic groups and at least 127 subgroups inhabit the country. Each group has its own distinctive language, dress, food, and culture. Most people live on a broad central plain nourished by the mighty Ayeyarwady (Irrawaddy) River, a 1,350-mile-long waterway winding from the icy Himalayas to the tepid Andaman Sea. Millions more inhabit a vast coastal delta and the arc of highlands bordering Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, and Thailand.

For nearly 100 years, Jehovah's Witnesses in Myanmar have built up a record of unwavering faith and endurance. During chaotic violence and political upheaval, they have maintained their neutrality. (John 17:14) Despite physical hardships, religious opposition, and limited contact with their international brotherhood, Jehovah's people have tirelessly preached the good news of God's Kingdom. The following account presents their heartwarming story.





## MYANMAR (BURMA)

### LAND

261,970 square miles

### POPULATION

60,380,000

### PUBLISHERS IN 2012

3,790

### RATIO, 1 PUBLISHER TO

15,931

### MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE IN 2012

8,005

In 1914, two Englishmen traveled from India to open up the preaching work in Burma. Their territory included the whole country

Andaman Sea



**Land** Embracing snowcapped mountains, steamy jungles, sweeping plains, mighty rivers, and broad deltas, Myanmar is amazingly diverse. It is the second-largest country in Southeast Asia and covers an area larger than France.

**Food** Rice is at the heart of nearly every meal. It is often accompanied by *ngapi*, a pungent paste made from fermented fish or prawns. Light spicy salads and mild curries are popular. Meals may include small amounts of fish, chicken, and prawns. The most common beverages are black tea and green tea.

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**Climate** The climate is governed by equatorial monsoons. There are three seasons: warm, hot, and hot with rain. However, in the mountainous northern region, temperatures can be cold.

Friends sharing a typical Myanmar meal



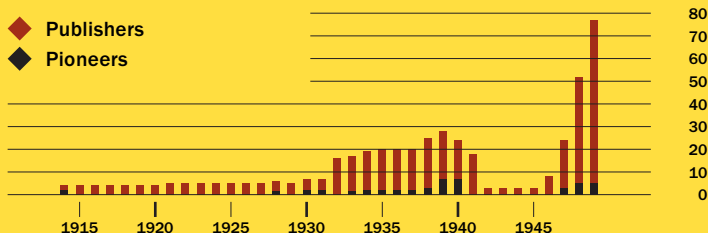
Publishers in Yangon, 1932



1914 to 1949



# Small Beginnings





## Opening Up the Work

In the landmark year of 1914, two Englishmen stepped from a steamship into Yangon's suffocating dockside heat. Hendry Carmichael and his pioneer partner had traveled from India to take on the challenging assignment of opening up the preaching work in Burma. Their territory included the whole country.

Starting in Yangon, Hendry and his partner soon met two Anglo-Indian men who showed genuine interest in the Kingdom message.\* Bertram Marcelline and Vernon French promptly severed their connections with Christendom and began witnessing informally to their friends. Soon, about 20 people were meeting regularly at Bertram's house to study the Bible with the aid of *The Watch Tower*.#

In 1928, another English pioneer from India, George Wright, visited Burma and toured the country for five months, distributing much Bible literature. Those seeds of truth doubtless included the 1920 booklet *Millions Now Living Will Never Die!*—the first of our Christian publications to be translated into Burmese.

Two years later, pioneers Claude Goodman and Ronald Tippin arrived in Yangon to find a small group of brothers faithfully holding meetings but not doing any organized preaching. "We encouraged the brothers to come witnessing each Sunday," said

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\* Anglo-Indians are people of mixed Indian and British ancestry. Under British rule, thousands of Indians migrated to Burma, then considered part of "British India."

# Bertram Marcelline was the first person to be baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Burma. He died in Burma in the late 1960's, faithful to the end.

**“By all means, if you want to get into the new world by proxy”**

Claude. “One brother asked if he could preach by proxy, by helping us pioneers financially. Ron told him: ‘By all

means, if you want to get into the new world by proxy also.’” That plainspoken encouragement was just what the group needed. Soon Claude and Ronald had plenty of preaching partners.

**“Rachel, I Have Found the Truth!”**

That same year, Ron and Claude met Sydney Coote, a railway stationmaster in Yangon. Sydney accepted the so-called rainbow set, a collection of ten of our brightly colored books. After reading parts of one book, Sydney called to his wife, “Rachel, I have found the truth!” Soon the whole Coote family was serving Jehovah.

Sydney was a diligent student of the Scriptures. His daughter Norma Barber, a longtime missionary now serving at the Britain branch, explains: “My father compiled his own scripture-reference book. Whenever he found a scripture that explained a Bible teaching, he entered it in the book under a suitable heading. He called the book *Where Is It?*”

Sydney not only wanted to study the Bible but also wanted to share its message with others. Accordingly, he wrote to the India branch to ask if there were any Witnesses in Burma. Soon he received a large crate of literature and a list of names. “Father wrote to each person on the list, inviting him to visit us for a day,” says Norma. “Five or six brothers later came to our home and showed us how to witness informally. My parents lost no time in distributing the lit-



Sydney Coote (middle) was a diligent student of the Scriptures; he and his wife, Rachel (left), shared the Bible's message with others

.....

erature to friends and neighbors. They also sent letters and literature to all of our relatives.”

When Daisy D’Souza, Sydney’s sister who lived in Mandalay, received Sydney’s letter and the booklet *The Kingdom, the Hope of the World*, she immediately wrote back asking for more publications and a Bible. “My mother was beside herself with joy as she delved into the literature until the early hours of the morning,” said her daughter Phyllis Tsatos. “She then gathered us six children together for a dramatic announcement: ‘I am leaving the Catholic Church, for I have found the truth!’” Later, Daisy’s husband and children also accepted the

# A Fortright Preacher of Bible Truth

.....  
**SYDNEY COOTE**  
.....

**BORN 1896 BAPTIZED 1939**

**PROFILE** One of the first people  
in Myanmar to accept the truth.  
As told by his niece, Phyllis  
Tsatos (formerly D'Souza).



◆ MY UNCLE witnessed to our family.

“Do you really believe that God allows people to burn forever in hell?” he asked me.

“Yes, that is what the Catholic Church teaches,” I answered.

Pointing to our pet dog lying in front of us, Uncle asked, “What would you do if your dog bit you?”

“I would give him a smack to teach him that it was wrong,” I replied.

“Why not hang him by the tail and jab him with a red-hot poker?” he said.

Shocked, I cried out, “Uncle! That would be so cruel!”

“Cruel?” he replied. “Yet, the church says that God torments sinners forever in a fiery hell!”

His blunt but sound reasoning prompted me to re-evaluate my beliefs. Soon, eight members of our family became zealous Witnesses.

truth. Today, four generations of the D'Souza family are faithfully serving Jehovah God.

### **Intrepid Pioneers**

By the early 1930's, zealous pioneers were spreading the good news along the main northern railway line running from Yangon to Myitkyina, a town near the China border. They also preached in Mawlamyine (Moulmein) and Sittwe (Akyab), coastal towns east and west of Yangon. As a result, small congregations sprang up in Mawlamyine and Mandalay.

In 1938 oversight of the work in Burma passed from the India branch to the Australia branch, and pioneers from Australia and New Zealand began arriving in Burma. Those stalwart workers included Fred Paton, Hector Oates, Frank Dewar, Mick Engel, and Stuart Keltie. All these brothers were pioneers in the true sense of the word.

Fred Paton related: "During my four years in Burma, I preached throughout most of the country. Along the way, I endured malaria, typhoid, dysentery, and other health problems. After a long day in service, I often had no place to sleep. Yet, Jehovah always cared for my needs and kept me going by the power of his spirit." Frank Dewar, a hardy



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Frank Dewar

New Zealander, said: “I encountered bandits, insurgents, and bombastic officials. But I found that even difficult obstacles usually melted away if I was polite, gentle, humble, and reasonable. Most people soon realized that Jehovah’s Witnesses are harmless.”

The pioneers stood in stark contrast to the expatriate population, who generally treated the local people with disdain. The pioneers treated people with respect and love. Their kindly approach appealed to the humble Burmese, who favor gentleness and subtlety over directness and confrontation. Through their words and deeds, the pioneers showed that Jehovah’s Witnesses are *true* Christians.—John 13:35.

## **A Landmark Convention**

Several months after the pioneers arrived, the Australia branch arranged to hold a convention in Yangon. The venue chosen was Yangon City Hall, a palatial building with marble staircases and huge bronze doors. Convention delegates came from Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore, while Alex MacGillivray, the Australia branch servant, brought a group of brothers from Sydney.

With war clouds on the horizon, the widely advertised public talk entitled “Universal War Near” aroused intense public interest. “I never saw a hall fill so fast,” said Fred Paton. “When I opened the front doors, hordes of people stampeded up the stairs and into the auditorium. In less than ten minutes, over 1,000 people crammed into the 850-seat hall.” “We had to close the front doors on the surg-

ing crowd, leaving another 1,000 people outside,” added Frank Dewar. “Even then, some enterprising young men slipped in through small side doors.”

The brothers were thrilled not only by the level of interest shown but also by the diversity of the audience, which included many local ethnic groups. Up until then, very few local people had shown interest in the truth, since most of them were devout Buddhists. Those locals who were nominal Christians—mostly Kayins (Karens), Kachins, and Chins—lived in remote areas barely touched by the good news. It appeared that the indigenous field was ripe for harvesting. Soon the multinational “great crowd” foretold in the Bible would also include Burma’s many ethnic groups.—Rev. 7:9.

### **First Kayin Disciples**

In 1940 a pioneer named Ruby Goff was preaching in Insein, a small town on the outskirts of Yangon. Finding little interest that day, Ruby prayed, “Jehovah, please let me find just one ‘sheep’ before I go home.” At the very next house, she met Hmwe Kyaing, a Kayin Baptist, who readily listened to the Kingdom message. Soon, Hmwe Kyaing and her daughters, Chu May (Daisy) and Hnin May (Lily), were studying the Bible and making good spiritual progress. Although Hmwe Kyaing died soon afterward, Lily, the younger daughter, later became the first Kayin to be baptized as a Witness of Jehovah. Daisy was also baptized.

Lily and Daisy became zealous pioneers and left a lasting legacy. Today, hundreds of their descendants and Bible students serve Jehovah in Myanmar and overseas.



The first Kayin disciples, Chu May "Daisy" (left) and Hnin May "Lily" (right)

## Struggles During World War II

In 1939, World War II had broken out in Europe, sending shock waves around the world. Amid the growing war hysteria, Christendom's clergy in Burma intensified its pressure on the colonial government to ban our literature. In response, Mick Engel, who cared for the literature depot in Yangon, approached a senior U.S. official and obtained a letter of authority to transport about two tons of literature on army trucks over the Burma Road to China.

Fred Paton and Hector Oates took the literature to the railhead at Lashio, a town near the Chinese bor-



der. When they met with the official controlling the convoy to China, he nearly had a fit! "What?" he shouted. "How can I

**When the authorities arrived, the literature was gone**

give you precious space in my trucks for your miserable tracts when I have absolutely no room for urgently needed military and medical supplies rotting here in the open?" Fred paused, extracted the letter of authority from his briefcase, and informed the official that it would be a very serious matter if he ignored an official order from Yangon. At that, the road controller placed a lightweight truck, with a driver and supplies, at the brothers' disposal. They traveled some 1,500 miles to Chongqing (Chungking), in south-central China, where they distributed the precious literature and even personally witnessed to Chiang Kai-shek, the president of the Chinese Nationalist government.

Finally, in May 1941, the colonial government in India cabled Yangon, ordering the local authorities to seize our literature. Two brothers working in the cable office saw the telegram and quickly told Mick Engel. Mick called Lily and Daisy and hurried to the depot, where they loaded up the remaining 40 cartons of literature and hid them in safe houses around Yangon. When the authorities arrived, the literature was gone.

On December 11, 1941, four days after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Japanese bombs began raining down on Burma. That weekend a small group of Witnesses assembled in a tiny apartment above the Yangon Central Railway Station. It was there that

after a dignified Scriptural discussion, Lily was solemnly baptized in a household bathtub.

Twelve weeks later, the Japanese army entered Yangon to find the city all but deserted. More than a hundred thousand people had fled toward India. Thousands died along the way, from hunger, exhaustion, and disease. Sydney Coote, who fled with his family, died of cerebral malaria near the Indian border. Another brother was shot by Japanese soldiers, while yet another lost his wife and family when their home was bombed.

Only a handful of Witnesses remained in Burma. Lily and Daisy moved to Pyin Oo Lwin (Maymyo), a quiet hillside town near Mandalay, where they sowed seeds of truth that later bore fruit. A third Witness, Cyril Gay, settled in Thayarwaddy, a tiny village some 60 miles north of Yangon, where he quietly lived out the remainder of the war.

### **A Joyful Reunion**

When the war ended, most of the brothers and sisters who had fled to India began returning to Burma. By April 1946 the Yangon Congregation had eight active publishers. At the end of the year, when the congregation had grown to 24 publishers, the brothers decided to hold an assembly.

The two-day assembly was held at a school in Insein. "I returned from India to find that I was to deliver the hour-long public address," recalled Theo Syriopoulos, who learned the truth in Yangon in 1932. "Up until then, I had given only two five-minute talks at meetings in India. The assembly, however, was a great success, and over 100 people attended."

A few weeks later, a Kayin community leader who was interested in the truth offered the congregation a block of land in Ahlone, a riverside suburb near the center of Yangon. There the brothers built a bamboo Kingdom Hall with seating for about a hundred people. The congregation was bubbling over with joy. The brothers and sisters had survived the war with their faith intact and were ready and eager to press on with the preaching work.

### **First Gilead Missionaries Arrive**

Early in 1947, a group of excited brothers gathered at the Yangon docks to welcome Robert Kirk, the first Gilead-trained missionary to enter Burma. Soon afterward, three more missionaries arrived—Norman Barber, Robert Richards, and Hubert Smedstad—along with Frank Dewar, who had pioneered in India during the war.

The missionaries had arrived in a city ravaged by war. Countless buildings were burned-out shells. Thousands of people lived in flimsy bamboo huts that lined the roads. People cooked, washed, and lived in the streets. Yet, the missionaries had come to teach Bible truth, so they adjusted to the conditions and got busy in the ministry.

On September 1, 1947, a branch office of the Watch Tower Society was established at the missionary home on Signal Pagoda Road, near the heart of the city. Robert Kirk was assigned as branch overseer. Soon afterward, the Yangon Congregation moved from the bamboo hall in Ahlone to an upstairs apartment on Bogalay Zay Street. This was just a few minutes' walk from the Secretariat, a

Above: First Gilead missionaries Hubert Smedstad, Robert Kirk, Norman Barber, and Robert Richards

Below: (back row) Nancy D'Souza, Milton Henschel, Nathan Knorr, Robert Kirk, Terence D'Souza, (front row) Russell Mobley, Penelope Jarvis-Vagg, Phyllis Tsatos, Daisy D'Souza, Basil Tsatos

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majestic edifice housing the British colonial government—an administration whose days were numbered!

### **Civil War Erupts!**

On January 4, 1948, the British handed over power to the new Burmese government. After 60 years of colonial rule, Burma was independent. But the country was engulfed in civil war.

Various ethnic groups fought to establish independent states, while private armies and criminal gangs vied for areas of control. By early 1949, rebel forces controlled most of the country, and fighting broke out on the outskirts of Yangon.

While the battles ebbed and flowed, the brothers preached cautiously. The branch office was transferred from the missionary home on Signal Pagoda Road to a large upstairs apartment on 39th Street, a secure area housing several foreign embassies and just a three-minute walk from the general post office.

The Burmese army slowly asserted its authority, driving the rebels into the mountains. By the mid-1950's, the government had regained control of much of the country. However, the civil war was far from over. It has continued in one form or another down to the present day.



## A decorative horizontal line consisting of a series of small, dark brown diamond shapes. Most diamonds are dark brown, but several are red, creating a rhythmic pattern. The diamonds are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.

**Greetings** Myanmar greetings are varied and colorful. Long-separated friends may lightheartedly exclaim, “So you are not dead yet, are you?” Around meal-time people may ask, “Have you eaten yet?” People do not say “Good-bye” but simply say “I am going now.” The typical reply is “Good!” or “Go slowly!”



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**Dress** Men and women wear the *lungi*, a colorful, tubelike length of cloth that reaches from waist to ankles. Men tie the *lungi* with a knot at the front; women tuck the garment in at the waist. Fabric designs differ between men and women and among ethnic groups.

.....

**Grooming** Most women and children use *thanaka*, a fragrant paste made from the ground bark of the *thanaka* tree, as a cosmetic and skin treatment. *Thanaka* cools the skin and is effective as a sun-block.

A mother applies *thanaka* to her daughter's face

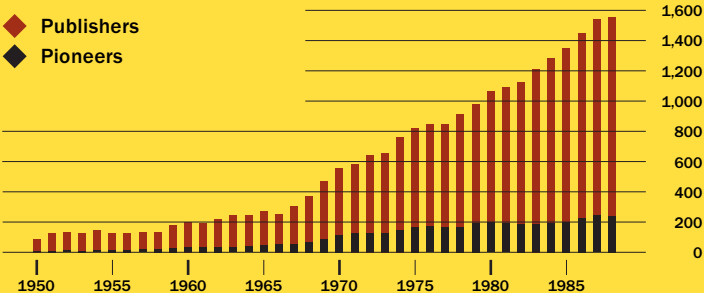




A group of Witnesses in Burma, 1987

1950 to 1988

# Dramatic Increase





## Preaching and Teaching in Burmese

Up until the mid-1950's, the brothers in Burma preached almost entirely in English, the language spoken by educated people in the larger towns and cities. But millions more spoke only Burmese (Myanmar), Kayin, Kachin, Chin, or other local languages. How could they be reached with the good news?

In 1934, Sydney Coote arranged for a Kayin schoolteacher to translate several booklets into Burmese and Kayin. Later, other publishers translated the book "*Let God Be True*" and several booklets into Burmese. Then, in 1950, Robert Kirk invited Ba Oo to translate study articles from *The Watchtower* into Burmese. The handwritten translations were typeset and printed by commercial printers in Yangon and then distributed to those who attended congregation meetings. Later, the branch office purchased a Burmese typewriter to speed up the translation process.

Those early translators faced numerous challenges. "I worked to support my family by day and then translated articles late into the night under a dim electric bulb," recalls Naygar

.....

Ba Oo (left) translated study articles from *The Watchtower* into Burmese





Today, nearly 50 years later,  
Doris Raj still works as a  
translator at Yangon Bethel

.....

Po Han, who took over translation when Ba Oo was no longer able to do it. “My knowledge of English was very limited, so the resulting translation must have been quite inaccurate. But we desperately wanted our magazines to reach as many people as possible.” When Robert Kirk asked Doris Raj to translate *The Watchtower* into Burmese, she was so overwhelmed that she broke down and cried. “I had only a basic education and no translation experience,” explains

Doris. “Yet, Brother Kirk encouraged me to try. So I prayed to Jehovah and set to work.” Today, nearly 50 years later, Doris still works as a translator at Yangon Bethel. Naygar Po Han, now 93, is also at Bethel and is as enthusiastic as ever about advancing the Kingdom work.

In 1956, Nathan Knorr from world headquarters visited Burma and announced the release of *The Watchtower* in Burmese. He also urged the missionaries to learn the language so that they could preach more effectively. Encouraged by his remarks, the missionaries intensified their efforts to learn Burmese. The following year, Frederick Franz, an-

other visitor from world headquarters, was the keynote speaker at a five-day assembly held at the Yangon Railway Institute Hall. He encouraged the brothers to expand the preaching work yet further by sending out pioneers into regional cities and towns. The first area to benefit from the new pioneers was Burma's former capital and second-largest city, Mandalay.



In 1956, Nathan Knorr released *The Watchtower* in Burmese

### **Fruitage in Mandalay**

Early in 1957, six new special pioneers arrived in Mandalay, joining newlywed missionary Robert Richards and his Kayin wife, Baby, who were already there. The pioneers found the city to be a challenging territory. Mandalay is a major center of Buddhism and home to about half of Burma's Buddhist monks. Still, the pioneers realized that as in ancient Corinth, Jehovah had "many people in this city."—Acts 18:10.

One such person was Robin Zauja, a 21-year-old Kachin student, who recalls: "Early one morning, Robert and Baby Richards called at my home and introduced themselves as Jehovah's Witnesses. They said that they were declaring the good news from house to house, in line with Jesus' command to preach. (Matt. 10:11-13) They presented their message and gave me their address, along with several magazines and books. I picked up one of the books



## Jehovah Gave Me a New Spirit

.....  
**WILSON THEIN**  
.....

**BORN 1924    BAPTIZED 1955**

**PROFILE** This former robber worked hard to change his personality and has served as a special pioneer for 54 years.

◆ WHEN I was young, I learned boxing, wrestling, and judo. As a result, I developed a violent, angry personality. By the age of 19, I was an armed robber in a gang. Eventually, I was caught and served eight years in jail, where I reflected on my bad way of life and prayed a lot. Deep down, I wanted to know more about God.

After my release, I moved to Yangon, where I attended meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. Eventually, I qualified for baptism, thanks to patient help from several kind brothers.

After my baptism, I still struggled to display the Christian personality. (Eph. 4:24) I tended to be very critical of others and often got upset with them. I wanted to be a better person but found it difficult to control

my emotions. I felt that I was such a failure that sometimes I went to the river and cried for hours.

**I felt that I was such a failure that sometimes I went to the river and cried for hours**

In 1957, I was appointed as a special pioneer. My first assignment was in Mandalay. There I worked alongside missionary Robert Richards. Robert was like a father to me. He taught me to focus on people's good points and humbly remember my own imperfections. (Gal. 5:22, 23) Whenever I got stirred up, I begged Jehovah to give me "a new spirit, a steadfast one" governed by peace. (Ps. 51:10) Jehovah answered my prayers, and over time my personality improved.

Later, I studied with an 80-year-old man who was a Baptist. The members of his church angrily accused me of "stealing" their sheep. One of them held a knife to my face and snarled, "Is it a sin to kill someone?" Blind anger reared up inside me. I immediately said a silent prayer to Jehovah and then replied in a steady voice, "You answer the question yourself." The man hesitated, then turned and left. I thanked Jehovah for helping me to remain calm. My elderly Bible student was baptized soon afterward, and he remained a faithful Witness up to his death.

Over the years, I have served in 17 different special pioneer assignments and helped 64 people learn the truth. When I reflect on how good Jehovah has been to me, my eyes well up with tears. He helped a violent, angry, unhappy young man to cultivate a peaceable new spirit.

that evening and read all night until I had finished it by sunrise. That same day, I went to Robert's home and plied him with questions for several hours. He answered every question from the Bible." Robin Zauja soon became the first Kachin to accept the truth. Later, he served for years as a special pioneer in northern Burma, helping nearly a hundred people learn the truth. Two of his children now serve at Yangon Bethel.

Another zealous disciple was Pramila Galliara, a 17-year-old girl who had recently learned the truth in Yangon. "My father, a member of the Jain religion, was bitterly opposed to my newfound faith," says Pramila. "He twice burned my Bible and Bible literature, and several times he beat me in public. He also locked me up at home to stop me from attending Christian meetings, and he even threatened to burn down Brother Richards' house! But when he saw that he could not break my faith, he slowly stopped opposing me." Leaving her university studies, Pramila became a zealous pioneer and later married circuit overseer Dunstan O'Neill. Since then, she has helped 45 people into the truth.

While the work moved ahead in Mandalay, the branch office also dispatched missionaries or pioneers to other regional centers, including Pathein (Bassein), Kalaymyo, Bhamaw, Myitkyina, Mawlamyine, and Myeik (Mergui). Jehovah clearly blessed the work, as each of these towns developed strong congregations.

### **Missionaries Expelled!**

As the preaching work continued to expand, rising political and ethnic tensions slowly pushed

the country toward the breaking point. Finally, in March 1962 the army took over the government. Hundreds of thousands of Indians and Anglo-Indians were deported to India and Bangladesh (then East Pakistan), and visiting foreigners could obtain 24-hour visas only. Burma was shutting its doors to the outside world.

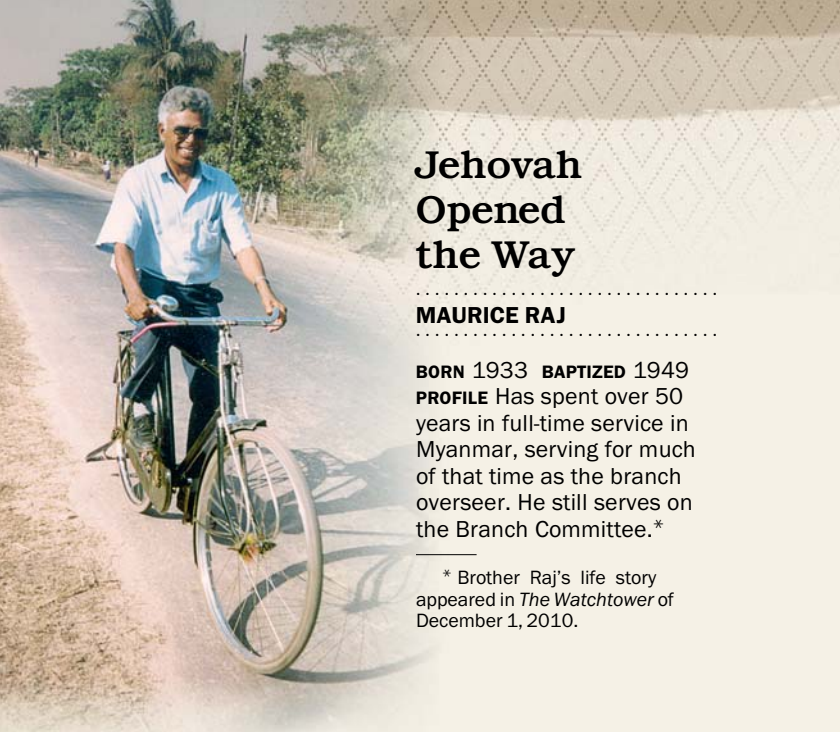
The brothers watched these developments with growing unease. The military government guaranteed freedom of worship, but only if religions kept out of politics. True to form, Christendom's missionaries continued to meddle in political affairs. Finally, by May 1966, the government had had enough—it ordered *all* foreign missionaries to leave the country! Witness missionaries had been scrupulously nonpolitical; yet they too were soon deported.

The local brothers were shocked but not disheartened. They knew that Jehovah God was with them. (Deut. 31:6) Still, some brothers wondered how the Kingdom work would continue.

Jehovah's guiding hand soon became evident. Maurice Raj, a former circuit overseer who had received some training at the branch, was quickly appointed to look after the branch office. An ethnic Indian, Maurice had not been deported with the Indian population. "Several years earlier, I had applied for Burmese citizenship," he explains. "But I lacked the 450 kyats\* needed to pay for my citizenship book, so I put the matter off. Then one day while I was passing the office of the company that had employed me years earlier, my former boss saw me. He cried out: 'Hey, Raj, come and get your money. You

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\* Equivalent, at the time, to about \$95 (U.S.), a sizable sum.



## Jehovah Opened the Way

.....  
**MAURICE RAJ**  
.....

**BORN 1933 BAPTIZED 1949**  
**PROFILE** Has spent over 50 years in full-time service in Myanmar, serving for much of that time as the branch overseer. He still serves on the Branch Committee.\*

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\* Brother Raj's life story appeared in *The Watchtower* of December 1, 2010.

◆ IN 1988, violent protests rocked Yangon as thousands of people flooded through the streets demanding political reform. With the nation at the breaking point, the army launched a military coup, imposing martial law on most of the country. Thousands of protesters were killed.

That same month, we needed to submit our annual branch report to world headquarters in New York, but all normal communication channels had been cut, and we saw no way to get the report out of the country. Then I learned that the U.S. Embassy was sending its diplomatic mail out of the country via helicopter. Thinking that the



report might be included in the mail, I donned my best suit and tie and set off for the embassy.

As I drove through the rain-soaked streets, I noticed that the city was eerily quiet. Soon my way was blocked by a huge log barricade, so I parked the car and walked the rest of the way.

Nearing the embassy gate, I saw hundreds of people clamoring to get in, but grim-faced marines blocked the way. I paused to say a silent prayer. A student saw my well-dressed appearance and yelled out, "This man must be an embassy official." At that, I squeezed my way through the crowd. When I reached the locked embassy gate, a huge marine eyed me suspiciously.

"Who are you," he barked, "and what do you want?"

"I want to see the ambassador," I replied. "I have a very important message to send to America."

He stared at me long and hard. Suddenly, he yanked the gate open, pulled me through, and then slammed it shut on the surging crowd.

"Follow me," he growled.

At the embassy door, the marine handed me over to a weary official, who asked me what I wanted.

"I'm from the local office of the Watch Tower Society," I explained. "And I have an important report that must reach our New York headquarters this month. Can you please send it with your diplomatic mail?" Handing the man my precious envelope, I added, "I'm very sorry; I don't have a stamp."

Somewhat baffled, the official asked me a few questions. Then he assured me that he would forward the report. I later learned that it reached world headquarters on time.

**Handing the man my precious envelope, I said, "I'm very sorry; I don't have a stamp"**

forgot to collect your provident fund when you left.’ It amounted to 450 kyats.

“As I left the office, I thought of all the things I could do with 450 kyats. But since it was exactly the amount needed to get my citizenship book, I felt that it was Jehovah’s will that I use it for that purpose. And that choice proved to be most beneficial. While other Indians were expelled from Burma, I could remain in the country, travel freely, import literature, and carry out other duties vital to our preaching work, all because I was a Burmese citizen.”

Along with Dunstan O’Neill, Maurice set out on a nationwide tour to encourage each congregation and isolated group. “We told the brothers: ‘Don’t worry, Jehovah is with us. If we are loyal to him, he will help us,’” says Maurice. “And Jehovah did help us! Soon many new special pioneers were appointed, and the preaching work expanded even more rapidly.”

Today, some 46 years later, Maurice, a member of the Branch Committee, still travels throughout Myanmar to strengthen the congregations. Like elderly Caleb in ancient Israel, his zeal for God’s work remains undiminished.—Josh. 14:11.

## **Expanding Into Chin State**

One of the first areas to receive special pioneers was Chin State, a mountainous region bordering Bangladesh and India. This area is home to many professed Christians, a legacy of Baptist missionaries of the British colonial period. Thus, most Chin people hold the Bible and Bible teachers in high regard.

Toward the end of 1966, Lal Chhana, a former soldier but now a special pioneer, arrived in Falam, then the largest town in Chin State. There he was joined by Dunstan and Pramila O'Neill and Than Tum, another former soldier who had recently been baptized. These zealous workers located several interested families and soon established a small but active congregation.

The following year, Than Tum moved to Hakha, a town south of Falam, where he started pioneering and established a small group. He later went on to preach throughout Chin State and helped to establish congregations in Vanhna and Surkhua, as well as in Gangaw and other areas. Today, 45 years later, Than Tum remains active as a special pioneer in his home village, Vanhna.

When Than Tum left Hakha, Donald Dewar, a 20-year-old special pioneer, took his place. Because



Donald's parents, Frank and Lily (formerly Lily May) Dewar, had recently been deported, Donald's 18-year-old brother, Samuel, joined him there. "We lived in a small tin hut that was stifling in summer and freezing in winter," says Donald. "Yet, I found that loneliness was a greater challenge. I regularly worked alone in service and could barely speak the local language, Hakha Chin. Only Samuel and I and one or two other publishers attended the meetings. Gradually, I became depressed and even gave thought to leaving my assignment.

"About that time, I read a stirring *Yearbook* account about our brothers in Malawi staying faithful under brutal persecution.\* I asked myself, 'If I can't bear loneliness, how would I endure persecution?' I poured out my concerns to Jehovah in prayer and started to feel relief. I also gained strength from reading and meditating on the Bible and on articles in *The Watchtower*. When I received a surprise visit from Maurice Raj and Dunstan O'Neill, I felt as if I were seeing two angels! Slowly but surely, I regained my joy."

Later, while serving as a traveling overseer, Donald drew on his experience to encourage other isolated Witnesses. His efforts in Hakha also bore fruit. Hakha now boasts a thriving congregation and regularly hosts Christian assemblies and conventions. Two of the publishers who attended meetings in Hakha, Johnson Lal Vung and Daniel Sang Kha, became zealous special pioneers who helped spread the good news throughout much of Chin State.

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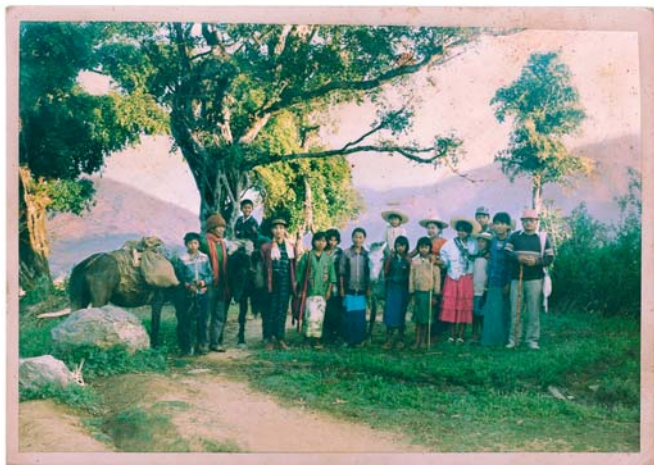
\* See the *1966 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, page 192.

## **‘Walking Up Mountains’**

Chin State lies 3,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level with some peaks soaring up to 10,000 feet. Many mountains are covered with dense forests filled with towering teaks, stately conifers, colorful rhododendrons, and exquisite orchids. The terrain is wild and majestic and makes for rough travel. Towns in the region are linked by winding dirt roads that are barely passable when wet and often severed by landslides. Many remote villages are accessible only on foot. These obstacles, however, have not deterred Jehovah’s servants, who are determined to reach as many people as possible with the good news.

Aye Aye Thit, who served with her husband in the circuit work in Chin State, relates: “I grew up in the flat Ayeyarwady Delta and was awestruck by the beautiful Chin Hills. I hiked up my first mountain with gusto, only to collapse out of breath at the top of the hill. Several hills later, I was so exhausted that I thought I would die. Eventually, I learned how to walk up mountains—by taking my time and conserving my strength. Soon I could walk up to 20 miles a day on journeys lasting six days or more.”

Over the years, the brothers in Chin State have used various forms of transport, including mule, horse, bicycle and, only recently, motorbike, passenger truck, and four-wheel-drive vehicle. But mostly, they walk. To reach the villages surrounding Matupi, for example, special pioneers Kyaw Win and David Zama trudged countless miles up and down mountains. In order to attend Christian conventions in Hakha, over 170 miles away, the Matupi



Congregation walked for six to eight days going there and six to eight days coming back. Along the way, they sang Kingdom songs that echoed through the picturesque hills.

Those grueling journeys exposed the brothers not only to harsh mountain weather but to swarms of mosquitoes and all kinds of creepy-crawlies, especially during the rainy season. “While walking through the forest, I saw leeches crawling up my legs,” relates Myint Lwin, a circuit overseer. “When I tore them off, two more climbed up. I jumped onto a fallen tree, but swarms of leeches started crawling up the log. Terrified, I sprinted through the forest. When I finally reached the road, I was covered with leeches.”

Left: Members of the Matupi Congregation walked 170 miles to attend Christian conventions in Hakha

Right: District overseer Gumja Naw and his wife, Nan Lu, hiked between congregations in Chin State



However, travelers in Chin State braved more than leeches. Myanmar also has wild boars, bears, leopards, tigers and, according to some sources, a greater variety of venomous snakes than any other country in the world. When hiking between congregations in Chin State, district overseer Gumja Naw and his wife, Nan Lu, built a ring of fires at night to keep wild animals at bay!

Those tireless evangelizers left a lasting legacy. “They served Jehovah with all of their strength,” says Maurice Raj. “Even after they left Chin State, they were willing to return. Their efforts truly glorified Jehovah!” Today, despite being one of the most sparsely populated regions in the country, Chin State has seven congregations and several isolated groups.



## An Earnest Judge Accepts the Truth

.....  
**MANG CUNG**  
.....

**BORN** 1934

**BAPTIZED** 1981

**PROFILE** A prominent headmaster and judge who later became a zealous pioneer.

◆ WHEN a pioneer first offered me a copy of *The Watchtower*, I told him: “I don’t have time to read. I’m too busy.” But being a heavy smoker, I thought that I could use the magazine pages to roll my cigars. So I accepted the magazine.

As I tore out a page to roll a cigar, I thought that it would be wasteful not to read it first. That is how I came to know and love *The Watchtower*. What I read motivated me to stop smoking and to bring my life into harmony with God’s other righteous standards. I was soon baptized.

After my baptism when I returned to my village, the pastor and church elders offered me money to return to my former religion. When I refused, they lyingly told people that the Witnesses had paid me to get baptized. Despite their slander, I was not intimidated. I was proud to know and serve the true God.



## **“No ‘Sheep’ in Myitkyina”**

In 1966 several special pioneers arrived in Myitkyina, a small picturesque town tucked into a sweeping bend of the Ayeyarwady River in Kachin State, near China. Six years earlier, Robert and Baby Richards had preached there briefly. They reported: “There are no ‘sheep’ in Myitkyina.” Yet, the new pioneers found people hungering for the truth.

One such person was Mya Maung, a 19-year-old Baptist who was praying to God for help to understand the Bible. He relates: “When a pioneer called on me at my place of work and offered me a Bible study, I was overjoyed. I felt that it was an answer to my prayers. My younger brother, San Aye, and I studied twice a week, and we made rapid spiritual progress.

“We were helped along by an excellent teacher—Wilson Thein. Rather than simply telling us what to do, he showed us! Through practice sessions and demonstrations, we learned to use the Bible effectively, preach with boldness, deal with opposition, and prepare and deliver congregation talks. Wilson Thein listened to us rehearse each talk and gave us suggestions on how to improve. His kindly training motivated us to reach out for spiritual goals.

“In 1968, San Aye and I started pioneering, bringing the number of pioneers in Myitkyina to eight. Our first Bible students included our mother and seven of our siblings, all of whom eventually accepted the truth. We also preached in the towns and villages along the Myitkyina-Mandalay railway on journeys that lasted from one to three days. The seeds that we planted later bore fruit. Today, the railway

**“Today, the railway towns of Namti, Hopin, Mohnyin, and Katha all have thriving congregations”**

towns of Namti, Hopin, Mohnyin, and Katha all have thriving congregations.”

While working business territory in Myitkyina, San Aye met Phum

Ram, a Kachin Baptist who worked in a government office. Phum Ram accepted the truth eagerly and moved to Putao, a small town at the foot of the Himalayas. There he preached to his many relatives, and soon 25 people were attending Christian meetings. While serving as a pioneer, Phum Ram helped his wife and seven children and many relatives learn the truth. He now serves as a pioneer and an elder in Myitkyina.

### **Missing Railway Coaches**

The rapid spiritual growth in Kachin State prompted the branch office to hold the 1969 “Peace on Earth” International Assembly in Myitkyina instead of Yangon, the usual location. To transport convention delegates from Yangon to Myitkyina, more than 700 miles to the north, the branch asked Burma Railways for permission to charter six railway coaches. This request was highly unusual. Kachin State was an insurgency hot spot, and movement in and out of the area was tightly controlled. Yet, to the brothers’ surprise, the railway authorities readily agreed to their request.

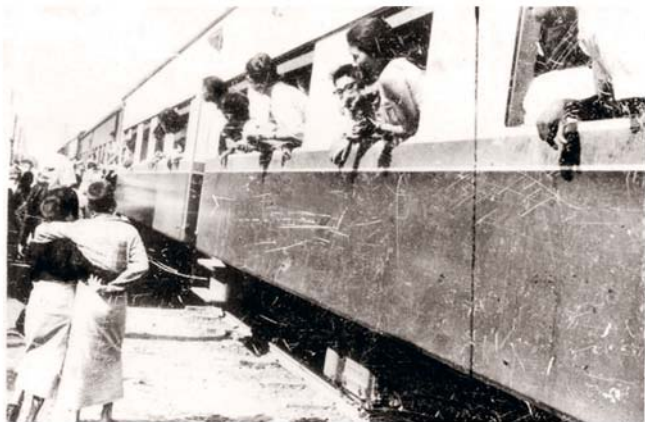
On the day that the convention train was scheduled to arrive in Myitkyina, Maurice Raj and a group of brothers went to the railway station to welcome the delegates. Maurice relates: “While we were wait-

ing, the stationmaster rushed up and told us that a telegram had just arrived stating that the authorities had unhooked the six coaches carrying our delegates, leaving them stranded between Mandalay and Myitkyina. Apparently, the train could not pull the extra coaches uphill.

“What could we do? Our first thought was to reschedule the convention. But that would mean applying for another set of permits, which would take weeks! Just as we were praying fervently to Jehovah, the train pulled into the station. We could not believe our eyes—all six coaches were filled with our brothers! They were smiling and waving. When we asked what had happened, one of them explained, “They did disconnect six coaches, but not our six!”

.....

Witnesses departing on a special train from Yangon to Myitkyina to attend a convention in 1969



**‘They disconnected six coaches, but not our six!’**

The Myitkyina convention was an outstanding success. During the program, three new publications were

released in Burmese and five in English. Three years earlier when the missionaries had been expelled, the flow of spiritual food entering Burma slowed to a trickle. Now that trickle had turned into a flood!

### **Teaching the Nagas**

Four months after the Myitkyina convention, the branch office received a letter from a postal clerk in Khamti, a riverside town situated below lofty hills lining the northwest Burma-India border. This area is the home of the Naga people, a collection of diverse tribes who were once fearsome headhunters. In his letter, the clerk, Ba Yee, a former Seventh Day Adventist, asked for spiritual help. The branch office promptly dispatched two special pioneers, Aung Naing and Win Pe.

Win Pe relates: “At the Khamti airstrip, we were unnerved to see fierce Naga warriors standing about girded only in loincloths. Then Ba Yee rushed forward to greet us and whisked us off to meet some interested ones. Soon we were studying with five people.

“The local authorities, however, mistook us for Baptist pastors with links to local insurgents. Despite our assurance that we were politically neutral, they ordered us to leave the area less than a month after we had arrived.”



Biak Mawia (back row, far right) and the Khamti Congregation when the work was opening up in the Naga areas

.....

Three years later, when new officials were in place, Biak Mawia, an 18-year-old pioneer, picked up where the previous pioneers had left off. Soon, Ba Yee resigned from the post office and started pioneering. Then several other pioneers arrived. This zealous group soon established a congregation in Khamti and several smaller groups in nearby villages. Biak Mawia recalls: "The Naga brothers and sisters were uneducated and illiterate. But they loved God's Word and were zealous preachers who skillfully used the pictures in our publications. They also memorized many scriptures and learned the Kingdom songs by heart."



## Jehovah Blessed My Endurance

.....  
**AH SHE**  
.....

**BORN** 1952

**BAPTIZED** 1998

**PROFILE** This former Catholic lay preacher accepted the truth.

◆ FOR many years, I was a Catholic lay preacher in the heart of the Golden Triangle. When I met Jehovah's Witnesses and saw the way they skillfully used the Bible, I agreed to study with them.

Soon I was preaching in church on Sunday mornings and attending Kingdom Hall meetings on Sunday afternoons. Before long, my church sermons began to include true Bible teachings, which upset some parishioners, not to mention the priest! When I resigned as a lay preacher, the parishioners took me to court to have me expelled from the village. The magistrate told them that I could worship freely. My wife, however, refused to be appeased. "Go! Get out of here with your bag and your Bible!" she screamed. Despite her anger, I never retaliated, and I continued to care for her and the children. To my great joy, Jehovah blessed my endurance. Today, my wife, Cherry, and our children are also happily serving Jehovah.

Today, district conventions are regularly held in Khamti, with delegates attending from as far south as Homalin, a town 15 hours away by riverboat.

### **Opposition in the “Golden Triangle”**

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, the work was also expanding into the highlands bordering China, Laos, and Thailand. This is the heart of the Golden Triangle, a beautiful region of rolling hills and fertile valleys marred by opium production, insurrection, and other illegal activities. The pioneers bringing the truth to this volatile region were cautious and discreet. (Matt. 10:16) Yet, their preaching work was unflinchingly opposed by one group—Christendom’s clergy!

When pioneers Robin Zauja and David Abraham arrived in Lashio, a bustling town in Shan State, the local clergy promptly denounced them as insurgents. Robin said: “We were arrested and carted off to prison, where we presented our ministerial documentation to the police. Before long, an army major walked in. ‘Hello Mr. Zauja,’ he called out. ‘I see that Jehovah’s Witnesses have come to Lashio!’ The major, an old schoolmate of mine, immediately set us free.”

The two pioneers set to work and soon established a sizable congregation. Then they built a Kingdom Hall. Two years later, they were summoned to the local government headquarters where more than 70 military officials, tribal leaders, and clergy had assembled. “The clergy angrily accused us of pressuring people to give up their religious traditions,” recalled Robin. “When the meeting chairman called for our response, I asked if I could use the Bible in

my defense. He agreed. I quickly said a silent prayer and then explained the Bible's position on false religious traditions, military service, and nationalistic ceremonies. When I finished, the chairman rose and declared that Burma's law allowed all religions to worship freely. We were released and allowed to continue preaching, much to the clergy's disappointment."

Later, in Mongpaw, a small village near the China border, an enraged mob of Baptists burned down a Kingdom Hall. When their vile act failed to intimidate the local Witnesses, the mob burned down the home of a special pioneer and began terrorizing brothers and sisters in their homes. The brothers appealed to the area ruler, but he backed the Baptists. Finally, however, the government intervened and granted the brothers permission to build a new Kingdom Hall—not on the original site at the edge of the village, but right in the center of the village!

Further south, in Leiktho, a remote mountain village in Kayin State, bordering the Golden Triangle, Gregory Sarilo encountered stiff opposition from the Catholic Church. "The village priest ordered his flock to destroy my vegetable garden," relates Gregory. "Then they gave me gifts of food, but a friend warned me that the food was poisoned. One day, the priest's henchmen asked me which road I would take the following day. That day I walked on a different road and thus avoided their efforts to ambush and kill me. When I reported these attempts on my life, the authorities sternly ordered the priest and his followers to leave me alone. Jehovah protected me from those 'hunting for my soul.'"—Ps. 35:4.





A group of elders at the 1969 “Peace on Earth” International Assembly in Myitkyina. (Back row) Francis Vaidopau, Maurice Raj, Tin Pei Than, Mya Maung, (middle row) Dunstan O’Neill, Charlie Aung Thein, Aung Tin Shwe, Wilson Thein, San Aye, (front row) Maung Khar, Donald Dewar, David Abraham, Robin Zauja

## **Maintaining Strict Neutrality**

Over the years, the brothers and sisters in Burma have had their integrity challenged in another noteworthy way. Ethnic wars and political strife have often tested their Christian neutrality.—John 18:36.

In the southern town of Thanbyuzayat, the western terminus of the infamous World War II Burma-Thailand “Death Railway,” special pioneer Hla Aung found himself surrounded by the fighting that was taking place between separatist insurgents and government forces. “Soldiers raided



## My Suspicions Melted Away

.....  
**GREGORY SARILO**  
.....

**BORN** 1950

**BAPTIZED** 1985

**PROFILE** A former church worker who thought that Jehovah's Witnesses might be false prophets.

◆ FOR years, I was a devout Roman Catholic who took the lead in church activities in my village. Meanwhile, I saw church leaders condoning immorality, offering animistic sacrifices, and practicing spiritism. Disgusted by their hypocrisy, I resigned from my church duties, but I still hung on to my Catholic beliefs.

In 1981, I met Jehovah's Witnesses. Impressed by their Bible knowledge, I accepted a study, but I was very suspicious of their teachings and constantly challenged them. They calmly answered my questions from the Bible.

I attended a district convention to see if the Witnesses were united in their teaching. During a break in the program, I inadvertently left my bag containing my identification card, money, and other valuables under my seat. I thought that the bag would surely have been stolen. But the brothers assured me: "Don't worry. It will be there when you return." I ran to my seat, and there it was! From that moment on, my suspicions about the Witnesses melted away.

villages at night to round up the men and march them off at gunpoint to serve as military porters,” he explains. “Many were never seen again. One night, soldiers began to raid our village while Donald Dewar and I were talking at my house. My wife quickly yelled out a warning, allowing us time to flee into the forest. After that narrow escape, I built a secret hiding place in my home, where I could quickly take cover if we were raided again.”

When special pioneer Rajan Pandit arrived in Dawei, a town south of Thanbyuzayat, he soon started several Bible studies in a nearby village that was an insurgent stronghold. “While returning from the village, I was arrested and beaten by soldiers who accused me of being in league with the insurgents,” he relates. “When I told them that I was one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, they demanded to know how I had come to Dawei. I showed them my plane ticket—which I had kept as a souvenir. It proved that I had arrived by plane, a mode of travel never used by insurgents. I was spared further beatings and was eventually released. The soldiers, however, interrogated one of my Bible students, who confirmed that we had only studied the Bible. After that, the soldiers left me alone and some even became part of my magazine route.”

Sometimes town officials tried to pressure the brothers to compromise their neutrality by voting in elections or by sharing in nationalistic ceremonies. When officials in Zalun, a riverside town about 80 miles north of Yangon, pressured local Witnesses to vote in an election, the brothers stood firm, citing the Bible as their authority. (John 6:15) The

officials appealed to the regional authorities. But the regional authorities were well-aware that Jehovah's Witnesses are politically neutral. The brothers were readily exempted from the election process.

When 23 Witness children in Khampat, a town on the Burma-India border, refused to bow to the national flag, the local headmistress expelled them from school. She then summoned two elders to appear before a large group of officials, including the town magistrate and the military commander. "As we explained the Scriptural reasons for our position, some of the officials were clearly hostile," says Paul Khai Khan Thang, one of the elders. "Then we showed them a copy of a government decree stating that Jehovah's Witnesses are permitted to 'stand quietly and respectfully during flag ceremonies.' The officials were stunned. When they recovered, the military commander ordered the headmistress to reinstate the expelled students. The headmistress also distributed copies of the decree to each school department."

Today, officials at the highest levels of the Myanmar government are familiar with the political neutrality of Jehovah's Witnesses. By standing firm for Bible principles, Jehovah's servants have given a fine witness, just as Jesus Christ foretold.—Luke 21:13.

### **Military Personnel Become Christians**

Throughout Myanmar's turbulent modern history, many of its citizens have served in the military or fought as insurgents. Like the first-century Roman army officer Cornelius, some of them are 'de-

vout and God-fearing.’ (Acts 10:2) Upon learning the truth, they work hard to bring their lives into harmony with Jehovah’s righteous standards.

One such person is Hlawn Mang, a former petty officer in the navy who learned the truth while stationed in Mawlamyine. “I wanted to start preaching right away,” he explains. “But just as I was about to resign from the military, I learned that I was being considered for a promotion and a military scholarship to a school in a rich Western country! Yet, I was determined to share in God’s work. To the amazement of my superiors, I submitted my resignation and started serving Jehovah. Today, some 30 years later, I am still convinced that I made the right choice. What could compare with the privilege of serving the true God?”

La Bang Gam was convalescing in a military hospital when Robin Zauja showed him the book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*.<sup>\*</sup> La Bang Gam was enthralled by the book and asked if he could keep it. But since it was Robin’s only copy, he agreed to lend it to La Bang Gam for just one night. The next day, when Robin returned, La Bang Gam exclaimed: “Here is your book. I now have my own copy!” He had stayed up all night to copy the entire 250-page book into several notebooks! Soon afterward, La Bang Gam left the military and used his “Paradise” book to help many others learn the truth.

In mountainous Shan State, Sa Than Htun Aung, a captain in the Burmese army, and Aik

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<sup>\*</sup> Published by Jehovah’s Witnesses but now out of print.

## I Found “Surpassing Riches”

SA THAN HTUN AUNG

**BORN 1954 BAPTIZED 1993**

**PROFILE** A former Buddhist monk and soldier. After accepting the truth, he served as a pioneer for many years.

◆ I CAME from a Buddhist family and lived for a time as a Buddhist monk. I did not believe in a personal God or Creator. Then a “Christian” friend invited me to his church, where I heard that humans have a Father in heaven. I yearned to know and draw close to this heavenly Father.

After I completed my period of service as a monk, I joined the military. While on duty I kept a diary. I started each entry with the words “Father, God in heaven.” Later, I tried to



leave the army to become a church pastor, but my superiors would not let me resign. In time, I rose to the rank of captain, a position that brought me prominence, influence, and financial opportunities. Yet, deep inside, I was spiritually hungry.

In 1982, I married Htu Aung. Her older sister, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, gave us the book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*. The book said that God's name was Jehovah, a claim that I doubted. I told Htu Aung, "If you can show me the name Jehovah in the Myanmar Bible, then I will become one of Jehovah's Witnesses!" She searched through her Bible but could not find it. However, her Witness friend, Mary, had no such trouble. She promptly showed me the name Jehovah! Eventually, I started attending the meetings of the Witnesses along with my wife and children and also accepted a Bible study.

As I grew in Bible knowledge, my desire to serve God became stronger and stronger. In 1991, I again applied to leave the military—this time to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Two years later, I was finally discharged. That same year, Htu Aung and I were baptized.

To support my family, I started selling food in a market. My relatives and friends told me that I was crazy to leave a promising military career to do menial work. But I recalled that to serve God, Moses left Pharaoh's royal court and became a shepherd. (Ex. 3:1; Heb. 11:24-27) Later, I reached a treasured goal—I became a regular pioneer.

Some of my military friends became prominent officers and gained great wealth. But I have found "surpassing riches," the blessings that come from knowing and serving my heavenly Father. (Eph. 2:7) Today, several of my nieces and nephews are in full-time service, and my eldest son serves at Myanmar Bethel.



Aik Lin (left) and Sa Than Htun Aung (right) fought on opposing sides in several fierce jungle battles

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**Freed from the chains of hate, these two men were now united by bonds of love, thanks to the liberating power of God's Word**

Lin, a commander in the United Wa State Army, fought on opposing sides in several fierce jungle battles. When the armies finally negotiated a cease-fire, both men settled in Shan State. Later, they separately

learned the truth, resigned their military commissions, and got baptized. These two former enemies met at a circuit assembly, and they warmly embraced as Christian brothers! Freed from the chains of hate, they were now united by bonds of



love, thanks to the liberating power of God's Word.  
—John 8:32; 13:35.

### **Reasoning With “All Sorts of Men”**

Between 1965 and 1976, the number of publishers in Burma grew by over 300 percent. Most of the new ones who responded favorably to the Witnesses' preaching efforts came out of Christendom. Yet, the brothers knew that God's will is that “all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.” (1 Tim. 2:4) Accordingly, from the mid-1970's onward, they intensified their efforts to preach to Burma's many other religious believers, including Buddhists, Hindus, and animists.

There were numerous challenges. Buddhists do not accept a personal God or Creator, Hindus worship millions of gods, and Burma's animists revere powerful spirits called nats. Superstition, divination, and spiritism abound in these religions. And while most devotees view the Bible as a holy book, they usually know little or nothing about Bible characters, history, culture, and concepts.

The brothers, however, knew that the powerful truths in God's Word can touch any human heart. (Heb. 4:12) They simply needed to rely on God's spirit and use the “art of teaching”—that is, sound reasoning that appeals to people's hearts and motivates them to make changes in their lives.—2 Tim. 4:2.

Consider, for example, how Rosaline, a long-time special pioneer, uses sound reasoning when speaking with Buddhists. She explains: “When Buddhists are taught that there is a Creator, they often ask, ‘But who created the Creator?’ Buddhists view



Buddhist monks in traditional robes are a common sight

.....

animals as reincarnated humans, so I reason with them using their pets as an example.

“‘Does a pet know that its owner exists?’ I ask.

“‘Yes.’

“‘But is it aware of its owner’s job, marriage, or background?’

“‘No.’

“‘Likewise, since humans are different from God, who is a Spirit, should we expect to understand everything about God’s existence or origins?’

“‘No.’”

Such reasoning has convinced many sincere Buddhists to consider further evidence proving God’s existence. When sound reasoning is coupled with genuine Christian love, it can have a pow-

erful impact on people's hearts. Ohn Thwin, a former Buddhist, relates: "When comparing my Buddhist belief in Nirvana with the Bible's

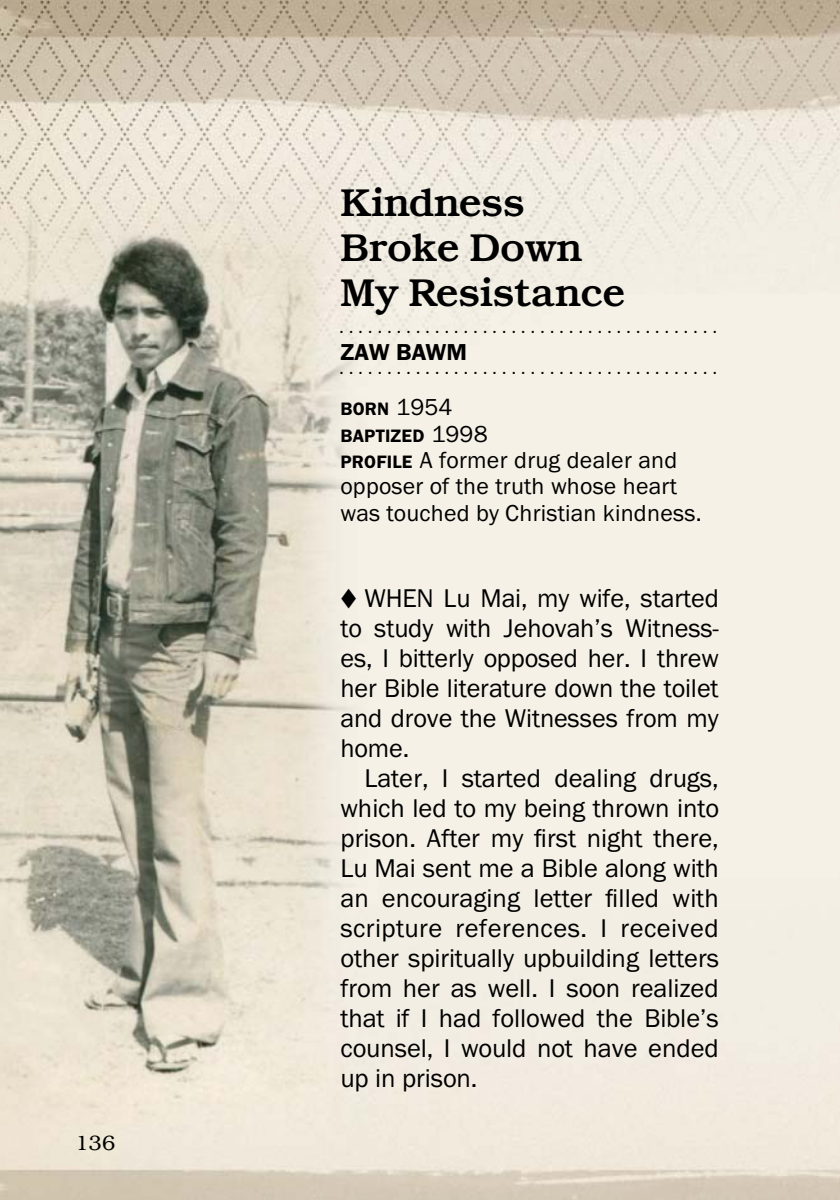
**"The love that the brothers showed me was like 'syrup on molasses' "**

promise of Paradise on earth, I found Paradise to be more appealing. But because I believed that many roads lead to truth, I saw no need to act on what I had learned. Then I started attending the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. The love that the brothers showed me was like 'syrup on molasses,' a Burmese expression describing a truly sweet experience. That love motivated me to act on what I knew to be the truth."

Of course, helping people to adjust their religious viewpoint requires tact and patience. Kumar Chakrabani was ten years old when his father, a strict Hindu, allowed Bethelite Jimmy Xavier to teach Kumar to read. He recalls: "Father warned him to teach only reading, not religion. So Jimmy told him that *My Book of Bible Stories* was an excellent book for teaching children to read. Also, after my reading lesson, Jimmy took the time to talk to Father, showing genuine interest in him. When my father started asking questions about religious matters, Jimmy tactfully told him: 'The Bible has the answers. Let's find them together.' In time, not only did my father accept the truth but 63 members of our family also became Jehovah's Witnesses."

### **Holding Conventions During an Uprising**

In the mid-1980's, the political scene in Burma became increasingly unstable. Finally, in 1988,



## Kindness Broke Down My Resistance

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**ZAW BAWM**  
.....

**BORN** 1954

**BAPTIZED** 1998

**PROFILE** A former drug dealer and  
opposer of the truth whose heart  
was touched by Christian kindness.

◆ WHEN Lu Mai, my wife, started to study with Jehovah's Witnesses, I bitterly opposed her. I threw her Bible literature down the toilet and drove the Witnesses from my home.

Later, I started dealing drugs, which led to my being thrown into prison. After my first night there, Lu Mai sent me a Bible along with an encouraging letter filled with scripture references. I received other spiritually upbuilding letters from her as well. I soon realized that if I had followed the Bible's counsel, I would not have ended up in prison.

While in prison, I received two unexpected visitors. The men, Jehovah's Witnesses, explained that my wife had asked them to visit and encourage me. They had traveled for two days to reach me. I was deeply moved by their visit. None of my many relatives had come to visit me—only the people whom I had once bitterly opposed did so.

Soon afterward, I was hospitalized with typhoid and could not afford to pay for the treatment. About that time, I received another unexpected visitor—a Witness sent by my wife. Moved with pity, he paid for my treatment. Humbled and shamed, I vowed to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Five years later, when I was released from prison, I kept my promise.

.....

Today I remain faithful to my "vow" by serving Jehovah to the fullest extent possible



tens of thousands of people took to the streets to protest against the government. Their protest, however, was swiftly suppressed, and most of the country was placed under martial law.

“The authorities enforced a strict curfew, and gatherings of more than five people were banned,” recalls Bethelite Kyaw Win. “We wondered if we should cancel our upcoming district conventions. But with faith in Jehovah, we approached the military commander of Yangon Division and asked for permission to hold a 1,000-person convention. Two days later, we received our permit! When we showed the permit to authorities in other areas, it prompted them to allow conventions in their areas too. With Jehovah’s help, the whole convention series was a resounding success!”

### **Not Forsaking Christian Gatherings**

After the 1988 uprising, the economic situation in Burma steadily worsened. Even so, the brothers and sisters showed deep faith in God by continuing to put Kingdom interests first in their lives. —Matt. 6:33.

Consider, for example, Cin Khan Dal, who lived with his family in a remote village in Sagaing. “We wanted to attend the district convention in Tahan, a two-day journey away by boat and truck,” he explains. “But no one would watch over our chickens while we were away. Still, we put our trust in Jehovah and attended the convention. Returning home, we found that we had lost 19 chickens—a serious economic blow. Yet, one year later, our small flock had increased to more than 60 chickens. And while many villagers lost their chickens to disease that

year, none of our chickens died.”

Another couple who remained spiritually focused was Aung Tin Nyunt and his wife,

Nyein Mya, who lived with their nine children in Kyonsha, a small village 40 miles northwest of Yangon. Aung Tin Nyunt relates: “Mostly, our family ate just rice gruel and vegetables. We had no money and nothing to sell. Still, we weren’t depressed. I told my family: ‘Jesus had no place to put his head. So even if I have to live under a tree or die of starvation, I will faithfully keep worshipping God.’

“One day, though, we had no food left in our house. My wife and children looked at me with concerned faces. ‘Don’t worry,’ I assured them. ‘God will help us.’ After spending the morning in field service, I took my sons fishing. But we caught only enough fish for one meal. Leaving our fishing baskets at the river, near a clump of water lilies, I told the boys: ‘We can come back later, after the meeting.’ That afternoon was very windy. When we returned, we found that many fish were under the water lilies, seeking shelter from the wind. So we lowered our baskets and caught lots of fish, which we sold to buy food for an entire week.”

Time and again, Jehovah’s servants in Myanmar have experienced the fulfillment of God’s heart-warming promise: “I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you.” Thus, they readily say: “Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”—Heb. 13:5, 6.

**“Jehovah is my helper;  
I will not be afraid.  
What can man do to  
me?”—Heb. 13:6**



## I Will Climb Up Like the Stag

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**LIAN SANG**  
.....

**BORN** 1950

**BAPTIZED** 1991

**PROFILE** A former soldier who lost both his legs in battle. He now serves as a ministerial servant.

◆ I WAS born and raised in Matupi, a remote mountain village in Chin State. Our family worshipped nats, powerful spirits thought to inhabit certain forests and mountains in our region. When someone in our family fell ill, we placed food on our household altar and summoned a nat to partake of the sacrifice. We believed that the nat would then relieve the illness.

When I turned 21, I joined the army. In the years that followed, I fought in 20 battles. In 1977 communist insurgents attacked our camp near Muse, a town in Shan State. The battle raged for 20 days. Finally, we launched a massive counterattack, and I stepped on a land mine. I stared at my legs and saw only bare bones. My legs felt hot, and I was extremely thirsty, but I was not afraid. I was rushed to a hospital, where my legs were amputated.



Four months later, I was released from the hospital as a civilian.

My wife, Sein Aye, and I moved to Sagaing, a town near Mandalay, where I took up weaving bamboo chairs for a living. There I met a Baptist pastor who told me that losing my legs was God's will. Later, Sein Aye and I met Rebecca, a pioneer, who told us that in the coming earthly Paradise, I could get my legs back. Soon we were studying the Bible in earnest with Rebecca, not the pastor!

Today, nearly 30 years later, Sein Aye and I and our seven baptized children live in a small village near Pyin Oo Lwin, a pleasant hilltop town about 40 miles from Mandalay. I serve as a ministerial servant in the Pyin Oo Lwin Congregation, and three of my children serve as regular pioneers. Sein Aye and I have worked hard to raise our children in the truth and feel blessed that they have responded favorably to our spiritual instruction.

I regularly preach in my village, using a wheelchair, and ride piggyback on a motorbike to the meetings. I also "walk," using two wooden blocks as platforms.

My favorite scripture is Isaiah 35:6, which says: "At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag does." How I look forward to getting my legs back! Then, not only will I climb up like the stag but I will run and jump for joy!

**In Paradise, not only will I climb up like the stag but I will run and jump for joy!**



## Hardworking Traveling Overseers

Throughout the length and breadth of this diverse country, traveling overseers have worked tirelessly to strengthen their brothers and sisters. How do they go about their work? Let us join one of them as he visits congregations in the remote Naga Hills. A circuit overseer named Myint Lwin, who travels with his wife, Lal Lun Mawmi, writes: “Midmorning, my wife and I leave Kalaymyo, crammed into the back of a pickup truck. We tuck our legs between piles of boxed goods and vegetables. Around us, other passengers cling to the tailgate or sit on the roof. The truck



bounces along a potholed road, and clouds of dust billow through the cab. We wear masks to avoid choking on the dust.

“Two hours later, we arrive at Kalaywa, a riverside town where we will catch a boat. While waiting, we preach to shopkeepers and fellow passengers, most of whom have never heard of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Our boat arrives, its passengers disembark, and new passengers rush for the vacant seats. Nearly 100 people cram into the boat, which is so overcrowded that it could easily capsize. We shove plastic bottles into our travel bags so that they will float if we fall into the river.

“Five hours later, we arrive at the town of Mawlaik, where we sleep overnight in a tiny guesthouse. Our journey resumes at five o’clock the next morning. It is the dry season and the river is shallow, so our boat gets stuck four times on submerged sandbanks. The other men and I have to get out and push. We arrive at Homalin 14 hours later, numb from the journey, and the local congregation is waiting to meet us. When we see their smiling faces, we feel rejuvenated. Tonight we will enjoy their warm association. Tomorrow we press on to Khamti, some 15 hours away.

“We make another early start. Today, our boat is not so crowded, and the scenery is different too. We chug





upstream past hundreds of villagers who are digging in the river, searching for gold. When we finally arrive at Khamti, stiff and sore, no one is there to meet us. Our letter to the local congregation informing them of our visit must have gone astray. So we catch a motorbike taxi to the dwelling connected to the local Kingdom Hall and collapse into bed.

“The next morning, we greet the 25 local publishers, who have come to the Kingdom Hall to meet for field service. Most are Nagas, an ethnic group that lives in the mountains extending into India. We all head off to the territory. The town is tucked into a sweeping bend in the river, between towering hills. My partner and I reach a bamboo house and call out a greeting. A Naga man emerges and invites us inside. He and his wife listen carefully to the Kingdom message and happily accept literature. Many Nagas are professed Christians who show much interest in the good news. Later in the afternoon, we attend a congregation meeting, the first of several held that week.



"A week later, we cross the river to Sinthe, a small town with 12 publishers. We also visit three isolated groups, the farthest being

seven miles away. We walk to each group to go preaching, and I give a talk. The publishers here are very poor and many suffer from malaria or tuberculosis. They also endure severe religious opposition. Even so, they are zealous preachers. On Sunday, we are thrilled to see 76 people attend the public talk, including many who have walked for hours to get there.

"All too soon it's time for us to go. We find it hard to leave these dear brothers and sisters who have proved their love for Jehovah time and again. As our boat heads south, we reflect on their strong faith. Although they are poor, they are spiritually rich! We can't wait to visit them again."

**When we see their smiling faces, we feel rejuvenated**

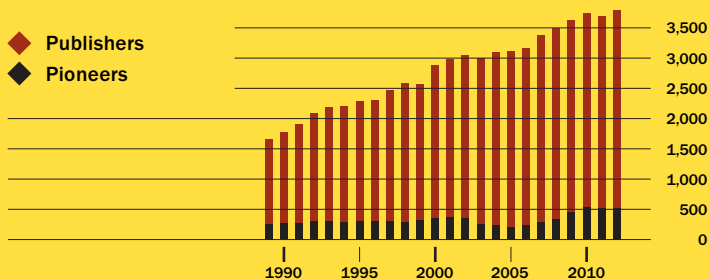




1989 to 2012



# Down to the Present



## Improvements in Publishing

Since 1956, people in Myanmar have benefited from the regular supply of spiritual food in the Myanmar (Burmese) edition of *The Watchtower*. Despite ongoing ethnic wars, civil strife, and economic upheaval, not one issue has been missed. How has the magazine been produced?

For many years, the branch office sent several typed copies of the translated magazine text to the government censor. When the censor approved the text, the branch applied for a permit to buy printing paper. After obtaining the paper, a brother took it and the magazine text to a commercial printer, who typeset each page by hand—letter by letter—into Myanmar (Burmese) type. The brother then proofread the text for accuracy, and the printer printed the magazine on a rickety press. Copies of the magazine were then sent to the censor, who supplied a numbered certificate approving the publication of the magazine. Understandably, this laborious procedure took many weeks, and the paper and print quality were quite poor.

In 1989, the branch received a new publishing system that completely transformed their printing operation. Developed and built at world headquarters, the Multilanguage Electronic Phototypesetting System (MEPS) used computers, software, and phototypesetters to produce printable text in 186 languages—including Myanmar!\*

“Jehovah’s Witnesses were evidently the first people in Myanmar to compose and publish literature using computers,” says Mya Maung,

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\* MEPS now accommodates more than 600 languages.

**Over the past 20 years, the number of magazines printed has increased over 900 percent!**

who worked at the branch. “The MEPS system, which used elegant Myanmar characters designed at our branch, sent ripples through the local printing industry.

People could not understand how we made the characters so neat!” MEPS also supported off-set printing—a vast improvement over letterpress printing. Moreover, MEPS allowed for high-quality artwork, which greatly increased *The Watchtower’s* visual appeal.

In 1991 the Myanmar government approved the publication of *Awake!* and the brothers were thrilled. So, too, was the public! A high official in the Ministry of Information echoed many readers’ comments: “*Awake!* is different from other religious magazines. It covers many interesting subjects and is easy to understand. I like it very much.”

Over the past 20 years, the number of magazines printed by the branch each month has grown from 15,000 to more than 141,000, an increase of some 900 percent! *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* are now familiar sights in Yangon and are enjoyed by people throughout the country.

### **New Branch Office Needed**

After the 1988 uprising, the military authorities invited social and religious organizations in Myanmar to register with the government. Naturally, the branch office readily did so. Two years later, on January 5, 1990, the government officially registered



the “Jehovah’s Witnesses (Watch Tower) Society” in Myanmar.

By this time, the brothers had moved the branch office from 39th Street to a two-story home on half an acre of land on Inya Road, in a well-to-do suburb north of the city. However, the new facility was now strained to the limit. Viv Mouritz, who at that time visited Myanmar as zone overseer, recalls: “The 25 members of the Bethel family worked under difficult conditions. The kitchen had no stove—a sister did the cooking on an electric hot plate. The laundry had no washing machine, so a sister washed clothes in a hole in the floor. The brothers wanted to buy a stove and a washing machine, but the items simply could not be imported.”

Clearly, the brothers needed a larger branch. Consequently, the Governing Body approved a proposal to demolish the existing two-story home and

The Bethel facility was strained to the limit. A sister used the floor to iron clothes



erect a new four-story residence and office building on the same site. Nevertheless, before the brothers could implement the proposal, some major hurdles had to be overcome. First, approval was needed from six levels of government. Second, local building contractors, who were unfamiliar with steel-frame construction, could not do the work. Third, Witness volunteers from overseas could not enter the country. And finally, the building materials could not be obtained locally, nor could they be imported. Needless to say, the project appeared doomed. Just the same, the brothers trusted in Jehovah. If Jehovah wanted it, the new branch office would be built!—Ps. 127:1.

### **‘Not by Power, But by My Spirit’**

Kyaw Win, from the branch’s Legal Department, picks up the story: “Our building application moved steadily through five of the six layers of government, including the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Then the Yangon City Development Committee claimed that a four-story building would be too high and rejected our application. When we resubmitted the application, it was rejected again. The Branch Committee encouraged me to persevere. So I prayed fervently to Jehovah and submitted the application for a third time. It was approved!

“Next we approached the Ministry of Immigration. There, officials told us that foreigners could enter the country on seven-day tourist visas only. But when we explained that our skilled foreign volunteers would train locals in advanced construction techniques, they granted our volunteers six-month visas!

“Then we went to the Ministry of Trade, only to learn that a freeze had been placed on all imports. However, when we informed the officials about the nature of our project, they granted us a license to import building materials worth over one million dollars (U.S.). What about import tax? A visit to the Ministry of Finance resulted in their allowing us to import the materials tax-free! In these and many other ways, we experienced the truth of God’s declaration: “Not by a military force, nor by power, but by my spirit,” Jehovah of armies has said.’”—Zech. 4:6.

In 1997, volunteers converged on the building site. Brothers in Australia donated most of the building materials, while other supplies came from Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. Bruce Pickering, who helped oversee the project, relates: “Several brothers from Australia prefabricated the entire steel frame and then traveled to Myanmar to bolt it together piece by piece. Amazingly, not one hole was out of place!” Other volunteers came from Britain, Fiji, Germany, Greece, New Zealand, and the United States.



Foreign and local brothers worked together closely

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## Myanmar Bethel

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For the first time in 30 years, local publishers could freely associate with foreign brothers and sisters. “We were so excited; it was like a dream,” recalls Donald Dewar. “The spirituality, love, and self-sacrificing spirit of the visitors encouraged us tremendously.” Another brother adds: “We also learned valuable building skills. Publishers who had used only candles learned to wire electric lights. Others who had used only hand fans learned to install air-conditioning. We even learned to use power tools!”

In turn, the foreign volunteers were deeply moved by the faith and love of the Myanmar brothers and sisters. “The brothers were poor, but they had big hearts,” says Bruce Pickering. “Many of them invit-


ed us to their homes for meals and shared food that could have lasted their families for several days. Their examples reminded us of what is truly important in life—family, faith, our brotherhood, God’s blessing.”

On January 22, 2000, the new branch facilities were dedicated at a special gathering held at the National Theatre. The local brothers were thrilled to have John E. Barr of the Governing Body deliver the dedication talk.

### **Building New Kingdom Halls**

As work on the new branch was nearing completion, the brothers turned their attention to another urgent need—Kingdom Halls. In 1999, Nobuhiko and Aya Koyama arrived from Japan. Nobuhiko helped to set up a Kingdom Hall Construction Desk at the branch. He recalls: “We brothers started by inspecting congregation meeting places throughout the country, which involved traveling by bus, plane, motorbike, bicycle, boat, and on foot. We often needed government travel permits, since many areas were off-limits to foreigners. Once we identified where new halls were needed, the Governing Body kindly allocated building funds from the program for lands with limited resources.

“After we assembled a team of willing volunteers, the workers descended on Shwepyitha, a Yangon suburb, to build the first new hall. Foreign and local brothers worked together on the project, astonishing the local police, who halted construction several times to check with their superiors whether such mingling was permitted. Other observers praised the brothers. ‘I saw a foreigner cleaning the



## I Want to Preach to the Whole World!

.....  
**SAGAR RAI**  
.....

**BORN 1928   BAPTIZED 1968**

**PROFILE** A decorated soldier who accepted the truth and kept preaching despite strong community opposition.



◆ I WAS born in Shan State, a mountainous region in north-east Myanmar. My family was Nepalese Gurkha, Hindu by religion. But we also practiced traditional animism. Following a strongly held Gurkha tradition, I became a soldier, as had my father and four older brothers before me. I served in the Burmese army for 20 years and fought in countless battles. Amazingly, I was never seriously injured.

When I first read *The Watchtower*, I learned from the Bible that there is only one true God—Jehovah. I was intrigued. As a Hindu, I believed in millions of gods! I looked up the name Jehovah in several dictionaries of different languages—Nepali, Hindi, Burmese, and English. Each dic-

tionary confirmed that Jehovah is the God of the Bible.

Later, my wife, Jyoti, and I moved to Pathein, where missionary Frank Dewar of-

fered me a Bible study. I accepted, and Jyoti did too. We soon became convinced that Jehovah is the only true God and decided to worship him alone. We threw our religious idols into the Pathein River so that no one could retrieve them.—Deut. 7:25; Rev. 4:11.

Soon afterward, I left the military and moved with my wife and children back to where I was born. There we joined a small group of Witnesses, who taught us to preach. In time, we gathered materials from the forest and built a small Kingdom Hall in front of my home. This enraged a committee from the Gurkha community, who protested: “Who gave you permission to build a Christian ‘church’ in a Hindu ward? You should not preach to people who already have a religion.”

The Gurkha committee complained to the local authorities, who asked me: “Mr. Rai, are you preaching in your ward and persuading people to become Christians?”

“I am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses,” I replied. “Not only do I want to preach in this ward but I want to preach to the whole world! But whether people change their religion or not is up to them.”

Happily, the authorities allowed us to continue to preach freely. Over the last 40 years, Jyoti and I have helped more than 100 people learn the truth. Many of them now serve as special pioneers, traveling overseers, or Bethelites. We also rejoice that most of our children and their families are faithfully serving Jehovah.

**Over the last 40 years,  
Jyoti and I have helped  
more than 100 people  
learn the truth**



Reaching a newly built Kingdom Hall by boat

.....

toilet!’ one man exclaimed. ‘I’ve never seen foreigners do such jobs. You people truly are different!’

“Meanwhile, another construction team started work on a new hall in Tachileik, a town on the Myanmar-Thailand border. Many Thai Witnesses crossed the border each day to work along with their Myanmar brothers on the project. The two groups worked unitedly even though they spoke different languages. In stark contrast, about the time the hall was completed, opposing military groups that lined the border started fighting. Bombs and bullets rained down around the hall, but it was not hit. When the fighting cooled down, 72 people gathered at the hall to dedicate the building to Jehovah, the God of peace.”



Since 1999, Kingdom Hall construction teams have built over 65 new Kingdom Halls throughout the country. How were the local publishers affected? Typical are the words of one grateful sister, who

through tears of joy exclaimed: "I never imagined that we would have such a beautiful new hall! Now I will try extra hard to invite interested ones to the meetings. I thank Jehovah and his organization for the kindness that they have shown to us!"

### **Missionaries Arrive**

During the 1990's, after decades of isolation, Myanmar began slowly opening up to the outside world. In response, the branch office sought government permission for missionaries to reenter the country. Finally, in January 2003, Gilead graduates Hiroshi and Junko Aoki arrived from Japan, the first missionaries to enter Myanmar in some 37 years.

"With so few foreigners in the country, we needed to be discreet so that the authorities would not misunderstand the nature of our preaching work," says Hiroshi. "So we began by accompanying the local brothers and sisters on their return visits and Bible studies. We soon discovered that the people of Myanmar love to talk about spiritual things. During our first morning in service, we started five new Bible studies!"

**Since 1999,  
Kingdom Hall  
construction teams  
have built over  
65 Kingdom Halls  
throughout the  
country**



Hiroshi and Junko Aoki, the first missionaries to enter Myanmar in some 37 years

.....

“We often experienced Jehovah’s guiding hand,” Junko adds. “Once, while returning by motorbike from a Bible study near Mandalay, we had a flat tire. Pushing the bike to a nearby factory, we asked for help to repair the tire. The security guard let Hiroshi and the bike inside, but I had to wait at the security booth. The security guard was curious.

“‘What are you doing here?’ he asked.

“‘Visiting some friends,’ I replied.

“‘For what?’ he pressed. ‘A religious meeting?’

“‘Unsure of his motive, I ignored his question.

“‘Be frank!’ he insisted. ‘Which organization are you from?’

“I took a copy of *The Watchtower* from my bag and showed it to him.

“‘I knew it!’ he exclaimed excitedly. Turning to his coworkers, he cried out: ‘Look! An angel has flattened a tire to send Jehovah’s Witnesses to us!’

“The man reached into his bag and pulled out a Bible and one of our tracts. He had studied with the Witnesses in another area but had lost contact with them when he moved to Mandalay. We started a Bi-

ble study with him on the spot. Later, some of his coworkers studied too.”

In 2005, four more missionaries arrived in Myanmar, this time from the Ministerial Training School (now called the Bible School for Single Brothers) in the Philippines. One of the brothers, Nelson Junio, faced a challenge common to many missionaries—homesickness. “I often cried and prayed before falling asleep,” he says. “Then a kindly brother showed me Hebrews 11:15, 16. It relates how Abraham and Sarah did not keep longing for their former home in Ur but kept moving forward in harmony with God’s purpose. After reading that scripture, I didn’t cry anymore. I began to view my assignment as my home.”

### **Good Examples Benefit Many**

In the first century, the apostle Paul counseled Timothy: “The things you heard from me . . . commit to faithful men, who, in turn, will be adequately qualified to teach others.” (2 Tim. 2:2) Taking this principle to heart, the missionaries worked to help the local congregations in Myanmar come into closer alignment with the theocratic procedures of Jehovah’s people worldwide.

For example, the missionaries observed that many local publishers taught their Bible students by having them repeat answers directly from the book—a method used in most Myanmar schools. “We patiently encouraged the publishers to use viewpoint questions to draw out the student’s thoughts and feelings,” says Joemar Ubiña. “The publishers readily applied the suggestion and became more effective teachers as a result.”



## I Can't Find "Jehovah's Kingdom"

.....  
**SOE LWIN**  
.....

**BORN** 1960

**BAPTIZED** 2000

**PROFILE** A former Buddhist who read about "Jehovah's Kingdom" and wanted to visit it.

◆ WHILE walking to work in the town of Tachileik, near the Thailand border, I picked up some *Watchtower* magazines that had been discarded along the road. The magazines spoke about wonderful blessings under Jehovah's Kingdom. I was a Buddhist and I had not heard of Jehovah, so I concluded that "Jehovah's Kingdom" must be a country in Africa. I looked for "Jehovah's Kingdom" in an atlas but could not find it. I asked other people, but they could not help me.

Later, I learned that a young man at my workplace was studying with Jehovah's Witnesses. I said to him, "Can you tell me where I can find Jehovah's Kingdom?" When I learned that Jehovah's Kingdom is a heavenly government that will bring Paradise to the earth, I was amazed and thrilled. I cut my hair, stopped chewing betel nut and abusing drugs, and left behind my Buddhist traditions. Now I am even more eager to live under Jehovah's Kingdom.—Matt. 25:34.

The missionaries also noticed that many congregations had only one elder or ministerial servant. Some of those appointed brothers, although faithful and hardworking, tended to deal with the flock in a very authoritative manner. Of course, the same human tendency must have existed in the first century, when the apostle Peter urged elders: “Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not . . . lording it over those who are God’s inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock.” (1 Pet. 5:2, 3) How could the missionaries help their brothers? “We worked to set a good example by being extra kind, gentle, and approachable,” says Benjamin Reyes. Their good examples gradually rubbed off. Many elders changed their approach and began caring for the flock in a more compassionate manner.

### **Improved Translation Brings Benefits**

For many years the brothers in Myanmar used a 19th-century vernacular Bible translated by one of Christendom’s missionaries with the help of Buddhist monks. This translation contains many obsolete Pali-language words and is very difficult to understand. So when the Myanmar-language *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* was released in 2008, the brothers were ecstatic. “The audience applauded for a long time, and some even wept for joy when they received their personal copy,” recalls Maurice Raj. “The new translation is clear, simple, and accurate. Even Buddhists find it easy to understand!” Soon after the translation was released, the number of Bible studies in the country increased by more than 40 percent.

Like many other languages, the Myanmar language comes in two forms—a *formal* style rooted in Pali and Sanskrit and a *colloquial* style used in everyday speech. Both styles are spoken and written. Most of our older publications used the formal style, which growing numbers of people now find difficult to understand. With this in mind, the branch recently began translating publications into everyday Myanmar, which most people easily understand.

These new publications have had an immediate impact. The Translation Department overseer, Than Htwe Oo, explains: “People used to say, ‘Your literature is of high quality, but I cannot understand it.’ Now their faces light up, and they start reading right away. Many exclaim, ‘This literature is

.....

Myanmar branch translation teams



so easy to understand!’” Even the commenting at congregation meetings has improved, since the audience now clearly understands what is written in our publications.

Currently, the Translation Department has 26 full-time translators working in three language teams—Myanmar, Hakha Chin, and Sgaw Kayin. Literature has also been translated into 11 other local languages.

### **Cyclone Nargis**

On May 2, 2008, Cyclone Nargis, a massive storm packing winds of 150 miles per hour, slammed into Myanmar, leaving a trail of death and destruction from the Ayeyarwady Delta to the Thailand border. The cyclone affected more than two million people and left some 140,000 either dead or missing.

Thousands of Jehovah’s Witnesses were impacted by the cyclone, yet amazingly none were harmed. Many survived by taking refuge in their newly constructed Kingdom Halls. In Bothingone, a coastal village in the Ayeyarwady Delta, 20 Witnesses as well as 80 other villagers perched for nine hours inside the roof cavity of their Kingdom Hall as floodwaters rose perilously close to the ceiling and then receded.

The branch office promptly dispatched a relief team to the worst-affected region at the mouth of the delta. Traveling through desolate terrain that was littered with corpses, the team reached the village with food, water, and medicine. They were the first relief team to reach the area. After giving the supplies to the local brothers and sisters, the team

encouraged them with Scriptural talks and handed out Bibles and Bible literature, since all their belongings had been swept away in the cyclone.

To coordinate the huge relief effort, the branch office set up Disaster Relief Committees in Yangon and Patheingyi. These committees organized hundreds of volunteers to distribute water, rice, and other basic supplies to cyclone victims. They also arranged for mobile construction teams to rebuild Witness homes that had been damaged or destroyed by the cyclone.

One of the relief volunteers, Tobias Lund, relates: “My wife, Sofia, and I found 16-year-old May Sin Oo, the only publisher in her family, drying her Bible in the sun among the ruins of her family home. She smiled when she saw us, but a tear was trickling down her cheek. Before long, one of our mobile construction teams arrived with hard hats, power tools, and building materials and began building the family a brand-new home. The neighbors were amazed! People squatted for days around the site, which became the main attraction in the area. Onlookers exclaimed: ‘We have never seen anything like this! Your organization is so united and loving. We too would like to become Jehovah’s Witnesses.’ May Sin Oo’s parents and siblings are now attending meetings, and the whole family is making fine spiritual progress.”

The relief work continued for months. The brothers distributed tons of relief supplies and repaired or rebuilt 160 homes and 8 Kingdom Halls. Cyclone Nargis brought tragedy and hardship to Myanmar, but its storm clouds laid bare something





May Sin Oo outside her house while it was being reconstructed



A relief crew stands with Brother and Sister Htun Khin in front of their rebuilt home after the devastation of Cyclone Nargis

precious—the bonds of love that unite God’s people and glorify Jehovah’s name.

### **An Unforgettable Event**

Early in 2007, the Myanmar branch office received a thrilling letter. “The Governing Body asked us to organize an international convention in Yangon,” says Jon Sharp, who with his wife, Janet, had arrived at the branch the preceding year. “The 2009 convention would include hundreds of foreign delegates from ten different countries—something unprecedented in our branch history!”

Jon continues: “Dozens of questions came to our minds: ‘What local venue could hold the large gathering? Would publishers from remote areas attend? Where would they stay? How would they travel? Could they afford to feed their families? Also, what about the Myanmar authorities? Would they even permit such a gathering?’ The obstacles seemed endless. Nevertheless, we recalled Jesus’ words: ‘The things impossible with men are possible with God.’ (Luke 18:27) So, trusting in God, we started planning in earnest.

“We soon located a suitable venue—Myanmar’s National Indoor Stadium, an 11,000-seat, air-conditioned facility near the center of the city. Immediately, we applied to the authorities for use of the venue. However, months later and just weeks before the convention, our application had still not been approved. Then we received devastating news: The stadium management had scheduled a kick-boxing tournament at the venue on the same dates as our convention! With no time to find an alternate venue, we patiently negotiated with the event pro-



Branch Committee, from left to right: Kyaw Win, Hla Aung, Jon Sharp, Donald Dewar, and Maurice Raj

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moter and dozens of officials to resolve the impasse. Finally, the promoter admitted that he could postpone the tournament but only if the 16 professional kickboxers booked for the event would alter their contracts. When the kickboxers heard that Jehovah's Witnesses wanted the venue for a special convention, every one of them agreed to the change."

"However," says Kyaw Win, another Branch Committee member, "we still needed government approval to use the stadium, and our application had already been rejected four times! After praying to Jehovah, we met with the general who controlled every stadium in Myanmar. It was just two weeks before the convention and the first time that we had been granted access to this level of the national

government. To our delight, he approved our request!”

Unaware of this ongoing drama, thousands of delegates from all over Myanmar and overseas were making their way to Yangon by plane, train, boat, bus, truck—and on foot. Many Myanmar families had saved for months to attend. Scores of brothers grew crops, others raised pigs, some sewed clothes, a few panned for gold. Many had never been to a large city or had ever seen a foreigner before.

Over 1,300 delegates from northern Myanmar converged on the Mandalay Railway Station to catch a special train chartered to carry them to Yangon. One group from the Naga Hills had traveled for six days, carrying on their backs two publishers whose makeshift wheelchairs had collapsed early in the trip. Hundreds camped out on the station platform, talking, laughing, and singing Kingdom songs. “Everyone was excited,” says Pum Cin Khai, who helped care for transportation. “We supplied them with food, water, and sleeping mats. When the train finally arrived, elders helped each group to their assigned coach. Finally, a loud-speaker blared: ‘The Jehovah’s Witnesses’ train is leaving!’ I scanned the platform for stragglers and leaped aboard!”

Meanwhile, in Yangon, nearly 700 foreign delegates were settling into their hotels. Where, though, would the more than 3,000 Myanmar delegates be accommodated? “Jehovah opened the hearts of the Witnesses in Yangon to look after their brothers and sisters,” says Myint Lwin, who worked in the Rooming Department. “Some families took in up



The 2009 “Keep on the Watch!” International Convention was faith strengthening to the brothers and gave a tremendous witness in Yangon

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to 15 visitors. They paid to register them with the authorities and provided their guests with breakfast and transportation to and from the stadium each day. Dozens of delegates stayed at local Kingdom Halls; hundreds more slept at a large factory. Even so, despite this massive effort, some 500 delegates still needed accommodations. We explained our problem to the stadium management, and they allowed the delegates to sleep at the stadium—an unprecedented step!”

**“Jehovah opened the hearts of the Witnesses in Yangon to look after their brothers and sisters”**



Since the stadium was in poor condition, more than 350 volunteers worked for ten days to get it ready for the convention. “We repaired the plumbing, electrical, and air-conditioning systems and then painted and cleaned the whole facility,” says Htay Win, the convention overseer. “This huge amount of work resulted in a fine witness. The army officer in charge of the stadium exclaimed: ‘Thank you! Thank you! I pray to God that you people will use my stadium every year!’”

Over 5,000 people attended the convention, held December 3-6, 2009. On the final day, many delegates wore traditional dress, creating a dazzling display of colorful attire. “All were hugging one another and crying—even before the program started!” said one sister. After Gerrit Lösch of the Governing Body said the final prayer, the audience clapped



**“Before the convention, we had only heard about our international brotherhood. Now we have experienced it!”**



and waved for several minutes. One 86-year-old sister summed up the feelings of many, “I felt like I was in the new world!”

Many government officials were also impressed. “This gathering is unique,” said one official. “No one is swearing, smoking, or chewing betel nut. Different ethnic groups are united. Never have I seen a group like this!” Maurice Raj relates, “Even the senior military commander in Yangon told us that he and his colleagues had never before seen such an impressive event.”

Many delegates agreed that they had witnessed something special. One local brother declared: “Before the convention, we had only heard about our international brotherhood. Now we have experienced it! We will never forget the love our brothers showed us.”

## **“White for Harvesting”**

Almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus told his disciples: “Lift up your eyes and view the fields, that they are white for harvesting.” (John 4:35) The same can be said of Myanmar today. Currently, the country has 3,790 publishers, a ratio of 1 publisher to every 15,931 inhabitants—truly a vast field for harvest! And with 8,005 people attending the 2012 Memorial, the potential for growth is great!

As further evidence, consider Rakhine State, a coastal region bordering Bangladesh that has nearly four million inhabitants but not one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. “Each month, we receive many letters from people in this region requesting literature and spiritual help,” says Maurice Raj. “Also, growing numbers of Buddhists in Myanmar, especially young people, are expressing interest in the





truth. Hence, we keep begging the Master to send out more workers into the harvest.”—Matt. 9:37, 38.

**“We keep begging the Master to send out more workers into the harvest”**

Nearly 100 years ago, two intrepid pioneers brought the good news to this mostly Buddhist country. Since then, thousands of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds have taken their stand for the truth. Despite violent conflicts, political upheaval, widespread poverty, religious persecution, international isolation, and natural disasters, Jehovah’s Witnesses in Myanmar have shown unwavering devotion to Jehovah God and his Son, Jesus Christ. They remain determined to preach the Kingdom good news and “to endure fully and be long-suffering with joy.”—Col. 1:11.





*THE Watch Tower* of January 1, 1913, echoed popular sentiment when it quoted American journalist Herbert Kaufman: “‘Impossibility’ is now an old-fashioned word . . .

Almost every dream of the past is a reality today.” The year 1913 dawned on a world optimistic about its future.

One reason for this optimism was the advance of technology. In the United States, for example, the Ford Motor Company opened a new factory in Highland Park, Michigan. Almost overnight, the price of a car fell dramatically, bringing the possibility of car ownership to millions. How was the drop in price achieved? The new factory featured an assembly line. This advancement allowed Ford to assemble its popular Model T automobile in a fraction of the time previously required, thus lowering the cost.



# One Hundred Years Ago **1913**

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Transcontinental Tour of  
Pastor Russell and the International  
Bible Students at Hot Springs,  
Arkansas, June 4, 1913



PASTOR RUSSELL AND SPECIAL TRAIN  
STUDENTS AT HOT SPRINGS, ARK. 6. 4. 1913



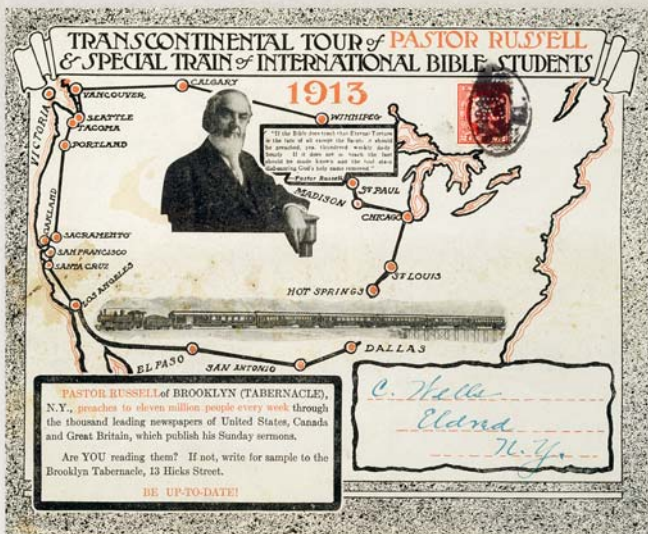
Jehovah's people were also optimistic but for different reasons. The Bible Students had long heralded 1914 as a pivotal year in human history, and their expectations ran high. Their enthusiastic activity showed that they were not slowing down as that year approached.

In June 1913 a series of conventions began with a one-day convention in Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A. For the next four weeks, a chartered train carried a happy group of over 200 brothers and sisters across the western United States and Canada. At each convention, newcomers were given the opportunity to request additional information. Thousands responded, and interested ones were later contacted by the Bible Students.

During 1913 the Brooklyn headquarters staff was busy producing the "Photo-Drama of Creation." This was an eight-hour program of recorded Bible talks and music that were synchronized with colored glass slides and motion pictures. The Bible Students hoped that the "Photo-Drama" would be used to reach millions of interested ones. Although at the time there were only about 5,100 active proclaimers of the good news, their stated purpose was that the program "be given as wide publicity throughout the world as possible."

What was in store for 1914? How would the "Photo-Drama" be received? What would happen in the fall, at the end of the Gentile Times? The Bible Students eagerly awaited the answers to these questions, confident of Jehovah's backing.

The impending Great War, later called World War I, would rob the world of its optimism. Technological advancement would not be the answer to the problems that people faced. The next year was to be one of great change for the Bible Students—and for the entire world.



## Conventions in 1913

### In the United States

Pertle Springs, Mo.	June 1-8
Hot Springs, Ark.	June 1-8
Los Angeles, Calif.	June 11-15
San Francisco, Calif.	June 14-16
Madison, Wis.	June 29-July 6
Springfield, Mass.	July 13-20
Asheville, N.C.	July 20-27

### International

Toronto, Canada	July 20-27
London, England	August 1-4
Glasgow, Scotland	August 23-24

A postcard:  
Transcontinental  
Tour of  
Pastor Russell

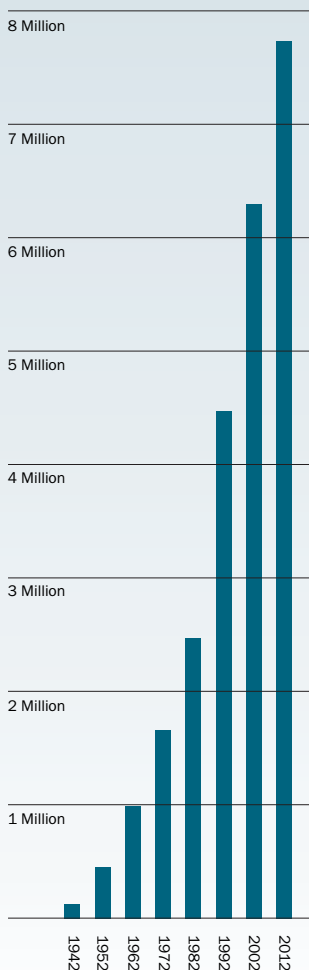
# 2012

## Grand Totals

Branches of Jehovah's Witnesses:	96
Number of Lands Reporting:	239
Total Congregations:	111,719
Worldwide Memorial Attendance:	19,013,343
Memorial Partakers Worldwide:	12,604
Peak of Publishers in Kingdom Service:	7,782,346
Average Publishers Preaching Each Month:	7,538,994
Percentage of Increase Over 2011:	1.9
Total Number Baptized:	268,777
Average Auxiliary Pioneer Publishers Each Month:	416,993
Average Pioneer Publishers Each Month:	950,022
Total Hours Spent in Field:	1,748,697,447
Average Home Bible Studies Each Month:	8,759,988

During the 2012 service year, Jehovah's Witnesses spent over \$184 million in caring for special pioneers, missionaries, and traveling overseers in their field service assignments. ■ Worldwide, a total of 21,612 ordained ministers staff the branch facilities. All are members of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses.

## Peak of Publishers



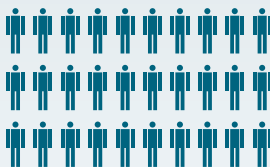
Peak publishers worldwide

**7,782,346**

Population of Switzerland

**7,664,000**

Average baptized  
each hour: **30**



New congregations  
formed each day: **6**



Total hours spent  
in the field ministry:

**1,748,697,447 Hours**  
**=199,486 Years**

# 2012 SERVICE YEAR REPORT OF

Letter and number following each country's name indicates

Country or Territory	Population	2012 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Pub- lisher to	2012 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 2011
Albania (D-11)	3,204,000	4,791	669	4,635	5
American Samoa (N-26)	69,543	222	313	204	1
Andorra (F-4)	85,000	179	475	164	
Angola (N-6)	19,082,000	91,587	208	86,802	9
Anguilla (O-32)	15,000	73	205	65	12
Antigua (P-32)	89,000	487	183	475	-2
Argentina (N-36)	40,542,337	144,134	281	142,435	1
Armenia (G-9)	3,274,300	11,073	296	11,019	
Aruba (Q-29)	103,504	899	115	877	6
Australia (O-19)	22,736,804	66,023	344	64,884	1
Austria (F-5)	8,394,000	20,923	401	20,795	
Azerbaijan (G-9)	9,235,100	1,118	8,260	1,064	10
Azores (G-1)	239,773	761	315	749	
Bahamas (G-35)	351,404	1,651	213	1,602	-1
Bangladesh (J-14)	148,692,000	168	885,071	161	15
Barbados (Q-33)	274,000	2,527	108	2,484	
Belarus (E-7)	9,595,000	5,145	1,865	4,965	4
Belgium (E-4)	11,108,871	25,311	439	24,131	1
Belize (H-33)	325,000	2,252	144	2,198	2
Benin (L-4)	9,100,000	11,005	827	10,545	3
Bermuda (F-36)	65,194	523	125	462	1
Bolivia (M-36)	10,320,730	22,703	455	21,957	6
Bonaire (Q-30)	15,666	109	144	103	10
Bosnia and Herzegovina (C-10)	3,760,000	1,208	3,113	1,191	-1
Botswana (O-6)	2,033,000	2,121	959	2,045	6
Brazil (L-37)	193,946,886	756,455	256	737,951	2
Britain (E-3)	60,704,600	135,654	447	131,629	1
Bulgaria (F-7)	7,364,570	1,993	3,695	1,925	5
Burkina Faso (K-3)	16,469,000	1,581	10,417	1,518	7
Burundi (M-7)	8,749,000	11,136	786	10,511	7
Cambodia (K-16)	14,138,000	598	23,642	546	18
Cameroon (L-5)	20,042,400	36,827	544	35,604	1
Canada (C-31)	33,476,688	114,792	292	112,710	1
Cape Verde (K-1)	523,568	1,973	265	1,936	4
Cayman Islands (H-34)	55,456	238	233	221	
Central African Republic (L-6)	4,487,000	2,578	1,740	2,474	
Chad (K-6)	11,525,000	668	17,253	609	4
Chile (M-35)	16,572,475	69,795	237	72,420	2
Chuuk (L-21)	48,651	53	918	46	7
Colombia (J-35)	47,551,000	156,143	305	152,280	2
Congo, Dem. Republic of (M-6)	69,921,000	177,556	394	163,349	1
Congo, Republic of (M-5)	4,239,000	5,810	730	5,526	4
Cook Islands (O-26)	14,959	186	80	176	-1
Costa Rica (J-34)	4,799,000	27,821	172	27,172	3
Côte d'Ivoire (L-3)	20,675,000	9,253	2,234	8,786	4
Croatia (B-9)	4,403,000	5,589	788	5,552	
Cuba (G-34)	11,240,841	95,441	118	94,810	2
Curaçao (Q-30)	150,563	1,859	81	1,811	3
Cyprus (H-7)	885,600	2,481	357	2,439	1



# JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WORLDWIDE

the country's location on maps following this chart.

2011 Av. Pubs.	2012 No. Bptzd.	Av. Aux. Pio. Pubs.	Av. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Attend- ance
4,412	259	471	1,032	72	1,746,488	6,218	12,084
201	3	12	25	3	51,751	357	727
164	2	10	13	3	32,162	112	337
79,960	6,246	4,309	9,509	1,228	23,008,408	355,704	441,602
58	6	1	4	2	12,297	97	290
485	10	32	43	7	102,399	554	1,329
141,301	4,682	9,639	16,359	1,961	33,202,974	128,705	309,212
11,010	428	845	2,205	133	3,401,482	7,660	23,201
830	34	50	53	11	162,263	998	2,600
64,498	1,424	3,098	4,627	801	11,205,439	27,495	115,533
20,792	381	956	1,245	293	3,555,710	10,987	34,076
963	53	122	230	11	404,848	1,741	2,659
749	25	42	79	15	173,789	900	1,780
1,616	43	92	188	27	366,218	2,026	3,948
140	8	13	39	4	58,118	337	535
2,492	55	155	189	30	459,448	2,304	6,101
4,769	215	463	854	67	1,545,424	4,105	8,985
23,942	396	1,102	1,385	373	3,781,768	9,832	44,136
2,151	117	115	386	56	634,091	3,805	7,808
10,205	513	733	1,305	168	2,956,142	24,652	38,117
457	19	26	68	5	115,410	351	962
20,770	964	2,093	3,444	266	6,715,772	36,586	73,688
94	2	5	10	2	26,377	153	346
1,199	37	91	198	16	346,656	637	2,111
1,936	100	126	216	46	489,692	3,878	5,790
720,896	30,989	39,365	67,430	11,127	149,554,562	803,959	1,663,221
130,808	2,556	6,463	10,712	1,544	22,603,448	57,322	225,351
1,834	62	103	459	43	681,255	2,610	5,056
1,425	75	101	227	41	460,417	3,026	5,553
9,852	780	683	1,440	221	3,412,643	28,307	38,377
462	37	22	276	10	290,119	1,569	1,736
35,222	1,586	1,739	3,050	324	8,082,532	65,920	92,238
111,970	1,940	6,526	10,677	1,373	22,335,732	50,538	187,704
1,865	80	123	342	35	567,888	4,173	7,957
222	5	12	27	3	51,519	183	549
2,472	95	142	258	53	618,043	5,903	15,450
583	22	29	63	17	161,391	1,050	4,069
71,128	2,658	5,229	9,260	881	17,975,234	66,888	172,849
43		3	11	3	17,580	135	266
148,767	7,404	7,386	19,796	2,431	36,058,715	223,610	490,538
161,298	10,668	6,605	15,122	3,288	37,494,752	456,033	1,001,518
5,312	312	312	368	76	1,359,639	17,892	26,396
177	9	12	17	3	39,169	187	542
26,264	758	1,483	2,438	436	5,656,615	34,437	68,409
8,483	515	671	1,258	232	2,789,064	24,461	42,661
5,556	110	356	481	66	1,179,381	2,488	9,367
93,254	3,470	7,008	8,203	1,403	19,189,315	171,184	225,545
1,757	68	97	142	24	338,255	2,107	4,751
2,403	91	151	260	34	534,917	1,652	4,795

Country or Territory	Population	2012 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Pub- lisher to	2012 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 2011
Czech Republic (E-5)	10,512,208	15,456	680	15,352	
Denmark (D-4)	5,550,000	14,411	385	14,281	1
Dominica (P-33)	67,000	463	145	422	-1
Dominican Republic (O-29)	10,088,598	35,505	284	34,132	4
Ecuador (K-34)	15,069,000	77,323	195	76,587	4
El Salvador (H-33)	6,267,000	38,359	163	37,721	2
Equatorial Guinea (L-5)	720,400	1,450	497	1,359	6
Estonia (D-6)	1,294,236	4,235	306	4,152	-1
Ethiopia (L-8)	87,000,000	9,502	9,156	9,300	2
Falkland Islands (Q-37)	2,841	13	219	12	20
Faroe Islands (C-2)	49,000	118	415	108	-11
Fiji (N-24)	860,806	2,877	299	2,734	3
Finland (C-7)	5,401,267	18,795	287	18,710	-1
France (F-4)	63,128,000	124,029	509	121,331	1
French Guiana (J-37)	236,250	2,200	107	2,138	3
Gabon (M-5)	1,540,000	3,713	415	3,560	2
Gambia (K-2)	1,728,000	206	8,388	197	5
Georgia (G-9)	4,497,600	18,248	246	17,577	2
Germany (E-5)	82,302,000	164,871	499	162,705	
Ghana (L-3)	25,626,845	113,896	225	109,085	4
Gibraltar (G-3)	29,000	118	246	113	2
Greece (G-6)	10,787,690	29,098	371	29,003	
Greenland (A-38)	57,000	157	363	154	-1
Grenada (Q-32)	104,000	598	174	547	-1
Guadeloupe (P-32)	408,090	8,350	49	8,089	-3
Guam (K-20)	159,914	765	209	748	1
Guatemala (H-33)	15,169,000	34,144	444	33,017	8
Guinea (K-2)	10,504,000	749	14,024	692	3
Guinea-Bissau (K-2)	1,515,000	137	11,058	123	3
Guyana (J-37)	758,000	2,756	275	2,680	5
Haiti (O-28)	9,993,000	18,338	545	17,403	6
Honduras (H-33)	7,925,000	21,412	370	20,122	3
Hong Kong (J-17)	7,136,300	5,407	1,320	5,262	3
Hungary (A-10)	9,939,000	23,161	429	22,593	-1
Iceland (B-1)	320,000	377	849	356	4
India (J-12)	1,224,239,000	36,319	33,708	34,995	5
Indonesia (M-17)	237,600,000	23,539	10,094	22,862	3
Ireland (E-2)	6,397,752	6,085	1,051	5,930	2
Israel (H-8)	7,763,000	1,379	5,629	1,348	3
Italy (G-5)	61,100,000	247,251	247	245,326	1
Jamaica (H-34)	2,706,500	12,088	224	11,838	
Japan (G-19)	126,536,000	217,154	583	216,692	
Kazakhstan (F-11)	16,793,600	17,704	949	17,175	
Kenya (M-8)	41,800,000	25,417	1,645	24,223	3
Kiribati (M-24)	102,697	129	796	120	5
Korea, Republic of (G-18)	48,184,000	100,203	481	99,970	1
Kosovo (D-11)	2,350,000	216	10,880	207	5
Kosrae (L-22)	6,616	22	301	17	6
Kyrgyzstan (G-12)	5,571,200	4,927	1,131	4,804	1
Latvia (D-6)	2,050,000	2,376	863	2,327	
Lebanon (H-8)	4,143,101	3,670	1,129	3,581	1
Lesotho (P-7)	2,196,000	3,844	571	3,648	-1
Liberia (L-2)	3,994,122	6,340	630	5,728	2
Liechtenstein (F-4)	36,000	88	409	85	5
Lithuania (D-6)	3,053,800	3,172	963	3,095	2

2011 Av. Pubs.	2012 No. Bptzd.	Av. Aux. Pio. Pubs.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Attendance
15,363	270	797	801	233	2,419,381	6,716	26,287
14,171	227	724	752	190	2,278,065	5,164	21,807
425	3	21	59	10	110,644	740	1,306
32,876	1,849	2,470	6,129	473	10,450,803	69,012	113,299
73,500	4,799	5,199	12,158	925	20,636,601	134,494	246,958
37,081	1,073	2,127	3,069	673	7,738,095	43,691	93,642
1,284	83	122	173	12	409,575	4,490	5,499
4,179	102	216	451	53	821,067	2,713	7,083
9,079	531	772	1,939	195	3,173,117	7,203	23,762
10		1		1	2,009	11	29
121		8	20	4	25,986	71	168
2,667	249	195	351	69	659,873	4,476	9,765
18,851	247	808	1,854	304	3,022,994	10,575	26,459
120,172	2,300	7,441	12,458	1,578	25,937,044	54,558	213,245
2,079	117	150	250	35	574,904	4,548	7,518
3,504	137	232	467	34	1,033,098	8,339	11,008
188	3	14	35	4	64,263	412	571
17,180	867	1,067	2,622	203	4,205,282	9,226	32,576
162,894	2,676	7,113	10,565	2,237	27,404,939	74,466	265,407
104,718	5,370	4,392	9,942	1,594	24,825,933	329,388	290,127
111	5	6	14	2	24,789	36	191
29,006	673	1,623	3,601	381	6,268,911	13,333	49,308
155	3	7	34	6	36,402	132	303
555	11	35	60	9	130,313	679	1,542
8,311	232	436	576	131	1,524,620	8,830	19,292
738	15	34	121	8	187,517	908	2,021
30,512	1,388	1,983	3,817	670	7,999,415	43,634	89,231
670	30	42	112	18	226,572	1,799	3,479
120	3	6	33	2	55,409	384	574
2,562	97	176	330	44	617,165	4,177	10,241
16,412	1,445	1,138	2,242	242	4,626,681	37,573	72,246
19,482	479	1,167	3,154	352	5,751,339	32,166	63,096
5,126	727	438	882	67	1,554,548	6,718	9,638
22,740	683	1,206	1,802	289	4,451,586	13,513	43,271
342	7	20	50	7	77,769	276	691
33,182	1,992	2,570	3,599	462	7,435,854	40,085	96,181
22,296	1,170	1,609	2,196	392	5,435,852	27,740	54,056
5,817	137	311	689	114	1,271,250	3,254	11,282
1,312	44	87	131	21	312,175	982	2,558
243,454	5,250	17,112	29,700	3,045	56,925,042	119,785	452,062
11,866	378	611	1,465	196	2,425,637	14,094	35,350
217,352	2,787	18,187	65,245	3,055	81,447,987	168,138	314,111
17,216	815	1,309	2,917	228	4,747,169	13,509	31,186
23,510	1,303	1,009	3,240	566	6,377,165	41,684	60,162
114	11	23	21	2	48,018	339	380
99,103	2,287	9,833	36,361	1,390	44,387,047	78,689	140,976
197	10	12	74	5	101,160	433	713
16	2	1	6	1	7,452	55	92
4,760	231	401	895	68	1,400,773	5,086	10,346
2,337	64	137	326	36	588,914	2,351	3,869
3,558	88	179	141	64	543,637	1,821	6,587
3,671	163	172	395	82	855,315	6,222	9,575
5,598	289	247	675	113	1,641,694	19,048	73,223
81		4	4	1	10,998	48	148
3,027	125	209	425	53	808,327	2,733	5,469

Country or Territory	Population	2012 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Pub- lisher to	2012 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 2011
Luxembourg (E-4)	507,000	2,097	242	2,013	-1
Macao (J-17)	557,400	255	2,186	239	12
Macedonia (D-11)	2,061,000	1,346	1,531	1,329	
Madagascar (O-9)	21,975,560	26,503	829	25,779	6
Madeira (H-1)	272,950	1,152	237	1,140	
Malawi (N-8)	15,000,000	80,439	186	78,225	3
Malaysia (L-16)	29,322,000	4,295	6,827	4,124	6
Mali (K-3)	15,370,000	286	53,741	274	2
Malta (G-5)	417,000	580	719	570	1
Marshall Islands (L-23)	53,158	192	277	178	-2
Martinique (P-32)	402,499	4,787	84	4,711	2
Mauritius (O-10)	1,257,900	1,751	718	1,733	2
Mayotte (N-9)	209,530	114	1,838	101	40
Mexico (G-31)	116,260,000	772,628	150	749,585	3
Moldova (F-7)	3,573,000	20,294	176	20,020	
Mongolia (F-15)	2,756,000	339	8,130	317	8
Montenegro (D-10)	631,490	243	2,599	233	-2
Montserrat (P-32)	5,000	21	238	16	33
Mozambique (O-7)	24,500,000	52,695	465	47,906	5
Myanmar (J-15)	60,380,000	3,790	15,931	3,705	2
Namibia (O-5)	2,327,000	2,040	1,141	1,891	6
Nauru (M-23)	9,378	18	521	15	15
Nepal (H-13)	26,620,809	1,738	15,317	1,665	12
Netherlands (E-4)	16,743,662	30,226	554	29,292	
Nevis (P-32)	12,355	57	217	53	
New Caledonia (O-23)	256,798	1,978	130	1,936	1
New Zealand (Q-24)	4,440,939	13,969	318	13,742	-1
Nicaragua (H-33)	5,962,000	24,480	244	23,453	4
Niger (K-4)	16,069,000	305	52,685	290	
Nigeria (L-4)	163,115,000	344,342	474	312,251	3
Niue (O-26)	1,398	25	56	23	-4
Norfolk Island (P-23)	2,169	8	271	7	-22
Norway (C-4)	4,883,000	11,141	438	10,959	2
Pakistan (H-12)	180,874,975	880	205,540	842	-6
Palau (L-19)	21,032	84	250	80	3
Palestinian Territory (H-8)	4,268,000	77	55,429	64	8
Panama (J-34)	3,629,000	15,160	239	14,242	6
Papua New Guinea (M-20)	7,013,829	4,014	1,747	3,770	-1
Paraguay (M-37)	7,136,610	9,016	792	8,781	3
Peru (L-35)	29,734,000	117,245	254	110,651	2
Philippines (K-18)	95,880,024	181,236	529	178,467	3
Pohnpei (L-22)	35,981	92	391	81	-14
Poland (E-6)	38,081,740	125,485	303	124,292	
Portugal (G-2)	9,769,071	49,450	198	49,049	
Puerto Rico (O-31)	3,749,000	26,274	143	25,827	
Réunion (O-10)	839,480	2,927	287	2,887	1
Rodrigues (O-11)	40,440	42	963	38	3
Romania (F-6)	21,388,000	40,147	533	39,803	
Rota (K-20)	2,527	16	158	13	8
Russia (C-15)	142,958,000	168,618	848	162,748	1
Rwanda (M-7)	11,689,696	22,734	514	20,604	8
Saba (O-32)	1,500	10	150	9	-10
Saint Barthélemy (O-32)	9,057	25	362	23	100
Saint Eustatius (P-32)	3,500	24	146	22	5

2011 Av. Pubs.	2012 No. Bptzd.	Av. Aux. Pio. Pubs.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Atten- dance
2,034	38	106	122	31	358,785	1,116	3,877
213		13	53	4	86,842	349	605
1,334	57	82	197	24	376,332	1,203	3,284
24,208	1,787	1,479	4,087	598	7,676,817	67,405	115,958
1,138	33	72	94	17	247,374	846	2,057
75,647	3,218	3,350	6,039	1,310	14,963,619	97,941	276,484
3,874	212	244	932	116	1,344,041	7,207	11,250
269	13	16	50	7	100,825	687	988
565	12	28	46	7	101,795	214	1,042
182	9	13	20	3	46,274	433	881
4,636	158	325	529	58	1,121,779	5,378	10,822
1,703	50	83	121	26	321,724	2,025	3,976
72	2	3	22	1	29,141	175	258
724,690	23,288	33,131	109,539	13,040	179,153,281	1,052,854	2,224,500
20,053	652	1,071	2,005	249	3,939,786	14,395	38,831
294	26	34	135	6	154,840	754	1,107
237	4	31	34	4	72,273	158	616
12		1	5	1	6,670	46	72
45,684	3,181	1,699	4,287	1,069	9,615,471	68,954	256,493
3,630	140	103	516	69	793,929	3,937	8,005
1,791	133	123	193	41	471,573	3,604	6,190
13	2	1	2	1	4,587	29	125
1,493	121	119	437	23	547,139	3,346	4,912
29,417	495	1,259	1,410	368	4,434,868	11,266	51,474
53	2	2	4	1	10,170	54	176
1,920	63	135	157	26	419,945	2,406	6,204
13,832	269	696	1,074	186	2,515,178	8,119	26,423
22,633	738	1,224	3,060	371	5,994,971	41,798	84,605
289	15	17	45	6	84,431	448	961
303,837	12,338	10,875	32,969	5,605	63,438,818	662,858	673,264
24		1	6	1	7,526	28	68
9		1		1	1,193	3	14
10,740	233	539	719	164	1,735,432	5,018	17,548
897	42	39	100	18	190,647	1,149	4,075
78	3	10	15	1	24,826	135	270
59	2	4	3	2	9,654	49	147
13,466	476	859	1,878	297	3,564,968	21,767	46,187
3,806	147	189	367	67	810,235	5,091	28,909
8,557	380	540	1,177	171	2,285,471	12,358	18,492
108,264	5,022	7,762	24,466	1,274	35,297,439	185,085	357,158
173,449	8,505	9,435	31,560	3,121	40,645,650	206,540	547,408
94	3	9	14	1	24,082	173	251
124,832	2,420	5,952	7,508	1,487	18,001,901	50,800	206,964
48,966	1,141	3,043	3,459	643	9,679,327	28,829	94,980
25,814	606	1,521	2,932	330	5,494,867	17,126	59,480
2,857	82	185	296	33	645,432	2,197	6,159
37	4	2	4	1	9,048	55	89
39,635	1,119	1,944	3,410	540	7,355,261	24,602	81,592
12		1	3	1	5,206	31	43
161,324	5,857	11,704	28,021	2,445	46,152,714	122,936	287,341
19,041	1,809	1,629	3,558	487	7,766,659	52,123	69,582
10	1	1	1	1	1,413	11	35
		2	2	1	5,196	22	73
21	2	1	2	1	5,605	32	84

Country or Territory	Population	2012 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Pub- lisher to	2012 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 2011
Saint Helena (N-3)	4,000	121	33	117	6
Saint Kitts (O-32)	40,000	210	190	202	5
Saint Lucia (Q-33)	174,000	728	239	711	7
Saint Maarten (O-32)	41,000	343	120	311	1
Saint Martin (O-32)	37,461	345	109	299	100
Saint Pierre and Miquelon (D-37)	6,314	15	421	14	
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines (Q-32)	110,000	371	296	355	2
Saipan (K-20)	48,220	222	217	212	-2
Samoa (N-25)	187,820	497	378	450	13
San Marino (F-5)	32,000	200	160	199	3
São Tomé and Príncipe (M-4)	183,176	659	278	634	8
Senegal (K-2)	12,434,000	1,155	10,765	1,116	1
Serbia (C-11)	8,118,146	3,843	2,112	3,816	
Seychelles (M-9)	88,211	337	262	327	2
Sierra Leone (L-2)	5,696,000	2,030	2,806	1,840	3
Slovakia (F-6)	5,445,324	11,184	487	11,094	-1
Slovenia (B-8)	2,030,000	2,004	1,013	1,983	
Solomon Islands (M-22)	584,578	1,790	327	1,717	-1
South Africa (P-6)	50,520,000	92,321	547	89,929	2
South Sudan (L-7)	10,314,021	1,253	8,231	1,103	100
Spain (G-3)	46,077,000	110,651	416	107,986	1
Sri Lanka (L-13)	20,860,000	5,248	3,975	5,132	4
Sudan (K-7)	33,419,625	658	50,790	495	-69
Suriname (J-37)	539,912	2,620	206	2,536	3
Swaziland (P-7)	1,205,000	3,134	384	2,938	2
Sweden (B-6)	9,522,998	22,380	426	22,043	
Switzerland (F-4)	7,664,000	18,251	420	17,696	1
Tahiti (M-27)	271,000	2,789	97	2,700	7
Taiwan (J-17)	23,276,000	8,577	2,714	8,366	6
Tanzania (M-8)	46,229,000	16,476	2,806	14,478	3
Thailand (K-15)	67,092,000	3,631	18,478	3,508	5
Timor-Leste (N-18)	1,175,880	214	5,495	194	9
Tinian (K-20)	3,136	15	209	12	-20
Togo (L-4)	6,155,000	17,429	353	16,612	3
Tonga (O-25)	106,146	233	456	225	
Trinidad & Tobago (R-33)	1,351,000	9,373	144	9,216	1
Turkey (G-8)	74,000,000	2,204	33,575	2,171	3
Turks and Caicos (N-29)	39,832	332	120	302	8
Tuvalu (M-24)	9,847	75	131	62	-2
Uganda (L-7)	34,509,000	5,924	5,825	5,691	7
Ukraine (E-7)	45,561,000	150,840	302	149,199	
United States of America (E-32)	315,800,438	1,203,642	262	1,156,150	1
Uruguay (O-37)	3,286,314	11,690	281	11,386	-1
Vanuatu (N-23)	246,162	564	436	492	9
Venezuela (J-36)	28,946,101	129,310	224	124,670	3
Virgin Islands, British (O-31)	13,000	272	48	264	4
Virgin Islands, U.S. (O-31)	109,000	640	170	615	
Wallis & Futuna Islands (N-25)	13,936	88	158	61	2
Yap (L-19)	11,376	27	421	25	4
Zambia (N-7)	13,883,577	162,370	86	156,898	3
Zimbabwe (O-7)	12,759,565	39,238	325	38,637	2
30 Other Lands		29,500		27,388	11.9
Grand Total (239 Lands)		7,782,346		7,538,994	1.9

2011 Av. Pubs.	2012 No. Bptzd.	Av. Aux. Pio. Pubs.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Atten- dance
110	3	4	1	3	12,335	79	288
192	3	12	32	4	55,995	318	792
665	29	45	106	10	186,375	1,261	2,196
308	17	17	32	5	66,545	419	1,126
		25	7	5	42,311	440	905
14		2	3	1	4,763	9	23
347	13	29	51	8	98,225	526	1,124
217	10	16	39	2	68,120	384	512
399	36	26	87	11	131,899	676	1,707
193		14	25	2	52,425	105	334
588	37	44	127	10	225,798	2,290	2,813
1,100	36	65	129	25	307,622	1,803	2,580
3,810	112	292	522	59	1,014,165	2,207	8,271
321	12	17	21	4	62,362	370	871
1,793	97	108	228	35	510,919	4,265	7,854
11,181	173	505	396	159	1,527,344	3,453	20,709
1,987	41	103	228	29	454,479	1,041	3,121
1,727	83	71	224	48	364,247	1,850	8,409
88,023	3,886	4,455	9,022	1,892	19,427,931	121,466	217,952
	66	44	173	34	321,329	2,766	4,678
107,405	2,432	7,690	12,293	1,521	25,926,712	60,107	196,960
4,951	295	364	574	91	1,176,332	7,194	13,581
1,590	19	30	67	17	138,680	855	1,569
2,464	214	229	239	51	583,994	4,527	8,121
2,891	189	140	264	90	649,370	4,140	7,496
22,052	344	998	1,855	318	3,567,794	9,716	35,524
17,535	326	772	833	268	2,711,980	8,466	31,194
2,523	205	232	266	35	694,706	4,154	9,057
7,869	541	759	2,536	125	3,431,292	14,051	18,477
14,036	862	589	1,623	454	3,486,362	25,638	50,125
3,351	132	252	1,005	89	1,290,720	5,298	8,066
178	20	13	39	3	65,883	345	563
15		1	2	1	4,261	23	25
16,140	806	1,180	1,504	259	4,306,123	49,620	58,880
226	9	12	30	5	48,726	260	612
9,109	234	738	1,138	117	2,038,239	11,234	22,742
2,104	77	155	224	28	526,758	1,394	4,102
280	38	18	50	5	94,006	703	1,018
63	9	5	2	1	8,607	74	224
5,318	392	362	843	122	1,695,660	15,135	19,798
148,509	4,861	10,443	19,008	1,723	35,632,928	90,260	265,985
1,145,723	32,039	59,501	143,072	13,546	255,048,430	722,179	2,502,055
11,447	329	623	655	157	1,953,309	9,104	24,314
453	79	30	52	5	114,328	1,119	2,743
120,533	6,496	8,836	21,759	1,549	35,231,980	186,600	404,516
253		18	31	4	64,743	328	806
614	27	36	87	10	147,292	609	1,824
60	1	2	6	1	11,270	81	177
24	2	3	5	1	8,018	65	124
152,135	10,090	5,519	11,894	2,488	31,046,219	315,951	738,978
37,720	2,369	2,156	4,540	1,031	9,585,337	85,088	97,688
24,483	1,617	2,254	8,937	685	12,213,683	47,402	54,524
7,395,672	268,777	416,993	950,022	111,719	1,748,697,447	8,759,988	19,013,343







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RUSSIA

ALASKA

*NORTH  
PACIFIC  
OCEAN*

MIDWAY

HAWAII

WAKE ISLAND

CHINA

DEMOCRATIC  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC  
OF KOREA

JAPAN

REPUBLIC  
OF KOREA

TAIWAN

HONG KONG

MACAO

PHILIPPINES

TINIAN

SAIPAN

ROTA

GUAM

YAP

PALAU

CHUUK

POHNPEI

MARSHALL  
ISLANDS

KOSRAE

NAURU

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

KIRIBATI

TUVALU

TOKELAU

WALLIS &  
FUTUNA ISLS.

FIJI

SAMOA

AMERICAN  
SAMOA

NIUE

TONGA

COOK ISLANDS

NORFOLK  
ISLAND

NEW  
CALEDONIA

NEW  
ZEALAND

PAPUA  
NEW GUINEA

TIMOR-LESTE

AUSTRALIA

COCOS ISLANDS

INDONESIA

MALAYSIA

SINGAPORE

VIETNAM

CAMBODIA

THAILAND

LAOS

**MYANMAR**

BANGLADESH

BHUTAN

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*OCEAN*



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# My 2013 Service Report

	Books	Booklets/ Brochures	Hours	Magazines	Return Visits	Bible Studies
January						
February						
March						
April						
May						
June						
July						
August						
September						
October						
November						
December						
Total						