

2011 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses



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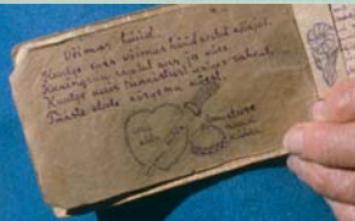
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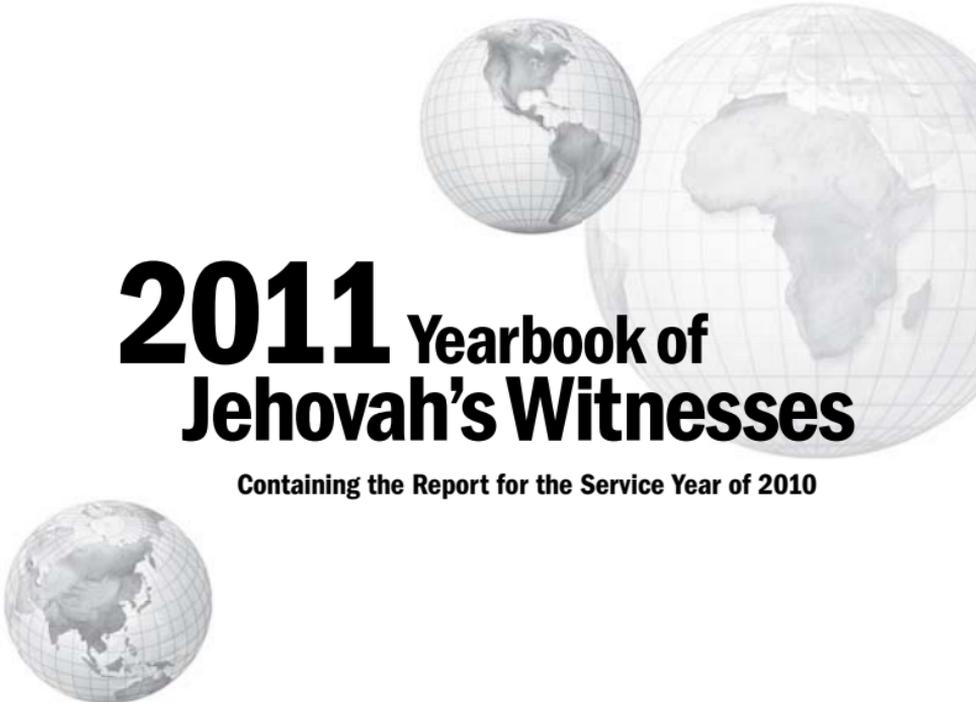
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2011 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses

Containing the Report for the Service Year of 2010

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2011 YEARETEXT

**“Take refuge in
the name of Jehovah.”**

—ZEPHANIAH 3:12.

“All creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now.” (Rom. 8:22) Those inspired words are beyond dispute. Millions of people have fallen victim to injustice, oppression, natural disaster, sickness, poverty, war, and crime. We who serve Jehovah are not immune to any of these things. In addition, we experience disdain, hatred, and persecution, just as Jesus did.

Despite the problems of Satan’s world, we do not despair. Instead, we rejoice in knowing that soon Jehovah will bring an end to all suffering on earth. Our hope, our trust, is in our God. Yes, we take refuge in Jehovah, who never disappoints his loyal ones.



A LETTER FROM THE

Governing Body

Dear Fellow Witnesses of Jehovah:

What exciting times these are! And what joy we have! We truly enjoy working together with you dear brothers and sisters—“shoulder to shoulder,” as it were—in giving the greatest witness of all time to our heavenly Father, Jehovah.—Zeph. 3:9; John 14:12.

Our joy in serving Jehovah does not mean that we are without serious difficulties. During the past service year, some of you have suffered hardships as a result of earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and other life-threatening natural disasters. (Matt. 24:7) Many struggle daily with the debilitating effects of disease and old age. All of us must contend with the ever-increasing “pangs of distress.” (Matt. 24:8) In a number of countries, including Armenia, Eritrea, and South Korea, many of our brothers are imprisoned for their faith.—Matt. 24:9.

What has helped us to keep a positive attitude despite these difficulties? The yeartext for 2010 has reminded us of one important factor: ‘Love endures all things. Love never fails.’ (1 Cor. 13:7, 8) Yes, our love for one another—as well as our love for Jehovah—strengthens us to endure successfully.

Many who claim to be Christians are amazed at the extent and consistency of our preaching work. Although they may disagree with our beliefs and teachings, some have even been prompted to exclaim, "You people are doing the work that we should be doing!" What is one factor that enables Jehovah's Witnesses to continue preaching day in and day out? Again the answer is love. Like our heavenly Father, we do not want any to be destroyed. (2 Pet. 3:9) Our desire that all attain to repentance is reflected in the new peak of 7,508,050 publishers recorded during the past service year. What other religious organization has so many ministers actively engaged in this labor of love, freely volunteering to assist others spiritually?

We are encouraged to see the continuing fulfillment of the prophecy recorded by Isaiah: "It must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will certainly be lifted up above the hills; and to it all the nations must stream." (Isa. 2:2-4) Among the vast multitude streaming up to the house of Jehovah are the 294,368 who were baptized during the past service year. We welcome these precious ones to our ranks. May our Christian love motivate us to continue to help them to

ward off the attacks of our enemy Satan the Devil.

—1 Pet. 5:8, 9.

The all-time peak attendance of 18,706,895 at the Memorial on Tuesday, March 30, 2010, indicates the potential for yet millions more to join us in our worship of Jehovah. How happy we can be that Jehovah has not yet brought an end to this wicked system of things! In the meantime, our love helps us to continue to endure.

—2 Thess. 3:5.

The “Remain Close to Jehovah!” District Conventions, most of which were held throughout the world in 2010, strengthened our relationship with our heavenly Father, Jehovah. How true are the words of the psalmist: “Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!” (Ps. 144:15) No matter what the future may hold, we feel confident that if we have Jehovah by our side, we have nothing whatsoever to fear. (Ps. 23:4) Soon Jehovah, by means of his Son, will “break up the works of the Devil.” (1 John 3:8) Truly, we long for that day to come! But in the meantime, we have plenty of work to keep us busy.—1 Cor. 15:58.

Be assured that “without ceasing” we always make mention of you in our prayers. (Rom. 1:9) May you “keep yourselves in God’s love, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view.”—Jude 21.

We love you all!

Your brothers,

Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses



Highlights of the past year

IT IS exciting to see what Jehovah is accomplishing through his people earth wide. This *Yearbook* reports on developments in the sign-language field and explains how our Writing Department does research. Learn about our international conventions, and discover interesting details about our new songbook. Bring yourself up-to-date on legal developments around the world, news from Haiti, and recent branch dedications. We trust you will enjoy what you read and be encouraged by it.

‘GOD WANTS THE DEAF TO KNOW HIM’

Consider what is happening in the sign-language field. Salvatore, in the United States, is a deaf man whose wife is one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Despite years of contact with Bible truth, he made no spiritual progress. His wife suggested that he read the Bible daily for a year. However, after struggling unsuccessfully to understand what he read, he was discouraged. “I will never learn to love Jehovah,” he lamented.

Salvatore’s life began to change, though, when he was told that part of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* was available on DVD in American Sign Language. After delving into God’s Word in sign language, he exclaimed, “I was certain that God wanted me to know him!” Salvatore studied the Bible, and he now serves Jehovah happily as a baptized Witness.

Like Salvatore, other deaf people throughout the world have felt Jehovah’s warm love and deep concern by means of sign-language Bibles and other publications available on DVD, as well as Internet downloads. Publications are already available in 46 sign languages, with more to come in another 13. *The Watchtower* is available in nine of these languages, and portions of the *New World Translation* have been released in the American, Brazilian, Colombian, Italian, Mexican, and Russian sign languages.

It is always very touching to see how publications in sign language move the hearts of new ones. “I first studied in 1981, using written Japanese publications,” relates Natsue, a deaf woman in Japan. “When I could not grasp the meaning and my family began opposing my study, I quit.”



Natsue resumed her Bible study

“In April 2007, a publisher showed me the Japanese Sign Language edition of *You Can Be God’s Friend!—On DVD*. That was 26 years after my first Bible study. I resumed my study immediately and could feel that my spiritual needs were being satisfied. I was baptized in November 2008.”

Today, there are more than 16,000 deaf publishers throughout the world. With their hands and facial expressions, they praise Jehovah in sign language. The support they receive from the 30 books, brochures, videos, and Bible dramas that have been translated into various sign languages assures them of Jehovah’s love and appreciation for their loyal service.

The 54 branches that translate publications into sign languages are receiving many expressions of appreciation from brothers and sisters and interested people in the field. Their letters tell how thrilled the deaf are to discover deeper spiritual truths in their sign language. Typical is the expression of Emi, from Japan, whose parents are deaf.

“My parents were baptized many years before me,” says Emi, “but they struggled to understand written Japanese publications. When they did not understand, they would ask me for an explanation. Now they can discuss the truth with confidence. My moth-

er said, 'I began to understand the details of the Bible only after sign-language publications became available.' As a result, they have drawn closer to Jehovah and our family relationship is better than ever."

'TRACING ALL THINGS WITH ACCURACY'

Jesus said that the faithful slave would be discreet in giving the domestics "their food at the proper time." Christ thus indicated that those who dispense this "food" would be conscientious, prudent, and discerning in providing spiritual food for the household of faith.—Matt. 24:45-47.

In our time, Christ's anointed brothers use the Writing Department in Brooklyn, New York, to provide spiritual information in the form of magazines, brochures, books, and other printed and electronic material. This spiritual food, like physical food, has to be well prepared. Even Bible writers, who were directed by holy spirit, made sure that they recorded information that was thoroughly researched and accurate. Luke, for example, spoke to many eyewitnesses and "traced all things from the start with accuracy."—Luke 1:1-4.

The Writing Department follows the pattern of 'tracing all things with accuracy.' But where can reliable information be found? While the Internet is a convenient and quick source of vast amounts of information, our researchers do not rely on blogs or poorly documented Web entries written by unidentified or unqualified persons. For example, *Wikipedia*, an online encyclopedia, warns that some articles on its own site "contain significant misinformation, unencyclopedic content, or vandalism," adding that "users need to be aware of this." Thus, the Writing

Department looks to standard reference works, articles written by recognized experts, and books produced by respected publishers.

The Writing Department itself has a comprehensive library with thousands of books. Additionally, our researchers make use of nearby public and academic libraries. They can also obtain specialized material from other sources by means of interlibrary loans. One of the large university libraries that our researchers use has some five million books, 58,000 periodicals, 5.4 million microforms, and thousands of electronic databases. The Writing Department also maintains a large archive of clippings, experiences, and historical information that is constantly being updated with material from local sources as well as from our branch offices around the world.

Of course, it is as Ecclesiastes 12:12 reminds us: "To the making of many books there is no end." Even reputable sources may contain false information. So how do we check for quality, accuracy, and reliability?

Take, for example, the following statement in the brochure *Was Life Created?* about spider silk being one of the strongest materials on earth: "If enlarged to the size of a football field, a web of dragline silk 0.4 inch thick with strands 1.6 inches apart could stop a jumbo jet in flight!" Although the source for this statement was a reputable science magazine, it was not the *original* source, and the original source was ambiguous. Therefore, it became necessary to contact the researcher who made the original statement and check how *he* reached this conclusion. Our researchers also had to find the formula and the information needed to calculate for themselves what impact a jumbo jet



Researchers carefully verify information

might have on a spiderweb the size of a football field. Many hours of research and meticulous calculations eventually confirmed the accuracy of this astounding piece of information.

At times, though, even a seemingly reputable source may fail to corroborate details adequately. For example: Gandhi has been quoted as saying at his ashram (religious retreat) to Lord Irwin: “When your country and mine shall get together on the teachings laid down by Christ in this Sermon on the Mount, we shall have solved the problems not only of our countries but those of the whole world.” However, a thorough investigation of this statement revealed that there is no evidence that Lord Irwin ever visited Gandhi at his ashram, raising unanswered questions

about where, when, and whether Gandhi made this statement. Hence, our publications do not use this particular quote anymore.

Or you may have read about the incident involving Sir Isaac Newton and a model of the solar system. Reportedly, a visiting atheist asked: "Who made it?" When Newton answered, "Nobody!" the atheist replied, "You must think I am a fool!" Newton is then said to have told the atheist that his puny imitation of the much grander solar system proves that there has to be a designer or maker. As appealing as this account may be, historical sources, as well as Newton scholars and biographers, cannot provide evidence that this conversation really occurred. Interestingly, the earliest references to this incident appeared in the early 1800's using, not Newton's name, but the name of German scholar Athanasius Kircher. Consequently, our Writing Department no longer uses this account in our publications.

Sometimes even minor statements require additional research to confirm their accuracy. For instance, a brother may say in his life story that he was born in Czechoslovakia in 1915. But Czechoslovakia did not come into existence until 1918. So, where was he born? Settling the question might require examining old maps or historical records.

Then, too, a brother may state in his experience that he was baptized in San Francisco on a specific date. Careful scrutiny, however, might reveal that there was no convention or assembly on that date in that city. How can such a discrepancy be reconciled? Individual memories can at times be fragile. While the brother would probably not get confused about the *place* of his baptism, he might not accurately recall the

date of the event. It is usually possible to confirm the accuracy of details by cross-checking various sources of information.

In summary, the Writing Department insists on using only material that is accurate and truthful, even regarding seemingly insignificant details. As a result, “the faithful and discreet slave” can consistently supply spiritual food that brings honor to “the God of truth,” Jehovah.—Ps. 31:5.

HELPED TO “KEEP ON THE WATCH”

Millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses around the world appreciated the practical and timely program presented at the many “Keep on the Watch!” District Conventions during 2009. Among those present were the more than 200,000 delegates who were invited from 136 lands to attend one of the 37 international conventions. The conventions were held in Austria, Chile, Côte d’Ivoire, France, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Kenya, Korea, Mexico, Myanmar, Peru, Poland, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States. The combined peak attendance at the international conventions was 1,495,045, and 15,730 persons were baptized.



What is the purpose of international conventions? The Governing Body schedules these gatherings every few years in strategically located cities—sometimes in lands where Jehovah’s Witnesses were formerly under ban. Such conventions serve to strengthen the brothers and help to give impetus to the preaching of the good news in those lands.



These conventions also provide our brothers with a unique opportunity to experience firsthand the special “bond of union” enjoyed by our international brotherhood. (Col. 3:14) What a delight it is to observe the love, peace, and unity at such conventions—which



transcend barriers of nationality, culture, and language! Genuine love is demonstrated by various ethnic groups as they mingle freely between sessions—eating together, exchanging simple gifts and contact information, taking many photographs, and embracing each other in brotherly affection. Many of the delegates and local Witnesses wear their traditional dress.

A special part of the program at international conventions is the feature “Reports From Other Lands,” presented on all four days. One traveling overseer from Italy observed that the reports helped all in attendance to “feel a part of a true international brotherhood pursuing the same objective—carrying out the Kingdom preaching work.” How heartwarming it was to listen to encouraging experiences from missionaries and other full-time servants who were visiting their home countries from their assignments in foreign lands! Their fine example continues to be a source of great encouragement to young and old alike!

And what a delight it was to have members of the Governing Body at the international conventions to impart timely spiritual instruction and loving encouragement! Talks delivered by Governing Body members as well as “Reports From Other Lands” were interpreted simultaneously for the benefit of all the language groups that were listening to the program. For example, at the second international convention held in Honolulu, Hawaii, Stephen Lett of the Governing Body presented four talks in English, which were interpreted simultaneously



Stephen Lett at one of the international conventions in Hawaii

into Chuukese, Iloko, Japanese, Mandarin, Marshallese, and Samoan.

When planning international conventions, the Governing Body gives consideration to the size of available convention facilities, the number of local Witnesses and of Witnesses from other countries who will be attending, and the amount of lodging available for delegates. Thereafter, responsible brothers in each convention city obtain permission from local authorities and make contracts with the managers of the convention sites.

Because large sports stadiums are often used for these conventions, a tremendous amount of planning and work is done to ensure that the venues are dignified places of worship to Jehovah. In Peru, for example, because a game of soccer was scheduled before the convention, the brothers were not able to enter the stadium to clean it and get set up until the night before the sessions were to begin. Although 3,000 volunteers were asked to help, over 7,000 brothers and sisters arrived at 6:00 p.m. and worked tirelessly all through the night to get the work done.

At the conclusion of the international convention held in Long Beach, California, U.S.A., three maintenance men working at the arena remarked: "We have seen many other religions come into this place, but no one can do what you people do. This is simply amazing." One of the men admitted that when Jehovah's Witnesses knocked at his door, he used to say to himself, "Keep knocking because I am not opening the door." Now, though, he said that the next time the brothers knock on his door, he will open it and listen. One of the men was even moved to say, "I've never be-

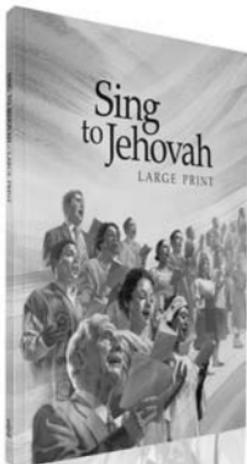
longed to any religion before, but this is the religion I want to belong to.”

What a resounding witness was given in all the convention cities to the glory of Jehovah! And how thankful we are to Jehovah for providing those faith-strengthening conventions so that we may continue to “keep on the watch”—Matt. 24:42.

SINGING PRAISE TO JEHOVAH

Singing songs of praise to Jehovah is an integral part of our worship. At the 2009 conventions, therefore, God’s servants were overjoyed when they were told of a new songbook, *Sing to Jehovah*. But why was a new songbook needed?

From time to time, we have revised our songbooks to keep them in line with increased spiritual light. (Prov. 4:18) Preparation of a new songbook thus provides an opportunity for needed adjustments to be made to the lyrics of our songs. Wording has been selected that makes it easier to absorb the meaning of the song while it is being sung and to make the words easier to remember. To help further with memorization, many of the songs have been shortened. Where appropriate, choruses have been added to provide meaningful repetition of key thoughts. In addition, an effort was made to assign each syllable of each word to a single note, rather than to place more than one syllable on a note.



A careful analysis of our previous songbook, *Sing Praises to*

Jehovah, revealed that some of the melodies needed adjustments to make them easier to sing. As a result, some of the songs have now been lowered in pitch so that the higher notes are easier to sing. Also, not all songs were being sung exactly as they were written in the book. So in some cases the melody itself has been adjusted to match the more natural manner in which the songs were actually being sung by our brothers internationally.

Details, such as how the music is printed on the page, were given careful consideration. While longer songs have been spread across two pages to accommodate the longer text of translated languages, songs have been placed so that there is no need to turn a page during any song. No songs are longer than three verses.

How was the mammoth task of preparing the new songbook accomplished? In August 2007, a team of experienced composers and lyricists were invited to assist the Governing Body with the project. All of the songs in the previous songbook were examined meticulously to identify problems with doctrinal content, word emphasis, and melodic issues. It was apparent that some of the older melodies were fine but that they required new lyrics. Other songs that required little adjustment to lyrics needed substantial changes to their melodies. Then, the Teaching Committee of the Governing Body approved a list of topics to be considered in songs for Christian meetings, assemblies, conventions, and dedication programs.

In addition, the composers took time to reexamine the style of music used by our brothers at our meetings. To produce reverent yet appealing songs, they

avoided music that sounded like the hymns used in Christendom's churches. At the same time, they did not want songs of praise to Jehovah to lean toward styles that have become popular in many charismatic churches.

Throughout the project, the Governing Body carefully monitored the composition and words of each song. Groups of new songs that the Governing Body was not familiar with were recorded by singers for the Governing Body to listen to and review. As soon as those songs were approved, they were sent to translating branches for translation of the lyrics so that vernacular songbooks could be released at the same time as the English songbook.

Additionally, in 2007, the Governing Body arranged for a chorus of singers to produce recordings that would help the congregations to learn the songs. For many years a volunteer orchestra from



14 branches has assembled about twice a year at Patterson, New York, to record music for educational programs produced by Jehovah's Witnesses, including dramas, video productions, and musical accompaniment for conventions and assemblies. These dedicated brothers and sisters, many of them full-time ministers, use their time and resources to travel and record music for the benefit of the international brotherhood. All are skilled musicians. The orchestral recordings are then shared with branches around the world to provide background music for their conventions and for the production of vocal renditions in dozens of local languages. Many of the vocal recordings made at the branches are now available for download from our Web site www.jw.org.



What has been the reaction to the new songbook, *Sing to Jehovah*? This letter from a sister is typical of hundreds of letters of appreciation that have been received: “Please allow me to begin this letter by thanking you for the beautiful new songs in our new songbook. They are moving, faith-strengthening, and comforting—a delightful gift from Jehovah.”

It is our desire that the songbook *Sing to Jehovah* will be a source of comfort and encouragement to our worldwide brotherhood. Whether we are alone or gathered together with our fellow worshippers, may we use it to express our love for our heavenly Father, Jehovah!

“HALED BEFORE GOVERNORS AND KINGS . . . FOR A WITNESS”

Jesus told his disciples that they would be brought before “local courts,” and “governors and kings.” Nevertheless, he said that this would be “for a witness to them and the nations.” (Matt. 10:17, 18) During the past year, Jehovah’s Witnesses have experienced precisely what Jesus foretold. And, as their Master said, their mistreatment has provided fine opportunities for them to give a witness.

Armenia Vahan Bayatyan, one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, was sentenced to two and a half years in prison because of his conscientious objection to military service. After losing his case and appeals before the Armenia courts, he filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in 2003. Finally, on October 27, 2009, the ECHR issued its judgment in favor of Armenia in keeping with over 50 years of legal precedent. However, a dissenting judge found this ruling “incompatible with current European standards on the question of conscientious objection.”

In view of the importance of this issue, the European Court agreed to refer this matter to its Grand Chamber. The hearing was scheduled to take place in Strasbourg, France, on November 24, 2010. The Grand Chamber's decision was not known at the time that this report went to press.

Azerbaijan Jehovah's Witnesses continue to have difficulty importing religious literature. The authorities approve importation of some religious literature but deny the importation of other publications because they claim that the "contents promote the exclusiveness of the faith of Jehovah's Witnesses and insult the feelings of other Christian religions." As a result, the homes of some brothers and sisters have been raided, and their personal Bible literature has been seized.

On April 25, 2010, in the city of Qazax, about 250 of Jehovah's Witnesses in five large buses and one minivan were returning from an assembly in Georgia. Police at the border control confiscated their personal Bible literature, including 33 Bibles. Many of the Witnesses, even the elderly and the infirm, were kept waiting at the border for up to eight hours before they were allowed to continue their journey. To prevent incidents such as this and to ensure that brothers in Azerbaijan continue to receive their



Dmitry Smyk

spiritual food, this issue has now been presented to the European Court of Human Rights.

Belarus On November 6, 2009, Dmitry Smyk, who is one of Jehovah's Witnesses, was fined 3,500,000 rubles (\$1,154 U.S.) for refusing to do military duty. "I try to be faithful to the Bible in every aspect of my life," Brother Smyk stated, "and I follow the teachings it contains. For me, this includes believing that a person should not be trained for or participate in warfare." —Isa. 2:1-4.

Although the Constitution of Belarus guarantees the right to choose alternative civilian service, there is no provision in the law for actually doing so. "On paper it appears that I have the right to alternative civilian service," explained Brother Smyk, "but in reality I cannot exercise that right."

To correct this legislative flaw, on February 18, 2010, the president of Belarus formed a commission to draft a law on alternative service. Shortly thereafter, the court found Brother Smyk innocent and canceled the heavy fine against him. Because other young Witnesses in Belarus are confronted with this same issue and do not wish to learn war, it is hoped that the government will soon make provision for alternative civilian service.

Belgium Until 1993, the Bethel property in Brussels, Belgium, was tax exempt, as were all religious buildings in Belgium. However, in 1993 the tax administration changed its position and refused full exemption. It claimed that Bethel is not exclusively used for religious purposes, that financial gain is one of its aims, and that Bethelites are not active full-time with their religious activities. The case was finally heard in 2008

in a lower trial court, but the judge decided in favor of the tax administration. The decision was appealed, and on May 4, 2010, the appeals court reversed the lower trial court's decision. In their written verdict, the three judges stated: "Life at Bethel, for the Witnesses who live there, is associated with a deep religious conviction requiring a total surrendering to God's service. . . . All these ministers are members of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants, and they live, pray, sing and study the Bible together. They also assist at the local organized morning worship."

Eritrea Jehovah's Witnesses in Eritrea continue to endure many hardships in their efforts to serve God faithfully. Currently there are 58 Witnesses in prison, including women and young children. Because of oppressive governmental restrictions and the constant threat of arrest, it is difficult to obtain information about those imprisoned. For years, Jehovah's Witnesses have attempted to relieve the suffering of their Eritrean fellow worshippers through diplomatic channels. Witnesses have appealed to officials at the U.S. Department of State, the European Union, and various embassies. They have also met with numerous officials in the Horn of Africa, such as representatives of the African Union. Recently, Jehovah's Witnesses have submitted a letter and a list of prisoners who were not of military age to 18 Eritrean embassies worldwide. The letter appealed to President Afewerki to release all prisoners who were not of military age, including children and the elderly. To date, though, the government has not responded.

Greece On January 15, 2010, Greece's highest court, the Council of State, found that Evangelos Delis,

one of Jehovah's Witnesses, had the right to object to serving as a reservist in the military. Brother Delis served in the army prior to becoming one of Jehovah's Witnesses, but when he was called up for reserve training, he was moved by his Bible-trained conscience to refuse to accept the training. Although the Administration denied his request to be viewed as a conscientious objector, the Council of State, citing articles of the European Convention of Human Rights, stated that an individual has the right to change his religion even after having served in the military and to claim conscientious objector status because of his newfound religious beliefs. This positive decision from Greece's highest court will no doubt benefit conscientious objectors in Greece and in other countries, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, South Korea, and Turkey.



Evangelos Delis



Portugal On September 25, 2009, the Ministry of Justice stated that the Association of Jehovah's Witnesses

The certificate issued by the Ministry of Justice

was unanimously approved as a Long-Standing Religious Community. Jehovah's Witnesses in Portugal now have the highest judicial and religious classification possible, which will help them to carry out their ministry. Their new legal status will bring numerous benefits to Jehovah's people. These include having authorized ministers to perform legally recognized marriage ceremonies at Kingdom Halls as well as authorization to enter hospitals and prisons to give spiritual assistance to those who request it.

Puerto Rico In a landmark decision, on January 27, 2010, the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico upheld an adult patient's right to refuse certain medical treatment. The Court also recognized a patient's right to use an advance directive and appoint a health-care agent to represent his interests when unconscious. Victor Hernandez, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, prepared an advance directive before going into the hospital. A trial court had earlier refused to enforce Brother Hernandez' medical decision as expressed in his directive and supported by his health-care agent. In overturning the trial court's ruling, the Supreme Court recognized "the fundamental right that makes the inviolability of the human body an inalienable right of the people." This victory benefits not only the more than 25,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses in Puerto Rico but also all other patients throughout the island.

Russia In recent months the spirit-directed activity of Jehovah's people has faced its most serious threats since the collapse of the Soviet Union. On December 8, 2009, the Russian Supreme Court upheld a decision of a lower court in Rostov that resulted in the liquidation of the local religious organization in Tagan-

rog, confiscation of its Kingdom Hall, and a declaration that 34 of our publications were considered to be extremist, including such widely read books as *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*, *My Book of Bible Stories*, and “*Come Be My Follower*.”

A few weeks later, the Supreme Court of the Altay Republic, in southern Russia, made a similar decision regarding the local religious organization in the city of Gorno-Altaysk, which resulted in a further 18 publications’ being listed as extremist. These court decisions have made it impossible, for the time being, to import any of the listed publications into Russia. In addition, the court decisions have emboldened Christ’s enemies to threaten and attack his peaceful followers in various cities. Since the December 8 decision, there have been over 300 recorded incidents of raids, arrests, house searches, and other disruptions of worship.

In response to this growing threat, the Governing Body approved the distribution of 12 million copies of a special tract entitled *Could It Happen Again? A Question for the Citizens of Russia*. The tract drew clear parallels between the harassment Jehovah’s Witnesses experienced under Communism and the problems they are facing today. Jehovah’s Witnesses distributed this special tract throughout Russia between February 26 and 28, 2010. Despite the frigid temperatures, as low as minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit (-40° C), many congregations distributed all their tracts in just two days.

In a counterattack, on April 26, 2010, the Federal Service for the Oversight of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Communications



(Roskomnadzor) revoked our license to import any subsequent issues of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines.

However, “the hand of Jehovah has not become too short that it cannot save.” (Isa. 59:1) On June 10, 2010, the European Court of Human

Rights (ECHR) handed down a landmark decision against Russia and in favor of Kingdom interests. The ruling in this case, entitled *Jehovah’s Witnesses of Moscow v. Russia*, declared that the liquidation

and the banning of the activities of the Moscow Community of Jehovah's Witnesses was unlawful and in violation of the fundamental human rights of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. The liquidation and the ban have been in force in Moscow since March 26, 2004, resulting in increased harassment and ill-treatment. This judgment explicitly states that the Russian government "has a legal obligation . . . to put an end to the violation found by the Court and to redress so far as possible the effects."

This sweeping decision refers favorably to nine high-court victories that Jehovah's Witnesses have won in Canada, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as to eight earlier decisions handed down by the ECHR itself in favor of Jehovah's Witnesses. In so doing, the court has confirmed that the ECHR continues to believe that the earlier cases were decided correctly. Drawing upon the European Convention of Human Rights and earlier decisions, the court held that Jehovah's Witnesses were not guilty of any of the charges brought against them by the Russian authorities.

"The applicant community of Jehovah's Witnesses," noted the court, "had existed and legally operated in Moscow for more than twelve years, from 1992 to 2004. During the entire period of its lawful existence the applicant community, its elders and individual members had never been found responsible for any criminal or administrative offence or a civil wrong." Accordingly, the court ruled that the rights of Jehovah's Witnesses had been violated and that, as it further noted, "the respondent State has a legal obligation . . . to select . . . measures to be adopted in their domestic

legal order to put an end to the violation found by the Court.”

On September 9, 2010, the Russian government requested referral of the controversy to the court’s Grand Chamber, no doubt as a tactic to delay its responsibility to comply with the decision. Whether Jehovah’s will permits the review by the Grand Chamber or not, we can be sure that a great witness will continue to be given.

Serbia After a legal fight that continued for almost four years, the Serbian Ministry of Religious Affairs finally entered “Jehovah’s Witnesses—Christian Religious Community” into the Register on Churches and Religious Communities in Serbia. Until then, the ministry had refused three applications for registration, although groups of International Bible Students, as Jehovah’s Witnesses were once known, have been present in the region since the early 1920’s. However, after the Serbian Supreme Court made two positive decisions in our favor, the Ministry of Religious Affairs granted the request for registration.

In the past, adversaries—with the help of the media—often tried to paint Jehovah’s Witnesses as a dangerous sect. Registration as a legal religious community will no doubt help sincere people in Serbia to see that Jehovah’s Witnesses are good citizens who respect the law and do not pose any threat to the community or to individuals. As the first positive result of this registration, Bible literature and other items used in connection with the meetings and preaching can be imported without paying any customs or taxes.

Slovenia On November 27, 2009, “Jehovah’s Witnesses—Christian Religious Community” was entered in the

register of churches and other religious communities that is kept by the government of the Republic of Slovenia. The director of the government's Office for Religious Communities informed our representatives that out of 40 religious organizations and groups in Slovenia, "Jehovah's Witnesses—Christian Religious Community" was the eighth to reregister successfully under the new Religious Freedom Act. This registration will enable full-time ministers to receive certain benefits afforded by the government to all those who perform religious activities on a full-time basis.

Turkey Jehovah's Witnesses in Mersin had been using their Kingdom Hall for some 20 years. Then, in August 2003, it was sealed by the authorities on the basis of a violation of a zoning law. Despite the brothers' efforts to resolve the issue by appealing to the courts, on December 30, 2009, Turkey's highest court rejected the appeal in favor of the Mersin governor's office. An application has now been filed with the ECHR.

BROTHERLY LOVE IN ACTION IN HAITI

On January 12, 2010, a powerful earthquake devastated Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, and surrounding areas. Hundreds of thousands were killed, and many more were displaced. Several thousand of Jehovah's Witnesses lost their homes, and 154 lost their lives. Many others were seriously injured or had narrow escapes.

Acloque was at home when the quake struck. Walls buckled, and blocks tumbled like dominoes, pinning him between the floor and the collapsed ceiling. He was not seriously hurt, though, and began feeling around in the darkness with his hands. "I felt the side

of a water bucket,” Acloque recalls. “It would not budge, but I could dip my fingers into the water and bring a few drops of water to my lips. I also found a loose stone to tap with, hopefully to draw attention to my plight.” He began praying for help and kept tapping with the stone and waiting.

“I had no watch and no idea what time it was,” says Acloque. “At first, I wept and begged Jehovah to rescue me. But as time passed, my prayers changed. ‘I know you will resurrect me,’ I prayed. ‘But I’m a young man! If I don’t die, I can go on serving you.’”

Gradually, Acloque felt his life ebbing away, and eventually he lost the strength even to tap with the stone. Then he passed out.

When Acloque regained consciousness, Witness rescuers were trying to break through to him. “Suddenly the concrete fell away by my leg,” he relates. “I realized that the next blow would strike my knee, so I reached through the opening in the dark and grabbed the rescuer’s arm.” Soon Acloque was free. He had been under the rubble for four days.

PROMPT RELIEF EFFORTS

Within 24 hours of the quake, the first Witness doctor arrived from the Dominican Republic branch. He was followed by a steady stream of Witness medical and relief personnel, along with donated materials. A field hospital was quickly set up on the branch property, where more than 1,000 Witnesses and non-Witnesses received treatment.

Among the patients were two young women, both of whom had lost their right arm. “Like all the other single patients who lost limbs,” recalls Mylène, a

Witness medical personnel arrived soon after the quake ►



▲ Witness volunteers from Haiti and abroad designed and built more than 1,700 temporary dwellings



volunteer at the branch, “they worried that they would never be able to marry or have a family.” Mylène therefore contacted a sister she knew in France who as a child had lost an arm in a car accident and asked her to encourage the two women. The sister in France e-mailed photos of herself with her husband and two beautiful children. Seeing them brought much comfort to the two young patients, who are now adapting well to their new circumstances.

Besides food, clothing, and medicines, survivors urgently needed housing. Witness volunteers from Haiti and abroad designed and built more than 1,700 temporary dwellings to provide shelter from the rain and a measure of security for Witness families whose homes had been destroyed. By June the relief teams had begun erecting temporary Kingdom Halls, and in July authorities issued the first building permits for permanent Kingdom Halls to be constructed.

PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL HEALING

In March a Witness doctor who specializes in treating post-traumatic stress disorder met with the elders of the 115 congregations affected by the quake. The doctor provided the elders with practical suggestions on giving spiritual support to the emotionally traumatized members of their congregations. Thereafter, the doctor met individually with more than 100 brothers and sisters who needed specialized treatment.

The “New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures” was released in Haitian Creole



Shortly after the quake, David Splane of the Governing Body traveled to Haiti to provide comfort and encouragement. Brother Splane, who speaks French, addressed the brothers at a circuit assembly and met with the Bethel family, missionaries, and circuit overseers. All deeply appreciated his loving concern and the tender care of the Governing Body.

Despite what appeared to be insurmountable obstacles, the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* in Haitian Creole was completed, printed, and shipped to the branch. The new Bibles arrived just hours before they were to be released at the district convention in July. Throughout the fast-moving events of 2010, from the initial relief efforts until now, everyone involved has seen and felt Jehovah's constant guidance and support in ways great and small. Over and over, needed supplies, transportation, and personnel all came together at just the right time and in ways that were too perfect to have been merely coincidental. In the words of one longtime missionary, "You had to be here to appreciate how clearly Jehovah's hand was in evidence."

BRANCH DEDICATIONS BRING GLORY TO GOD

February 13, 2010, was an unforgettable day for Jehovah's Witnesses on the **Solomon Islands**. Stephen Lett, a member of the Governing Body, gave the dedication talk at the new branch facilities there. Among the 368 in attendance was the first local Witness, Clement Fa'abasua. A month earlier an open house was held for those who live in the vicinity of the new branch facilities, and 273 persons were given a tour. One of the visitors, an architect, wrote in the leading national newspaper: "Overall, the total [branch] facility gets a triple A. It serves as a model for the Solomon Islands



Estonia branch expansion

community to see what can be done here regardless of who the designated user may be. The designer, the conglomerate labor force, and the current administrators could be said to have created a jewel in paradise.”

A memorable dedication program was held at the **Estonia** branch on Saturday, April 3, 2010. The 438 in attendance thoroughly enjoyed the program, which included the dedication talk by Christian Muntean, from the Greece branch. A two-story building, located on a piece of property adjacent to the branch, had been purchased from the local water company. The remodeled building contains audio and video studios as well as a classroom for schools, such as the Bible School for Single Brothers.

The branch in neighboring **Latvia** enjoyed its dedication program on April 10, 2010. After the good news was first preached in Latvia in 1918, our work experienced decades of stiff opposition. Now, though, the preaching work is thriving in Latvia, and 248 delegates



The Paraguay branch ▲



*Winston Payne gave the dedication talk for the
Papua New Guinea branch*

from nine countries were present with the local brothers and sisters to hear Christian Muntean give the dedication talk.

On Saturday, May 8, 2010, more than 2,200 enjoyed the dedication talk given at the **Paraguay** branch by Gerrit Lösch of the Governing Body. A 32-room residence and a new office complex were built, and the present residence was repaired and remodeled. In addition, a 10,000-gallon subterranean water tank was constructed. From the outset, local authorities have

been very pleased with the quality of work done by the international and local volunteers. One official commented that there had been many problems with other religious buildings but that Jehovah's Witnesses had a reputation for doing everything correctly. As a result, it was never difficult to obtain the building permits for the branch construction.

At the **Papua New Guinea** branch, on Saturday, May 29, 2010, nearly 500 brothers and sisters from 12 countries gathered to hear the dedication talk delivered by Winston Payne, from the Australia branch. The expanded branch facilities include a four-story building with bedrooms, dining room, kitchen, and laundry; a services building with a Kingdom Hall; and a spacious translation office. The audience included a group of Witnesses who walked six days over rugged mountains to attend the event. The group dressed in traditional Orokaiva clothing and warmly welcomed the other visitors with dance and song. With tears in her eyes, one longtime sister expressed the feelings of many when she said, "Today I feel as though I am already in Paradise!"

"KEEP BEARING MUCH FRUIT"

There can be no doubt that the united efforts of Jehovah's Witnesses continue to glorify God. "My Father is glorified in this," said Jesus, "that you keep bearing much fruit and prove yourselves my disciples." (John 15:8) With Jehovah's blessing and loving direction, they will endeavor "to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him as [they] go on bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God, being made powerful with all power to the extent of his glorious might so as to endure fully and be long-suffering with joy."—Col. 1:10, 11.



Preaching and Teaching Earth Wide

TO HIS first-century disciples, the words of Jesus must have seemed puzzling. He foretold that they would be objects of hatred by *all* the nations—they would be killed and delivered up to tribulation. Moreover, many would be stumbled and betrayed. But then, Jesus said that the good news would be preached in *all* the earth. (Matt. 24: 9-14) Just how successful could a global preaching campaign be in the face of worldwide opposition? In the pages that follow, you will find the answer to that intriguing question.

2010 SERVICE YEAR REPORT OF

Letter and number following each country's name indicates

Country or Territory	Population	2010 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Publisher to	2010 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 2009
Albania (D-11)	3,600,000	4,314	834	4,217	4
American Samoa (N-26)	70,100	237	296	208	1
Andorra (F-4)	84,484	198	427	171	1
Angola (N-6)	17,000,000	78,334	217	74,877	4
Anguilla (O-32)	14,436	61	237	57	-5
Antigua (P-32)	89,138	524	170	466	4
Argentina (N-36)	36,260,130	142,012	255	139,372	2
Armenia (G-9)	3,250,000	11,123	292	10,763	4
Aruba (Q-29)	107,138	811	132	774	3
Australia (O-19)	22,471,507	65,214	345	63,951	1
Austria (F-5)	8,375,290	20,992	399	20,741	
Azerbaijan (G-9)	8,922,300	924	9,656	900	7
Azores (G-1)	244,780	765	320	738	3
Bahamas (G-35)	347,000	1,806	192	1,604	4
Bangladesh (J-14)	156,050,883	136	1,147,433	133	8
Barbados (Q-33)	270,000	2,536	106	2,507	2
Belarus (E-7)	9,480,200	4,779	1,984	4,652	3
Belgium (E-4)	10,775,000	25,111	429	23,724	
Belize (H-33)	303,283	2,183	139	2,041	6
Benin (L-4)	6,769,914	10,687	633	9,704	3
Bermuda (F-36)	67,835	476	143	441	-3
Bolivia (M-36)	10,426,155	20,778	502	19,945	5
Bonaire (Q-30)	13,389	96	139	89	5
Bosnia and Herzegovina (C-10)	4,613,414	1,212	3,806	1,188	
Botswana (O-6)	1,800,098	1,924	936	1,896	9
Brazil (L-37)	192,040,996	733,475	262	706,699	2
Britain (E-3)	60,237,357	134,339	448	129,230	1
Bulgaria (F-7)	7,600,000	1,797	4,229	1,737	3
Burkina Faso (K-3)	15,730,977	1,495	10,522	1,365	3
Burundi (M-7)	8,053,574	9,840	818	9,210	8
Cambodia (K-16)	14,494,293	420	34,510	398	9
Cameroon (L-5)	18,879,301	36,182	522	34,220	3
Canada (C-31)	34,018,957	113,603	299	111,193	1
Cape Verde (K-1)	434,263	1,938	224	1,847	2
Cayman Islands (H-34)	54,248	247	220	224	-4
Central African Republic (L-6)	4,560,000	2,609	1,748	2,482	2
Chad (K-6)	10,600,000	652	16,258	587	1
Chile (M-35)	17,094,270	72,918	234	69,514	1
Chuuk (L-21)	67,556	46	1,469	42	-11
Colombia (J-35)	45,633,153	149,218	306	144,176	4
Congo, Dem. Republic of (M-6)	68,692,542	162,533	423	151,842	5
Congo, Republic of (M-5)	4,012,809	5,484	732	5,215	3
Cook Islands (O-26)	18,723	183	102	173	9
Costa Rica (J-34)	4,509,392	26,043	173	25,141	5
Côte d'Ivoire (L-3)	22,687,345	8,885	2,553	8,426	4
Croatia (B-9)	4,489,409	5,577	805	5,534	
Cuba (G-34)	11,236,790	92,834	121	91,593	1
Curaçao (Q-30)	142,180	1,781	80	1,705	4
Cyprus (H-7)	885,600	2,391	370	2,322	3

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WORLDWIDE

the country's location on maps following this chart.

2009 Av. Pubs.	2010 No. Bptzd.	Av. Aux. Pio. Pubs.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Attend- ance
4,070	236	374	1,001	72	1,658,323	6,204	11,959
206	5	9	25	3	51,432	315	855
170	1	7	15	3	35,156	107	376
71,949	5,204	2,838	7,524	1,068	17,965,921	259,227	344,785
60	1	3	9	2	15,293	110	328
450	28	15	42	7	96,457	563	1,447
136,904	5,263	7,643	15,022	1,953	31,687,302	131,484	320,217
10,332	611	853	2,099	123	3,486,530	9,367	24,693
754	32	35	37	10	137,533	868	2,674
63,454	1,213	1,877	4,278	794	10,664,584	26,106	115,986
20,662	390	588	1,170	298	3,444,690	10,820	34,440
838		92	198	7	333,928	1,580	2,148
718	36	28	67	15	158,690	914	1,727
1,549	44	67	165	28	358,766	2,106	4,414
123	5	6	30	3	40,251	267	499
2,451	53	116	170	30	443,661	2,314	6,539
4,507	219	382	720	57	1,381,603	3,777	8,900
23,764	438	713	1,234	375	3,545,057	9,185	43,372
1,927	112	90	322	49	565,814	3,399	8,358
9,401	523	514	1,159	162	2,614,143	21,733	39,406
453	10	9	69	5	105,909	302	996
18,942	1,084	1,681	2,685	246	5,762,977	29,657	66,412
85	2	5	9	1	22,519	151	324
1,184	44	77	223	16	376,283	683	2,267
1,733	94	90	141	41	396,344	3,001	5,003
689,577	28,979	22,859	62,213	10,796	138,098,823	799,207	1,681,986
128,435	2,611	3,976	9,828	1,533	21,124,483	55,499	222,795
1,679	53	80	363	33	576,263	2,007	3,914
1,328	67	60	190	36	400,886	2,614	4,646
8,511	814	482	1,280	186	3,017,024	24,940	37,687
364	29	21	207	7	224,486	1,216	1,902
33,365	1,539	1,257	2,803	335	7,547,404	61,026	91,097
110,467	2,111	4,138	9,885	1,354	21,273,057	46,841	187,982
1,805	105	95	316	35	545,491	4,113	8,437
233	8	11	26	4	49,246	232	674
2,438	151	102	252	53	595,248	5,283	17,504
582	22	17	73	18	160,721	954	4,922
68,537	2,506	3,269	7,770	826	15,611,358	62,984	178,844
47		3	12	3	18,526	125	260
139,194	7,639	5,233	17,238	2,191	32,981,524	214,558	460,776
144,697	10,711	4,932	12,709	3,103	33,773,456	389,386	1,040,029
5,085	257	211	327	74	1,270,235	17,396	26,331
158	12	6	18	3	37,899	183	575
23,894	950	1,054	2,020	394	4,955,513	33,047	67,688
8,101	670	450	1,142	193	2,486,736	22,811	44,630
5,510	105	233	455	69	1,142,675	2,550	9,684
90,738	3,778	5,637	6,760	1,254	17,695,778	159,010	232,342
1,646	89	62	116	22	294,913	1,945	4,559
2,254	65	104	242	34	500,312	1,533	4,461

Country or Territory	Population	2010 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Publisher to	2010 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 2009
Czech Republic (E-5)	10,698,235	15,433	693	15,337	
Denmark (D-4)	5,534,738	14,274	388	14,085	
Dominica (P-33)	72,660	461	158	409	12
Dominican Republic (O-29)	11,887,200	33,072	359	31,385	5
East Timor (N-18)	1,131,612	171	6,618	148	17
Ecuador (K-34)	14,253,481	73,215	195	70,055	6
El Salvador (H-33)	5,835,231	37,337	156	35,749	4
Equatorial Guinea (L-5)	633,441	1,405	451	1,205	12
Estonia (D-6)	1,340,000	4,268	314	4,203	
Ethiopia (L-8)	75,000,000	9,009	8,325	8,729	3
Faeroe Islands (C-2)	48,650	124	392	122	9
Falkland Islands (Q-37)	3,175	7	454	5	25
Fiji (N-24)	847,200	2,709	313	2,549	10
Finland (C-7)	5,351,427	19,045	281	18,870	
France (F-4)	62,947,000	123,444	510	118,848	1
French Guiana (J-37)	215,036	2,096	103	2,028	5
Gabon (M-5)	1,514,993	3,797	399	3,476	5
Gambia (K-2)	1,778,081	195	9,118	186	-4
Georgia (G-9)	4,436,400	18,951	234	18,021	4
Germany (E-5)	81,802,257	165,568	494	162,611	
Ghana (L-3)	23,869,800	104,256	229	100,334	8
Gibraltar (G-3)	29,000	110	264	103	2
Greece (G-6)	10,539,771	29,058	363	28,879	1
Greenland (A-38)	56,194	170	331	166	6
Grenada (Q-32)	104,000	576	181	551	
Guadeloupe (P-32)	455,000	8,497	54	8,243	
Guam (K-20)	178,430	746	239	718	9
Guatemala (H-33)	14,361,666	30,015	478	28,809	5
Guinea (K-2)	10,316,464	686	15,039	649	3
Guinea-Bissau (K-2)	1,548,159	124	12,485	118	-3
Guyana (J-37)	777,648	2,575	302	2,495	1
Haiti (O-28)	8,373,750	16,291	514	15,250	2
Hawaii (J-26)	1,295,178	8,786	147	8,531	4
Honduras (H-33)	8,175,763	19,009	430	18,504	5
Hong Kong (J-17)	7,061,200	5,156	1,370	5,029	2
Hungary (A-10)	10,001,000	23,850	419	22,646	1
Iceland (B-1)	318,006	362	878	339	
India (J-12)	1,160,919,000	33,089	35,085	31,556	6
Indonesia (M-17)	235,000,000	22,495	10,447	21,739	3
Ireland (E-2)	6,245,700	5,833	1,071	5,721	
Israel (H-8)	11,525,130	1,355	8,506	1,336	2
Italy (G-5)	60,418,711	243,941	248	241,823	1
Jamaica (H-34)	2,698,800	12,227	221	11,801	1
Japan (G-19)	127,078,679	218,698	581	217,240	
Kazakhstan (F-11)	16,170,398	17,744	911	16,934	3
Kenya (M-8)	38,610,000	24,515	1,575	22,812	2
Kiribati (M-24)	105,621	120	880	111	12
Korea, Republic of (G-18)	48,710,000	98,341	495	97,825	1
Kosovo (D-11)	2,350,000	187	12,567	181	8
Kosrae (L-22)	9,922	23	431	17	-29
Kyrgyzstan (G-12)	5,455,300	4,826	1,130	4,643	3
Latvia (D-6)	2,238,000	2,379	941	2,347	-1
Lebanon (H-8)	4,017,095	3,603	1,115	3,541	-1
Lesotho (P-7)	1,891,830	3,632	521	3,491	3
Liberia (L-2)	3,476,608	6,198	561	5,451	4

2009 Av. Pubs.	2010 No. Bptzd.	Av. Aux. Pio. Pubs.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Congs.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Attendance
15,348	286	509	730	235	2,313,043	6,519	26,940
14,153	183	413	741	203	2,130,190	4,792	21,851
365	25	17	50	10	104,896	704	1,407
29,960	1,799	1,943	5,324	418	9,340,429	65,789	123,511
127	16	6	30	3	51,511	283	508
65,909	4,810	3,931	10,474	876	18,735,400	129,376	239,751
34,305	1,727	1,486	2,656	665	7,147,881	43,433	94,899
1,074	110	68	165	10	352,956	3,850	5,063
4,196	132	171	455	53	843,512	2,805	7,369
8,509	537	618	1,509	171	2,827,734	6,498	22,766
112	2	6	27	4	33,306	72	175
4		1		1	810	5	13
2,313	280	152	281	61	596,386	4,078	10,885
18,940	293	490	1,778	300	2,972,480	10,694	27,114
118,085	2,370	5,006	10,290	1,555	23,437,320	50,618	210,371
1,935	104	107	192	34	500,958	4,118	8,094
3,326	202	214	399	30	1,020,267	8,859	11,404
194	6	12	27	4	58,239	359	588
17,272	928	841	2,589	207	4,251,335	10,094	36,270
162,890	3,052	4,182	9,878	2,229	26,132,151	75,278	270,169
92,787	7,136	3,279	7,141	1,472	22,295,336	290,596	291,108
101		2	8	2	17,032	30	171
28,569	732	1,015	3,174	380	5,723,515	12,846	48,042
157	2	5	34	6	37,979	126	316
550	12	26	52	9	121,233	670	1,696
8,227	247	285	508	134	1,448,944	9,259	20,797
658	29	27	136	8	198,334	973	1,893
27,355	1,514	1,126	3,083	401	6,490,575	36,951	85,048
630	35	32	104	18	212,150	1,587	3,337
122	6	5	35	2	57,986	406	564
2,471	112	101	272	45	534,901	4,002	11,843
14,910	1,313	756	1,901	223	3,869,356	30,271	71,371
8,226	396	378	1,144	97	1,974,836	6,610	20,448
17,595	1,173	850	2,580	302	5,048,949	30,028	60,375
4,925	320	335	778	64	1,443,413	6,553	9,071
22,331	779	859	1,644	279	4,284,388	13,993	44,412
340	11	9	43	6	71,294	269	703
29,638	1,861	1,423	2,963	435	6,138,651	34,184	87,532
21,097	967	901	1,884	381	4,889,717	25,945	50,948
5,713	140	201	639	115	1,170,378	2,989	11,060
1,313	55	57	98	21	265,397	966	2,761
240,262	5,068	11,295	27,320	3,071	53,644,187	117,474	443,787
11,632	463	438	1,341	197	2,348,393	14,910	37,271
217,530	3,268	14,724	64,421	3,118	80,533,101	167,353	322,845
16,446	975	1,177	2,581	214	4,598,648	14,542	32,740
22,321	1,903	737	2,961	533	5,992,543	38,643	57,541
99	8	11	21	2	39,921	260	401
96,620	2,488	8,002	34,720	1,408	42,706,109	70,801	141,826
167	16	15	53	5	86,108	385	461
24			3	1	4,000	38	111
4,514	410	321	853	66	1,322,207	5,300	9,947
2,360	78	117	360	36	648,997	2,399	4,118
3,562	64	105	132	65	536,207	1,830	6,594
3,387	241	136	341	77	794,974	5,722	8,802
5,255	321	219	639	108	1,598,744	18,727	81,457

Country or Territory	Population	2010 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Publisher to	2010 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 2009
Liechtenstein (F-4)	35,904	71	506	62	27
Lithuania (D-6)	3,329,000	3,110	1,070	3,010	
Luxembourg (E-4)	591,791	2,019	293	2,002	2
Macao (J-17)	544,600	200	2,723	191	10
Macedonia (D-11)	2,032,017	1,363	1,491	1,319	1
Madagascar (O-9)	20,653,556	23,681	872	22,664	8
Madeira (H-1)	247,161	1,146	216	1,123	1
Malawi (N-8)	13,077,160	79,157	165	72,634	2
Malaysia (L-16)	29,000,000	3,766	7,700	3,630	8
Mali (K-3)	14,517,176	287	50,582	241	5
Malta (G-5)	404,139	580	697	560	-3
Marshall Islands (L-23)	64,522	186	347	178	2
Martinique (P-32)	403,688	4,659	87	4,569	1
Mauritius (O-10)	1,277,853	1,722	742	1,713	2
Mayotte (N-9)	190,000	70	2,714	64	-12
Mexico (G-31)	108,782,804	710,454	153	696,749	4
Moldova (F-7)	4,086,300	20,244	202	19,918	1
Mongolia (F-15)	3,041,142	287	10,596	244	10
Montenegro (D-10)	620,145	230	2,696	222	8
Montserrat (P-32)	5,097	13	392	11	22
Mozambique (O-7)	22,416,881	49,306	455	44,182	2
Myanmar (J-15)	53,414,374	3,746	14,259	3,618	3
Namibia (O-5)	2,185,625	1,898	1,152	1,781	10
Nauru (M-23)	11,019	13	848	12	9
Nepal (H-13)	29,134,644	1,413	20,619	1,304	20
Netherlands (E-4)	16,577,612	30,350	546	29,357	
Nevis (P-32)	12,355	59	209	55	-4
New Caledonia (O-23)	249,264	1,944	128	1,839	4
New Zealand (Q-24)	4,380,036	14,382	305	13,692	2
Nicaragua (H-33)	5,727,000	22,848	251	21,816	4
Niger (K-4)	11,453,651	318	36,018	283	3
Nigeria (L-4)	140,003,542	320,266	437	298,476	3
Niue (O-26)	1,398	31	45	28	
Norfolk Island (P-23)	1,862	10	186	8	-11
Norway (C-4)	4,888,000	10,883	449	10,517	1
Pakistan (H-12)	177,276,594	967	183,326	877	4
Palau (L-19)	20,461	100	205	86	4
Panama (J-34)	3,504,483	13,225	265	12,980	3
Papua New Guinea (M-20)	6,935,889	4,105	1,690	3,672	1
Paraguay (M-37)	6,996,000	8,679	806	8,378	2
Peru (L-35)	29,461,933	112,366	262	105,082	4
Philippines (K-18)	93,000,000	171,910	541	169,096	4
Pohnpei (L-22)	34,680	107	324	98	17
Poland (E-6)	38,091,951	126,488	301	125,193	
Portugal (G-2)	10,135,309	49,489	205	48,732	
Puerto Rico (O-31)	3,954,037	26,293	150	25,524	1
Réunion (O-10)	817,000	2,850	287	2,810	2
Rodrigues (O-11)	38,000	40	950	37	6
Romania (F-6)	21,462,186	39,842	539	39,270	2
Rota (K-20)	2,899	14	207	14	100
Russia (C-15)	141,915,000	162,182	875	157,365	2
Rwanda (M-7)	10,042,578	18,937	530	17,548	8
Saba (O-32)	1,500	14	107	13	30

2009 Av. Pubs.	2010 No. Bptzd.	Av. Aux. Pio. Pubs.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Congs.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Attendance
49	4	1	1	1	6,695	34	103
2,997	102	156	372	44	747,287	2,642	5,644
1,955	39	70	129	33	350,299	1,051	3,999
173	12	5	33	2	56,409	209	394
1,304	48	57	200	21	380,321	1,196	3,460
20,894	1,373	1,022	3,345	447	6,525,535	59,322	122,853
1,115	26	42	90	18	219,918	852	1,959
71,386	4,734	2,786	5,791	1,230	13,954,484	79,942	256,169
3,376	177	161	722	113	1,125,190	6,269	9,995
230	11	13	46	7	90,357	608	927
576	12	16	40	7	97,047	228	1,014
175	7	12	27	3	55,529	463	877
4,503	149	209	376	57	949,731	4,940	10,873
1,685	65	57	119	26	326,968	2,076	4,125
73	1	3	3	1	12,130	105	183
668,876	27,861	22,649	86,284	12,339	154,894,673	946,920	2,148,385
19,672	762	851	1,804	243	3,740,909	14,510	39,639
221	16	20	94	4	112,171	537	754
205	10	18	25	4	60,635	153	660
9		1	2	1	2,944	30	121
43,324	3,198	1,304	4,095	1,013	8,706,642	56,662	230,110
3,508	304	89	523	71	805,366	3,977	8,373
1,621	173	67	163	38	418,588	3,032	6,113
11	2		2	1	3,784	27	136
1,086	156	97	280	17	413,166	2,781	4,607
29,452	505	879	1,272	395	4,217,345	10,709	51,459
57		2	5	1	11,714	66	230
1,768	86	102	125	26	372,840	2,176	5,822
13,462	368	512	980	182	2,440,926	7,799	26,952
20,898	1,252	865	2,667	341	5,485,077	40,370	82,586
276	11	9	48	6	88,645	419	1,073
291,179	14,051	8,265	30,762	5,329	58,264,720	601,379	661,530
28	1	1	4	1	6,480	35	77
9				1	930	2	14
10,384	191	264	597	166	1,505,113	4,319	17,445
842	26	41	56	18	170,596	1,047	4,460
83	1	5	19	1	28,556	166	307
12,653	574	586	1,506	279	3,051,900	19,253	44,708
3,619	210	137	370	60	789,161	4,908	25,875
8,196	307	309	1,128	152	2,055,393	10,280	19,981
100,910	9,536	6,141	23,171	1,240	32,947,310	180,831	324,897
162,647	9,694	6,754	28,752	3,091	37,553,269	175,975	493,272
84	4	7	16	1	24,497	175	265
125,679	2,669	3,820	7,145	1,814	16,569,723	47,322	212,002
48,610	1,238	1,834	2,985	643	8,683,163	27,891	97,174
25,155	727	916	2,676	323	5,079,629	16,958	59,594
2,760	80	139	190	33	549,788	2,079	6,096
35	1	1	5	1	8,886	48	121
38,653	1,343	1,322	3,035	530	6,986,503	23,752	82,337
7	1	1	3	1	5,559	34	58
154,387	6,629	9,475	25,945	2,339	44,039,527	123,704	278,813
16,177	1,821	1,240	3,161	409	6,771,265	45,404	65,712
10		1	1	1	2,864	30	60

Country or Territory	Population	2010 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Publisher to	2010 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 2009
Saint Eustatius (P-32)	3,500	21	167	19	
Saint Helena (N-3)	4,060	112	36	109	
Saint Kitts (O-32)	50,675	199	255	189	1
Saint Lucia (Q-33)	172,000	717	240	663	
Saint Maarten (O-32)	41,000	328	125	316	-2
Saint Pierre and Miquelon (D-37)	6,125	12	510	12	
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines (Q-32)	109,000	346	315	336	2
Saipan (K-20)	71,400	218	328	201	13
Samoa (N-25)	180,741	415	436	395	2
San Marino (F-5)	31,794	215	148	202	
São Tomé and Príncipe (M-4)	219,059	575	381	558	8
Senegal (K-2)	12,171,265	1,112	10,945	1,082	2
Serbia (C-11)	8,118,146	3,860	2,103	3,805	1
Seychelles (M-9)	86,525	317	273	301	4
Sierra Leone (L-2)	6,440,053	1,861	3,461	1,747	4
Slovakia (F-6)	5,429,763	11,289	481	11,135	
Slovenia (B-8)	2,048,488	1,993	1,028	1,974	1
Solomon Islands (M-22)	595,613	1,923	310	1,680	-3
South Africa (P-6)	49,991,300	90,037	555	86,157	6
Spain (G-3)	46,951,532	112,810	416	106,497	1
Sri Lanka (L-13)	20,450,000	5,029	4,066	4,733	4
Sudan (K-7)	39,154,490	1,826	21,443	1,693	1
Suriname (J-37)	524,143	2,530	207	2,430	4
Swaziland (P-7)	1,018,449	2,793	365	2,753	7
Sweden (B-6)	9,380,437	22,499	417	21,967	
Switzerland (F-4)	7,785,900	17,937	434	17,387	
Tahiti (M-27)	259,706	2,430	107	2,331	6
Taiwan (J-17)	23,100,000	7,622	3,031	7,339	7
Tanzania (M-8)	42,720,229	15,091	2,831	13,572	2
Thailand (K-15)	66,001,000	3,235	20,402	3,140	7
Tinian (K-20)	2,940	16	184	14	-7
Togo (L-4)	5,683,850	16,300	349	15,660	4
Tonga (O-25)	104,000	240	433	224	2
Trinidad & Tobago (R-33)	1,297,944	8,978	145	8,820	2
Turkey (G-8)	71,500,000	2,074	34,474	2,024	5
Turks and Caicos (N-29)	22,942	273	84	241	13
Tuvalu (M-24)	12,373	67	185	61	33
Uganda (L-7)	31,300,000	5,271	5,938	5,002	4
Ukraine (E-7)	45,859,818	149,852	306	146,387	2
United States of America (E-32)	305,711,372	1,178,349	259	1,115,786	2
Uruguay (O-37)	3,241,000	11,635	279	11,364	2
Vanuatu (N-23)	234,023	513	456	419	7
Venezuela (J-36)	28,830,000	119,455	241	114,713	5
Virgin Islands, British (O-31)	24,500	254	96	246	10
Virgin Islands, U.S. (O-31)	110,000	645	171	613	
Wallis & Futuna Islands (N-25)	13,566	67	202	62	3
Yap (L-19)	12,167	25	487	21	-5
Zambia (N-7)	13,272,553	159,024	83	147,614	5
Zimbabwe (O-7)	12,459,400	38,025	328	36,380	9
30 Other Lands		23,538		21,721	14.3
Grand Total (236 Lands)		7,508,050		7,224,930	2.5

2009 Av. Pubs.	2010 No. Bptzd.	Av. Aux. Pio. Pubs.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Attendance
19	3	1	2	1	4,600	31	75
109		1		3	9,803	58	275
188	6	5	26	3	50,692	337	717
662	29	34	84	9	157,628	1,028	2,164
324	16	11	30	5	69,294	459	1,120
12		1	3	1	4,155	9	14
329	9	20	48	7	89,485	515	1,157
178	22	12	39	2	64,683	391	618
388	42	24	70	10	116,106	572	1,765
202	2	12	35	2	56,621	121	359
515	47	42	96	10	199,594	2,083	2,929
1,063	39	46	140	26	323,396	1,960	2,734
3,776	96	236	482	57	984,760	2,035	8,370
290	8	6	23	4	56,291	357	790
1,679	113	92	184	34	459,372	3,758	8,017
11,114	216	247	289	161	1,334,397	3,019	20,889
1,950	47	77	199	29	439,840	1,053	3,143
1,735	70	39	230	47	348,922	1,714	8,698
81,419	4,306	3,029	8,070	1,773	17,939,931	111,613	214,828
105,558	2,333	5,039	10,934	1,466	24,036,847	59,839	196,197
4,532	386	223	442	85	951,235	6,085	12,880
1,676	104	73	246	65	486,749	3,820	7,349
2,336	141	148	210	49	528,053	4,042	8,487
2,576	170	109	253	83	621,469	3,826	6,886
22,054	346	684	1,727	325	3,418,723	9,299	35,759
17,301	273	448	742	272	2,532,552	8,127	30,709
2,204	144	126	198	28	537,553	3,391	8,138
6,866	503	628	2,084	110	2,980,525	12,573	17,241
13,275	863	441	1,521	436	3,242,773	22,284	47,844
2,933	142	186	779	81	1,069,454	4,652	7,516
15		1	2	1	3,626	20	47
15,116	893	755	1,326	253	3,834,407	44,483	57,120
219	15	5	34	5	54,460	299	622
8,640	370	559	984	112	1,866,804	10,477	24,339
1,935	92	98	166	27	441,112	1,207	3,862
214	18	12	35	5	74,678	627	1,188
46	4	1	2	1	7,045	54	251
4,790	428	211	740	113	1,452,639	12,780	17,799
143,609	6,117	8,412	17,584	1,647	34,102,930	96,849	271,425
1,096,502	35,120	37,177	127,609	12,995	234,901,534	683,090	2,485,231
11,193	347	377	616	158	1,790,064	9,449	25,489
391	23	21	46	4	96,705	1,015	2,470
109,521	6,231	6,140	17,886	1,424	31,151,365	178,221	413,402
224	2	13	31	4	60,574	294	864
613	23	21	89	9	146,147	633	1,940
60	4	1	8	1	14,154	103	259
22	2	2	4	1	6,759	52	129
140,250	10,759	4,175	10,808	2,302	28,478,671	274,812	710,352
33,506	3,346	1,618	4,016	974	8,673,909	76,374	94,379
19,004	1,606	1,441	6,318	571	8,992,475	33,210	41,271
7,046,419	294,368	287,960	844,901	107,210	1,604,764,248	8,058,359	18,706,895

14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26



RUSSIA

ALASKA

MONGOLIA

DEMOCRATIC
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
OF KOREA

*NORTH
PACIFIC
OCEAN*

CHINA

REPUBLIC
OF KOREA

JAPAN

BHUTAN

BANGLADESH

MYANMAR

LAOS

THAILAND

CAMBODIA
VIETNAM

BRUNEI

MALAYSIA

SINGAPORE

INDONESIA

COCOS ISLANDS

EAST TIMOR

OCEAN

AUSTRALIA

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MIDWAY

WAKE ISLAND

HAWAII

TINIAN

SAIPAN

ROTA

GUAM

PHILIPPINES

TAIWAN

HONG KONG

MACAO

YAP

PALAU

CHUUK

POHNPEI

KOSRAE

NAURU

MARSHALL ISLANDS

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

KIRIBATI

TUVALU

TOKELAU

SOLOMON ISLANDS

VANUATU

WALLIS & FUTUNA ISLS.

FIJI

SAMOA

AMERICAN SAMOA

NIUE

TONGA

COOK ISLANDS

NEW CALEDONIA

NORFOLK ISLAND

NEW ZEALAND

**PAPUA
NEW GUINEA**





2010 Grand Totals

Branches of Jehovah's Witnesses:	116
Number of Lands Reporting:	236
Total Congregations:	107,210
Worldwide Memorial Attendance:	18,706,895
Memorial Partakers Worldwide:	11,202
Peak of Publishers in Kingdom Service:	7,508,050
Average Publishers Preaching Each Month:	7,224,930
Percentage of Increase Over 2009:	2.5
Total Number Baptized:	294,368
Average Auxiliary Pioneer Publishers Each Month:	287,960
Average Pioneer Publishers Each Month:	844,901
Total Hours Spent in Field:	1,604,764,248
Average Home Bible Studies Each Month:	8,058,359

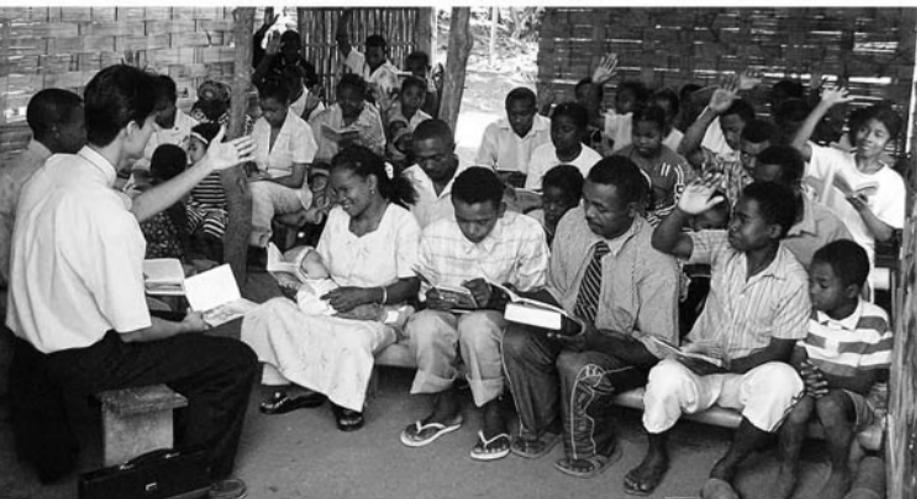
During the 2010 service year, Jehovah's Witnesses spent over \$155 million in caring for special pioneers, missionaries, and traveling overseers in their field service assignments. ■ Worldwide, a total of 20,062 ordained ministers staff the branch facilities. All are members of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses.



Africa

LANDS	57
POPULATION	888,219,101
PUBLISHERS	1,222,352
BIBLE STUDIES	2,596,614

GROUP SEARCHES FOR TRUTH. In a small village in **Madagascar**, 80 people decided to leave the National Protestant Church. They built a church for themselves and began to search for the true religion, examining each of the local religions in turn. They concluded that the Catholics did not study the Bible and that within the Lutheran Church there were dissensions. The Pentecostals, they felt, did not teach the truth, and the Seventh-Day Adventists had too many taboos. Then they approached one of our brothers and asked him



if he could teach them the Bible. The brother readily agreed.

A few publishers arranged to visit these interested people. The brothers met 26 of them gathered in the church that they had built, and they were ready to listen to Bible information. Using chapter 15 of the *Bible Teach* book, the brothers explained how to find the religion approved by God. The people were satisfied with the explanation. When the brothers returned, 73 met with them. And on the third visit, 142 were in attendance!

TEXT MESSAGE GOES ASTRAY. To encourage her Bible student, a Witness named Menen, who lives in **Ethiopia**, sent her the 2009 yeartext as a text message on her cell phone. However, she entered a wrong number, and the message went to another cell-phone subscriber. The woman who received it read it repeatedly: “‘Bear thorough witness to the good news.’—Acts 20:24, NW.” As she was God-fearing, she agreed with the message but did not know how she could apply it. She was also puzzled by the mysterious “NW” [*New World Translation*] at the end. Weeks went by, but the matter was still on her mind. Finally, she phoned the sender of the text message. Our sister was surprised to hear what had happened to her message, but she seized the opportunity to answer the woman’s sincere inquiry. This led to a Bible study, which is being conducted twice a week.

YOUNG PIONEER PARTNERS. Persis, who lives in **Cameroon**, became an unbaptized publisher when she was six years old. Her first service report showed ten home Bible studies. The congregation secretary thought that it was a mistake. When questioned, Persis explained to him that she actually had ten different students. He

further asked: "How do you know how much time to report, since you do not have a watch?" She replied that she knew that her school recess was one hour long. She started preaching at the beginning and stopped when the bell rang. Her bold witnessing influenced her mother and cousin, who later became unbaptized publishers. Now ten years old, Persis is baptized and is serving as an auxiliary pioneer while in school. Her eight-year-old friend Aasy is already an unbaptized publisher. A Bible student said of them: "At the meetings I was happy to see children greeting everyone, especially the elderly ones, before going to sit with their parents. I never saw this at my church. I know children growing up that way will be better people in society tomorrow."



The Americas

LANDS	55
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POPULATION	918,834,998
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PUBLISHERS	3,673,750
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BIBLE STUDIES	3,967,184
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SHE DID NOT KNOCK. Miriam, who lives in **Bolivia**, prayed to God for a week. Her prayer went something like this: “Please help me to know you, but I do not want help from Jehovah’s Witnesses. I do not want them knocking on my door.”

Later that week the phone rang. It was Candy, a special pioneer, who offered to take Miriam our magazines in one hour. She accepted. Within an hour Candy was at her door. Miriam abruptly opened it and ordered Candy to come in and sit down. Miriam then began to pace and shake her head, obviously upset. Candy asked her what was wrong. “I am in shock!” Miriam said. “For over a week, I have been praying to God for direction and guidance, but I was very clear in my prayers that I didn’t want the help to come from Jehovah’s Witnesses who are always knocking on my door! And then you phoned me instead of knocking! Since your call an hour ago, I have been praying to God that you would not come to visit me. And you came! I am in shock! It is very obvious that he wants you people, Jehovah’s Witnesses, to help me.” A study was started immediately.

THEY LEFT HIM FOR DEAD. Pasensi was a popular former village head, or *kapiten*, in **Suriname** and a close

ally of the *granman*—the chieftain, or king—of the whole river area in the interior. Pasensi proudly defended local traditions. He opposed Jehovah’s Witnesses because he thought them to be a threat to traditional ways.

In time, a young man claimed to have the ability to identify villagers who practiced sorcery. His many followers accompanied the young man along the river in canoes, beating those accused and taking all that belonged to them. Large sums of money had to be paid over to “cleanse” the accused of the evil spirit they were said to possess. Among the many innocent victims was Pasensi, who was beaten and left for dead. Even his friend, the *granman*, could not help him, afraid that his own life and reputation would be at stake if he helped someone accused of sorcery. Friends and relatives were forbidden to give any help. However, Pasensi’s son-in-law mustered up courage and took him to a village inhabited mostly by Jehovah’s Witnesses. The



brothers discussed the matter and, knowing the risk to themselves, decided to help. They arranged for Pasensi to be taken by canoe to a nearby village where a brother works as the station manager at an airstrip. From there, this former opposer was flown to a city for medical treatment.

Pasensi, who recovered from his wounds, was moved by the love shown him by the people he once opposed. He began to study the Bible and was baptized in December 2009. Pasensi is now a zealous preacher of the good news, and though he is 80 years old, he auxiliary pioneered in April 2010.

HE THOUGHT HE KNEW THE BIBLE. A bearded man named Eric showed up at a congregation meeting in the **United States** with Bible in hand. When one of our brothers greeted him, Eric began asking about our beliefs. He declined the *Bible Teach* book, preferring to use only the Bible. His Bible-reading schedule was 20 pages per day, and he had read the entire Bible more times than he could recall. After the meeting, his discussion with the brother continued for more than three hours. By the end of the visit, Eric said, "I feel sick." Our brother asked why. Eric responded: "I felt confident that I knew the Scriptures quite well. However, after this visit I realize that I don't know them at all." He then accepted a *Bible Teach* book.

The following day, the two had their first study together. Eric had stayed up the night before, reading the first ten chapters of the *Bible Teach* book. His conclusion? "I have finally found the truth!" They studied three to four hours a day five days a week. He began preparing for and attending all the meetings along with his entire family. Within the first week, he wrote letters of resignation to three different churches,



shaved off his beard, and resolved not to celebrate holidays. Within two weeks he joined the Theocratic Ministry School, and within four weeks he became an unbaptized publisher. He was baptized in April 2010, only six months after his initial contact with Jehovah's Witnesses!

BAPTIZED AT SEVEN. Paola, who lives in western **Mexico**, is being raised by her grandparents. Her grandmother began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses when Paola was five years old. Paola listened in, and the truth took root in her young heart. Although her grandmother did not progress, Paola began to attend the meetings by herself. She would ask her grandparents to help her get dressed and to help her cross the street to get to the Kingdom Hall.

As soon as she learned to read and write, Paola enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School and became a

publisher. Because of her love for Jehovah, she got baptized at the age of seven. When asked why she attends the meetings and preaches so zealously, even without her family's support, Paola, who is now ten, answers: "I like the talks a lot because they encourage me to keep on studying the Bible and to stay out of trouble. And I preach because I want to teach people what Jehovah is going to do for them in the future and because the Bible can make them happy right now."

WRONG-NUMBER WITNESSING. In the **Dominican Republic**, a sister was receiving many wrong-number telephone calls, which interrupted her work. After a few days, she thought, 'I can use this inconvenience to preach.' How did she do it? When responding to wrong numbers, she said that she regretted that the caller had dialed a wrong number, but she then added, "Let me take this opportunity to ask you, Have you read the Bible today?" Though some hung up, quite a few answered that they had not read the Bible. She then asked, "Do you know why it is so important?" To provide a Scriptural answer, she would then read Psalm 1: 1-3. One government official talked at length with the sister and said that he did not have a Bible. Arrangements were made to take him a Bible and some Bible literature. Two weeks later he telephoned, this time to thank her for her interest and the literature.

On another wrong-number call, a young woman asked, "Are you one of Jehovah's Witnesses?" When the sister replied that she was, the woman began to weep, explaining that she was an inactive publisher. The sister encouraged her and arranged for someone to help her spiritually. The woman is now a reactivated publisher.



Asia and the Middle East

LANDS	47
POPULATION	4,587,021,833
PUBLISHERS	652,251
BIBLE STUDIES	601,306

“THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.” It was a hot summer day in **Kazakhstan**. Two pioneers, a brother and a sister, were out preaching and saw a woman drawing water from a well. The brother asked her for a drink of water, and while he was drinking, the sister witnessed to the woman. The woman showed interest and invited the pioneers to her home so that she could learn more about what they were telling her. They talked for a while, and the pioneers left Bible literature with her. The sister promised to call back two days later.

As promised, the sister returned, along with her mother, who is also a Witness. They found the woman waiting for them outside her home, holding the literature that had been left with her. She gave it back to the sister and said: “This is from Jehovah’s Witnesses! Yours is a Russian religion!”

The mother then asked the woman if she might read a text from the Scriptures to her before they left. Wanting to show the woman God’s name in the Scriptures, she turned to Exodus 3:15 and read: “Jehovah the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.” To the sisters’ surprise, the woman in-

vited them into her house. What made her change her mind so suddenly? The woman had forefathers named Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. She reasoned that if Jehovah was the God of her ancestors, she should not turn away his Witnesses. On the next visit, a Bible study was started. She was so eager to learn the truth that the study was conducted twice a week. Despite opposition from her sons, she grew spiritually, and now she is an unbaptized publisher. In addition, her daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law's mother are studying the Bible and regularly attending meetings. Because the initial contact resembled the account at John 4:3-15, she is known in the congregation as "the Samaritan woman."

"I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS." From **Cyprus** an elderly pioneer sister writes: "On a Wednesday morning, I was not feeling very well, but rather than stay at home, I wanted very much to do street witnessing. So I prayed to Jehovah, asking if he would send someone who had the time to come and sit next to me on the bench, so that I could start a Bible study. Soon a young man from Nepal came along. I was holding the magazines in my hand, and before I even had the chance to speak to him, he asked me what the magazines were about. When I told him that they were based on the Bible, he said: 'Madam, I have the time, so may I sit down next to you? I have some questions about the Bible that I would like to ask you.'

"Of course I agreed, as that was just what I had asked Jehovah for! The man then continued: 'My first question is, What does the Bible really teach?' I was so surprised that I could hardly reply! I took out the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* from my bag



and showed it to him. He looked at the book, looked up at me, and asked, 'Isn't the title of this book the very question I just asked you?' So I started a Bible study right there on the park bench! He is now regular in his study of the Bible as well as in meeting attendance, and he has expressed his desire to enroll in the Theocratic Ministry School. I really appreciate the value of fully relying on Jehovah's strength and direction in performing the Christian ministry, even though sometimes I feel physically tired."

GRANDPA TEACHES GRANDSON'S MURDERER. Miguel's grandson was killed several years ago. The murderer, Esmeraldo, was caught but did not admit to the crime when tried in court. Nevertheless, based on the evidence, he was sentenced to prison.

Later, an elder invited Miguel to accompany him to witness in the very prison in the **Philippines** where Esmeraldo was incarcerated. Miguel hesitated, knowing that his grandson's murderer was there. How-

ever, he went along and joined in teaching some inmates who were having a Bible study. During the study, he looked up and saw Esmeraldo walking toward him. To defuse what might have been a volatile situation, Miguel spoke to him mildly, saying: “Esmer, I came here, not to quarrel, but to show love to people like you. Look, we are discussing the Bible with this man. What happened to you would not have happened had you known the Word of God. Please study the Bible with us.” To Miguel’s surprise, Esmeraldo stayed for the rest of the study. Touched by what he heard, he openly admitted to Miguel that he had indeed murdered the grandson. He then asked for forgiveness.

The elder, who had not heard their private exchange, saw that they appeared to be having a cordial conversation, so he asked Miguel to study with Esmeraldo. Miguel felt fearful at first, knowing that his grandson was not the only person

murdered by this man, but he agreed. Esmeraldo had a long struggle to conform to God’s standards; but his patient efforts paid off, and on February 1, 2010, he was baptized in symbol of his dedication to Jehovah. Miguel, in a display of Christian forgiveness for what Esmeraldo had done, is now working to shorten his sentence so that Esmeraldo might share Bible truths more fully with others.





Europe

LANDS	47
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POPULATION	739,193,855
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PUBLISHERS	1,575,094
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BIBLE STUDIES	830,888
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HER TWO DESIRES WERE FULFILLED. Nelena, who is 19 years old and lives in **Bulgaria**, had two desires—to be baptized and to auxiliary pioneer. However, she suffers from hereditary motor and sensory neuropathy, which for the moment is incurable. She breathes with the aid of a machine, and this restricts her ability to move about. Fulfilling her first desire, baptism, presented a problem because her condition did not allow her to leave her apartment to attend an assembly. So when she was 18 years old, a Scriptural talk was given at her home, after which she was baptized in a tub.

What of her desire to auxiliary pioneer? During the season when the weather is good, she can sometimes

breathe for an hour or so without the aid of the machine. She then enrolls as an auxiliary pioneer, and a publisher pushes her from door to door in a wheelchair. Nelena also conducts a home Bible study by means of voice calls over the Internet. At times, sisters in the con-



gregation conduct their Bible studies in Nelená's home, allowing her to participate. Consequently, Nelená was able to auxiliary pioneer three times during the past year. She says: "I am happy that I have fulfilled my two desires. Doing so has drawn me closer to Jehovah, my loving Creator."

HE NOW WEARS A TIE. A sister in **Armenia** was ridiculed at her place of work for being one of Jehovah's Witnesses. A workmate had the habit of taunting her, saying that "the people who wear ties" had coaxed the sister into accepting their religion. After trying to reason with him many times but to no avail, she decided to ignore his comments and, in imitation of Jesus Christ, "made no answer." (Matt. 27:12) Eventually, the worker was laid off for his bad behavior and for causing trouble for our sister. Months later, a man walked into the workplace looking for her. It was the former workmate who had caused her so much heartache. His appearance caught her by surprise. Though he had ridiculed Witnesses for wearing ties, he was now wearing one himself and carrying a book bag. He said to our sister: "I apologize for the hurtful words I said to you. Now I know I have found the truth." The man had studied the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, and despite opposition from his family, he had been baptized and had enrolled as a regular pioneer.

"DO YOU KNOW MRS. NADIA?" Nadia is a pioneer in a congregation in northern **Italy**. In September 2009 she spoke through the intercom to a man who immediately interrupted her to tell her that his wife had just died and that he did not want to talk to her. The following Sunday, Nadia went back to express her condolences and to highlight the Bible's resurrection hope, but the



man's reaction was the same. The *Watchtower* Study that was held that same afternoon included the experience of a sister who had written a letter to someone who had lost a loved one in death. That made Nadia think of the man she had spoken to over the intercom, so she decided to write a letter of condolence and include details about the resurrection hope. Two days later, she left the letter in the man's mailbox.

Several days later, Nadia was engaging in street work and stopped a man in his 70's to read a Bible verse to him. The man asked if she was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and Nadia replied that she was. The man went on to explain that he had been visited by one of Jehovah's Witnesses, who had left him a beautiful letter that deeply moved him. He then asked, "Do you know Mrs. Nadia?" With much amazement on the part of both of them, Nadia introduced herself and made arrangements to visit him with her husband. Not only did the man start to study the Bible but he is now regularly attending the meetings.

THEY CAN'T STUDY WITH ALL. Four baptized Witnesses live in the town of Bujanovac in southern **Serbia**. These Kingdom proclaimers were overjoyed to have 460 in attendance at the 2010 Memorial! The elders of a nearby

congregation have organized regular meetings in Bujanovac at a rented facility. On average, more than 50 attend—most of whom are of Roma descent. Because of the tremendous response to the Kingdom message, the special pioneers assigned to this territory cannot conduct Bible studies with all those who have shown interest. Therefore, they study only with those who come well-prepared to all the meetings.

A CENTENARIAN AND MORE! Elin, the oldest publisher in **Sweden**, is 110 years of age—the age that Joshua reached. (Josh. 24:29) She lives in a home for elderly people and seizes every opportunity to speak to visitors and to all she meets there. She places many books. When an elder, together with his daughter, preached from house to house in the neighborhood, they met a young woman who said that Elin had preached to her and had left her a book. This resulted in a fine conversation.*

SHE FOUND THE BOOKS AT CHURCH. Tatyana, who lives in **Belarus**, was surprised to receive a phone call one day from a young woman whom she did not know. The woman wanted to get Bible answers to her questions. A lively conversation followed. How did she get Tatyana's phone number? The woman explained that while visiting

* Elin died as this yearbook was being finalized.



a church, she had found a *Bible Teach* book and a *New World Translation* under a bench and that Tatyana's phone number was written in the books. How did the books end up in the church? They had been taken there by the mother of a girl with whom Tatyana had studied the Bible. Evidently, the mother's motive was to check with the priest to see if her daughter should read them or not. For some reason, the books were left under the bench. The woman saw them there and decided to take them home. The phone call has led to further Bible discussions.

LOST COAT OPENS THE WAY. Elena, a special pioneer sister, noticed a nice coat lying on a street in Minsk, **Belarus**. The coat was clean and did not look like it had been thrown out. Picking it up, she found \$1,200 (U.S.) in the pocket. Looking at people walking by, she quickly identified the man who must have lost the coat. He was frantically running about as though searching for something. Elena had to run to catch up with him. He was a businessman from Bangladesh, living in Moscow. He was delighted to get his coat back with the money. He also wanted to know why the sister returned the coat, even running after him to do so. She explained that she was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He said that a few days earlier, two Witnesses had spoken with him. For about 30 minutes, he had argued with them and defended his religious beliefs. The man then asked Elena how he could show his appreciation for the returned coat. She said that she did not want to turn the incident to her advantage but that the best way to show his appreciation would be to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses upon his return to Moscow. He agreed to do so.

Oceania

LANDS	30
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POPULATION	39,384,408
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PUBLISHERS	101,483
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BIBLE STUDIES	62,367
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MANAGING A SPEECH DISORDER. Hamish, a 23-year-old brother who lives in **Australia**, has a severe speech disorder that causes his words to be jumbled or unintelligible or not to come out at all. This disability, however, has not diminished his zeal for public speaking or for the field ministry. For example, to deliver a talk at the Kingdom Hall, Hamish first types his manuscript into a portable electronic device that converts written text into audible speech. When delivering his talk, he places the device on the speaker's stand and operates the keyboard to select and replay blocks of speech. The synthe-

sized speech is picked up by a microphone and amplified through the sound system. When his part calls for audience participation, he acknowledges the comments by typing into the device. In the field service he communicates in much the same way, using a mixture of prepared sentences,



scripture quotations, and fast typing! As a result, he has many fine return visits. Since 2007, when Hamish was appointed as a ministerial servant, he has served as an auxiliary pioneer several times each year.

PROBLEMS WITH HER PRINTER. In **New Caledonia**, David, a computer repairman, got a phone call from a woman who had trouble with her printer—a document could not be printed. David swiftly fixed the problem, but he was surprised when he saw that the printed document read: “DO NOT call. Jesus is in our home. We do not need any other religion.”

David said to the householder: “Excuse me, but as I was repairing your printer, I read the message on the document. May I ask you why you wrote it?”

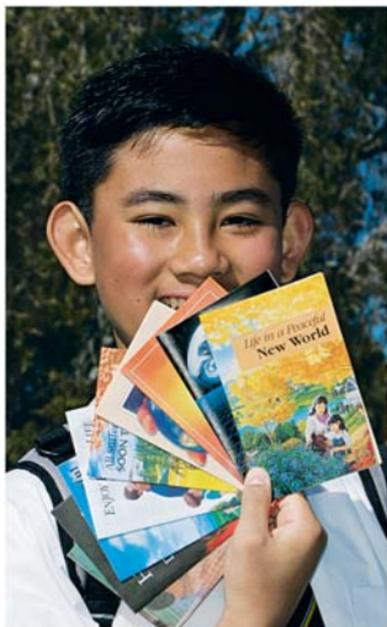
She answered: “Oh, you know that Jehovah’s Witnesses come every weekend. We are tired of seeing them in this area. I tell you, none of them will get across our doorstep.”

David asked: “Do you know that you have already invited one of them into your house?”

She replied: “Impossible. That will never happen!”

David said: “I am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses! And you invited me in!” The woman was amazed and a little ashamed. David kindly explained why Jehovah’s Witnesses call on people at their homes. A two-hour discussion followed. A few days later, David revisited this woman and her husband. They explained that after pondering over what had happened, they were sure that God had led David to them. Hence, they could not refuse his visit! They now regularly accept our magazines.

EQUIPPED WITH TRACTS. Nathan, aged 12, lives in **Australia**. He carries Bible-based tracts in his schoolbag



and regularly witnesses to his friends at school. One day, while walking home from school, he saw an elderly lady standing in the front yard of her home. The lady smiled, so Nathan smiled back and gave her one of his tracts. The lady then told him that her husband had died three years earlier. At this Nathan reached into his bag and pulled out the tract *What Hope for Dead Loved Ones?* The lady's eyes brimmed with tears as Nathan told her about

the coming resurrection when she could see her husband again in Paradise. "But when will all suffering end?" asked the lady. Nathan reached for another tract, *All Suffering Soon to End!* The lady then asked Nathan what else he believed. So he gave her yet another tract from his bag, *What Do Jehovah's Witnesses Believe?* After that, Nathan left. Weeks later he saw the lady again in her front yard. She called him over and gave him a hug. "Guess what, Nathan?" she said. "After you gave me those tracts, two Witness ladies called on me, and now I am studying the Bible with them!"

THEY HAD ONLY ONE MEMORIAL INVITATION. Michael helped in the construction of the new branch complex in the **Solomon Islands**. After that, he decided to preach to people on Mbanika Island, an isolated island where he had lived as a child and where his fleshly brothers

lived. There were no Witnesses on the island. There is also no regular ship to the island, no postal service, and only one available telephone.

He traveled to Mbanika Island with Hansly, a young pioneer. On their arrival, they immediately began to build a small palm-leaf Kingdom Hall and to invite people to attend the Memorial of Christ's death. Since they had only one printed invitation, the two brothers just showed it to people and explained the importance of the Memorial.

A day before the occasion, the brothers paddled two hours to the other side of the island to extend an invitation to a family who lived there. However, they found only the children at home. Michael decided to leave them the only copy of the invitation that he had. He gave it to the older daughter and asked her to give it to her father.

The next afternoon, as Michael and Hansly were preparing for the Memorial, they saw the family coming in a canoe. The father had read the invitation and concluded that the Memorial must be a very important event, so he brought everyone in his family. That evening, 52 attended the Memorial. Michael and Hansly continue to preach and to study the Bible with those who attended.



Acts of Jehovah's Witnesses IN MODERN TIMES

Papua New Guinea Proclaiming the good news in this tropical land has been an enormous challenge. There are dense jungles, extensive swamps, and rugged mountains. More than a thousand tribes live here, and over 800 languages are spoken. Read how courageous brothers have overcome these obstacles to make Bible truth known to others. Read, too, of the courage and determination of fellow worshippers who broke the bonds of superstition and unscriptural tradition to become faithful servants of Jehovah. Surely this account will strengthen your faith.



Estonia This is the exciting account of hardworking brothers and sisters who advanced Kingdom interests in the face of fierce persecution. Find out what the “chariot of the heavenly Kingdom” was and how a police officer broke his arm at the branch office. Discover how the brothers built their own printing machines and made their own ink. Learn how humble servants of Jehovah endured a grueling two-week train trip and survived the harsh Siberian weather. Read why a sister said, “It was good when I was put in isolation.” Yes, this is the thrilling chronicle of the loyalty, courage, and resourcefulness of God’s faithful servants in Estonia.





Papua New Guinea

IN THE ancient past—over a period of many years—waves of people migrated south through Asia in search of a new home. At the eastern end of the Malay Archipelago, they encountered New Guinea, a rugged tropical island—the second largest in the world.* They trekked along its steamy coastline, settling its vast swamps, dense jungles, and scattered outer islands. Some scaled its mountainous spine to populate temperate highlands blessed with broad valleys and fertile soils.

The population formed no unified national group but was composed of over a thousand small and often-warring tribes. They followed diverse customs, wore distinctive dress, and spoke over 800 languages. Most groups lived in fiercely defended enclaves, completely oblivious to the outside world. Many believed that the horizon hid a realm of demons and departed ancestors who affected their lives for evil or good. People's lives revolved around appeasing those spirits.

The population was also physically diverse—barring one widespread characteristic. Noting this feature, Jorge de Meneses, a Portuguese official visiting

* Greenland is the largest island in the world. Australia is considered to be a continent, not an island.

there in 1526, dubbed the island *Ilhas dos Papuas*, meaning “Land of the Fuzzy-Haired People.” The Spanish navigator Ynigo Ortiz de Retes felt that the islanders resembled the inhabitants of Guinea, West Africa, so he named the island *Nueva Guinea*, or New Guinea.

In the 19th century, European powers divided the island into three sections. The Dutch, who came first, claimed the western half, which is today part of Indonesia. The British and the Germans divided the eastern half into British New Guinea in the south (later called Papua) and German New Guinea in the north (later, New Guinea). After World War I, both of these territories came under Australian control. Finally, in 1975, Papua and New Guinea combined to form the independent nation of Papua New Guinea.*

Today, Papua New Guinea is still emerging into the modern world. Some of its citizens live in modern cities surrounded by high-tech conveniences. Yet, 4 out of 5 people live in small bush villages, where life has changed little over hundreds of years and ownership of pigs signifies wealth, bride-price is common, spiritism is widespread, and clan loyalties are paramount.

In recent decades, however, this country of contrasts has seen a more significant transformation, one touching sincere people from all ethnic groups and improving their lives in countless ways. It is a spiritual transformation resulting from the study and application of the truths found in God’s Word, the Bible.—Rom. 12:2.

* Throughout this account, we will use the present name Papua New Guinea rather than the earlier terms.



EARLY BEARERS OF GOOD NEWS

Bible truth arrived in Papua New Guinea in 1932 when a British pioneer named Peck stopped over on his way to Malaya (now Malaysia). Not one to waste an opportunity, Peck spent several weeks preaching to the locals. He placed hundreds of pieces of Bible literature before moving on to his assignment.

Three years later, seven pioneers aboard the motorized ketch *Lightbearer* landed at Port Moresby to repair their damaged engine. During their month-long stay, they zealously preached throughout Port Moresby and nearby areas. One of them, Frank Dewar, a hardy New Zealander, walked inland with a load of books and placed Bible literature with settlers as far as 30 miles from the coast.

Some of that literature found its way into the hands of Heni Heni Nioki, a witch doctor from the Koiari tribe. After that, the Bible truths he learned lay dormant in his heart, waiting for Jehovah's Witnesses to return and water what had been planted.—1 Cor. 3:6.



***The first local publishers, left to right:
Bobogí Naiori, Heni Heni Nioki, Raho Rakatani, and Oda Sioni***

During the late 1930's, another pioneer engaged in an extended preaching tour that covered the main towns in Papua New Guinea, including the islands of New Britain, New Ireland, and Bougainville. He placed much Bible literature. But before others could build on his efforts, the region sank into the chaos of World War II.

PREACHING IN THE “BIG VILLAGE”

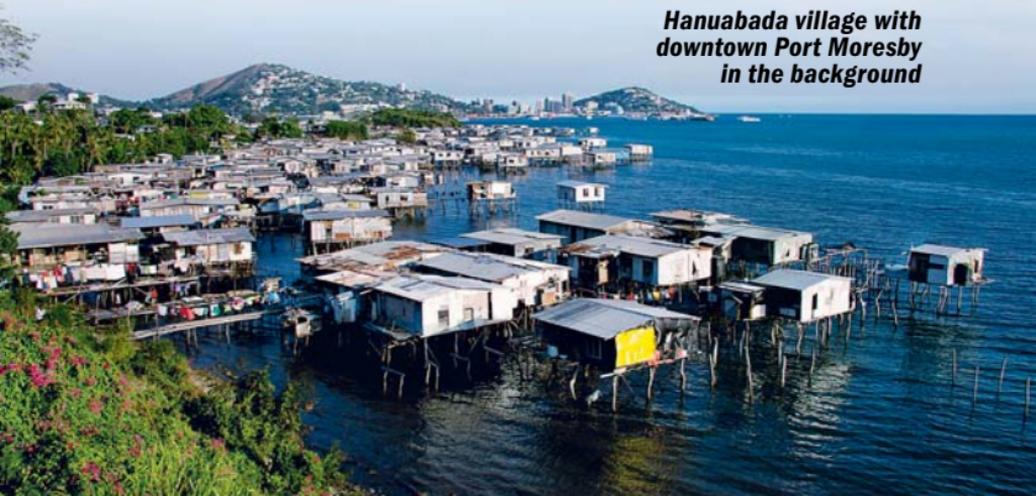
Twelve years later, on September 22, 1951, a tall Australian stepped out of a plane into Port Moresby's oppressive heat and humidity. Tom Kitto—a 47-year-old Witness—had responded to a call for volunteers to open up the Kingdom work in the Pacific islands. His wife, Rowena, joined him six weeks later. Their territory was all of Papua New Guinea.

The Kittos soon discovered that most Europeans in Port Moresby were indifferent to the Kingdom message. But then they met Geoff Bucknell, a fellow Australian, who had drifted away from the truth as a young man. Geoff agreed to study and later became a faithful Witness, as did his wife, Irene.

Tom and Rowena then moved on to Hanuabada, a name meaning “Big Village” in Motu, the local language. Extending over Port Moresby Harbour, the village included hundreds of stilt houses connected together by long wooden walkways reaching out from the beach. “People flocked around us to hear the good news,” writes Rowena. “There was so much interest that we returned every evening to conduct Bible studies, missing only two evenings in two months.” Tom adds: “The hope of the resurrection and life on a paradise earth really appealed to these people. When Christendom’s missionaries and a local policeman pressured them to stop their studies, every one of them stood firm. The truth had settled deep in their hearts.”

Among those who took their stand for the truth were Raho and Konio Rakatani, Oda Sioni, Geua Nioki, and her husband, Heni Heni, who had obtained literature from the crew of the *Lightbearer* 16 years earlier. Soon a group of about 30 interested ones was coming to Heni Heni’s home for regular meetings. “Men and women sat apart on separate sides of the room,” recalls Oda Sioni, a young boy at the time.

***Hanuabada village with
downtown Port Moresby
in the background***



An Overview of Papua New Guinea

Land Papua New Guinea occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea. The country includes 151 smaller islands and is slightly larger than the state of California, U.S.A. Rugged mountains dominate the interior; dense rain forests and swamps line the coast.

People Of the 6.7 million inhabitants, 99 percent are Papuan and Melanesian. The rest are Polynesian, Chinese, and European. Most people are professed Christians.

Language Papua New Guinea is the most linguistically complex country on earth, with 820 distinct languages—12 percent of the world's total. In addition to their indigenous languages, most people speak Tok Pisin, Hiri Motu, or English.

Livelihood About 85 percent of the population live traditional lives, tending small vegetable gardens in little villages. Coffee and tea are grown as cash crops in the highlands. Mineral, gas, and oil, as well as forestry products, also contribute to the economy.

Food Staple foods include sweet potatoes, taro, cassava, sago, and bananas, which are eaten raw or cooked. Vegetables, tropical fruits, and tinned meat and fish are also popular. Pork is eaten on special occasions.

Climate There are two seasons—wet and not so wet. Because Papua New Guinea is located near the equator, its climate is tropical on the coast, but it is cooler in the highlands.



PAPUA NEW GUINEA



PORT MORESBY





***Shirley and Don Fielder
just before their arrival***

“The women wore grass skirts and no tops and carried their babies in colorful string bags that they suspended from the rafters in the room. After breast-feeding their infants, they placed them in the bags and gently rocked them to sleep.”

Tom Kitto conducted those meetings with the aid of an interpreter. Understandably, things did not always run smoothly. “At one meeting, Heni Heni’s brother, Badu Heni, served as interpreter,” relates Don Fielder, who arrived in 1953. “Things seemed to be going well at first, with Badu interpreting Tom’s words and even copying his gestures. Only later did Badu confess that he did not understand a thing Tom was saying. He just repeated what truths he knew and copied Tom’s gestures so that the talk looked right.” Despite those challenges, the group grew rapidly, and soon a second group was formed at Raho Rakatani’s home, also in Hanuabada village.

“COME AND TEACH MY PEOPLE”

Early in 1952, Bobogi Naiori, a Koiari chief and prominent witch doctor, visited Heni Heni—his *wantok*, or fellow tribesman—and attended a meeting at his home. Impressed by what he saw and heard, Bobogi later approached Tom Kitto and pleaded: “Please, come and teach my people about the truth!”

Soon afterward, Tom and Rowena drove their old pickup truck over boggy dirt roads to Bobogi’s home

'I Conquered My Shyness'

ODASIONI

BORN 1939 **BAPTIZED** 1956

PROFILE The first local pioneer in Papua New Guinea. He now serves as a special pioneer in Hohola Motu Congregation, Port Moresby.



■ **WHEN** my older sister saw Tom and Rowena Kitto preaching along the wooden walkways of Hanuabada village, she asked me to attend their meetings to find out about this “new religion.” At the time, the meetings were held at the home of Heni Heni Nioki, a local Bible student.

I was 13 years old and very shy. I went to Heni Heni’s home, where about 40 villagers had gathered, and sat quietly in the background with my head in my hands. I liked what I heard and kept going back. Soon, Heni Heni asked me to interpret Tom Kitto’s English into Motu, the language spoken by most of those present.

Some years later, when I began working at a local hospital with the goal of training to be a doctor, John Cutforth took me aside and kindly reasoned with me, saying, “If you become a medical doctor, you can help people physically, but if you become a spiritual ‘doctor,’ you can help them gain everlasting life.” That week I started pioneering.

My first assignment was Wau. I had recently visited the town and had found several persons interested in the truth. One man, Jack Arifeae, invited me to preach at the

local Lutheran church. I chose God's law on blood as my subject. The 600 people in the congregation paid rapt attention, since many of them believed that eating a person's blood could allow his spirit to take over their body. The priest was furious and told the assembly that they should have nothing to do with me. But many liked what they heard and made further spiritual progress.

About a year later, I was assigned to Manu Manu, about 30 miles northwest of Port Moresby. There I met a local chief, Tom Surau, who invited me to preach in his village. After I had studied with the villagers for three days, they chopped up their wooden idol of the Virgin Mary and threw it in the river.

People living downstream collected the debris and took it to the Catholic priests in their village, crying out, "They have killed Mary!" Two priests came to confront me. One of them walked straight up to me and punched me in the face, slashing my cheek with his ring. When the local villagers rushed to defend me, the priests ran off.

I traveled to Port Moresby to have the cut stitched and to file a complaint with the police. The priests were later fined and defrocked. Meanwhile, I returned to the village and established an isolated group. With Jehovah's help, I had conquered my shyness.

The first meetings were held in Heni Heni's home





The country's first Kingdom Hall, at Haima, Port Moresby

at Haima, a small village about 15 miles north of Port Moresby. Tom preached to the assembled villagers while Bobogi interpreted. As a result, about 30 people began studying the Bible.

Later that month, the group at Haima built a small hall for Christian meetings. "The hall had a bush timber frame, thatched grass roof, and waist-high plaited bamboo walls," recalls Elsie Horsburgh, who later attended meetings there. "Sapling seats, a kerosene lamp, and a small blackboard completed the internal decor." This modest structure became the first Kingdom Hall in Papua New Guinea.

Bobogi then wanted his *wantoks* in the nearby mountains to hear the good news too. So he and Tom set off along a precipitous mountain road to the Sogeri plateau. Soon they were studying with over 90 people in three villages there.

Such activity did not escape the notice of the government authorities. At Ioadabu, a government officer marched into the meeting place, demanding to know who had authorized Jehovah's Witnesses to teach the local villagers. The police also interrogated

The *Wantok* System

The term *wantok*, meaning “one talk” in Tok Pisin, is related to a powerful cultural bond that links people of the same ethnic group who speak the same language. The bond includes certain obligations and privileges. For example, people are expected to care for the material needs of their elderly *wantoks* (people who speak their language) or for those out of work or unable to work. This is a real help in a land with limited social welfare.

The system also has its downside. For instance, when Bible students take a stand for the truth, other family members may reject them. In such situations, new ones must look to Jehovah for aid should they become unemployed or for some other reason come into material need. (Ps. 27:10; Matt. 6:33) “The *wantok* system can also put brothers under considerable pressure to associate unduly with non-Witness relatives, including those who may be disfellowshipped,” says Branch Committee member Kegawale Biyama. “Also, during political elections, Witness relatives of candidates are often pressured to compromise their Christian neutrality.” Of course, they do not compromise.

several interested people about the nature of our work. Some village pastors and plantation owners even threatened the brothers with violence.

Under such pressure some interested ones fell away. Yet, a nucleus stood firm. In 1954, the first Wit-

ness baptism in Papua New Guinea was held, and 13 Bible students were baptized in the Laloki River at Haima. One of them was Bobogi, who declared: "Even if all the Koiari fall away, I will not, because I know this is the truth." True to his word, Bobogi maintained his integrity, serving faithfully as an elder in the Haima Congregation until his death in 1974.

MEMORABLE GATHERINGS

In July 1955, John Cutforth, a Canadian missionary serving in Australia, arrived in Port Moresby as the first circuit overseer. John took an immediate liking to the tropics, its way of life, and its humble people. Little did he know that he would serve in Papua New Guinea for more than 35 years.

John brought with him the film *The New World Society in Action*, a documentary highlighting the organizational work and conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses. During his three-week visit, he showed the film 14 times to audiences ranging from a few hundred people to nearly 2,000. It had a real impact on the local population, many of whom had never seen a film before.

John's visit culminated in a one-day circuit



John Cutforth

“Bobogi, where did you learn to do all this?”

assembly at Haima. “When the candidates for baptism were asked to rise, . . . seventy stood up!” recalls Tom Kitto. “Our hearts literally welled up with gratitude to see forty brothers and thirty sisters lined up along the jungle river ready to symbolize their dedication to Jehovah.”

The following year, the brothers arranged to hold a second circuit assembly at Haima. Bobogi, the village chief, was assigned to build the needed facilities and prepare food for those expected to attend. Three days before the assembly, John (Ted) Sewell, the new circuit overseer from Australia, met with Bobogi to discuss the preparations.

“What have you built?” asked Ted, getting right to the point.

“Nothing yet,” Bobogi replied.

“But this is Thursday, Bobogi, and the assembly is on Sunday!” exclaimed Ted.

“That’s all right, brother,” answered Bobogi. “We’ll make everything on Saturday.”

Ted was aghast and returned to Port Moresby convinced that the assembly would be an organizational disaster.

That Sunday he drove anxiously to Haima to see what had happened. What a transformation! Under a sweeping tree facing a large area of cleared ground stood a sturdy wooden podium. Farther away lay stone cooking pits, where pigs, wallabies, deer, pigeons, fish, yams, and sweet potatoes were being roasted. Teakettles boiled on an open fire. Crowds of people mingled happily at a cafeteria made from bush materials. And

there, in the midst of all the activity, stood Bobogi, looking quite unperturbed. Ted was flabbergasted!

“Bobogi, where did you learn to do all this?” he gasped.

“Oh, I saw all of this in that film John Cutforth showed us last year,” replied Bobogi.

Over 400 people from eight ethnic groups attended that assembly, and 73 were baptized. In later years, it came to be called Bobogi’s assembly.

PREACHING WITH PICTURES

In 1957, John Cutforth moved permanently to Papua New Guinea and took up the traveling work there. Since his first visit, he had thought long and hard about the best way to preach to the local people, most of whom were illiterate. Now he was ready to put his ideas into practice.

When addressing a congregation or isolated group, John first wrote his name and the name of his interpreter on a blackboard. Then, pointing to heaven, he asked the audience, “God, what name?” He wrote their answer, “Jehovah” as well as “Psalm 83:18” at the top of the board. Underneath, to the left, he then wrote the heading “Old World” and drew stick figures of two men fighting, a person crying, a grave, and “Romans 5:12.” On the right, he wrote the heading “New World” and

**Reproduction
of a picture sermon**



drew two men shaking hands, a smiling face, a grave crossed out, and “Revelation 21:4.” Afterward, he gave an animated talk explaining the drawings. He then invited individuals in the audience to come forward and repeat his presentation. When they had mastered it, he invited them to copy the pictures onto a sheet of paper and use it in their preaching work.

“Picture Sermon One,” as it was called, had a profound impact on the preaching work in Papua New Guinea. Other picture sermons soon followed. “We spent countless hours copying these picture sermons into school exercise books. Each Bible student received a copy, which he used to preach to others,” says Lena Davison, who served in the country for 47 years. Children produced their own picture books and colored them in with great pride.

This teaching method was also adapted for congregation meetings. “Blackboard drawings were used extensively during the Public Meeting and Watchtower

Right: John Cutforth teaching with the aid of pictures; bottom: a brother carrying a picture board for preaching in the bush villages



He Won the Hearts of Many

During his missionary service in Papua New Guinea, John Cutforth won the hearts of many. Consider what some of his fellow missionaries and others with whom he worked had to say about him.—Prov. 27:2.



Erna Andersson: “John told us: ‘A true missionary becomes all things to all people. If people give you a stump to sit on, sit on it; it is the best they can give. If they give you a roughly hewn bed, sleep on it; it has been made with kindness. If they give you unusual food, eat it; it has been prepared with love.’ John was an outstanding example of a self-sacrificing missionary.”

Awak Duvun: “During the period of colonial rule, John not only broke down prejudice between black people and white people but destroyed it! ‘Black man, white man—no difference!’ he often declared. He loved all.”

Peter Linke: “One afternoon, after traveling most of the day, John arrived at our home in Goroka, dusty and tired. Yet, after dinner he said, ‘I haven’t done anything for anyone else today’ and trudged off into the failing light to visit and encourage a local family. He was always concerned about others. We all loved him.”

Jim Dobbins: “John taught us to live simply and to teach simply, using illustrations that people could understand, as Jesus did. This enabled us to communicate with those who couldn’t read or write.”

Study, greatly helping those who could not read,” explains Joyce Willis, a Canadian pioneer who spent more than 40 years in Papua New Guinea. Picture sermons painted on canvas were also used as teaching aids at assemblies. “These large paintings were very popular and impressed key teaching points on the mind of the audience,” says Mike Fisher, who served in the circuit work there. “Many of the paintings ended up hanging in the homes of isolated publishers, who proudly used them to witness to visitors.”

Decades later, when more people learned to read and write and illustrated literature became widely available, picture sermons were discontinued.

EXPANDING THE WITNESS

During the late 1950’s, a steady stream of zealous Australians moved to Papua New Guinea, eager to preach the good news. In addition, many people who learned the truth in Port Moresby returned to their villages with the Kingdom message. Thus, the good news spread rapidly throughout the country.

In 1957, David Walker, a 26-year-old Australian brother living in Port Moresby, heard that people in the neighboring Manu Manu village and in the Gabadi region were interested in the truth. David left his job, started



***Alf Green, David Walker,
and Jim Smith***



***Left: Shirley, Debbie, and Don Fielder;
right: Don and his canoe***

special pioneering, and spent a year preaching in the region, working alone in service the whole time. Others later built on his efforts, and now Manu Manu has a congregation and a Kingdom Hall.

In the meantime, while preaching at Koki market in Port Moresby, Don Fielder met several fishermen interested in the truth. The men came from Hula, a coastal village about 60 miles to the east. To help them and their families further, Don, along with Athol (Dap) Robson and some interested Hula people, set sail for Hula in Don's new 26-foot twin-hull canoe. They stayed in Hula for three days and established a small study group there.

Soon afterward, Don moved to Hula as a special pioneer, taking his wife, Shirley, and their two-year-old daughter, Debbie, with him. "We built a small hut and began preaching in the five villages in the area," relates Don. "This involved walking a circuit of about eight miles every day. It was physically taxing but

spiritually refreshing, as we started many Bible studies and soon had eight new publishers working along with us.”

Don and Shirley’s preaching aroused the ire of the local United Church minister, who pressured their landlord to order their hut off his land. “When people from a nearby village heard about this, they were very angry because they did not want us to leave,” says Don. “About 20 of them helped us to move our hut—foundations and all—to a new plot of land owned by their village.”

The irate clergyman refused to give up. He lobbied the Port Moresby authorities to ban the Fielders from locating their hut anywhere in the district. “Rather than leave our assignment,” says Don, “we asked Alf Green, a skilled carpenter, to salvage wood from our hut and build a small room on our twin-hull canoe. We then anchored the canoe in a mangrove swamp near the mouth of a nearby river. There, among swarming mosquitoes and lurking crocodiles, we lived, while pioneering, for the next two and a half years.” When their second daughter, Vicki, was born, the Fielders returned to Port Moresby. They later shared in the traveling work, and Don served on the Branch Committee.

OTHERS HEAR THE GOOD NEWS

About that time, at Port Moresby, Lance and Daphne Gosson started studying with several young men who came from Kerema, a coastal village about 140 miles west of Port Moresby. When the men returned home for vacation, Lance and Jim Chambliss decided to visit them for two weeks to take the good news to Kerema.

“The whole village gathered together to listen to us,” writes Lance. “During our presentation, the local London Missionary Society pastor stormed in and attacked our interpreter, punching him several times before the villagers intervened. He insisted that the local people did not want us there and ordered us to leave ‘his’ area. We replied that those who wanted to listen to us could accompany us to the other side of the village, while the rest could stay with him. The whole village followed us.

“The next morning we went to see the district commissioner to report what had happened. On the way there, we met a woman who was very ill. We offered to take her to the local hospital, but she was afraid to go. Only after much persuasion did she finally agree to accompany us. After leaving her with the hospital doctor, we called on the district commissioner, who clearly did not welcome our visit. In fact, he angrily accused us of teaching people not to accept medical help! Just then, however, the hospital doctor walked in and overheard his accusation. He told the commissioner that we had just persuaded a sick woman to go to the hospital for medical treatment. The commissioner, to his credit, immediately apologized. He told us that the local Catholic priest had just visited him and misrepresented our beliefs. He then assigned two armed policemen to protect us from further trouble. It was quite an experience to have policemen with rifles sitting in on our Bible studies!”

Soon afterward, two young Australians, Jim Smith and Lionel Dingle, were assigned to Kerema as special pioneers. They immediately set to work learning Tairuma, the local language. “We said each word in Motu, and our Bible students told us the corresponding



Jim Smith and Glenn Finlay

Tairuma word, which we wrote down,” explains Jim. “In this way we built up a small vocabulary and memorized a simple Bible presentation. The local people were amazed to hear us speaking their language, as no other Europeans in the district could do so. After three months we were conducting weekly meetings in Tairuma on both sides of Kerema Bay.”

Later, Glenn Finlay, another young Australian pioneer, took over from Jim and Lionel and preached alone in Kerema for 18 months. “It was a testing time for me,” says Glenn, “and I sometimes wondered if my work was accomplishing anything. But then a humbling experience changed my view.

“One of my Bible students was an elderly village baker named Hevoko. He was totally illiterate and after some months had managed to retain only a few basic truths. I wondered if it was worthwhile teaching him. Then one morning, as I approached his home, I heard a voice and stopped to listen. It was Hevoko praying aloud to Jehovah, thanking Him in earnest tones for teaching him the truth about His name and the

Kingdom. His sincere prayer reminded me that Jehovah looks at people's hearts, not their intellect. He well knows those who love him."—John 6:44.

CONFRONTING A CARGO CULT

In 1960, two other Australian special pioneers, Stephen Blundy and Allen Hosking, moved to Savaiviri, a village about 30 miles east of Kerema. After living in a tent for three months, Stephen and Allen moved into a small bush house on a coconut plantation surrounded by a vast swamp.

Savaiviri was a renowned cargo-cult stronghold. How did this cult begin? During World War II, the locals marveled at the vast wealth, or cargo, that accompanied foreign soldiers. Then the war ended, and the soldiers packed up and left. Some villagers reasoned that since the cargo had come from over the horizon—the direction of the spirit world—their dead ancestors must have been sending it to them but that the soldiers had been intercepting it. To alert the spirits to their need, the people engaged in mock military drills and built sturdy wharves to prepare for the glorious day when a flood of new cargo would arrive.

***Stephen Blundy
crossing Kerema Bay***



Before long, Stephen and Allen were studying with some 250 cargo-cult members, including its leader and some of his “twelve apostles.” “Many of these people came into the truth,” relates Stephen. “Indeed, the local government patrol officer later told us that our preaching was instrumental in bringing the Savaviri cargo cult to an end.”

PRODUCING BIBLE LITERATURE

Those early pioneers quickly saw the value of translating Bible literature into the local languages. But how could they provide literature to 820 different language groups?

In 1954, Tom Kitto took the first step by arranging for local brothers to translate a chapter of the book “*Let God Be True*”^{*} into Motu, the local Port Moresby language. Over two hundred copies of that mimeographed chapter, entitled “The ‘New Earth,’” were distributed in pamphlet form, delighting many Motu-speaking people.

As new areas opened up, pioneers toiled long and hard to translate literature into other local languages. Jim Smith relates: “By writing down new words and expressions, I painstakingly compiled a Tairuma dictionary and notes on grammar, which I used to translate *Watchtower* study articles. I often worked late into the night typing up translated articles on sheets of paper to distribute to people attending the meetings. Later I translated a tract and a booklet into Tairuma. Those early publications helped many Kerema people to learn the truth.”

Other publications were produced in Hula and

^{*} Published by Jehovah’s Witnesses but now out of print.

Toaripi. Since it seemed impossible to print publications in every language, the brothers later concentrated their efforts on the two trade languages—Hiri Motu and Tok Pisin. Hiri Motu, a simplified form of Motu, was spoken by many people along the Papuan coast. “We worked hard to improve the written form of this language,” says Don Fielder. “Indeed, *The Watchtower* and our other publications in Hiri Motu did much to develop the language to its present comprehensive form.” Tok Pisin—a blend of English, German, Kuanua, and other languages—is widely spoken in the highlands, coastal regions, and islands in northern Papua New Guinea. How did the preaching work get started in that diverse territory?

THE GOOD NEWS SPREADS NORTH

In June 1956, newlywed pioneers Ken and Rosina Frame were the first Witnesses to move to New Ireland, an island in the Bismarck Archipelago in northeast Papua New Guinea. Ken, an accountant, worked with a large trading company in Kavieng, the main town on the island. “Before we left Sydney,” Ken relates, “we were advised to let people get used to us before we started to preach openly. Rosina was a good dressmaker and soon had many



Rosina and Ken Frame

'He agreed to screen our film without charge'

customers. We witnessed to them informally, and soon there was a small group of interested ones meeting discreetly at our home once a week.

“Eighteen months later, John Cutforth, the circuit overseer, visited us and asked if he could show the film *The Happiness of the New World Society*. I spoke to the owner of the local cinema, and he agreed to screen our free ‘mission’ film without charge. His staff must have spread the word about the show. When we arrived at the cinema, the entrance was packed with people, and we needed help from the police to make our way inside. Over 230 people attended the screening, not counting those peering in through the open windows. After this event we preached more openly.”

In July 1957, a congregation was established at Rabaul, New Britain, a pretty harbor town flanked by two active volcanoes. The Rabaul Congregation met in the backyard of a house rented by special pioneers. “Over a hundred people came to the house every night to study the Bible,” says pioneer Norm Sharein. “We divided them up into groups of about 20 and taught them by lamplight under the trees.”

When the congregation hosted its first circuit assembly, seven persons were baptized at a local beach. Five of them soon took up the pioneer ministry. But where could they best serve? The Australia branch office provided the answer—Madang.

At Madang, a town on the northeast mainland coast, the “fields” were ripe for harvesting. (John 4: 35) In fact, the small group of publishers there could barely keep pace with the level of interest. When

'We Will Never Give Up'

KALIP KANAI

BORN 1922 **BAPTIZED** 1962

PROFILE One of the first people to accept the truth in the Madang area.

As told by his son Ulpep Kalip.



■ MY FATHER was a humble man and a deep thinker. When faced with a problem, he would listen carefully and analyze the matter before finally offering his opinion.

When I was 15, I was hospitalized in Madang because a shark bit my leg off just below the knee. While visiting me, my father met John Davison. "In the new world," John said, "Jehovah can give your son a new leg." Father's interest was aroused, he began studying the Bible in earnest, and he soon developed a strong faith.

Because my father and his relatives had left the Catholic Church, the police were incited to evict us from our homes. Our 12 houses, set among lush flowering gardens, were less than a year old. The police threw blazing torches onto the thatched roofs, which burst into flames. We rushed to salvage our belongings, but burning embers and smoke drove us outside. We wept as our homes were reduced to ashes.

With heavy hearts we walked to Bagildig, the neighboring village, where the village chief kindly allowed us to move into a small one-room hut. There, my father addressed our family: 'Jesus was persecuted. So we can expect that people will persecute us too, but we will never give up our faith!'

Canadian pioneer Matthew Pope and his family arrived and purchased a house with several backyard cabins, the way was open to send in more pioneers.

Eight pioneers arrived from Rabaul and spread out into the Madang District. One of them, Tamul Marung, obtained a bicycle and traveled by coastal boat to Basken, his home village, 30 miles north of Madang. After preaching in Basken, he rode his bicycle back to Madang, witnessing as he went. He then returned to Basken, established a congregation, and pioneered for another 25 years. During that time, he married and raised a family. His daughter and his niece later served at Bethel.

Meanwhile, in Madang, John and Lena Davison met Kalip Kanai, a schoolteacher from Talidig, a small village between Basken and Madang. Before long, John and Lena

were traveling out to Talidig to study with Kalip and his relatives. This incurred the wrath of the school inspector, a Catholic, who ordered the police to evict Kalip and his relatives from their homes. Undeterred, the group moved to Bagildig, a neighboring village, and grew into a thriving congregation. They later built a large Kingdom



Matthew and Doris Pope

Hall that was used for assemblies and conventions. Now there are seven congregations and two groups in the Madang District.

While Madang was opening up, Jim Baird and John and Magdalen Endor were making good progress in Lae, a large coastal town some 130 miles to the southeast. "We studied with large groups of people at our home nearly every night. Within six months, ten of our Bible students joined us in service," recalls John. Later that year more than 1,200 people attended a screening of the film *The New World Society in Action* at the Lae picture theater. Many in the audience were contract workers who carried the good news back to their remote mountain villages.

Inland from Lae, stalwart publishers were also doing good work. At

The home of Magdalen and John Endor was the first meeting place in Lae



Wau, Jack Arifeae, a big round-faced man with a real zeal for serving Jehovah, had established a thriving congregation in his home. About 30 members of the Kukukuku tribe—once feared cannibals—were also studying the Bible and making good spiritual progress.

Meanwhile, at neighboring Bulolo, Wally and Joy Busbridge's zealous preaching aroused the ire of the New Tribes Mission, which regarded the area as its exclusive domain. As a result of pressure from the mission, Wally's employer gave him an ultimatum, "Give up your religion, or find another job." Wally and Joy moved to Lae and kept on preaching. They later entered the full-time ministry and spent years in the traveling work.

"Give up your religion, or find another job"

Popondetta, a small town southeast of Lae, heard the good news through Jerome and Lavinia Hotta, who returned to their home province from Port Moresby. Jerome had plenty of initiative and used the Scriptures persuasively, while Lavinia was a warmhearted woman who showed real personal interest in others. True to form, when they started witnessing, the Anglican bishop and a large group of his followers soon arrived at their house demanding that they stop. But Jerome and Lavinia refused to be intimidated. They kept on preaching and established a small but zealous congregation.

By 1963, the good news had reached Wewak, a town on Papua New Guinea's remote northern coast. Karl Teynor and Otto Eberhardt, two German builders, worked on the Wewak hospital by day and studied with over 100 interested people during evenings and

weekends. Their preaching enraged the local Catholic priest, who gathered a mob and threw Karl and Otto's motorbikes into the sea. One of the priest's accomplices, a prominent village leader, had a son who later became a Witness. Impressed by the improvements he saw in his son's lifestyle, the man's attitude softened, and he granted the Witnesses permission to preach in the villages that were under his control.

BRANCH OFFICE ESTABLISHED

While the clergy wrestled with the Witness "problem," the brothers took steps to 'legally establish the good news' at the highest level. (Phil. 1:7) Accordingly, on May 25, 1960, the International Bible Students Association, a legal corporation used by Jehovah's Witnesses in many countries, was officially registered with the government. This opened the way for the brothers to secure government land on which to build Kingdom Halls and other facilities needed to support the Kingdom work.

Later that year, a branch office of the Watch Tower Society was also established in Papua New Guinea. John Cutforth was appointed branch servant. Yet, with rental space in short supply, where would the office be located?

The answer came through a newly arrived couple—Jim and Florence Dobbins. Jim had served with the U.S. Navy in Papua New Guinea during World War II. Later, he and Florence accepted the truth and set the goal of expanding their ministry. "In 1958, a brother from Port Moresby visited us at our home in Ohio and showed us some slides of Papua New Guinea," relates Jim. "Later we discovered a slide that he had accidentally left behind. On the slide was one of the most

beautiful scenes we had ever seen. 'We'll post it back to him,' said my wife. But I replied, 'No, let's take it to him.'"

A year later, Jim and Florence, along with their daughters, Sherry and Deborah, moved into a small concrete house at Six Mile, a Port Moresby suburb. Shortly afterward, Jim started talking to John Cutforth about a location for the branch office.

"I've looked everywhere in Port Moresby for a place to locate the branch office, but nothing is available," lamented John.

"Well, what about our house?" replied Jim. "You can have the front three rooms, and my family and I can live in the back."

Arrangements soon fell into place, and on September 1, 1960, the Dobbins' home was officially registered as Papua New Guinea's first branch office.

'BAN THE WITNESSES'

All this progress did not sit well with our opposers. From 1960 onward, the combined forces of Christendom's churches, the Returned Services League (RSL), and the local media launched an orchestrated campaign to vilify and ban Jehovah's Witnesses.

Matters came to a head when a pamphlet explaining our position on blood transfusions was distributed to selected doctors, clergymen, and government officials. Typically, Christendom's clergy were the first to react. On August 30, 1960, the *South Pacific Post* trumpeted the headline "Churches Angry on Blood Question." In the accompanying article, church leaders denounced the Witnesses as "anti-Christ [and] an enemy of the Church."

He Was Grateful That He Went to the “Wrong” School

MICHAEL SAUNGA

BORN 1936 **BAPTIZED** 1962

PROFILE Became a special pioneer in September 1964 and has served as a special pioneer longer than anyone else in Papua New Guinea.



■ IN 1959, I moved to Rabaul to advance my education. When I heard that the Witnesses had a school, I went to the home of the “teacher,” Lance Gosson, thinking that I was going to a vocational school. Lance invited me to join in the Bible study that was held every Wednesday. Despite the misunderstanding, I accepted the invitation. I deeply appreciated what I learned, especially that God’s name is Jehovah and that there will be a “new heavens and a new earth.” (2 Pet. 3:13) I was baptized on the morning of July 7, 1962, ever so grateful that I had gone to the “wrong” school.

That same day, I attended a meeting for those interested in pioneer service. The conductor, John Cutforth, who was the district overseer, stressed that the fields were white for harvesting and that more workers were needed. (Matt. 9:37) As soon as I was able, I enrolled as a vacation pioneer, as auxiliary pioneers were then called. In May 1964, I became a regular pioneer, and in September, a special pioneer.

I recall an occasion when I was preaching near Rabaul. A Tolai man asked if he could hold my Bible to read a text for

himself. When I gave him the Bible, he tore it into pieces and threw it on the ground. Rather than get angry, I reported the matter to the police commander, who immediately dispatched a constable to arrest the offender. The commander told the man: "You are a bad man. You broke God's law and the law of the government. You must buy a new Bible for the man tomorrow, and if you don't, we will send you to jail." The commander then told me to come to the police station at 10 o'clock the following morning to pick up the money for the Bible. When I arrived, the money was waiting for me. Since then, many Tolai people have come into the truth.

On another occasion, I was with a group of Witnesses distributing the *Kingdom News* in an area west of Wewak. The others were working ahead of me. A local village leader, however, found out what the brothers were doing and collected the copies they had distributed. He must have known that I was coming, for he was waiting for me in the middle of the road, his hands on his hips, with copies of the *Kingdom News* in one hand. I asked if there was a problem. He held them out to me and said, "I'm in charge here, and I don't want you distributing these."

I took them from him. Meanwhile, villagers had gathered around. Looking at them, I asked, "If you want to work in your garden or go fishing, do you have to get official permission?"

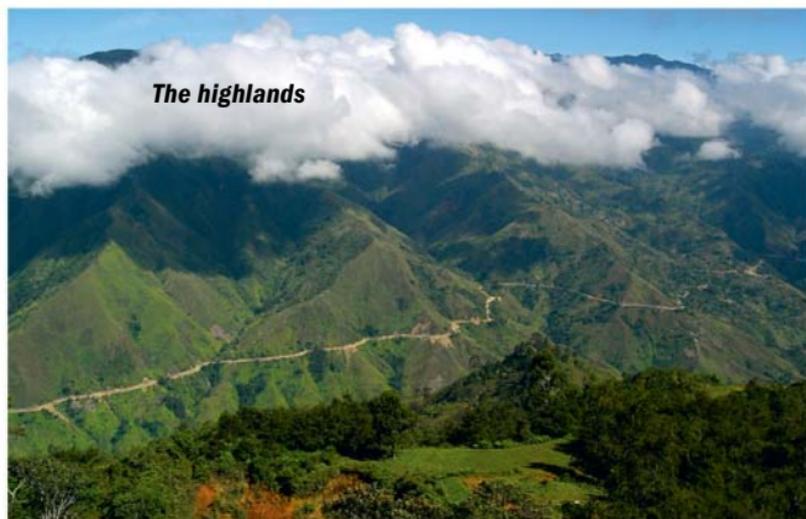
"No!" said one lady.

Then I asked the villagers, "Do you want to read this?"

"Yes," they said. So I redistributed the copies of the *Kingdom News* unopposed. Later, though, I had to defend myself before a meeting of some 20 village leaders. Happily, all but two voted in favor of our preaching work.

Subsequent articles lyingly claimed that Jehovah's Witnesses were subversive and that their teachings promoted school truancy, nonpayment of taxes, cargo cults, and even poor hygiene. Other reports falsely accused them of using an imminent solar eclipse to whip up fear and "gain control of primitive native minds." One editorial even berated the Witnesses for "living, eating, and working with villagers." The *South Pacific Post* criticized them for teaching that "all men are equal" and claimed that the Witnesses were "a menace greater than Communism."

Finally, on March 25, 1962, the RSL called on the colonial authorities to ban the Witnesses. The Australian government, however, publically rejected the request. "This announcement had a good effect throughout the country," says Don Fielder. "Fair-minded people could see that the claims of our opposers were simply not true."



INTO THE HIGHLANDS

That same month, Tom and Rowena Kitto left Port Moresby on a grueling journey that lasted several weeks. They were taking the good news to untouched territory—the rugged New Guinea highlands.

Thirty years earlier, Australian gold prospectors had entered the highlands to discover a civilization of about one million people completely cut off from the outside world. The awestruck highlanders thought that the white men were ancestral spirits returned from the dead.

On the heels of the prospectors came Christendom's missionaries. "When the missionaries heard that we were coming, they ordered the villagers not to listen to us," relates Rowena. "But their warning proved to be good advertising. The highland people—curious by nature—were eagerly waiting for us to arrive."

Tom and Rowena established a small store at Wabag, 50 miles northwest of the town of Mount Hagen. "The clergy ordered their flocks not to buy from, sell to,

Tom and Rowena Kitto in front of their small store and home at Wabag



or speak with us and even pressured them to ask that our land lease be revoked,” says Tom. “In time, however, the villagers saw that we were different from the other Europeans they knew. Most noticeably, we treated them kindly. Indeed, our kind acts often brought tears to their eyes, and they said they wanted us to stay!”

PATIENT TEACHING BRINGS RESULTS

From 1963 onward, a flood of Witnesses from abroad moved to the highlands to help expand the preaching work. Moving slowly east to west, those brothers and sisters eventually covered the entire region, establishing groups and congregations in many areas.

At Goroka, in the Eastern Highlands Province, a small congregation first met in a private home. Later, they built a modest meeting place from bush materials. Then, in 1967, they constructed an attractive Kingdom Hall with 40 chairs. “I quipped that we might just fill the chairs by Armageddon,” recalls George Coxsen, who served in the highlands for ten years. “How wrong I was! Within 12 months, so many people were attending meetings that we had to form a second congregation!”

Farther east, near Kainantu, Norm Sharein studied the Bible with over 50 villagers who came to his hut each day. Pioneers Berndt and Erna Anderson later looked after this group for two and a half years. “The people rarely washed, wore few clothes, were totally illiterate, and were steeped in demonism,” relates Erna. “Yet, with patient and loving help, some of them could soon recite and explain 150 scriptures from memory.”



‘Have They Eaten Your Heart?’

AIO KOWAN

BORN 1940 **BAPTIZED** 1975

PROFILE One of the first individuals from the Enga people to learn the truth.

■ **WHEN** Tom and Rowena Kitto came to Wabag, Enga Province, the local missions spread false stories about them. For example, the missions claimed that Tom and Rowena dug up dead people and ate them. Those stories really frightened me.

One day, Tom asked my father if he knew of a young woman who could help his wife with her housework. My father pointed to me. I was terrified, but my father made me accept the job.

Later, Tom and Rowena asked me, “What do you think happens to people when they die?”

“Good people will go to heaven,” I replied.

“Did you read that in the Bible?” they asked.

“I have not been to school, so I cannot read,” I answered.

They started to teach me to read, and slowly I began to understand Bible truth. When I stopped attending the Catholic Church, one of the church leaders asked me: “Why have you stopped coming to church? Have that white couple eaten your heart?”

“Yes,” I replied, “my figurative heart is now with them because I know that they are teaching me the truth.”

Berndt and Erna developed a close bond with their group. "When we were assigned to Kavieng, the women gathered around me and cried, yes, wailed!" says Erna. "They took turns stroking my arms and face as their tears flowed freely. Time and again, I retreated to my hut to weep while Berndt tried to comfort them, but they were inconsolable. When we finally set off, a large crowd ran down the mountain behind our vehicle, the women wailing



Erna and Berndt Andersson

all the way. I still struggle to describe the heart-wrenching emotions that I felt that day. How we long to see those dear ones in the new world!" Other pioneers built on Berndt and Erna's work, and a fine congregation was established at Kainantu.

SOWING KINGDOM SEED BEARS FRUIT

By the early 1970's, a small group of Witnesses had established themselves at Mount Hagen, about 80 miles west of Goroka. This town was famous for its large weekly market, which drew thousands of villagers from miles around. "We placed hundreds of pieces of literature at this market," says Dorothy Wright, a fearless pioneer. When the people returned to their villages, the Kingdom message went with them,



Kerry Kay-Smith and Jim Wright

penetrating remote areas that the publishers could not then reach.

Later, Dorothy's son, Jim Wright, and his pioneer partner, Kerry Kay-Smith, were assigned to Banz, a tea- and coffee-growing district in the picturesque Wahgi Valley east of Mount Hagen. Here they encountered stiff opposition from the church missions, who incited children to hurl

rocks at them and drive them from their villages. When Kerry moved to another assignment, Jim stayed on at Banz, pioneering alone. He recalls: "I often lay awake at night in my little grass hut praying, 'Jehovah, why am I here?' Only many years later did I get an answer to that question.

"In 2007, I traveled from Australia to Banz to attend a district convention," Jim continues. "Near the site of my old grass hut stood a fine new Kingdom Hall that could be extended temporarily to form a 1,000-seat Assembly Hall. As I entered the grounds, a brother rushed up to me, grabbed me, and began weeping on my shoulder. When he finally composed himself, the brother, Paul Tai, explained that I had studied with his father 36 years earlier. Paul later read his father's study books and accepted the truth. He told me that he was serving as an elder.

"During the convention, I was interviewed on the



Mike Fisher on the Sepik River

platform and described the persecution we had endured in the early days at Banz,” says Jim. “There was hardly a dry eye in the audience. After the program several brothers came and embraced me and tearfully apologized. As young boys, they had chased me from their village while throwing stones and yelling abuse. Moreover, one of them, Mange Samgar—now an elder—was the former Lutheran pastor who had spurred them on! What a wonderful reunion that convention proved to be!”

SEEDS SPROUT IN REMOTE AREAS

While many people in Papua New Guinea learned the truth through direct contact with the Witnesses, others did so from seeds of truth that worked their way into remote areas. (Eccl. 11:6) For instance, about 1970, the branch office started receiving regular field service reports from an unknown person at a nonexistent congregation in an unidentified village on

the remote Sepik River. The branch office asked Mike Fisher, a circuit overseer, to investigate.

“To get to the village, I traveled ten hours by motorized canoe along narrow waterways through mosquito-infested jungle,” relates Mike. “Finally, arriving late in the day, I met our mystery correspondent, a man who had been disfellowshipped years earlier in another area. He had returned to his village, repented of his sins, and started preaching to others. Over 30 adults in the village called themselves Jehovah’s Witnesses, some of whom qualified for baptism. Soon afterward, the repentant man was reinstated, and the group was officially recognized by the branch.”

In 1992, another circuit overseer, Daryl Bryon, learned of a remote inland village where people were supposedly interested in the truth. “To reach the village, I drove inland by car for 50 miles, hiked through dense jungle for an hour and a half, and then paddled a canoe upriver for another hour,” Daryl explains. “To my surprise, standing on the riverbank surrounded by towering mountains was a brand-new building bearing the sign ‘Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses.’

“About 25 interested ones met at the hall each Sunday to study the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. Since they claimed to be Witnesses, I asked them if they chewed betel nut. ‘Oh, no,’ they replied. ‘We gave that up a year ago when we came into the truth!’ Needless to say, I was delighted when the branch office added the group to my circuit routing.”

MISSIONARY BOOM

During the 1980’s and 1990’s, activity in the Papua New Guinea field was boosted by the arrival

“Give Me a Chicken, and It’s Yours”

AWAIWA SARE

BORN 1950 **BAPTIZED** 1993

PROFILE Learned the truth in an isolated area. Now serves as a ministerial servant in the Mundip Congregation.



■ WHILE staying with a friend, I saw a copy of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. I read a few chapters and asked him if I could have it. “Give me a chicken, and it’s yours,” he replied.

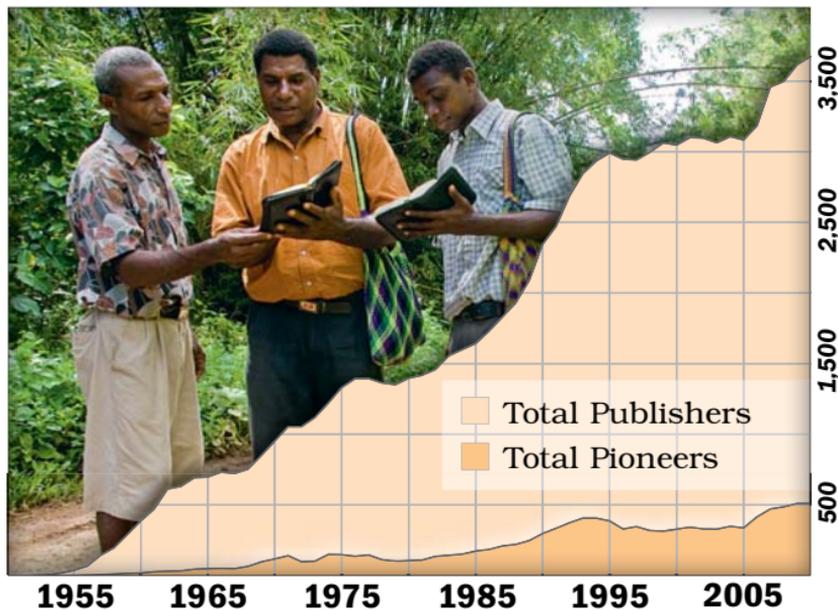
The exchange was made, and I took the book home and read it carefully. Before long, I was telling others about the wonderful things I had learned, even though I was twice summoned before church leaders, who said that I should stop preaching!

Soon afterward, I wrote to the branch office asking how to contact Jehovah’s Witnesses locally. They put me in contact with Alfredo de Guzman, who invited me to a district convention at Madang.

I arrived at the convention wearing ragged bush clothes and a big black beard. Yet everyone treated me kindly and respectfully. During the program I started to cry because what I heard touched my heart. The next day, I arrived at the convention clean-shaven.

After the convention, Alfredo came to my village—a two-hour truck ride plus a five-hour walk from Madang. My family and friends plied him with questions, and he answered every one from the Bible.

Today the Mundip Congregation has 23 publishers, and more than 60 attend the meetings here.



of scores of Gilead-trained missionaries, Ministerial Training School graduates, and special pioneers from Australia, Canada, England, Finland, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Sweden, the United States, and other countries. This often proved to be a double blessing, for some of these evangelizers later married and were joined by equally zealous mates.

On arriving in the country, most newcomers attended a Tok Pisin or Hiri Motu language class for two or three months. Students studied the language each morning and then put their lessons to work in service each afternoon. This training enabled many of them to conduct meaningful Bible studies and give talks within a few months.

Learning a new language also helped them to be patient and empathetic when teaching people who

could not read or write. They thus helped scores of interested ones to master the basic literacy skills needed to read God's Word. (Isa. 50:4) In turn, the number of publishers grew from 2,000 in 1989 to about 3,000 in 1998, an increase of 50 percent in just nine years!

Although many of those evangelizers later had to leave Papua New Guinea for health and other reasons, they left behind a lasting legacy. Indeed, those dear ones are still warmly remembered for their faithfulness and their loving acts.—Heb. 6:10.

CONSTRUCTION WORK PROMOTES PROGRESS

As the number of Kingdom publishers grew, so did the need for Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, and enlarged branch facilities. How did these become available?

Before 1975, the government Lands Department regularly set aside new blocks of land for religious use. Interested churches applied for the allotments and argued their case before a government-appointed Land Board. The successful bidder received the land free of charge but had to build on it within a reasonable period of time.

In 1963, despite stiff opposition from Christendom's clergy, the International Bible Students Association secured a lease on a prime Port Moresby property. The hillside allotment had stunning views of Koki market and the azure Coral Sea. A two-story branch office and Kingdom Hall was later built on this site. Subsequent land grants in Port Moresby were used to build Kingdom Halls at Sabama, Hohola, Gerehu, and Gordon.

The Gordon site, which had a commanding position near the center of town, was originally earmarked

as the future location of an Anglican cathedral. “At the public hearing, however, the Land Board chairman told the Anglican minister that the board was not pleased with the way that the church had hoarded land and often misused it for commercial purposes,” explains Ron Fynn, who served in Papua New Guinea for 25 years. “The chairman added that the Anglicans would not receive any more land until the board was satisfied that they were using their current allotments for the purpose for which they were intended.

“After saying this, the chairman turned to me and asked me about our land requirements. I told him that our first preference was the ‘cathedral’ block at Gordon. The Anglican minister sprang to his feet to object, but the chairman firmly told him to sit down. I completed my presentation. To the amazement of everyone present, the committee awarded our congregation the land.”

A Kingdom Hall and the four-story branch office were built on this site. The new branch facility was dedicated on December 12, 1987. The earlier Koki site was sold. Between 2005 and 2010, a four-story residence, a Kingdom Hall, and a translation office were added to the branch facilities. These buildings were dedicated on May 29, 2010.

Today, there are 89 Kingdom Halls and other meeting places across the country. In many rural areas, local bush materials are still used in the construction of meeting places. However, in larger towns, modern building materials are used. Many of these newer halls have been built under the program for lands with limited resources, which has operated in Papua New Guinea since 1999.

PERSEVERING DESPITE CHALLENGES

The various religions operating in Papua New Guinea had a gentleman's agreement as to where each mission could operate. Each church group had their own territory and expected other religions to keep well away. Of course, Jehovah's Witnesses share the good news with all who want to hear it, no matter where they live. This stand, and the positive response of many who listened to the truth, angered the clergy.

"After I moved to the small island of Kurmalak, West New Britain, one of my first callers was an Anglican priest," recalls Norm Sharein. "'You have no right to witness in my parish,' he said. 'The people are already Christians!'

"Later, I saw one of my Bible students frantically paddling his dugout toward the shore in heavy rain and seas. In fact, he was risking his life by being out in such weather. He pulled his dugout up onto the beach and, panting heavily, told me that a boatful of Catholics, led by a catechist, was coming to beat me up. I had nowhere to run, and I turned to Jehovah for wisdom and strength.

"When the boat arrived, about 15 men disembarked, their faces painted red—a sure sign of ill will. Instead of waiting for them to come to me, I walked down to meet them. Earlier, I felt afraid, but now the fear was gone. As I approached, they spoke abusively to me, hoping that I would give them an excuse to get physical, but I remained calm.

"Also on the scene was another of my Bible students, an elderly man who actually owned the island. With the best of intentions, he said to the men:

‘Jehovah’s Witnesses don’t fight. Go ahead, hit him! You’ll see!’

“‘Whose side is he on?’ I said to myself, wishing he would be quiet.

“After reasoning with the men for several minutes, I suggested that they leave, and as a gesture of good will, I offered my right hand to their leader. Surprised, he looked around at the others, and they at him. Then he shook my outstretched hand. This broke the tension, and we all shook hands. After that they left, much to my relief! I could not help but think of Paul’s words to Timothy: ‘A slave of the Lord does not need to fight, but needs to be gentle toward all, . . . keeping himself restrained under evil.’”—2 Tim. 2:24.

Berndt Andersson recalls that in one highlands village, the Lutheran pastor and a mob of about 70 men from another village tried to chase the Witnesses away and destroy their Kingdom Hall. Berndt put the mob off balance by going outside the village to meet them. He approached the pastor and asked why the Lutheran mission says God’s name is Anutu, a local name adopted by some of Christendom’s missionaries. The pastor said that it was in the Bible, so Berndt asked where. The pastor opened his Bible, and when it was obvious that he could not find such a scripture, Berndt invited him to read Psalm 83:18. After receiving help to find the book of Psalms, the pastor began to read aloud. When he came to the name Jehovah, he shut the Bible and shouted, “That’s a lie!” Too late, he realized that he had just condemned his own Bible. After that episode, many of his followers changed their attitude toward the Witnesses.

At times, religious opposers did burn down bush

Kingdom Halls, as in the village of Agi, in Milne Bay Province. In this instance, though, one of the arsonists, who was drunk at the time of the offense, deeply regretted his actions. In fact, he later approached the brothers, accepted a Bible study, and became a pioneer. Moreover, he was offered the use of the pioneer house adjacent to the rebuilt hall. Thus, he now found himself caretaker at the very location where he had committed the crime!

Today religious persecution has all but stopped. “We have entered a period of peace,” says Craig Speegle. “But another problem has developed—violence, often caused by hoodlums and thieves called *ras-kols*. Hence, when witnessing in dangerous areas, the brothers work in groups and keep one another in sight.”



The Kingdom Hall in Agi was burned down by arsonists but was then rebuilt and expanded



When they saw what was in her bag, they felt guilty about what they had done

“It helps to be known as Witnesses,” say missionaries Adrian and Andrea Reilly. “Whether you are shopping or preaching, it’s prudent to carry literature,” says Adrian. “Granted, this may not guarantee your safety, but it may be of help because it identifies you as a minister of Jehovah. On one occasion, my car broke down in a rough part of Lae. I was alone, and before long a gang of menacing-looking youths gathered around. Thanks to a Bible discussion we had recently had together, two of them recognized me. As a result, they spoke up for me. So instead of stealing anything or harming me, the whole group—much to my surprise and relief—pushed my disabled car the full quarter of a mile back to the missionary home.”

In another instance, a sister was in a market when *raskols* armed with knives whispered to her, “Give us your bag.” She immediately handed it over, and they ran off. A few minutes later, they returned, apologized, and gave her back the bag with all its contents. Why? When they opened the bag, they saw her Bible and *Reasoning* book and felt guilty about what they had done.

DIVERSE PREACHING METHODS

“We preached wherever we found people,” reminisced Elsie Thew, who served in Papua New Guinea with her husband, Bill, from 1958 to 1966. “We spoke to people in their villages, in their homes, in their gardens, in the markets, and along bush tracks. We spoke to fishermen on beaches and riverbanks. In the early days, we also carried a map of the world

“What Have You to Say for Yourself?”

MAKUI MAREG

BORN 1954 **BAPTIZED** 1986

PROFILE She pioneered alone for many years on an island having no other Witnesses.



■ IN 1980, I accepted a tract from a pioneer in Madang and took it back home to Bagabag Island, six hours away by boat. I liked what it said and wrote to the branch office requesting more information. Soon afterward, I received a letter from Badam Duvun, a pioneer in Madang, inviting me to attend a district convention. I visited her for two weeks and started to study the Bible. I also attended all the meetings at the local Kingdom Hall. When I returned home, I continued to study, but by correspondence.

Before long, I started Bible studies with 12 other families on Bagabag Island. We held regular meetings in my uncle's home, following the pattern for group Bible study that I had seen in Madang. This angered my father, a prominent member of the Lutheran Church. "I know Yahweh but do not know Jehovah," he thundered. I opened my Tok Pisin Bible and showed him the footnote on Exodus 3:15, which discusses the divine name. My father had nothing to say in response.

Three times he summoned me to appear before church leaders to defend my faith. One of these meetings

was held in the largest church on the island. Over a hundred people filled the building. The atmosphere was tense. "What have you to say for yourself?" demanded the chairman. "I only want to follow Matthew 6:33 and put God's Kingdom first," I replied, holding my Bible tightly. My father leaped to his feet. "Are you trying to teach us?" he bellowed in rage. One of my uncles rose to strike me, but another relative jumped to my defense. The meeting descended into chaos. Finally, I was dismissed.

My troubles, however, were far from over. Tragically, one of the women attending the meetings we were holding had a sick baby who died. Some in the community blamed me for the death, saying that it happened because I was teaching the mother a new religion. My father, wielding an iron bar, drove me from our family home. I fled to Madang with my aunt, Lamit Mareg, who had also accepted the truth. Soon afterward, we were both baptized.

In time, my father became very sick. I took him into my home at Madang and cared for him until he died. During that time his heart softened toward my religion. Before he died he urged me to return to Bagabag Island and preach to its inhabitants. This I did in 1987. My relatives kindly built me a small house, and for 14 years I was the only Witness there. For 12 of those years, I served as a regular pioneer.

Later, I returned to Madang to pioneer along with Lamit. In 2009, six individuals from Bagabag Island came to Madang to attend the annual Memorial of Christ's death. I never married, and I rejoice that I have been able to use my singleness to serve Jehovah fully.



Elsie and Bill Thew

so that we could show people in the more isolated areas where we came from. This was important because sometimes we arrived by air, and the villagers, unaware of the outside world, thought we'd dropped in from heaven! So we showed them that we simply came from another part of the same world as theirs."

The only way to reach many of the villages that pepper Papua New Guinea's long coastline and numerous riverbanks is by boat or canoe. Steve Blundy recalls: "Brother Daera Guba, from Hanuabada, Port Moresby, was an aged man and had a lot of experience with watercraft. He had two hollowed-out logs under his house, so my pioneer partner and I helped him to obtain the timber he needed to build a *puapua*, a local form of catamaran. The sail was made of canvas. With Daera as captain and two or three other brothers from Hanuabada as crew, we made quite a few trips to coastal villages near Port Moresby."



A "puapua" under full sail

In the late 1960's, Berndt Andersson was serving on New Ireland, a beautiful island some 400 miles northeast of the mainland. Berndt writes: "People came from the small islands nearby, asking us to visit them.

In order to do so, however, we needed a boat, which seemed an impossible dream in view of our small monthly reimbursement. We did have a few planks stored in a shed, but not nearly enough to build a boat. So we took the matter to Jehovah in prayer. Then, out of the blue, a brother in Lae sent us \$200 to help us visit the outer islands. Thus, we were able to build a boat, which we named *Pioneer*. However, it lacked an engine. Once again, that dear brother provided the funds we needed, this time to purchase a small outboard motor. Now we could answer the call to visit those picturesque islands!"

About 1990, a circuit overseer, Jim Davies, along

The boat "Pioneer," built by Berndt Andersson



with three other brothers, made plans to witness to a refugee camp far up the Fly River near the border of Indonesia. The brothers had arranged for accommodations with an interested woman whose husband was second in charge of the camp. "The trip up the Fly River took nearly two hours in a motorized dugout canoe," says Jim. "At about nine o'clock in the morning, we arrived at a clearing in the jungle, where we saw a dirt road that led to the distant camp. We waited there for transportation.

"Finally, at five o'clock in the afternoon, a vehicle showed up. We loaded our supplies, climbed in, and went only about a hundred yards before the steering mechanism broke! Unperturbed, the driver identified the problem, found some fencing wire, slid under the car, and tied the separated parts together. 'That won't get us far,' I thought. But I was wrong. The wire held for the duration—five hours, all of it in four-wheel drive because of the state of the road. Many times, in fact, we got stuck in mud and had to push the vehicle out. We arrived at ten o'clock that night, weary and covered with mud.

"For three days we witnessed in the camp, which was scattered over a wide area of jungle, and placed all of our literature. We also met a disfellowshipped man who expressed the desire to return to Jehovah. Later, we were thrilled to learn that he did come back. Also, his wife and some of his children are now in the truth. The same is true of the interested woman and her husband who kindly gave us accommodations."

CIRCUIT WORK ON THE SEPIK RIVER

Over 700 miles long, the Sepik River is like a large brown serpent winding from the highlands to the sea.

In some places it is so wide that it is difficult to see across it from one bank to the other. The river is a great highway, regularly used by the brothers, including traveling overseers and their wives. Let's join a circuit overseer and his wife as they visit congregations along this mighty waterway.

Warren Reynolds writes: "Early in the morning, my wife, Leann, and I set out from the town of Wewak with our 12-foot aluminum dinghy strapped to the roof rack of our vehicle. After a three-hour ride, most of it in four-wheel drive, we park our vehicle by the river for a few days while we travel upstream to visit the approximately 30 publishers in four villages along the Sepik's tributaries.

"With our flat-bottom dinghy loaded with supplies, we start the 25-horsepower outboard motor and head upstream. An hour later, we turn up the Yuat River, a tributary of the Sepik, and travel for another two hours before arriving at the village of Biwat. There we are warmly welcomed by the brothers and their Bible students, some of whom haul our dinghy ashore and store it at one of their homes. After enjoying a meal of plantains and coconut milk, we all head off on a two-hour hike through swampy jungle, the publishers leading the way and helping us carry our supplies. Finally we arrive at a small village called Dimiri, where we quench our thirst with coconut milk and set up our mosquito net and bed in a stilt house made of bush materials. Finally, after a dinner of cooked yams, we go to bed.

"Fourteen publishers live in this area in three villages. Over the next few days, we witness to each village and find many interested people. We also have

the joy of seeing two Bible students legalize their marriage and become approved to serve as Kingdom publishers. The other publishers provide a simple wedding dinner of yams, sago, some edible leaves, and two chickens.

“On Sunday we are thrilled to see 93 villagers attend the public talk! After the meeting, with our backpacks filled, we set off in the midday sun to return to Biwat, where we leave our packs at a Bible student’s home and start witnessing. Several people accept literature; and some, a Bible study. That night, in the home of a Bible student, we eat as we huddle around a fire, with the smoke keeping hordes of mosquitoes at bay.

Traveling on the Sepik River







Left: Circuit overseer Warren Reynolds and his wife, Leann, visit the village of Biwat; above: public talk during his visit to the village of Dimiri

“Early the next day, we return to our dinghy, slide it back into the river, and head off in the morning mist, entranced by the birdlife and the fish splashing in the water. Families on bamboo rafts packed with goods for the local market quietly pass us going the other way.

“When we get back to our vehicle, we refill the fuel tank in the dinghy and replenish our drinking water and other supplies. Then we set out on the river again, this time to visit the 14 publishers at Kambot. We arrive two hours later, soaked to the bone, thanks to a tropical downpour. From Kambot, we head upriver—this time with our dinghy full of publishers—to a large village lining both sides of the river. We witness to these appreciative ones till late in the afternoon. On

our way back, we witness to people who are standing on their floating bamboo jetties. Having seen us go up-river in the morning, they are awaiting our return. Since money is rare in this remote area, the villagers show their appreciation for our visit and the tracts we have left with them by donating food—coconuts, pumpkins, smoked fish, bananas. As the sun sets, we are back in Kambot cooking these items.

“In Kambot, the meeting place stands on stilts, as do all the homes in the area. During the wet season, when the whole area is flooded, people paddle their canoes right to the meeting-place steps. Our visit concludes with 72 in attendance at the public talk, including some who had walked five hours to get here.

“After arriving back at our circuit vehicle and strapping the dinghy onto the roof, we make the three-hour trip home. En route, we reflect on our dear brothers and sisters who live by the Sepik River. We also think about the love Jehovah has for them, as reflected in the effort his organization makes to ensure that they are spiritually well-fed. What a privilege we have to be part of such a wonderful family!”

WRESTLING WITH WICKED SPIRITS

Although a large percentage of Papua New Guineans profess Christianity, many also cling to traditional beliefs, including ancestor worship and fear of evil spirits. And in recent years, according to one guidebook, “there’s been a strong resurgence in black magic and sorcery.” Hence, people often attribute sickness and death to witch doctors or the spirits of ancestors.

In such an environment, Bible truth is truly liberating. In fact, even some witch doctors have recog-

nized the power of God's Word, abandoned their practices, and taken up true worship. Consider two examples:

Soare Maiga lived in a village about 30 miles from Port Moresby and was greatly feared because of his powers. However, he became curious about the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses and started attending group Bible studies. Before long he accepted the truth and abandoned his old ways. But when he tried to discard his spiritistic paraphernalia, in some mysterious way it kept coming back! Nevertheless, Soare was determined to "oppose the Devil," so one day he placed all the items in a bag, weighted it with a stone, and hurled it into the sea off Port Moresby. (Jas.



Soare Maiga

Kora Leke



4:7) That time his items did not come back. Thereafter, this courageous man became a zealous Witness of the true God, Jehovah.

Kora Leke used sorcery and herbal remedies to cure the sick. However, when he began to study the Bible, he struggled to break free from a spirit that had helped him in his witchcraft. Like Soare, Kora was determined to end his involvement with the demons—and with

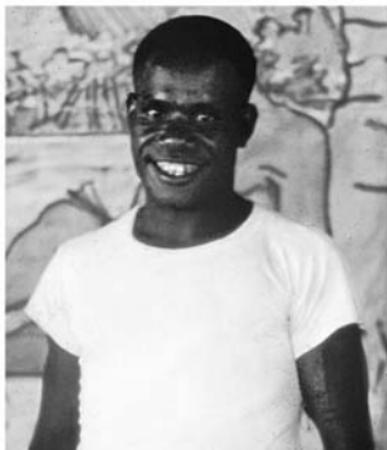
Jehovah's help, he succeeded. Later, he served as a regular pioneer and as a special pioneer. Even in his old age, when his legs were giving out, this loyal brother continued sharing the good news with his neighbors.

How did Kora get to his favorite witnessing spot? The brothers carried him there in a wheelbarrow, the most practical means at hand. Later, a resourceful brother working at the branch kindly made him a wheelchair using the steel frame of a normal chair, bicycle wheels, and canvas for the seat. His new mode of transport gave Kora greater independence, and he used it to the full! Yes, what an inspiring example such older ones are, and how they must warm Jehovah's heart!—Prov. 27:11.

TEACHING PEOPLE TO READ AND WRITE

“All the things that were *written* aforetime were *written* for our instruction,” says Romans 15:4. Clearly, God wants his people to be literate. Hence, as we have already mentioned, Jehovah's Witnesses in Papua New Guinea have made great efforts to teach people how to read and write.

Of course, learning to read and write can be a challenge, especially for older ones, but if a student has a willing heart, success will usually follow. Indeed, God's Word can have a powerful effect on the humblest and most unlettered of men.



Save Nanpen

Consider the example of Save Nanpen, a young man from the headwaters of the Sepik River. When Save moved to Lae, he experienced a cultural leap, seeing facets of the Western world for the first time. Additionally, he met Jehovah's Witnesses, who shared the Kingdom hope with him. Save's heart was touched, he began to attend Christian meetings, and before long, he qualified to be an unbaptized publisher. However, he was reluctant to take the next step—baptism. Why? He had promised Jehovah that he would not get baptized until he could read the Bible for himself. So he studied hard and attained his spiritual goals.

Illiteracy is still common, but secular schools have been established in a number of areas, and children of Witnesses attend those schools. In fact, our young ones are often models of literacy—thanks in no small part to good parenting and the training given at congregation meetings, such as the Theocratic Ministry School.

BIBLE TRUTH TRANSFORMS LIVES

The apostle Paul wrote: “The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful by God for overturning strongly entrenched things.” (2 Cor. 10:4) Sometimes just one scripture can have a powerful effect, as was the case with a woman named Elfreda. After Elfreda was shown God's name in her Wedau-language Bible, she consulted an encyclopedia, which confirmed what the Bible said about God's name. ‘Jehovah's Witnesses teach the truth,’ she thought. However, her husband, Armitage, wanted nothing to do with the Witnesses. He was a drunkard who chewed betel nut and smoked tobacco, and he had a foul temper.

After retiring from his job in Lae, Armitage, along with Elfreda, moved to Alotau in Milne Bay Province, where there were no Witnesses. Meanwhile, Elfreda subscribed to *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* and studied by mail with Kaylene Nilsen, a pioneer. “Elfreda faithfully sent me her written answers every week,” says Kaylene.

Later, Gilead graduates Geordie and Joanne Ryle were assigned to Milne Bay, and they visited Elfreda to encourage her and work with her in the ministry. “Armitage asked me to study the Bible with him,” recalls Geordie. “Because of his reputation, I wondered about his real motive. But after studying with him for a month, I knew he was sincere. Later he was baptized and eventually became a ministerial servant.” Now, three generations of his family are in the truth, and his grandson, Kegawale Biyama, quoted earlier, serves on the Branch Committee in Port Moresby.

While pioneering in Hula, Don and Shirley Fielder started a Bible study with Alogi and Renagi Pala. “Alogi was a thief and was always fighting with others,” writes Don. “He suffered from a tropical disease that gave his skin an unsightly appearance, and part of his mouth had been eaten away by a tropical ulcer. Both he and his wife also chewed betel nut, so the gaps between their blackened teeth were often blood red. Alogi was the last person one would expect to be drawn to the truth. Yet, he and his wife became interested in the truth and attended our meetings, sitting quietly at the back.

“Over a six-month period,” recalls Don, “we saw a stunning transformation in Alogi. He stopped stealing, fighting, and arguing, and he and Renagi cleaned

themselves up physically and started to participate in the meetings. They also began to share the good news with others. In fact, they and a handful of others became the first publishers in the Hula area.”

Abel Warak lived on New Ireland and had suffered from leprosy. As a result, he had no feeling in his hands and feet. When first contacted with the truth, Abel could hardly walk and had lost interest in life. The truth, however, completely transformed his attitude and outlook, infusing him with renewed joy and vigor. In time, he even became a pioneer. To supplement his diet, Abel used to fish, but because his feet were numb, he could no longer walk on the reef. So the brothers bought him knee-high rubber boots. He also learned to ride a bicycle, which enabled him to travel farther with the good news. In fact, he sometimes pedaled 60 miles to follow up on interest, and on one occasion, he rode his bicycle 90 miles one way to invite an interested man to the Memorial.

At times, “the knowledge of Jehovah” has helped even those with beastlike traits to make great changes. (Isa. 11:6, 9) For example, in 1986, about 60 people from two villages near Banz filed into a district convention at Lae and sat in the front rows. These highlanders were traditional enemies who often fought one another. But after hearing the good news from special pioneers, they decided to live



Geordie and Joanne Ryle

together in peace. Such experiences call to mind the words found at Zechariah 4:6: “ ‘Not by a military force, nor by power, but by my spirit,’ Jehovah of armies has said.” That same spirit has also impelled many sincere people to conform to the Bible’s moral standards.

HONORING GOD’S GIFT OF MARRIAGE

In many lands local custom as well as the churches of Christendom typically disregard the Scriptural view of marriage. (Matt. 19:5; Rom. 13:1) The situation is no different in Papua New Guinea. Thus, in order to please Jehovah, many couples living together out of wedlock or in a polygamous relationship have made major changes in their lives. Consider the example of Francis and his wife, Christine.

When Francis resigned from the army, he and his wife separated. Christine and their two children went back to her home village on Goodenough Island, Milne Bay Province, and he returned to Mount Hagen. There, Francis eventually took up living with another woman and her children. They attended the Assemblies of God Church. In time, Francis’ partner was contacted by the Witnesses and started to study the Bible. Later, Francis took an interest too, and before long, both were attending Christian meetings.

Francis wanted to become a Kingdom publisher, which meant that he had to resolve his marital situation. After giving the matter prayerful thought, he discussed it with his partner. She and her children then moved to another house, and Francis went to see Christine, from whom he had now been separated for six years. Understandably, Christine and her relatives were more than a little surprised to see Francis. Using

Jehovah Took Me In

DORAH NINGI

BORN 1977 **BAPTIZED** 1998

PROFILE She learned the truth as a girl and was ostracized by her family. Later, she began pioneering and now serves at the branch office.



■ **WHEN** I was 17 years of age, I found a copy of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. I soon realized that I had found something very special. I associated the book with Jehovah's Witnesses because when I was about four years old, two Witnesses spoke to me about God's promise of Paradise on earth.

Not long after I found the *Live Forever* book, my adoptive parents told me that since they had five children of their own, I had to return to my family, who lived in the coastal town of Wewak. When I first arrived there, I stayed with my father's brother.

Eager to meet the Witnesses, I found my way to the Kingdom Hall and arrived just as a brother was announcing the closing song. Nevertheless, a missionary from the United States named Pam arranged to study the Bible with me. I thoroughly enjoyed what I was learning, but after only three studies, I had a confrontation with my uncle.

As I was nearing home after a Sunday meeting, I saw smoke ascending from my uncle's front yard. He was burning all my possessions, including my Bible study aids. When

he saw me, he shouted, “If you want to worship with those people, then let them take care of you.” Because I was no longer welcome there, I had no choice but to go to the home of my biological parents, who lived in a village about two hours by car from Wewak.

When I approached my father, he said to my siblings in my hearing: “Who is this girl? We don’t know her. We gave her away when she was three.” I got the message that he did not want me either; so I left and stayed wherever I could.

About two years later, two special pioneer brothers met me in my parents’ village. I said to them, “Please tell Pam that I have not forgotten what she taught me, but I have no way to see her.” Shortly thereafter, however, I was able to meet Pam in Wewak and resume my study. During that time, I stayed with three different families, but because of my association with the Witnesses, I was kicked out of each house. Pam kindly made arrangements for me to live with a Witness family in Wewak. I was baptized in 1998 and began regular pioneering in September 1999. I was invited to Bethel in 2000 and have the privilege of working with the Tok Pisin translation team.

While my own family turned me away, which hurt me deeply, my spiritual family has more than made up for the loss. One of my favorite scriptures is Psalm 27:10, which reads: “In case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up.”

Literature in Tok Pisin



the Scriptures, Francis kindly explained to all of them his desire to do what is right in Jehovah's eyes. He then asked his wife to come back to Mount Hagen with their children and become a family again. All were amazed at this change of heart. Christine accepted her husband's invitation, and he, in turn, provided financial compensation to his wife's relatives for all they had done for his family over the previous six years.

After Christine arrived back in Mount Hagen, she too began to study the Bible, which also meant learning to read. Meanwhile, she gave up chewing betel nut and smoking tobacco. This couple are now dedicated servants of Jehovah.

CHILDREN WHO HONOR THEIR CREATOR

By courageously adhering to their Bible-trained conscience, many children in Papua New Guinea have given a fine witness. For example, early in 1966 a primary-school teacher told seven children of local Witnesses that they would be expected to salute the flag during ceremonies to be conducted the following week. When the time arrived, in the presence of some 300 assembled students, all seven children refused to salute. As a result, they were expelled, even though their parents had requested in writing that their children be exempt from the ceremonies. An elder in the local congregation appealed the matter to government officials in both Papua New Guinea and Australia.

On March 23 the Australian Administrator of Papua New Guinea telephoned the school authorities directing that the children be returned to school

immediately. True worship had won a small legal victory. Today the Papua New Guinea government continues to respect the right of children to refrain from saluting the flag for reasons of conscience.

“Babes and sucklings” can praise Jehovah in other ways too. (Matt. 21:16) Consider the example of Naomi from the highlands, whose parents, Joe and Helen, were not in the truth. When Naomi was about three years old, she stayed for about a year in Lae with Helen’s sister, a zealous Witness. The aunt regularly took Naomi out witnessing, often carrying her in a bag draped over her shoulder. Thus, Naomi became familiar with the Kingdom hope, and all the more so because her aunt made good use of the illustrations in *My Book of Bible Stories*.

When Naomi returned to her parents, she took a Witness publication, stepped outside the house, and then knocked loudly on the door. “Come back inside,” her parents called out. Stepping inside, the little girl said: “Hello. I am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, and I have come to talk to you about the Bible.” As Joe and Helen looked on in surprise, Naomi continued: “The Bible says that Paradise will come upon this land; and one King, Jesus, will rule over us. Everything we see around us is made by Jehovah.”

Joe and Helen were stunned. “What will the neighbors think!” Joe exclaimed to his wife. “Tomorrow you had better keep her locked inside the house.”

The following day, while her parents were sitting outside the home, Naomi knocked loudly on her bedroom wall. “Come outside,” said Joe. Naomi emerged and launched into another presentation: “Hello. I

am one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and I have come to preach to you. Good people will live forever on the earth. But people who get angry and do bad things will not be in Paradise." Totally baffled, Helen burst into tears, while Joe stormed off to bed.

That night, his curiosity piqued, Joe paged through his old King James Bible and chanced upon the name Jehovah. The following morning, instead of going to work, he wrote a letter to the Witnesses and then drove 25 miles to Mount Hagen to leave it at the Kingdom Hall.

The brothers went to Joe and Helen's home and arranged for a regular Bible study. They also taught

***Some of these children were expelled
from school for not saluting the flag***



Helen to read. Eventually, both Joe and Helen were baptized, and Helen was able to help other Bible students learn to read—all this because a little girl’s heart overflowed with praise to Jehovah!

EFFORTS TO ATTEND CHRISTIAN GATHERINGS

In some parts of the world, brothers negotiate congested, polluted highways or crowded subways to get to Christian meetings and conventions. But in Papua New Guinea, the problem is often the lack of good roads and transportation. Hence, many families have to travel at least some of the way on foot or by canoe or both. For example, publishers, along with their children, regularly walk more than 100 miles over slippery, sawtooth mountains to attend the annual district convention in Port Moresby. Their grueling, week-long trek follows the world-famous Kokoda Trail, site of many bitter World War II battles. They carry with them their food, cooking utensils, clothes, and other items needed for the convention.

The brothers on isolated Nukumanu Atoll usually attend annual conventions in Rabaul, 500 miles to the west. “To be certain of getting there on time,” says Jim Davies, “they sometimes leave six weeks ahead of time because of the unreliable boat service. The return trip can also be fraught with uncertainty. One time, the only boat traveling to Nukumanu detoured to Australia for repairs, and then the owners had financial problems. As a result, it took the brothers more than six months to get home! Granted, that was an extreme case, but delays of weeks are not unusual, forcing the stranded publishers to stay with fellow Witnesses or relatives.”

“Jehovah Is Our Greatest Teacher”

JOHN TAVOISA

BORN 1964 **BAPTIZED** 1979

PROFILE As a child, he was cruelly persecuted by his teachers and his fellow students and was forced to leave school after only two years. He now serves as a circuit overseer.



■ I WAS born in the village of Gogovigi in Milne Bay Province. My father started to study the Bible when I was seven years old, and he taught me the things he was learning.

At about that time, I began to attend a public school. When my two teachers, who were Anglicans, learned that I was associating with the Witnesses, they began to persecute me. Fellow students did the same, even attacking me with sticks. As a result, I was forced to leave school after only two years.

About a year later, I saw one of the teachers at the local market. “You are a clever boy who would have done very well at school,” he said. “But because of your religion, you will end up being a servant to your fellow students.” When I told my father what the teacher had said, his reply warmed my heart. “If the world will not educate you,” he said, “Jehovah will.”

Father and a special pioneer brother helped me to gain the most valuable education of all—the knowledge that

leads to everlasting life. (John 17:3) My native tongue was Dawawa, but they taught me the Bible in Hiri Motu, which became my second language, and in Tok Pisin, which became my third. I was baptized at the age of 15. Two years later, I started pioneering.

In 1998, I was invited to attend the Ministerial Training School. At the time, I had a limited knowledge of English. So, to prepare me for the school, the branch assigned me to an English-language congregation in Port Moresby. Thus, English became my fourth language.

At the graduation, I was assigned to the Alotau Congregation in Milne Bay Province. Six months later, I was greatly surprised—and thrilled—to be appointed as a circuit overseer. My first circuit included New Britain, New Ireland, Manus Island, and other neighboring islands. I married my dear wife, Judy, in 2006, and we special pioneered for one year, after which we took up circuit work together.

When I visit congregations, I often tell young ones: “Jehovah is our greatest Teacher. So let him teach you, for he can equip you to be truly successful in life.” That, to be sure, is an important lesson I have learned.

With my wife, Judy



THE FINE EXAMPLE OF MISSIONARIES

Serving in a foreign land where the standard of living may be lower than it is at home can be quite an adjustment for missionaries. Yet, as many have demonstrated, it is an adjustment that can be made and that is often appreciated by the local people. One woman in Papua New Guinea said of the two missionary sisters studying with her, "Their skin is white, but their hearts are like our hearts."

Some missionaries serve in the traveling work. In order to visit congregations, they may have to travel by whatever mode of transportation is available. This was true of Edgar Mangoma. The circuits he served took in the Fly River and Lake Murray. "When serving the two congregations on the lake, I went by canoe—sometimes with and sometimes without a motor. In the latter case, it would take me up to eight hours to get from one congregation to the other. Usually, three or four brothers accompanied me, knowing they had to paddle all the way back after dropping me off. How I appreciated them!"

"Their skin is white, but their hearts are like our hearts"

The good example of missionaries, including their humility and love for people, has resulted in an excellent witness. "The villagers were astonished to see me staying with interested ones in their homes and sharing meals with them," wrote a circuit overseer. "In fact, some local people have said to me: 'Your worship of God is genuine. Our pastors do not associate with us like you do.'"

Do foreign sisters find it difficult to adjust to life in Papua New Guinea? "For the first few months, I found

it very difficult,” recalls Ruth Boland, who accompanied her husband, David, in the traveling work. “Many times I felt like giving up. But I am glad I didn’t, for I came to appreciate and love the brothers and sisters. My husband and I thought less and less about ourselves and more and more about others. Indeed, the joy we began to experience was unsurpassed. Materially we had nothing, but spiritually we were rich. And we saw Jehovah’s hand in so much that happened—not just in connection with the advancement of the good news but also in our own lives. When you have nothing materially—that is when you truly rely on Jehovah and see his blessing.”

CIVIL WAR ON BOUGAINVILLE

In 1989, on Bougainville Island, the smoldering embers of a longtime secessionist movement finally ignited a full-scale civil war. During the 12-year conflict, some 60,000 people were displaced and 15,000 died. Among the displaced were many publishers, most of whom resettled in other parts of Papua New Guinea.

Shortly before leaving the island, Dan Ernest, a pioneer, was seized by Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) soldiers and taken to a large warehouse. Dan recalls: “Inside was a BRA general wearing a uniform covered with medals and a sword at his side.

“‘Are you Dan Ernest?’ he asked.

“‘Yes,’ I replied.

“‘I heard you were a spy for the Papua New Guinea Defence Force,’ he declared.

“I started to explain that Jehovah’s Witnesses do not get involved with the conflicts of any country, but

he interrupted and said: 'We know! We were watching. Other religions supported whoever seemed to be winning. Yours is the only religion that remained completely neutral.' Then he added: 'Our people have been in turmoil during this war and need your comforting message. We would like you to stay in Bougainville and continue preaching. But if you must leave, I will make sure all your belongings get out safe.' Two weeks later, when my wife and I transferred to a new pioneer assignment on Manus Island, the general lived up to his word."

The branch office worked hard to maintain contact with the publishers in the area affected by the war and, despite a naval blockade, was able to send them some food, medicine, and literature. A visiting circuit overseer reported: "The scars of war are everywhere, but the brothers and sisters are still busy preaching and holding their meetings. Many Bible studies are also being conducted."

Finally, in 2001, the warring parties reached a peace agreement that established Bougainville and nearby islands as an autonomous region. Bougainville Island currently has no resident Witnesses, but neighboring Buka Island has a fine congregation of 39 publishers.

A VOLCANO DESTROYS RABAU

The city of Rabaul has a large harbor that is actually the caldera of an ancient volcano. In September 1994, active vents on opposite sides of the harbor erupted, devastating Rabaul and reshaping the way of life in the province. The Kingdom Hall and the attached missionary home were destroyed, but no brothers were killed. One brother, however, had a

heart problem and died while fleeing the eruption. The brothers all went to prearranged areas miles away, following an evacuation plan that for some years had been posted on the information board at the Kingdom Hall.

Immediately, the branch office took steps to assist those affected and to organize relief supplies. Donated clothing, mosquito nets, medicine, gasoline, diesel fuel, and other items were dispatched, along with rice and taro from a nearby congregation. Indeed, the relief operation went so well that local officials and others made a number of favorable comments.

Eventually, the Rabaul Congregation ceased to exist. Two days after the eruptions, about 70 publishers and their children gathered at an abandoned vocational school. When the elders arrived, the publishers asked, "What time does the book study start?" Yes, despite the hardships, meeting attendance and the witnessing work were never neglected. (Heb. 10:24, 25)



Most of the brothers moved to nearby groups, one of which became a congregation as a result.

The provincial government promised all the religions that had lost property that they would be granted land in the town of Kokopo, about 15 miles from Rabaul. However, while other religions received land, the Witnesses did not. Then, about seven years after the eruption, a brother from Africa began to work for the town planning department. Noting the unfair treatment the Witnesses had been given, he promptly located a suitable parcel of land in Kokopo and assisted the brothers with the application, which was approved. A volunteer construction team helped build a Kingdom Hall and missionary home. In fact, the initial injustice actually proved to be a blessing. How so? The land earlier granted to the churches is up a steep hill. But the property given to the brothers is ideally located in the center of town.

TRANSLATION MOVES AHEAD

“In a country of over 800 languages, it is vital to have a common language or common languages so

***Left: Rabaul with the Tavurvur volcano in the distance;
bottom: the Rabaul Kingdom Hall that was destroyed in 1994***



that people can communicate with one another,” says Timo Rajalehto, who is a member of the Branch Committee and the overseer of the Translation Department. “Simple trade languages, such as Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu, are ideal for that purpose. They are relatively easy to learn as a second language, and they serve well as a means of communication in everyday matters. But they are not ideal for conveying complicated concepts. Hence, our translators often struggle with certain terms.

“For example, we discovered that no Tok Pisin word could adequately translate the word ‘principle.’ Hence, our translators joined two Tok Pisin words to create the word *stiatok* (steer talk), which describes how principles work by ‘steering’ people in the right direction. The expression caught on in the media and is now used by many Tok Pisin speakers.”

The Watchtower began to be published in Motu in 1958, and Tok Pisin in 1960. Study articles were printed in Sydney, Australia, on loose sheets of paper that were stapled together and then shipped to Port Moresby. In 1970, the magazine was enlarged to 24 pages, and its circulation rose to over 3,500. A 24-page edition of *Awake!* was first published in Tok Pisin in January 1972. At present, the branch prepares a semi-monthly *Watchtower* and a quarterly *Awake!* in Tok Pisin as well as a monthly study edition of the *Watchtower* and a quarterly public edition in Hiri Motu.

“Recently, we translated certain tracts into a number of new languages, including Enga, Jiwaka, Kuanua, Melpa, and Orokaiva,” says Timo Rajalehto. “Since people who speak those languages also speak



Translation team, 2010

Tok Pisin or English or both, why was this done? We wanted to see how people would respond to the Kingdom message in their native tongue. Would it spark their interest in the truth and create positive feelings toward the Witnesses?

“The answer is a resounding yes! Indeed, many positive comments have been made by the public. Bible studies have been started, and even some former opposers have changed their attitude toward the Witnesses. When people get a publication in their mother tongue, it has great impact.”

Currently, the Translation Department has a staff of 31, which includes the Hiri Motu and Tok

TIME LINE

Papua New Guinea

Tom and Rowena Kitto **1951** arrive in Port Moresby. ▾



Tom and Rowena Kitto move to the New Guinea highlands. **1962**

◀ A branch office is constructed at Koki, Port Moresby. **1965**



Violent mobs destroy Kingdom Halls in Milne Bay Province. **1977-1979**

Civil war breaks out on Bougainville Island. **1989**

A new branch office is dedicated. **1987**



◀ Volcanic eruptions destroy Rabaul, New Britain. **1994**

A Kingdom Hall Construction Desk is established at the branch. ▾ **1999**

An Assembly Hall **2002** is built at Gerehu, Port Moresby.



1940

1960

1980

2000

2020

1930

- 1935 Pioneers aboard the Society's ketch *Lightbearer* preach in Port Moresby. ▶



1950

- 1956 Pioneers move to New Ireland and New Britain.

- 1957 John Cutforth develops picture sermons. ▼

- 1960 The International Bible Students Association is registered.



1970

- 1969 The "Peace on Earth" International Assembly is held at Haima, Papua.

- 1975 Papua and New Guinea combine to form Papua New Guinea.

The Watchtower is published in Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu simultaneously with the English edition.

1990

- 1991

- 1994 A Hospital Liaison Committee begins operating.

2010

- 2010 A new branch office extension is dedicated. ▶



Pisin translation teams. In December 2009, all were thrilled to move into a new translation office.

THE PIONEER SERVICE SCHOOL BENEFITS MANY

For many of Jehovah's servants, the Pioneer Service School is a highlight of their life. The school not only helps the pioneers to develop spiritually but also equips them to be better pioneers. Consider what some have said after attending the school.

Lucy Koimb: "The school has helped me to see that one of the best things I can do with my life is to share in the full-time service."

Michael Karap: "Before the school, I had many return visits and no Bible studies. Now I have many studies!"

Ben Kuna: "The school taught me to think more the way Jehovah thinks."

Siphon Popo: "I studied harder than I ever had in my whole life! And I learned not to rush when studying."

Julie Kine: "The school taught me to have a proper view of material things. We don't really need as much as others say we need."

Dan Burks, who is a member of the Branch Committee, observed: "When pioneers become more productive, they also become happier and more zealous. We are confident that the Pioneer Service School will continue to benefit hundreds of pioneers in this land. Of course, these benefits will also extend to the publishers and interested ones in the territory."

GROWING TOGETHER IN LOVE

Jesus Christ said: "All will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John

13:35) In Papua New Guinea, Christian love has bridged all kinds of chasms: language differences, racial diversity, tribal culture, and economic disparity. When honesthearted people see such love, they are moved to say, “God is with you people.”

Those were the sentiments of Mange Samgar, a bus owner and former Lutheran pastor from Banz, mentioned earlier. What led him to that conclusion? In order to attend a district convention in Lae, the local congregation chartered one of Mange’s buses. “Curious about the Witnesses, he came along for the ride,” said Steve and Kathryn Dawal, who were at the convention site when the bus arrived. “Mange was tremendously impressed by the organization and by the racial and tribal unity among Jehovah’s people. By the time he returned home with the busload of Witnesses, he was convinced that he had found the truth. Later, he and his son became Christian elders.”

Sister Hoela Forova, a young, widowed regular pioneer caring for her widowed mother, was in desperate need of a new home. On two occasions she had scraped up some money, gave it to a relative to buy lumber, and never saw it again. Aware of her plight, the local Witnesses rebuilt her house in just three days. For the whole three days, Hoela wept off and on, completely overwhelmed by the love of the brothers. The project also gave an outstanding witness. A local church deacon exclaimed, “How can people who do not solicit money and just walk around with book bags build a house in three days!”

The apostle John wrote: “Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed

and truth.” (1 John 3:18) As a result of such love, expressed in many ways, the work in Papua New Guinea continues to move ahead. Indeed, the 3,672 publishers conduct 4,908 Bible studies, and 25,875 people attended the 2010 Memorial of Christ’s death—a powerful evidence of Jehovah’s continued blessing!—1 Cor. 3:6.

Some 70 years ago, a mere handful of courageous brothers and sisters ventured into this amazing and mysterious land, bringing with them the truth that sets men free. (John 8:32) In the decades that followed, many other Witnesses—expatriates and locals—joined them in the work. Before them lay seemingly insurmountable obstacles: dense jungles, malaria-infested swamps, and poor roads or none at all, as well as poverty, tribal violence, rampant spiritism, and sometimes violent opposition from Christendom’s clergy and their supporters. The brothers also had to deal with illiteracy and the challenge of preaching to thousands of tribal communities speaking over 800 languages! Their unselfish contribution to the Kingdom preaching work is greatly appreciated by those who have come after them and built on the foundation they laid.

Many of these challenges, however, still face Jehovah’s servants in Papua New Guinea. But with God all things are possible. (Mark 10:27) Thus, with full trust in him, the brothers and sisters in this diverse land are confident that Jehovah will grant many more righteously inclined ones “the change to a pure language, in order for them all to call upon the name of Jehovah, in order to serve him shoulder to shoulder.”—Zeph. 3:9.



Papua New Guinea Branch

*Branch Committee: Dan Burks, Timo Rajalehto,
Kegawale Biyama, Craig Speegle*





Estonia

WELCOME to Estonia! This “much-loved Baltic gem” will stun you with its scenic beauty: woods and meadows, picturesque coastal villages, more than 1,400 lakes, and over 1,500 islands. Almost half of Estonia is blanketed with dense trees and undergrowth—remnants of the primeval forest that used to cover most of Europe. Estonia, not much bigger than Switzerland or Denmark, is one of the smallest countries in Europe.

You will find that the friendly but reserved inhabitants of this delightful little country have many truly admirable qualities. In general, they are well-educated, have a very high literacy rate, and love to read. Although about 30 percent of the population are Russian-speaking, Estonian is the official language. However, it is not easy to learn because it is very complex. For example, Estonian has several words for “island,” depending on the appearance, size, and age of the island.

STORMY PAST

Estonia has been dominated by one powerful neighbor after another. German knights and Danish troops invaded the land in the early 13th century, after which Denmark, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, and Sweden battled for control of Estonia for centuries.

Then, after more than a century of Swedish rule, Russia took over in 1721. After a short period of

independence between 1918 and 1940, the Soviet Union marched in and annexed Estonia. In 1941, Nazi Germany occupied the country but lost control to the Soviet Union in 1944. Estonia was part of the Soviet Union for almost 50 years, until 1991 when it became the first Soviet republic to declare independence.

How did those events affect Jehovah's Witnesses in Estonia? What happened to the servants of the true God during the oppressive German occupation and the difficult Soviet era? Read the exciting story of their faith, courage, and resourcefulness in the face of brutal persecution.

THE SCARS OF FALSE RELIGION

The crusaders who invaded Estonia in the 13th century forced "Christianity" on the people by the edge of the sword. The conversions, though, were no more than skin-deep. Afterward, entire villages splashed themselves and their houses with water to wash away their forced baptism and returned to their pagan worship. The people continued practicing nature worship and pagan rites until their rituals gradually became interlaced with Catholic beliefs.

In the 17th century, Estonians were converted to the Lutheran Church, and later the Russian Orthodox Church became the State church in Estonia. In 1925, Church and State were separated. According to a survey, only 14 percent of Estonians claim that religion is an important part of their daily life.

In recent times, however, many sincere Estonians have welcomed the healing balm of God's Word, "the healthful teaching according to the glorious good news of the happy God." (1 Tim. 1:10, 11) As a result, since 1991 the number of Jehovah's Witnesses pro-

claiming God's Kingdom has grown from fewer than 1,000 to over 4,000. But how did the good news reach tiny Estonia in the first place?

"YOU HAVE A MOUTH"

Early in the 20th century, Martin Kose and his brother Hugo obtained some literature published by the Bible Students (as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known) while in the United States. Excited about what he had discovered, Martin was concerned about his native country, where he knew there were no Bible Students. Locating the address of the New York headquarters from a brochure, Martin later went there and expressed his concern to J. F. Rutherford, who was overseeing the work of the Bible Students at the time.

"What should I do?" asked Martin.

"Well, you have a mouth, don't you?" replied Brother Rutherford. "Then go back and use it."

And so Martin did! About 1923 he went back to Estonia and started to preach, becoming the first Bible Student in the country. Martin taught his family Bible truths, and his son, Adolf, proved to be a faithful servant of God and a pillar of

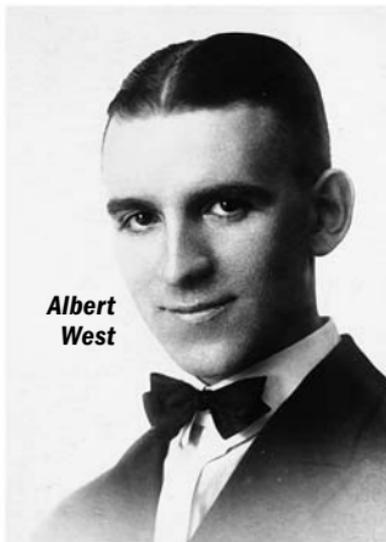


Hugo and Martin Kose

stability during the difficult days that lay ahead. Martin's brother Hugo became a Bible Student too, but he never returned permanently to his homeland.

"YOU WON'T BE LONELY"

At a London convention of Bible Students in 1926, Brother Rutherford asked for volunteers to go to the Baltic countries. Albert West, Percy Dunham, and James Wil-



**Albert
West**

liams put up their hands. Shortly thereafter, they were appointed to organize the preaching of the good news in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. William Dey, then overseer of the Northern European Office, situated in Denmark, traveled with Albert West to Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. After finding a room for Albert to stay in, Brother Dey patted him on the shoulder and said: "Well, good-bye, Albert. You won't be lonely. Soon *The Watchtower* will be coming!"

Colporteurs, as pioneers were then known, came from England, Germany, and other countries to help. However, they were not able to stay long because they had difficulties extending their visas. Finnish colporteurs were able to adapt quickly, since the Estonian and Finnish languages are closely related. Dozens of foreign full-time preachers planted Kingdom seeds diligently and abundantly. Foreigners, who were a novelty, were warmly welcomed and often given nick-

names, such as “Soome Miina” (Finnish Miina). If a speaker was from Britain, he would simply be introduced as a “Londonist.”

THE FIRST BRANCH

Suitable office space was scarce, and because foreigners were thought to be wealthy, higher rent was demanded of them. However, in 1926 a branch was opened in a small apartment in Tallinn at 17 Kreutzwaldi Street, with Albert West serving as branch servant. The first booklets in Estonian, including *Millions Now Living Will Never Die!*, were released that same year.

A young Estonian woman, Hilda Ang, heard about the truth from her friends. When she went to the branch office to get literature, a German brother asked her if she would be willing to help him with the translation of his public talk. She agreed, and in 1928 she was invited to work in the office

The first branch office was located in this apartment building

Alexander and Hilda Brydson, in the 1930's



An Overview of Estonia

Land An unspoiled, sparsely populated country, Estonia is characterized by tall, thick forests, more than 1,400 lakes, about 7,000 streams and rivers, and uninhabitable swamps. Over 1,500 islands make up one tenth of Estonia. Most of the country is flat and lies less than 160 feet above sea level. The southeast has a beautiful, undulating landscape.

People Ethnically, 68 percent of the inhabitants are Estonian, and 26 percent are Russian, with the remainder being mostly Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Finnish. Religiously, they are Lutherans, Orthodox, and other nominal Christians, as well as Muslims and Jews. Much of the population is unaffiliated or is attached to unspecified religions.

Language The official language, Estonian, is in the same language group as Finnish and Hungarian. The Russian-speaking population makes up over a quarter of the nation.

Food *Leib* (black bread) and potatoes are popular, as are pickled pumpkin, beet salad, and sauerkraut. Other specialties include *sült* (jellied veal), *rosolje* (herring and beets), wild mushroom soup, pork, fish, and smoked meats. Desserts include *kringel*—a sweet knotted bread sprinkled with raisins and nuts—and pancakes.

Climate Summers are cool, and winters moderate. The longest day in summer has over 19 hours of daylight, and the shortest day in winter has only 6. While the southwestern coast can enjoy balmy Mediterranean temperatures in summer, winter temperatures can drop to minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit.



FINLAND

HELSINKI

St. Petersburg

Gulf of Finland

TALLINN

Maardu

Tapa

Narva

Vormsi

Hiiumaa

Saaremaa

Pärnu

Tartu

Lake Võrtsjärv

Lake Peipus

Räpina

Võru

Lake Pskov

RUSSIA

ESTONIA

LATVIA

RĪGA

Gulf of Riga



as a translator. She later married a British brother, Alexander Brydson, who had moved to Estonia to preach full-time. Hilda proved to be an efficient and hardworking translator, and later, when the work went underground and she and her husband had to leave the country, she secretly continued translating for several decades from abroad. Together, the Brydsons eventually served a total of more than 100 years in full-time service!

In 1928 the Bible Students published their first book in Estonian, *The Harp of God*. In addition, *The Watchtower*, seven other books, and numerous booklets were published in Estonian before World War II.

EARLY EVANGELIZERS

The colporteurs covered vast territories by bicycle and slept wherever they could find accommodations

The first pioneers from Finland, Jenny Felt and Irja Mäkelä



—whether in country houses or in haystacks. People were poor, but they loved to listen to the Kingdom message. As a result, these full-time preachers happily spent between 150 and 200 hours a month in the preaching work, one reporting 239 hours in a single month! Their service was characterized by industriousness, boldness, and perseverance. This is what it was like for one sister the first time she went out in the field service:

“Do you know how to ride a bicycle?” a zealous Finnish sister asked her.

“Yes, I do,” replied the new sister.

“Well, let’s go to Sarema,” said the Finnish sister enthusiastically, referring to the largest Estonian island, about 125 miles away.

When they arrived at the first village on Sarema, the Finnish sister suggested: “You start from this end, and I’ll start from the other end. In the evening we’ll meet in the center of the village.” The new sister had never done any preaching before. But when she called at the first door, she felt Jehovah’s help and quickly gained enough confidence to enjoy the rest of the trip.

Hellin Aaltonen (later Grönlund) met people from the island of Vormsi and found that they spoke a strange language.

“Don’t you speak Estonian?” she asked the islanders.

“No, we speak Swedish,” they replied.

“Well, do you have Swedish books to read?” asked Hellin.

“We haven’t had Swedish books for several hundred years,” was their exaggerated reply.

Realizing that the inhabitants of Vormsi needed Swedish literature, Hellin decided to visit the island with Fanny Hietala, who spoke Swedish.

“We took all the Swedish books that the office had and went there by boat,” recalls Hellin. “We worked the whole island in three days and placed almost all of our literature. Decades later, I heard of a brother in Sweden who learned the truth from books that he had obtained in Vormsi!” Time and again Kingdom preachers experienced the truth of Ecclesiastes 11:6: “In the morning sow your seed and until the evening do not let your hand rest; for you are not knowing where this will have success.”

CHALLENGES FACED BY COLPORTEURS

The work of colporteurs was not easy. In winter, on ski or on foot, they would travel from 12 to 24 miles a day. The cold was intense, and comfortable lodgings were scarce. Only the most basic food and other necessities could be taken with

“I never lacked anything really important”

them, as they also carried boxes of literature. Heavy rain often rendered roads impassable. Many nights the colpor-

teurs were compelled to sleep outdoors. This rigorous avenue of service demanded as much physical strength and stamina as they could muster. Yet, how did these devoted preachers feel about their service?

“I never lacked anything really important,” recalls Vilho Eloranta, a zealous Finnish brother who preached full-time in isolated areas for many months. “Most of the time, I got my daily food and overnight accommodations in exchange for literature. The need

for money was minimal. When evening came, I would start asking for accommodations. Few householders refused a place for me to stay, especially if it was late in the day or far to the next farm.”

“Getting the message of the Kingdom into the hands of the people,” continues Vilho, “was so much my concern that the modest living conditions did not in any way diminish the contentment and joy I derived from doing the preaching work.”

Those hardworking brothers and sisters paved the way for future growth by placing huge amounts of literature. In 1929 a total of 53,704 books and booklets were distributed by a handful of evangelizers.

“Estonia had approximately 30 colporteurs,” remembers Adolf Kose, “and they worked the entire country before World War II.”

The impact made by those diligent early preachers is still being felt. For example, early in the 1990’s, Jehovah’s Witnesses met Ruth, an elderly lady. Their message seemed familiar to her. She recalled that over 60 years earlier, she had listened to a German Bible Student who called on her neighbor a couple of times. Now, although deaf and advanced in age, Ruth recognized the ring of truth, accepted a Bible study, and was baptized—almost 70 years after her initial contact!

EARLY BRANCH ACTIVITY

In those early days, the tiny branch office served as a convention site. The first convention, in June 1928, was attended by 25, and 4 were baptized. The following year, 80 Finnish brothers came over to assist with the convention and to work in the field service.



In 1932, the branch was moved to 72 Suur Tartu Road, Tallinn

Albert West, who had been serving as branch servant in Estonia, was assigned to assist, and later to replace, William Dey as branch servant in Denmark. Who would replace Brother West as branch servant in Estonia? Wallace Baxter, from Scotland, who was a warm brother with a good sense of humor. Before finding the truth, he had fought in the British army in France during World War I. What he saw

and experienced in the war was not in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

“I was confused,” recalls Brother Baxter, “and began to realize that all human warfare was wrong, no matter who the enemy might be. I always believed that all men are brothers and that anyone who sought God would eventually find him. As I pondered thoughts like those, I knelt down in my dugout and solemnly vowed to God that if I was spared and was able to return home, I would serve him my whole life.”

And that he did. After he learned the truth, he zealously entered the full-time ministry in 1926. Two years later he accepted an invitation to serve in Estonia, where he showed the same zeal. He was appointed as branch servant in 1930, the year that Brother West left. The branch was relocated to 72 Suur

Tartu Road, Tallinn, in 1932, and the following year the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society was officially registered in Estonia.

MULTILINGUAL BROADCASTS

As early as 1927, Brother West received permission to broadcast on a commercial radio station in Tallinn. The lecture he gave, "Blessings of the Millennium," was translated into Estonian. The broadcast not only aroused much interest but also resulted in some controversy. Thus, further permission to broadcast was not given again until 1929. Then regular broadcasts began every Sunday. The talks were given in English, Estonian, Finnish, Russian, occasionally in Swedish and German, and at least once in Danish. Those talks too aroused much interest and could be heard as far away as Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Leningrad

Kaarlo Harteva giving a radio lecture



(now St. Petersburg), Russia. During the 1932 service year, the 200 lectures that were broadcast proved to be effective tools in making Jehovah's name known. Not surprisingly, they also aroused clergy opposition!

Knowing how fearful officials in Estonia were of anything having to do with Communism, the clergy falsely claimed that the Witnesses had Communist links. Quick to react to anything that they felt could weaken the nation, Estonian authorities banned the lectures in 1934. However, not everyone agreed with the ban. A schoolboy wrote the following letter in English:

Dear Watch Tower and Judge Rutherford:

I am sorry that our government in Estonia has forbidden your lectures in our broadcasting. I am a schoolboy, a pupil. My parents are not rich: they earn with fatiguing work a living to their children. But the love and hope to the Lord is like a sunbeam on their faces. I was severely ill in the winter, and then were your lectures in the broadcasting the only thing that have me consoled. The tears in my eyes were then the tears of happiness. . . . Where are these lectures now? . . . I began to learn the English, and this is my first letter written in this language, all without a dictionary. . . . With best wishes and greetings to Judge Rutherford.

Brother Rutherford replied with a personal letter and sent the young boy some records of his lectures.

A “CHARIOT OF THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM”

John North, a zealous colporteur from England, lived in a trailer with his family while preaching in Estonia. This aroused much interest all over southern Estonia. A local newspaper described the trailer this way: “The [Watch Tower] Society is building in Tartu a vehicle similar to a house, and the purpose is to travel around the country in this and hold religious services. They preach to the people out of the ‘chariot of the heavenly Kingdom’ and distribute books that explain the Bible. The personnel from this ‘chariot’ consists of five persons—the chief missionary, his wife, their child, and two energetic young men. The latter ride swiftly on bicycles (like Jehu) in all directions round about the ‘chariot’ distributing literature.”

During the political turmoil in the mid-1930’s, a former army pilot, Nikolai Tuiman, was imprisoned



John North and his “chariot”





Nikolai Tuiman

because of his involvement with an Estonian Fascist movement. In the prison library, Nikolai found some books by J. F. Rutherford that made him realize that he was on the wrong track. After his release he traveled to Tallinn to the address he had found in a book that his wife had obtained, which was published by the Witnesses. With Brother Baxter's help, Nikolai made a complete turn-about in his life, gave up his political activities, and became a peaceful

and zealous Witness of Jehovah. Later, when the work was under ban, he was one of the pillars in the congregation, helping with underground printing. He remained faithful during some 15 years in exile in Siberia.

Another person who had been involved in and disappointed by politics was a medical doctor, Artur Indus. The first spark of truth was ignited when he called at Martin Kose's home to provide needed medical treatment. Brother Kose encouraged Artur to study the Bible, and because Artur knew German, Brother Kose ordered him all the literature that was available in that language. With Martin's help, Artur

accepted the truth, dedicated himself to Jehovah, and was baptized. He was a well-known and respected doctor, and he also became known as a zealous and respected brother.

DARK CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON

The mid-1930's were turbulent times. Because of the pressure from Nazi Germany and the Catholic Church, the booklet *Righteous Ruler* was confiscated in January 1935.

In the same year, the Minister of the Interior closed down the Watch Tower Society in Estonia, confiscated the literature, and placed a lien on its property. Although much literature was already hidden, some 76,000 pieces were confiscated. This setback did not stop the work, though. Much to the brothers' surprise and joy, the contents of two confiscated brochures were published in two leading newspapers that had a combined circulation of 100,000. Despite the loss of literature, Jehovah's name received more publicity than it would have if the brothers had distributed the brochures.

The police confiscated great quantities of literature



In the meantime, the preaching work continued, and office activities were resumed. Quite a number of books continued to be confiscated in the following years. Hellin Aaltonen was working in the branch when one of the raids took place.

“Three young policemen came primarily to confiscate the booklet *Millions Now Living Will Never Die!*” recalls Sister Aaltonen, “but we had none. They pulled all the books off the shelves and threw them in a heap on the floor. Brother Baxter couldn’t do a single thing, as they were watching him very closely. But I started tidying up after the police and discreetly went to Brother Baxter’s desk to check if there were any papers there that the policemen should not see. I noticed a letter with all the publishers’ names and their addresses. I dropped it into a bin in the corner. When the police started to load the books into boxes, the officer in charge arrogantly grabbed a box and jerked it away so violently that he broke his own arm! The police hastily left to take him to the hospital, allowing us time to sort through the boxes before they returned.”

“The policemen returned,” continues Brother Baxter, “and while the removal was going on, I caught sight of one of them putting a copy of the *Deliverance* book in the large pocket of his overcoat. I have often wondered how many more books were taken and read by those men.”

The year 1939 was an uncertain and frightening time. A number of Soviet troops were allowed to enter Estonia. “Every day the radio kept up a constant barrage of Communist propaganda,” wrote Brother Baxter. “There was much speculation, excitement, apprehension, and outright fear. The sky was filled with

droning Soviet warplanes loaded with paratroops.” Would that threat paralyze the witnessing work?

Despite all the turmoil, in 1940, Jehovah’s loyal servants placed 59,776 books and booklets—a remarkable accomplishment by only 27 publishers and 15 pioneers! They were doing as much as they could in the remaining period of freedom.

LAST ASSEMBLY IN FREEDOM

The brothers were able to arrange for an assembly in Tallinn shortly before the Soviet rule began—the last one to be held in freedom for the next five decades. They discussed such *Watchtower* articles as “The Theocracy,” “Neutrality,” “Snares,” and “Doom of Religion”—timely spiritual food that helped prepare God’s people for what lay ahead.

World War II was about to engulf Estonia, and our brothers were not going to escape its effects. On

1940: The last assembly held in freedom before Soviet rule



June 16, 1940, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics issued an ultimatum to the Estonian government to appoint a new government and allow more Soviet troops into Estonia. The Estonian Communist party, with fewer than 150 members, was legalized, and Estonia was annexed and incorporated into the Soviet Union. Within months, thousands of Estonians were exiled to Siberia, and their houses and farms were abandoned, burned, or given to invading Russians. Thousands of others tried to escape in small fishing boats, mainly to Sweden. Many succeeded, but others perished in the tempestuous seas.

LAST FOREIGNERS LEAVE

With the arrival of the Communist regime, the branch office was again closed down. Although Brother Baxter and Alexander and Hilda Brydson were determined to stick to their assignment, it was becoming increasingly dangerous for foreigners to stay. Consequently, they were advised by Brother Rutherford to leave the country. Brother Baxter and the Dunhams from Latvia were evacuated by train through Siberia and ended up in Australia. The Brydsons left about a year later, traveling to Sweden. Brother Baxter served faithfully on the Branch Committee in the Australia branch until he finished his earthly course on June 21, 1994.*

What was awaiting the small group of local brothers now that the foreign brothers had left? They were relatively new in the truth, and a cruel war was dragging them into its vortex. The war took its toll,

* His life story is in the June 15, 1963, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 373-376.

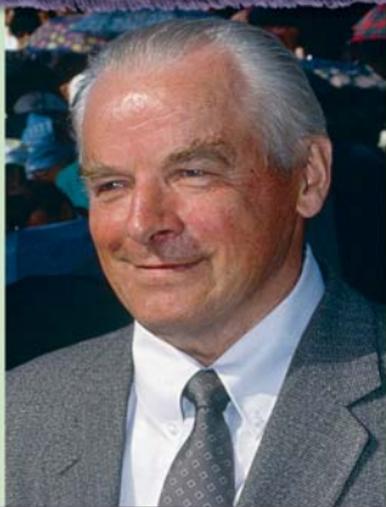
“We Were Like One Family”

ADOLF KOSE

BORN 1920 BAPTIZED 1944

DIED 2004

PROFILE In a Siberian prison camp from 1951 to 1956. Helped organize the preaching work in the Baltic countries and the northwestern part of the Soviet Union.



■ “I WAS arrested in 1950,” recalls Adolf, “and sent to a hard-labor camp in Inta, Siberia. For the first year and a half, I didn’t know anything about my wife and two small daughters, who had been exiled to another part of Siberia.

“There was a special kind of unity among the brothers. We were like one family. We shared both spiritual and physical food.

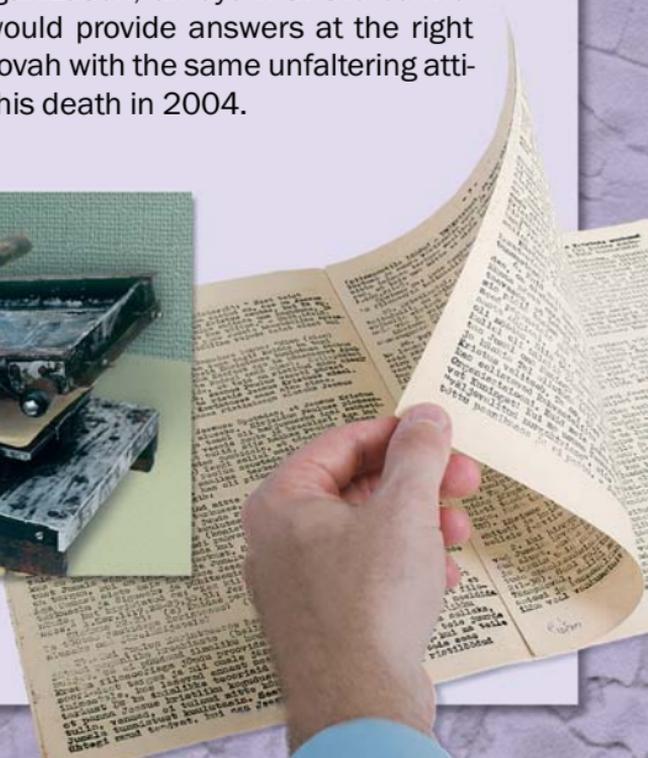
“After returning to Estonia, we had many challenges. How do we get in contact with our ‘Mother’ organization? How do we maintain unity among the brothers? How do we continue the preaching work?

“In order to communicate better with the couriers, I wanted to learn Finnish. That was easier said than done because there were no grammar books or dictionaries for sale.

“As for printing, it was a crime to be in possession of an unregistered typewriter, let alone printing equipment. Anyone who produced forbidden literature could be imprisoned for seven years. It was also difficult because there

was a shortage of everything that was needed for printing. After many trial-and-error attempts using available materials, I finally succeeded in developing a printing technique. First of all, I made a printing machine (below). Then I typed the text on waxed cloth that we made ourselves. This left holes on the surface of the wax. We printed the first publications with ink made from a mixture of soot and tar. While printing, the homemade ink would trickle through the holes in the wax cloth and leave an impression on the paper underneath. The job was complicated, time consuming, and harmful to one's health because the fumes from the ink and other chemicals were dangerous. Proper ventilation of the rooms was impossible, as the windows were tightly covered to keep the work secret.”

In the midst of difficulties, Adolf fearlessly followed direction from the organization, always with the conviction that Jehovah would provide answers at the right time. He served Jehovah with the same unfaltering attitude and faith until his death in 2004.



and the work slowed down. After their last report in 1941, nothing was heard of our brothers for about 20 years.

SEVERE TESTS OF FAITH

As World War II raged on, German troops drove out the Soviets and occupied Estonia from 1941 to 1944. However, conditions did not improve for our brothers. Jaan Päärat, a deaf brother, was preaching in Tartu in 1942 when the Germans arrested him. He was accused of subversive activity and imprisoned. According to prison documents, the warden of his prison was ordered to “extradite for a special disposal” this prisoner, Jaan Päärat. This was, in effect, an execution order. A group of men saw him being taken outside and then heard gunshots. He was never brought back or seen again.

Yes, it was a difficult time for the brothers. First the Soviet army and then the German army wanted to recruit young men. “We had to hide to avoid being drafted into the army,” recalls Adolf Kose. “If we were caught, we either obeyed the command to join the army or we were shot. The Kingdom work, of course, suffered because it was quite difficult to do anything.”

Again, the tide of war turned. Toward the end of 1944, the Soviet army drove the Germans out of Estonia, once again subjecting Estonia to harsh Soviet rule. The war and the following years of repression had a devastating effect on the Estonian people. At least a quarter of the population was killed or sent into exile in distant locations in the Soviet Union, or they managed to leave the country. Over the years,

hundreds of thousands of Russians moved into Estonia, and the composition of the population changed markedly. Soviet rule presented a severe test of faith for our brothers, as we shall see.

FROM FOREST BROTHER TO SPIRITUAL BROTHER

A nationalistic, anti-Soviet, partisan movement of that time became known as “Forest Brothers” because they hid in the thick forests. Among them were many who were not partisans but had to hide because the Soviet State Security Committee, the KGB, was after them. It is estimated that at times, between 15,000 and 20,000 men hid in the forests, some disappearing for years without the authorities’ finding them. In fact, the last one was not found until 1978! Would any of the Forest Brothers accept the truth and choose to become spiritual brothers?

Because of his background in Estonian State service, Erik Heinloo knew he was in danger. When the Soviet Union occupied Estonia, he and his wife, Magda, tried to escape to Sweden by boat many times. The last time they got on a boat, the motor broke down and they had to return. For seven years he managed to elude authorities by hiding in forests, until he was eventually arrested. Then he and his wife were sent to separate prison camps in the Soviet Union.

While in prison, Magda met two Witnesses who shared the Kingdom hope with her. Magda immediately realized that she had found the truth and was so delighted that she literally danced with joy! Magda was released in 1956 and was baptized in 1960. Seven years after his release, Erik also accepted the truth. At last, a Forest Brother became a spiritual brother.

HUNTED DOWN AND ARRESTED

After the foreign brothers had to leave Estonia, a brave and zealous brother, Martin Kose, was assigned to oversee the work in northern Estonia. Southern Estonia came under the oversight of Friedrich Altpere, a tall, well-mannered Estonian who was a secondary-school English teacher. Back in the 1930's, he had been asked to interpret a talk by one of the foreign pioneers who came to Võru. After doing so, he realized that he had found the truth. By now he had progressed to the point where he could take the lead in the preaching work in southern Estonia.

These assignments were difficult for both brothers because there was no contact with the organization and neither of them had much experience. Despite the challenges of working underground, the two brothers served faithfully from 1940 until they were arrested in late 1948.

In place of Martin Kose and Friedrich Altpere, a Service Committee was formed, made up of Albert Kruus, Karl Talberg, and Artur Indus, with Lembit Toom as an assistant. While the rest of the committee had to remain hidden, only Brother Toom could

***Brothers Kruus, Talberg, Indus, and Toom
constituted the Service Committee***



The KGB and Our Organization

At the end of the 1940's, the secret police made concerted efforts to discover how the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was organized. In order to obtain information for the KGB, some individuals pretended to be interested in the truth. The accompanying chart, found in government archives in Tallinn, shows that the KGB were quite well informed. It includes the names of the brothers on the Service Committee, those overseeing the work in the major cities of Estonia, and those involved in the printing work.

СХЕМА СТРУКТУРЫ ПОДПОЛЬНОЙ АНТИСОВЕТСКОЙ СЕКТАНТСКОЙ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ „СВИДЕТЕЛЕЙ ИЕХОВА“ НА ТЕРРИТОРИИ Эстонской ССР



travel freely and visit the groups. Why? He was a miller at a windmill, and on calm days when the windmill was not working, he was free to do as he pleased.

Responsible brothers in Estonia risked their lives to help their fellow worshippers. Pictures of those who were thought to be leaders were displayed at railway stations, treating them like wanted criminals. The KGB assigned up to four security agents to keep track of each of our meek, sheeplike brothers. Though the years between 1948 and 1951 were difficult, Jehovah blessed the efforts of his devoted servants in the preaching work. As a result, the number of publishers rose to more than 100.

‘CAUTIOUS AS SERPENTS, INNOCENT AS DOVES’

Increasingly, Jesus’ disciples in Estonia were experiencing the truth of their Master’s warning: “Prove yourselves cautious as serpents and yet innocent as doves. Be on your guard against men; for they will deliver you up to local courts, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. Why, you will be haled before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness to them and the nations.” (Matt. 10:16-18) However, some who had commendable faith did not fully grasp that Jehovah does not always provide miraculous protection against Satan’s tyranny. (Job 1:9-12; 2:3-6) Some Witnesses were not always as “cautious as serpents”—as they should have been—and they became easy prey for cruel persecutors.

“There was an interested man who seemed to be very zealous and bold,” recalls Adolf Kose. “He was given responsibility in the congregation and was very popular among the sisters. The brothers became

She Was Never Silenced by Opposers

ELLA TOOM

BORN 1926 **BAPTIZED** 1946

PROFILE Sentenced to a total of 13 years imprisonment but released after serving 5 years and 6 months.



■ “THE authorities put me in solitary confinement for three days to get me to renounce my faith,” says Ella, “so that I would no longer talk to anybody about God’s government or believe in it myself. The officials shouted: ‘We are going to make it so that even the name Jehovah will not be remembered in Estonia! You are going to a camp, and the others are going to Siberia!’ Tauntingly, they added, ‘Where is your Jehovah?’ I refused to be a traitor. It is better to be in the camp with God than to be at home without God. Even in the prison camp, I never considered myself confined. I always felt that Jehovah had allowed me to be taken there to preach in my new territory.

“In one camp I used to go for a walk every day with an interested person. Then one day we decided not to go. Later I learned that on that day some religious fanatics had planned to drown me in the river because of my preaching activity.” Ella was never silenced by opposers and still serves Jehovah faithfully as a regular pioneer.*

* Ella Toom’s life story was related in the April 2006 issue of *Awake!* pages 20-24.

suspicious, though, and warned the sisters not to take him to all our meeting places.” Regrettably, some failed to heed the caution, and the man was able to pass on a great deal of information directly to the KGB.

“In 1950,” relates Lembit Toom, “we received some copies of *The Watchtower* from Germany, which we wanted to share with all our Christian brothers in Estonia.”

An assembly was planned in a hay barn out in a secluded part of the country. The KGB, though, became aware of the plans and prepared to arrest all the brothers and sisters. They set up an ambush, positioning two truckloads of soldiers at the railway station where the brothers were to disembark. Three Witnesses were waiting at a prearranged milepost on the road to the assembly site to give delegates directions. One of the brothers heard a suspicious noise in the woods and went to investigate. Suddenly he found himself looking down the barrel of a gun! The soldiers took him back to where the other two brothers were, and all three Witnesses were placed under arrest.

When Lembit Toom and Ella Kikas (later Toom) realized that the three brothers had been arrested, they reacted swiftly. They jumped on Lembit’s motorcycle and rode as fast as they could to a preceding railway station to warn the brothers who were coming on the next train. Lembit and Ella hurried to the station, rushed onto the train, and quickly got the brothers to disembark! Consequently, when the train pulled into the station where the KGB officers were waiting, they

“Jehovah, Let Your Will Take Place”

LEMBIT TOOM

BORN 1924 **BAPTIZED** 1944

PROFILE In Estonia during the German occupation and then in a Siberian work camp from 1951 to 1956.



■ LEMBIT was one of many young Jehovah’s Witnesses who refused to be recruited by the German army and had to go into hiding. One night police officers raided the home where Lembit was staying. They had received a complaint that a suspicious-looking man was hiding on that farm. Lembit quickly hid his bed and crawled half dressed under the floor. He could hear the sound of the officers’ boots reverberating just above his head.

The policeman pointed a pistol at the farmer’s head and shouted: “Someone is hiding in this house. How can we get under the floor?” The farmer remained silent.

“If the one hiding there does not come out, we will throw a grenade under the floor!” screamed the policeman.

Then Lembit saw the beam of their flashlight as they tried to see him. All Lembit could do now was pray, “Jehovah, let your will take place.”

“The mental stress I was under,” recalls Lembit, “was almost unbearable, and I crawled to another place under the floor, almost ready to come out.”

Then he calmly lay down, and after an extremely stressful few minutes, the police left. Lembit waited where he

was for about another hour to be sure that the officers did not return. Then, before daybreak, he left the house to find another hiding place.

When the Soviets took over, Lembit faced other tests. “I was sentenced to ten years in a camp in Noril’sk, Siberia, a 5,000-mile trip from Estonia. That meant hard work in an open-pit nickel mine. Living conditions in the camp were substandard, and the work was extremely exhausting. In the northern part of the Soviet Union above the Arctic Circle, winters are hard. The temperature can drop to minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit and sometimes much lower. For two months in the winter, the sun does not rise above the horizon.”

After five years of slave labor, Lembit was released, and in 1957 he married Ella Kikas. Through the years, Lembit also helped in translating and printing literature. He is known as an empathetic, warm elder, always ready with a scripture to strengthen his fellow servants.*

* Lembit Toom’s life story was related in the February 22, 1999, issue of *Awake!* pages 10-16.

Lembit and Ella Toom



were disappointed to find that there were no Witnesses on board.

Meanwhile, other brothers quickly located another farm on which the assembly could be held. Then they had the delegates walk along a quiet side road for more than six miles to the new venue. All the while, soldiers were driving back and forth along the main roads searching for the delegates who had mysteriously disappeared. The assembly was held without disturbance with 111 in attendance. The atmosphere was very somber because everyone was aware that at any time they too could be arrested. The program included reports about the brothers and sisters in other countries, including faith-strengthening experiences about Jehovah's Witnesses in the Nazi concentration camps. Even though this escape from mass arrest proved to be of short duration, that assembly provided crucial guidance and strength for the tests that lay ahead.

INTERROGATED AND SENTENCED

One by one, during the next few months, all the responsible brothers were arrested, along with more than 70 publishers and other people who had some connection with Jehovah's Witnesses. Jehovah's peace-loving servants now faced seemingly endless interrogations, while those still free knew that they could be next.

Because interrogations were usually done at night and went on for months at a time, detainees were not able to sleep properly for long periods of time. As they became more sleep deprived, the mental stress became increasingly debilitating. Brothers were sentenced without a court hearing; they

were simply told what their sentence would be—5 to 12 years in prison or work camps. The majority received ten-year sentences. Their crime? “Anti-State propaganda and subversive activity,” according to the official records. Shortly thereafter, the law changed and Witnesses began receiving 25-year prison sentences. After being sentenced, 63-year-old August Pressraud reportedly exclaimed with irony: “Thank you to the honored Court for giving me such a long sentence. I estimated that I would live only about a dozen more years. But you have given me a quarter of a century!”

Witnesses were sentenced to notorious prisons or labor camps throughout the Soviet Union, mainly in Siberia and Russia’s Far East or Far North, where conditions were harsh. There seemed to be no hope of return, and many prisoners felt it would be easier to die.

Even false brothers who collaborated with the authorities did not escape the oppression of the persecutors. A case in point is what happened to two brothers who became spies for the KGB. Right after they had fulfilled their task, they themselves became objects of persecution by the KGB. Both of them were exiled to prison camps. The KGB did not seem to have any respect for those cowardly informants.*

FROM ESTONIA TO SIBERIA

Now that the KGB had arrested those who were considered to be the most prominent Witnesses, they were determined to root out every one of Jehovah’s Witnesses remaining. The offensive was conducted

* The types of sentences and conditions in prisons and camps are explained in the *2002 Yearbook of Jehovah’s Witnesses*, page 157.

in the early morning of April 1, 1951. In an extremely well-coordinated maneuver, all parts of the country (as well as Latvia, Lithuania, and Western Ukraine) were targeted simultaneously.

Virtually all of Jehovah's Witnesses, many of their close relatives, and even interested ones were taken quickly from their homes, gathered together at several railway stations, and put into boxcars. They were allowed to take along some food and personal items, but the rest of their property was confiscated. On that day—without a trial or any explanation—nearly 300 people from Estonia were taken by rail to Siberia, mainly to the region of Tomsk, some 3,000 miles away.

BRAVE YOUNG ONES

Corinna Ennika, 17 years of age, and her 13-year-old sister, Ene, had been away visiting relatives. Imagine their distress when they returned home and discovered that their house was all closed up and their mother was nowhere to be found! However, on learning that their mother had been arrested, they were somewhat relieved. Why?

“At least she was alive!” Corinna says. “Realizing that others had probably also been arrested, we thought that at least Mother must be together with Jehovah's people. We really felt strong support and peace from Jehovah. I didn't cry, and neither did Ene, who is somewhat sensitive and frail. On Monday we both went back to school and didn't mention to anybody that our mother had been arrested.”

Corinna and Ene remained calm even when officials came to take them away. “In our train carriage,

everyone was calm,” continues Corinna. “One sister comforted us, saying that Jehovah will never allow tribulation beyond our strength and that we needed to trust his promise to help us.” The girls remained separated from their mother for more than six years.

Indicative of the irrational hatred of the persecutors is the exile document of a six-month-old baby. The crime for which the infant was being exiled was “enemy of the State.”

The deportation was very traumatic, and exiled ones were humiliated and disgraced in every possible way. Every morning and evening, everyone was let off the train to go to the lavatory, even though there were no lavatories. “It was below all standards of decency and humanity,” relates one sister. “It was impossible to separate the men and the women. Other people would walk past us, and the guards all stood around watching us.”

LIFE IN SIBERIA—AND DEATH

After a grueling two-week train trip, the exiles, along with their meager belongings, were finally let out of the boxcars into the cold snow. At the nearby collective farm, foremen came to select the best workers for their farm, much like landowners buying workers at a slave market.

Many of those who lived in Siberia were exiles themselves, and they felt compassion for the newcomers. Thus, with the help of fellow believers and friendly locals, the exiled brothers soon got settled. Some were able to establish a relatively normal life. A few even experienced unexpected health benefits, such as the two Estonian sisters who had tuberculosis

“It’s Your Mother”

KARIN REILE

BORN 1950 **BAPTIZED** 1965

PROFILE Born in prison and taken from her mother to be raised by her grandmother.



■ “I WAS born when my mother, Maimu, was in prison because of her political activity,” says Karin. “I was a weak baby, and on account of the coldness of the prison cell, I contracted double pneumonia. But I survived, thanks to another prisoner, Laine Prööm, who later learned the truth.

“At that time, many of the prisoners’ babies were sent to orphanages throughout the Soviet Union so that they would forget their parents. Fortunately, I was given to my grandmother. My mother was sent to a prison camp in Mordvinia, where she met Ella Toom, a courageous sister. Mother accepted the truth and was baptized there.

“For the next five years, my grandma raised me. Unexpectedly, one day a strange lady appeared at our house. ‘It’s your mother,’ Grandma said. It was a very confusing experience, and it took me several years to get over it.” Happily, Karin and her grandmother also accepted the truth.

Later Karin learned English and began helping with the translation of our publications. She married Lembit Reile, and they now serve together in the Estonia branch.



Maimu and Lembit Trell, 1957

but recovered when they moved to the drier Siberian climate.

But not everyone was so fortunate. At least one child died on the train, and one elderly Witness died as a result of the difficult conditions or emotional trauma. Some brothers became disabled because of lack of proper medications or because of the overly demanding work. Others were affected by the harsh living conditions, poor nutrition, sickness, accidents, and extreme cold. In addition, many

endured the emotional pain of being torn away from their families for many years and never receiving the letters written by their loved ones.

“Since our family consisted only of children and very young women,” explains Tiina Kruuse, “we were taken to a rather poor collective farm. The members of the commune didn’t have sufficient food even for themselves, not to mention us. Newcomers chewed on pine bark and edible roots and often had nettle soup.”

The winters in Siberia are long and bitterly cold, a severe climate to which the Estonian exiles were not accustomed. Even the most normal activity, such as growing potatoes, was seldom successful. For most,

The Divine Name in the Estonian Bible

The Greek Scriptures were translated into a southern Estonian dialect as early as 1686 and into the northern dialect in 1715. The complete Bible, *Piibli Ramat*, published in 1739, was readily accessible to the common people. It was remarkable in that it used the divine name, Jehovah, wherever it appeared in the Hebrew Scriptures, a practice that continued throughout the following centuries. A 1988 edition of the Bible in Estonian uses the divine name 6,867 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. As a result, many Estonians know that God's name is Jehovah.

A milestone was reached on July 3, 2009, at the district convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Tartu, Estonia, when Guy Pierce, a member of the Governing Body, released the Estonian-language edition of the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*.

Piibli kreeka osa

PIIBEL
Kreekakeelse osa
uue maailma tõlge

...nende südame peal
... kui keegi pöördub Je-
... poole, siis võetakse kate-
17 Sest Jehoova on Vaim,
... on Jehoova vaim, seal
... padus. 18 Ja me kõik, kui
... atmata nägudega peegel-
... Jehoova auhiilgust na-
... glid, muutume kuju poo-
... masuguseks, peegeldes

Handmade Books

HELMI LEEK

BORN 1908 BAPTIZED 1945

DIED 1998

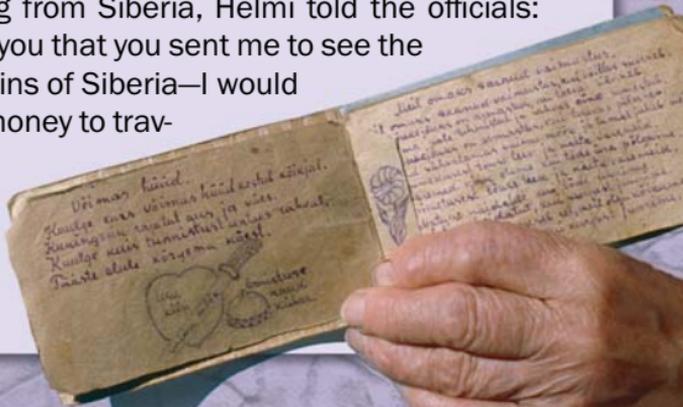
PROFILE Imprisoned and sent to Siberia.

■ HELMI was arrested as one of Jehovah's Witnesses and sent to Siberia, where she made a small purse for her notebook. She stitched a comforting scripture on it—Romans 8:35: “Who will separate us from the love of the Christ? Will tribulation or distress or persecution or hunger or nakedness or danger or sword?”

Helmi found some pieces of brown paper and used them to make a book. In it were some en-

couraging Biblical thoughts. Many brothers copied entire books by hand, as there were not many printed publications available.

After returning from Siberia, Helmi told the officials: “I am thankful to you that you sent me to see the beautiful mountains of Siberia—I would never have had money to travel that far!”



the first year in exile was grueling and was accompanied by persistent pangs of hunger.

“It was minus 60 degrees Fahrenheit,” recalls Hiisi Lember. “Because of the cold, we kept the hen’s cage under our bed to prevent the hen from freezing to death. Some even had a calf with them in their house if it happened to be born in the winter.”

OFF TO NEW TERRITORY—AT THE STATE’S EXPENSE!

Years earlier, William Dey had said that if the Soviet Union ever took over the Baltic countries, the brothers would have vast new territories in which to preach. How true those words proved to be! The Soviet government really helped Jehovah’s Witnesses extend their preaching work to Siberia and other far-away places by sending them into exile. Although Jehovah allowed his Witnesses to be tested, many who had never even heard the divine name thus had the opportunity to learn the truth.

Lembit Trell, for example, had been arrested for antigovernment activities. He heard about the truth in 1948 in an unusual way—in a prison cell in Tartu. A Russian army officer, who was also being detained, told him about the Witnesses he had met in another prison cell. The officer gave Lembit a short summary of their teachings. He explained that God’s government is the only solution and that God will soon start to rule over the earth. That aroused Lembit’s interest.

Lembit was eventually sent to a prison camp in Vorkuta, in the far north of Siberia, close to the Arctic Ocean. There he overheard a group of Witnesses talking about the Bible. When he got closer, he discerned that they were discussing the same things he

had heard about from the officer, so he joined their conversation.

“Why are you in prison?” the brothers asked Lembit.

“I was fighting for justice,” he replied.

“Did you succeed?” one of the Witnesses inquired.

The answer was obvious, but Lembit replied, “No, I did not.”

“Look! You fought on the wrong side,” a brother pointed out to Lembit. “Wouldn’t you rather fight on the right side?” Then they started explaining what the Bible says about spiritual warfare. The more he heard, the more Lembit realized that he had found the truth and the more he saw the need to join Jehovah’s side of the spiritual warfare.

After his release, Lembit returned to Estonia and started his spiritual warfare. He now serves as a regular pioneer. His wife, Maimu, found the truth in a similar way; her interest was kindled in prison by a non-Witness.

**“It was good
when I was put
in isolation”**

The preaching work was difficult for the brothers who did not speak much Russian. But even with their limited vocabulary, it was always easy for them to start a conversation by talking about the reason for their exile in Siberia. This approach helped the brothers to master informal witnessing. Furthermore, they had ample opportunity to witness to Estonian exiles in their mother tongue. One survivor estimates that between 15 and 20 Estonians learned the truth in the camps, as did a number of Russians and Lithuanians.

HOW TO GET SPIRITUAL FOOD

Many methods were used to smuggle Bibles and spiritual food into prisons and to exiled Witnesses living in isolated areas. “We received pages of literature in jars of pork or other animal fat,” explains one brother. “Because the fat turned white in the cold, the paper could not easily be seen. Although the officials inserted a knife into the jars, they hardly ever detected the thin paper, which was pressed close to the sides of the jar.” The officials seldom found the precious spiritual food hidden in the jars of literal food.

Little pieces of literature could also be sewn into a handbag or clothing, hidden in a soapbox, or pressed into a hollowed-out bar of soap. “I could fit four *Watchtowers* into the soap in a soapbox,” says Ella Toom.

Although letters were censored, the Witnesses learned how to camouflage Bible truths and theocratic language with everyday words. For example, one sister wrote: “We are richly taken care of by the Father, also having a rope that reaches the well.” She indicated that “the Father,” Jehovah, was providing for them spiritually; that they had contact with “the well,” Jehovah’s organization; and that they had access to life-giving waters of truth, Bible literature.

Though much literature was simply copied by hand, some was reproduced using elementary printing methods. When they were copying literature by hand, Witnesses were grateful if they were put into isolation as punishment for preaching. Why? “It was good when I was put in isolation,” says one sister. “I was better able to translate *The Watchtower* there, as I was not disturbed so often.” This is one of many ways in which persecutors’ tactics were

unsuccessful and often resulted in the advancement of Kingdom interests!—Isa. 54:17.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEETINGS

Opportunities to get together with other Witnesses at meetings were rare and highly valued. Corinna Ennika describes how she and another sister plucked up the courage to leave their work for a couple of days without permission in order to attend a meeting. “We left our work area in the evening,” Corinna explains, “and walked to a railway station 15 miles away. The train departed at two o’clock in the morning, and we rode for six hours before disembarking and walking six miles to the meeting place. We found the right house and were trying to decide who would say the password when a brother came out, recognized us as sisters, and said cheerfully: ‘You are at the right place. Come in!’ We studied *The Watchtower* and sang Kingdom songs. It was a very upbuilding and faith-strengthening experience for us.” When they returned to work three days later, they were relieved to learn that the farm manager had not even noticed that they were missing. Attending clandestine meetings did much to fortify the faith and courage of Jehovah’s faithful servants.

In another instance, a group of brothers were having a meeting in a prison when the guards arrived suddenly to search for literature. One brother, who had some pages of literature in his hands, quickly grabbed a broom and started sweeping the area. The guards searched, found nothing, and departed. Meanwhile the literature was wrapped securely around the broom handle in the firm grip of the brother who was diligently sweeping the floor!

THE POWER OF TRUE CHRISTIAN LOVE

“For five years I worked underground in the coal mines,” recalls Adolf Kose. “We were north of the Arctic Circle, where there is no daylight in the winter-time. It was dark by the time we came above ground at the end of our shift. So we didn’t see daylight for months. We also did not get adequate food rations. This affected my memory and my sense of time. Because of the hard work, scarcity of food, and sheer exhaustion, we had only enough strength for casual conversation for a few minutes at a time. However, when discussing Kingdom truths, we never felt tired. We could go on for hours.”

Through all the hardships, Jehovah’s people learned to show self-sacrificing love for one another. “Anything we had,” explains Brother Kose, “or anything any of us received was distributed evenly among the brothers. Every one of us was in need, so we learned to share whatever we had with one another.”—1 John 4:21.

Even the guards got to know that the Witnesses always helped one another. When Aino Ehtmaa was transferred from one camp to another, she didn’t have a spoon or a bowl—the very basics for camp life.

“Well, that’s OK,” responded the camp supervisor, “your sisters will give you what you need.” And so they did. Time and again, displays of Christian love like this brought honor to Jehovah’s name.

Even so, tests of loyalty never ceased. For example, although Sister Ehtmaa had been in the prison camp for some time, the guards constantly asked her, “Are you still refusing to cooperate with us?” Of

course, the type of cooperation they wanted was confidential information about Jehovah's Witnesses.

"You detain me in prison camps, and my father and mother died because of you," Sister Ehtmaa always replied. "How could I ever cooperate with you?"

Even in their "prison bonds," the exiled Witnesses continued to show Christlike love by sharing the good news of the Kingdom whenever they could. But to whom would they preach? The Soviet policy of relocating elite, non-Communist citizens actually 'opened a door of utterance' for them. Many brothers and sisters enjoyed productive conversations with those well-educated exiles, who otherwise might not have easily heard or responded to the Kingdom message.—Col. 4:2-4.

"Later we were taken to different camps," explains Brother Kose. "There was a great witness work going on in every cell. I was able to do more witnessing than I had ever been able to do before or have been able to do since."

Through all the years of exile, the attack on Jehovah's Witnesses was relentless. They were robbed of their property and freedom, and they were humiliated in every possible way. But morally and spiritually, they were never defeated by their persecutors.

BACK TO ESTONIA

When Joseph Stalin died in 1953, many of his devoted supporters were grief-stricken. At the time, Ella Toom was in a prison cell with six other sisters. The guard came in crying and ordered them to stand up and salute Stalin. They courageously refused.

A Self-Sacrificing Spirit

FANNY HIETALA

BORN 1900 **BAPTIZED** 1925

DIED 1995

PROFILE Moved to Estonia in 1930, pioneered, and adopted a Witness orphan.



■ FANNY was baptized in Finland in 1925 and entered full-time service two years later. At a convention in Helsinki, she met William Dey, the overseer of the Northern European Office. Although they did not speak the same language, Brother Dey kept repeating the word “Estonia.” Deducing that he was encouraging her to move to a place where the need was greater, Fanny, as well as some other pioneers, moved to Estonia in 1930. During the following years, she made good use of her bicycle to preach the good news in several counties across Estonia, including the island of Sarema.

Fanny never got married, but she adopted an orphan girl named Ester, whose mother and Witness father had both died by the time she was eight. With Fanny’s loving care, Ester grew up to embrace the truth.

When the Communist regime arrived and the persecution started, Fanny could have moved back to Finland. However, she demonstrated a self-sacrificing spirit by staying with a small group of local publishers. As a result of her decision to stay, she endured many difficulties and poor living conditions, but because of her Finnish citizenship, she was not exiled to Siberia.

Fanny served as a courier, carrying microfilms and correspondence from Finland to Estonia during the 1950's. She was known for her courage and discretion, and although there were some very tense situations, she was never caught. For example, once she traveled to Leningrad (St. Petersburg) to pick up a package of microfilms from a Finnish courier brother in a certain park. She, in turn, was to hand the package on to two Estonian brothers as quickly as possible. However, the Estonian brothers had noticed that they were being followed by the secret police and tried to slip away unnoticed by Fanny. Alas! Fanny and the Finnish brother walked straight in the direction of the Estonian brothers. If she had greeted them or tried to give them the package, the secret police would have uncovered their connection. Amazingly, Fanny walked right past them as if she did not know them. Actually, it turned out that she simply

did not see them, even though she knew them both very well! As a result, the secret police never found out who the couriers were and the package was safely handed over afterward. Fanny's help as a contact allowed for a steady flow of spiritual food, and thankfully none of the microfilm shipments were ever discovered.

This warmhearted sister served Jehovah faithfully for 70 years until her death at the age of 95 while still residing in Estonia.

***On a courier mission
in Leningrad, 1966***



As a result of Stalin's death, the political atmosphere began to change. From 1956 to 1957, hundreds of petitions on behalf of the exiled brothers were sent from the worldwide brotherhood of Jehovah's Witnesses to the Soviet government. One by one, exiled Witnesses were granted amnesty. Those in prison were released, and those in exile were allowed to move back home. Some Witnesses were released soon after Stalin's death, but others had to wait for some time. For example, the Tuiman family was exiled in 1951 but was only permitted to return in 1965. And although our brothers were able to return to Estonia, they still had to find a place to live, for all their property had been confiscated when they were sent into exile.

LOOKING BACK

How did the intimidation, cruelty, hard labor, and appalling prison conditions affect the Witnesses? The great majority remained spiritually strong and faithful, even in the face of death. At least 27 Estonian Witnesses died in prison or in exile, including Artur Indus, who had served on the Service Committee in Estonia before being deported. Friedrich Altpere died soon after his release, evidently from the consequences of hard labor. Jehovah's servants had been subjected to severe tests of faith in Siberia; but they had learned many lessons, and their integrity remained unbroken. Indeed, they emerged from the onslaught with stronger faith and greater endurance. —Jas. 1:2-4.

“The responsible brothers were all in prison camps,” explains Viljard Kaarna, “and we remained

in contact with them. As a result, in Siberia we always had literature and did well spiritually. Back in Estonia, it was much more difficult to get a regular supply of spiritual food. We don't think we would have done as well spiritually if we had remained in Estonia."

Many non-Witnesses in exile became bitter as a result of what they suffered. Jehovah's Witnesses, on the other hand, viewed their exile as a spiritually strengthening experience.

"We learned obedience from the things we suffered," says Corinna Ennika. "We put our hope in Jehovah and never regretted it. We saw how little we needed to have to survive. My sister, Ene, and I had only a small suitcase and a box under the bed. Now if we ever feel we need something more, we reflect on that experience. The best years of our youth—ages 17 to 23—were spent in Siberia. I have often wondered if we would have been as spiritually strong if we hadn't been in exile. I feel that Siberia was the best place for us at the time."

"Those five years in Siberia were soon forgotten," explains another sister. "It was as if I had merely been watching a movie for a couple of hours."



Ene and her sister, Corinna

Objects of Slander

“Happy are you,” Jesus told his disciples, “when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake.” (Matt. 5:11) True to their Master’s words, Jehovah’s Witnesses are frequently the objects of malicious slander. The Witnesses were falsely accused of being a political organization involved in subversion and espionage. Especially in the late 1950’s and the early 1960’s, newspapers claimed that our work was led by the U.S. government and that we were exploited by wealthy American capitalists.

After refusing to do military service in 1964, Silver Silliksaar was accused of being a betrayer of the fatherland and sentenced to prison. Also, a short movie of his trial, laced with pompous Communist propaganda, was shown in every movie theater across Estonia. Most brothers who refused to do military service were imprisoned for two to three years. Jüri Schönberg, Taavi Kuusk, and Artur Mikit were each imprisoned twice—Brother Mikit for a total of five and a half years.

Silver Silliksaar on trial for his faith



Aino Ehtmaa reminisces: “I will never forget the merry dance of the northern lights, frosty days when the colorful clouds of condensation rose from the sea or rivers, polar days when the sun did not set for two weeks, and polar nights when the sunrise was not visible for two weeks. I recall the green strawberries that ripened during the short summer and the arctic wildfowl that fed off the tiny branches of the slender trees. Despite all the hardships, I felt as though I were on tour in Siberia. I realized that, even there, with Jehovah it is possible to be happy.”

NEW TIMES, OLD TACTICS

After the brothers returned to Estonia from Siberia, the persecution did not end. The secret police used both direct and indirect tactics to get information about the organization and slander it.

Jüri Schönberg, who had been arrested for refusing to do military service, was taken from the labor camp for intensive interrogation. A special KGB agent had traveled from Kiev, Ukraine, to Estonia to persuade Jüri to work for the KGB. The officer tried to show him that the literature of Jehovah’s Witnesses was antigovernment and full of mistakes. He gave Jüri some copies of *The Watchtower* to read, but although the magazines appeared to be genuine, Jüri refused to accept them. He was afraid that they might be some of the counterfeit *Watchtowers* that the KGB sometimes prepared to cause confusion among the Witnesses. For an entire week, the agent pressured Jüri from morning until evening to collaborate with the KGB, but our brother remained steadfast and refused to compromise.

RENEWED CONTACT WITH “MOTHER”

Even though the Iron Curtain was tightly closed, it could not completely prevent the light of Bible truth from shining through. For years the brothers had to subsist on literature from previous years. However, while in exile in Siberia, the Estonian Witnesses were able to meet with brothers from other parts of the Soviet Union. Once they were back in Estonia, they bravely maintained these contacts with brothers in the Soviet Union and were able to obtain fresh spiritual food from time to time. For example, starting in 1956, they had contact with Ivan Dziabko and others from Ukraine and were able to obtain literature from them. But those contacts were rare, and the amount of literature was limited. Something more was needed, and soon Jehovah blessed our brothers' bold efforts.

Under the direction of the Governing Body, the Finland branch made plans to help the brothers in Estonia more systematically. Vilho Eloranta, who had worked as a pioneer in Estonia in the 1930's, was assigned to make contact with them. In the early 1960's, on his first trip to Estonia, he managed to contact Fanny Hietala. After that, many Finnish brothers, posing as tourists, served as couriers and helped maintain a constant channel of communication. At last, the brothers in Estonia were in contact with “Mother,” as the brothers called Jehovah's organization. They could send field service reports and correspondence and could receive literature on microfilm. However, because the arrangement had to be carried out in complete secrecy and with the greatest discretion, contact was limited to two or three times a year.

Adolf Kose's cousin, Hugo Kose, Jr., who lives in the United States, traveled to Estonia 15 times as a courier. On one of his trips, the border guards searched him thoroughly but found nothing. Things got tense, though, when the guards asked him outright to which religion he belonged. Noticing that the officials did not speak fluent English, Hugo started to chatter away rapidly in English. The officials did not want to betray their ignorance by asking him to speak slowly, so when the phone rang, they told him to hurry along because the ship was ready to sail. Of course, he carried out this instruction without delay!

Those who served as couriers knew how important their assignment was, and they took it very seriously. They were always cautious and were constantly aware of the danger of becoming overly confident. Field service reports were encoded in case they ended up in the wrong hands. The couriers realized that they could put their own life and the lives of others in danger by being careless. At times, they saw KGB agents following them. While waiting to receive a package from two brothers, Viljard Kaarna saw an agent photograph and then follow them. No doubt he was gathering evidence to use against the Witnesses. Yet, over all those years, the brothers never lost a single shipment of literature or any correspondence or reports.

IMPROVED ORGANIZATION

For some time the preaching work in the Soviet Union had come under the oversight of a Country Committee based in Ukraine. In addition, several brothers served as district overseers throughout the vast land. But now the growing organization in Esto-

nia called for someone to take oversight of the work locally. Quiet in nature and tempered by various trials of faith, Adolf Kose was assigned to help organize this work in 1967. Later, responsibility was increased to include processing correspondence and reports for Latvia, Lithuania, Karelia, Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), and Murmansk. Brother Kose also helped organize the printing work in various locations.

How did Brother Kose manage to care for all those responsibilities and also work full-time with his wife, Koidula, on a pig farm near the town of Tapa? Brother Kose invented some machinery that made his secular work somewhat easier. This, in turn, allowed him more time to care for his theocratic assignments.

Later, brothers such as Viljard Kaarna, Lembit Toom, and Silver Silliksaar helped with visiting congregations in Estonia and neighboring republics of the Soviet Union. As the Russian field in Estonia grew, Alexandr Yevdokimov served in a similar way. In time, the printing work was divided, and the Russian-speaking brothers in Estonia did their own printing. When their publications arrived on microfilm, they were already in Russian and could be duplicated directly onto photographic paper. Eventually, though, as congregations grew, this laborious photoduplicating method was replaced, as it could not keep pace and required a large number of brothers to help with the printing in several locations. Despite their limited resources, the brothers had printed hundreds of copies of more than 20 different books underground. Over five million pages of Estonian and Russian literature were produced by hand between 1966 and 1989.

CAUTION ESSENTIAL

Policemen once searched a brother's home under the pretext of looking for a stolen motorcycle. However, they went straight to a bookshelf, clearly an unlikely place to hide a motorcycle! Obviously, they were really looking for banned literature. How disappointed they were to find none!

How did the brothers camouflage the literature and keep it hidden? When they produced the literature, they often bound it with covers from old secular books or journals. Thus, when homes were subjected to unexpected searches, such "old" publications usually went unnoticed.

*Heimar and Elvi Tuiman's wedding
—an assembly that lasted for two days*



The Witnesses used special occasions, such as weddings, as a cover for meetings and assemblies. For example, Heimar and Elvi Tuiman's wedding lasted for two days. Sometimes such gatherings lasted three or four days. The Estonian elders encouraged couples to arrange weddings that were not too large. Smaller groups were not so visible, attracted less attention, and were less likely to cause difficulties.

RUSSIAN BROTHERS MOVE IN

In 1970, longtime Witnesses from Ukraine, Belarus, and other parts of the Soviet Union began moving into Estonia. For many of those brothers, life in Estonia was much easier than it was in their native country, where they had endured brutal persecution.

With the help of brothers such as Nikolai Dubovinski, a longtime elder from Ukraine, the first Russian-speaking congregation was formed in Tartu in 1972 with about 50 publishers. The Russian field was fertile, and by 2010, there were 27 Russian-language congregations and 4 Russian-language groups—comprising more than half the publishers in Estonia.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF INFORMAL WITNESSING

The Russian-speaking brothers were bold and zealous preachers and did not hesitate to talk to people in informal settings. For example, they would start conversations with tourists who were visiting churches in Tallinn and witness to them. Often tourists thought that a person who talked about the Bible was a tour guide, so they paid rapt attention to what the brothers said.

Some sisters preached on trains. They would buy a round-trip train ticket between Tartu and Tallinn.

The eight-hour journey gave them plenty of time to start conversations and share the good news with passengers.

“I prayed for a Bible study,” recounts Maria Pa-sechnick, who had moved to Estonia from Kazakh-stan. After some thought, she decided to preach to the people who, with her, waited for hours in long lines to buy food at the local shops.

“One day, while standing in line,” continues Maria, “I began a discussion with a woman and gradually directed the conversation toward the Bible. The woman herself did not happen to be very interested, but she took me to her acquaintances, introduced me to them, and then left me to continue the discussion with them. As a result, I was able to start four Bible studies. One of the women became a baptized Witness and is still serving Jehovah faithfully.”

As is true everywhere, many of Jehovah’s servants stood out as exemplary at their places of employment. For example, the Communist Party organizer at a power station suggested that Leonhard Nilsk was not needed at the company any longer because of being a religious person. However, the head of the electrical laboratory spoke up and said, “Do we need the Communists who drink and don’t fulfill their tasks more than we need a religious person who is known to be trustworthy?” Leonhard’s other work-mates also defended him because of his good reputation, and the matter was dropped. Apparently the party organizer was trying to curry favor with superior party officials, and when Communist rule came to an end in Estonia, the party organizer herself lost her job.

GIVING A WITNESS UNDER BAN

“When I was at school,” recalls Lembit Reile, who now serves on the Estonia Branch Committee, “I spoke cautiously to many of my classmates. I used to invite one of the boys to my place, and I would discreetly preach to him. After I finished school, I didn’t see him for about 20 years. Recently, I was delivering a public talk at the congregation in my hometown, and guess who was in the audience? It was my schoolmate! He had been studying with Jehovah’s Witnesses, and shortly after my visit, he was baptized! What a joy that was for me!”

Because our work was banned, the brothers needed to be alert when witnessing. One elder explains how they did it: “We had to take the time to observe what kind of people were around us and with whom we could safely start a conversation. We had to be very discreet when speaking to strangers. After a while, we could often discern when someone was a KGB informant. Also, if someone was very talkative or loud, we would be suspicious. On the other hand, it might be safe to speak to someone who was reserved. We often started conversations with those who did not support the Communist government—the so-called dissidents—who tended to be more open-minded.”

AN ENCOURAGING VISIT IN A PARK

The Governing Body arranged for one of its members, Lloyd Barry, along with Viv Mouritz, from the Finland branch, to meet Adolf Kose, who was organizing the work in Estonia. They met in a park in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg).

“At first, Brother Kose was hesitant to speak,” says Brother Mouritz about their clandestine meeting, “and he cautiously remained behind his newspaper. But as the discussion progressed, the newspaper came down, and Adolf started to open up.”

“He declined an invitation to have a meal with us,” recalled Brother Barry. “He said it was better just to attend to necessary matters and leave it at that.”

When Brother Kose expressed concern about the heavy yoke of persecution and the restrictions on the Witnesses in the Soviet Union, Brothers Mouritz and Barry shared many encouraging thoughts with him. “In other countries we have tests too,” they pointed out. “Those tests seem easier, but they are more dangerous! We have many temptations that you do not have, and we are losing more people in the West than you are here.”

This visit was most timely and spiritually strengthening for Brother Kose. Only later did he learn that he had been talking to a member of the Governing Body, and he gladly conveyed the encouragement from Jehovah’s organization to all those who were maintaining integrity under tyrannical oppression.

“Our hearts go out to our brothers in the Soviet Union,” wrote Brother Barry afterward. “It was a delight to meet Brother Kose, and the handshake and bear hug that he gave us as we parted were a fitting conclusion to a most delightful meeting.”

YOUTHS TAKE A COURAGEOUS STAND AT SCHOOL

Young servants of Jehovah, in particular, came under pressure to support political organizations. They were also urged to engage in other activities that went against their Bible-trained conscience.

“One day when I was a little girl at school,” remembers Ester Tamm, “everyone in the class was told to stand up, step forward, and sign a letter sending birthday greetings to the dictator, Joseph Stalin.”

Ester stood up but refused to go forward. Instead, she politely said that she was not going to sign the letter. The teacher was angry, but surprisingly, some of the other students supported Ester and courageously said that they too were not going to sign the letter. As a result, the matter was dropped.

Another issue involved wearing a red kerchief in support of Communism. Those who refused to do so were threatened with lower grades or other forms of punishment. Our young brothers and sisters refused to compromise, manifesting the same loyal spirit as Daniel and his three Hebrew companions displayed in ancient Babylon.—Dan. 1:8.

A WHOLE NEW ERA

The fact that only 7 percent of the people belonged to the Communist Party indicates that the Estonian people in general did not support the Soviet system. Estonian officials were not always eager to follow directions from Moscow, and some of them even helped the Witnesses. For example, in 1985 a local official came to Lembit Toom and advised: “I know you are a kind of foreman among the Witnesses. When you get together for your meetings, do not do it on State holidays.”

“Well, I’ll pass that information along,” said Lembit. It evidently offended the KGB that the Witnesses used State holidays for their meetings. Apparently the brothers had been gathering too openly, so they made some adjustments in response to the friendly advice.

A whole new era began in 1986 when the Soviet Union introduced its policy of perestroika, or restructuring. The Governing Body encouraged the brothers to use the new openness and freedom to arrange conventions in Eastern Europe. For our brothers in the Soviet Union, it was hard to believe that freedom could come before Armageddon. All that they had suffered was still fresh in their minds, and home searches continued to be a regular threat.

INVITED TO ADDRESS THE PUBLIC

With increased freedom, a growing number of people were showing an interest in religion and the Bible. Members of the public were curious about the stand taken by Jehovah's Witnesses, and various institutions invited brothers to give public discourses on our beliefs.

One such occasion came as quite a surprise. Lembit Reile agreed to give a discourse to a group of people. When the day arrived, Ainar Ojarand, who had made the arrangements, was listening to the radio as he was shaving, when he heard the announcement: "Today in Sakala Center there will be a speech entitled 'What Does the Bible Teach?'" Sakala Center was the main conference center in Tallinn, where the Communist Party usually held their meetings! Ainar almost dropped his shaver! But he had no way of letting Lembit know that this was going to be a far bigger meeting than they had thought—not until they met at the bus stop.

"The hall was packed," recalls Lembit. "I had never spoken to such a big audience. I had never used a microphone, nor had I spoken from a rostrum. After a short prayer, I thought about Paul at the Areopagus

and thought of an introduction. As most in the audience were vegetarians, I began my talk by explaining that God gave the first humans only fruit and vegetables to eat. Only after the Deluge were they allowed to eat meat.”

That introduction seemed to have a good effect on the audience, and a number of people lined up afterward to leave their name and address so that they could receive literature when it was available. Over the years many brothers gave talks to large audiences in libraries, schools, and cultural centers. As a result, many righteously disposed people recognized and accepted the truth.

STAYING SPIRITUALLY AWAKE

In 1989, Jehovah’s servants in the Soviet Union started to experience greater religious freedom, allowing some brothers to travel to a convention in Poland. What did it feel like to assemble in freedom after years of tyrannical repression?

“We were so happy!” recalls Ella Toom. “We cried so much! To us this convention was really a spiritual paradise.”

“We arrived in Poland early, so we were taken to a meeting in a Kingdom Hall,” recounts another sister. “When I saw the brothers and sisters going into the hall, I started to cry. That was the first time I had ever been in a Kingdom Hall.”

That year, Theodore Jaracz and Milton Henschel, of the Governing Body, along with Willi Pohl, from the Germany branch, traveled throughout the Soviet Union. They were interested in meeting with the brothers to encourage them and to get acquainted

An Underground Theocratic Ministry School

Under the ban, the brothers could never be sure how long they would have literature or even the Bible. Therefore, in addition to having a variety of different hiding places for literature, they tried to memorize as many Bible verses as possible.

Most informal get-togethers were used to discuss and memorize Bible verses. For those gatherings, some made little cards that served as memory aids. On one side of the card was a Bible chapter and verse citation, such as Matthew 24:14, or a question or a Bible name. On the other side, they wrote out the Bible text or the answer to the question.

Brothers used whatever spiritual publications were on hand to conduct meetings. The Theocratic Ministry School, for example, consisted of weekly classes, homework assignments, oral tests, and even examinations. There were reviews every three months and a final exam in the spring.

“One of the weekly homework assignments,” recalls one of the students, “was to memorize five Bible texts, which we had to recite at the next class. I remember the final exam in 1988. There was one examination card that simply said: ‘Recite 100 scriptures from memory.’ Strange as it may seem, everyone hoped to draw that card. Those assignments helped us the most in our preaching work, since we could rarely use the Bible openly.” In 1990, the Estonian congregations were delighted when at last they were able to hold the Theocratic Ministry School the way the rest of the worldwide brotherhood did.



Toomas and Elizabeth Edur

with the situation. The scene of the world was changing quickly, and no time was to be lost in making use of the Soviet Union's policy of perestroika. This was a time for spiritual reorganizing, giving attention first to the translation work.

Since 1983, Toomas (Tom) Edur, an energetic former hockey-league player with an Estonian background, had been doing some translation

into Estonian at the Canada branch.* At that time, those publications were made available primarily to Estonians living abroad. But in 1990, with the work beginning to open up in Estonia, Toomas and his wife, Elizabeth, were assigned to the Finland branch to help translate our literature into Estonian. Soon after that, they were transferred to Estonia.

Prior to this, individual translators had been working at separate locations. It was now evident that a translation team would benefit from working together at one location. Consequently, a number of translators began working at Lembit Toom's home in Tartu. However, because it was virtually impossible to obtain computers in the Soviet Union, the translators lacked equipment to do the work efficiently. The

* The February 22, 1986, issue of *Awake!* relates how and why Brother Edur gave up his hockey career.

Notable Conventions



Welcoming delegates to the "Pure Language" District Convention, Helsinki, Finland, 1990





**The "Lovers of Freedom"
District Convention, Tallinn,
Estonia, 1991**



situation improved, though, when a local brother visited the United States branch and brought back two computers—a good start for an efficient translation department. Only a few of the translators had experience with computers and the organization’s Multilanguage Electronic Phototypesetting System (MEPS), so the task was challenging. But they were eager to learn and were soon doing excellent work.

ANOTHER JOYFUL CONVENTION ABROAD

As Soviet control of Eastern Europe diminished, people began to enjoy an increasing amount of freedom. In fact, about 200 Estonian brothers and sisters were granted visas to attend the “Pure Language” District Convention in Helsinki, Finland, in June 1990.

When the Estonian delegates stepped off the boats that had brought them to Finland, the Finnish brothers at the port burst into thunderous applause, which lasted about half an hour! Non-Witnesses were curious about what was going on and wanted to know who the celebrities were. What a turnabout! Our humble brothers, who had been mistreated by the Soviet authorities for decades, were being welcomed like Olympic champions!

How thrilled the Estonian brothers were to listen to part of the program in Estonian and to receive some new releases in their mother tongue! “When we held an Estonian brochure in our hands for the first time,” said one old-timer, “it was like holding a precious jewel.”

The Estonian delegates were even more thrilled by a stirring announcement made during the final

talk. The speaker said that the Governing Body had given approval for a semimonthly four-color Estonian *Watchtower* to be published simultaneously with the English edition, starting in January 1991! The ecstatic audience stood up and broke into prolonged applause. Then, as silence fell after the applause, someone in the audience asked: “Will there be just one magazine for each study group as there was before? Or will each individual receive a personal copy?” The answer that everyone would get a personal copy was too good to be true and triggered another round of appreciative applause.

The Finland branch got busy printing the Estonian literature and also made the back issues from 1990 available. In addition to receiving spiritual help, the Estonian Witnesses received and in turn distributed many shipments of humanitarian aid from their brothers in various countries—help that was badly needed in view of the state of the economy.

THE FIRST CONVENTION IN FREEDOM

Jehovah’s organization was quick to make use of the increasing religious freedom to arrange large district conventions throughout the Soviet Union. How excited the Estonian brothers were to host the first of the “Lovers of [Godly] Freedom” conventions on July 13-14, 1991, in Tallinn!

This convention was particularly joyous for some of the older delegates. Why? Because the last time they had attended a convention in Estonia in freedom was in 1940. How thrilled they were now, over 50 years later, to assemble freely once again!

The Russian-speaking brothers from the northwest of the Soviet Union, the Baltic countries, and Kaliningrad assembled in the Tallinn Linnahall (City Concert Hall). The adjacent Jäähall (Ice Hall) seated almost a thousand for the Estonian sessions, with a combined peak of 4,808 for both halls. With 447 baptized, it was certainly a time of great jubilation!

Conventions such as this one did much to help new ones learn the truth. For example, Leonhard Nilsk's grandmother Amalie was attending the Adventist church but had doubts about their teachings. Leonhard encouraged her to determine the truth from the Bible. The turning point came for Amalie, though, when she attended the convention in Tallinn in 1991. After the first day, Amalie announced that she would never go back to her church again. What Leonhard had said had not been enough for Amalie—she simply had to see Jehovah's people for herself. She agreed to a Bible study and was later baptized.

DREAMS COME TRUE

Now that dark clouds of persecution and oppression no longer threatened Jehovah's servants, it was hard for some to believe that there truly was freedom of worship. One longtime elder, for example, had dreamed of the day when the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* would be available in Estonian. In 1991, this became the first of our books printed in Estonian in the new era of increased freedom.

"Now that this book was in my hand," says the elder, "I could not believe it was true. When I introduced it at the meeting, it was hard to hold back the tears. For a moment, everyone was silent, as they could not

believe their ears. Then came the cries of joy! Brothers were rejoicing and crying, all at the same time. It was the kind of moment that is impossible to forget. Every time I think of it, I get tears in my eyes.”

Time and again, brothers felt “like those who were dreaming.” (Ps. 126:1-6) After decades of hardship, many were personally able to experience the happy outcome promised in God’s Word: “In due season we shall reap if we do not tire out.”—Gal. 6:9.

A JOYFUL THEOCRATIC MILESTONE

October 31, 1991, is a date our brothers and sisters in Estonia will long remember. That was the date on which the first congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses was officially registered in Estonia.

A time of great spiritual rebuilding was now at hand. There was so much interest in the good news, and people were openly expressing their interest in the Bible and religion. There were Bible studies to be conducted, as well as congregation meetings, circuit assemblies, and conventions to be organized. The translators needed adequate facilities to care for their growing workload.

In the meantime, Gilead missionaries were starting to arrive, and suitable missionary homes had to be found. They needed help to solve visa problems and to obtain residence permits. The neutrality issue had to be resolved with government officials. Building permits were needed to build Kingdom Halls.

“Those years,” recalls Reino Keski, who served as a circuit overseer at the time, “flew by as if they were only a few short months because of all the theocratic groundwork that had to be laid. It was also an

extremely emotional time. People loved the truth and accepted it quickly. In every congregation there were many who wanted to get baptized. Some interested ones who came to the convention not knowing much about Jehovah's Witnesses enjoyed the talks and immediately wanted to get baptized. There was so much to do to help them!"

When Estonia was under Soviet rule, the preaching work was supervised by the branch office in Germany. One of the secret channels of communication between Germany and Estonia was through the Finland branch. But with borders now open and free communication possible, in 1992 the oversight of the work in Estonia was assigned to the Finland branch.

VERY ZEALOUS AND VERY EAGER!

Because so many were making rapid progress, it was a challenge to keep track of the new ones who wanted to qualify as unbaptized publishers. For example, Tom Edur visited a new little group on the morning of the Memorial of Christ's death and was amazed at the large number that arrived to go out in the field service.

"Do you know everybody here?" Tom asked the local brother.

"Well, some aren't publishers," was the reply.

So Tom went ahead with the meeting for field service and then announced: "Maybe afterward I can speak separately to any who are not yet publishers."

About ten Bible students presented themselves, explaining that they wanted to qualify to go out and preach. After Tom had discussed the basic qualifications for unbaptized publishers, three of the young

women admitted that they had not yet resigned from their church. Tom explained that if they wanted to be identified with Jehovah's Witnesses, they needed to terminate their church membership. So they did! They immediately went to their former church, had their names removed from the registry, and then joined the others in the preaching work.

One man present at the meeting for field service was still a smoker. It would take him some time to clean up his life, so he went home with the prospect of becoming a publisher at a later time.

Now that the brothers could share in the preaching work without government restrictions, they were eager to use every opportunity to share the good news with as many people as possible. Some were so eager that they needed help to maintain a healthy spiritual balance. For example, when reviewing the baptism questions with a young candidate, Tom Edur asked him if the elders had ever given him any counsel.

"Yes," said the young man, "the elders advised me to be a little more balanced in my use of time."

"Oh, what was the problem?" asked Tom.

"Well, as a result of spending 150 hours in field service every month," explained the young man, "I was neglecting other Scriptural responsibilities. The elders suggested that if I put in 100 hours in the ministry, I could make time for personal study and preparation for the meetings."

A JOYFUL CONVENTION IN RUSSIA

Another important milestone in theocratic history was the international convention held in St. Petersburg, Russia, in June 1992. For many of the

“The Field Ministry Was Wonderful”

Some missionaries share their observations about their assignment in Estonia:

Markku and Sirpa Kettula: “The territory to which we were assigned was virtually untouched. The field service was amazing because people were very interested in the Bible. When we arrived in Pärnu, there were some 30 publishers. Now there are three congregations.”



Markku and Sirpa Kettula

Vesa and Leena-Maria Edvik



Vesa and Leena-Maria Edvik: “There was hardly anything to buy in the stores. So rather than shopping, people had the time to talk about the Bible. When we did street work, people often lined up to get the literature!”

Esa and Jaael Nissinen: “There’s a lot you can learn from other people. It has been a privilege to get to know many of those who remained faithful under the most severe tests.”

Anne and Ilkka Leinonen: “Day after day, week after week, territory after territory, we met people who had

never heard the Bible's message. We worked from early morning until late in the evening and really enjoyed seeing the rapid increase. It was hard to believe that at the end of the 20th century, we would be privileged to see such an increase. We will never forget those early years."



Anne and Ilkka Leinonen

Richard and Rachel Irgens:

"The people were very hospitable, and the field ministry was wonderful. We went preaching in the villages along Lake Peipus. Never did we have to take along anything to eat, because the householders would invite us in and feed us. We saw that Jesus' instructions found at Matthew 10:9, 10 could be applied even in our day. Being in Estonia taught us the need to focus on the more important things and not to get distracted by side issues."

Esa and Jael Nissinen



Richard and Rachel Irgens





International convention in St. Petersburg, Russia, 1992

1,000 delegates who attended from Estonia, it was a happy reunion with former prison mates and with other Witnesses they had met during their exile in Siberia.

“The timing of the convention was excellent for us,” says one of the delegates. “We chartered a special train for quite a low price with Russian rubles. Then, just one week before the convention, Estonia changed its currency from rubles to Estonian krooni. If we had been away that specific week of the conversion, we would not have been in Estonia to change any of our money. However, even though we were there to change our money, we were permitted to convert only a limited sum of money. What should we do with the extra rubles that we had been unable to convert? Because rubles were still being used in Russia,

brothers took the rubles with them to the convention and put them in the contribution boxes. In addition, if the convention had been a week later, when new border regulations were implemented, we would have had to obtain expensive visas to cross the border. The convention was at precisely the right time for the brothers!"

One of the many whose hearts were touched by this historic convention was an interested woman who had arranged to travel from Estonia with the Witnesses. "Somehow I misunderstood the departure time," she relates. "When I arrived at the station, the train had already departed. But I had paid for the trip. What could I do now? I prayed to Jehovah, asking him to please help me and telling him that I would do whatever I could to get there.

"The stationmaster said that I would have to buy a ticket for another train, but I didn't have enough money for another ticket! Suddenly, I saw a group of people arriving at the station. They were all so happy and well-dressed! They were Witnesses from the island of Sarema. Their train had not arrived yet, and my ticket enabled me to travel with them. What a relief!

"While traveling, the Witnesses sang Kingdom songs, which had a special impact on me. I felt as though I had been adopted as part of their spiritual family. I stayed with them for the entire convention and saw how sincere and loving they were. This melted away all my doubts. It was now clear to me that I had found God's earthly organization." This former interested person now serves as a regular pioneer together with her husband.

WILLING WORKERS WELCOME

The preaching work and the organization were progressing rapidly, and there was a need for more brothers with theocratic experience. Who could fill this growing need? Like Isaiah, many responded and said: “Here I am! Send me.”—Isa. 6:8.

The first four Gilead-trained missionaries, Vesa and Leena-Maria Edvik as well as Esa and Jaael Nisinen, arrived in 1992. Reino and Lesli Keski, who had been in the traveling work in Canada for 17 years, were also among those assigned to Estonia. Then, in the spring of 1993, 20 pioneers from Finland were assigned to serve in the Estonian- and the Russian-language fields as special pioneers, and four more missionaries arrived.

Thereafter, missionaries were sent to Estonia from several consecutive Gilead classes, bringing with them much joy and enthusiasm. Some missionaries without Gilead training were also assigned here. The energetic missionaries and eager special pioneers continued to fortify the solid foundation that had been laid by loyal Estonian brothers and sisters over the course of many decades.

In addition, some two hundred foreign brothers and sisters have come to serve where the need is greater. Their spiritual maturity has helped to strengthen and stabilize the congregations. Many new congregations were established, and these brothers from other lands were the only elders in some of the congregations until the local brothers made enough progress to take on more responsibility.

Lembit Välja is one who came to help. He was born in Estonia, survived World War II, and moved



Lauri and Jelena Nordling

to Australia, where he became a Witness. When he was about to retire, he decided to move back to Estonia in 1990 to help quench the spiritual thirst of the many interested ones. He recalls that at one point, he studied with 18 groups scattered over half of Estonia with about 80 people

attending. He traveled to those groups by bus, often spending the night at bus stations in his sleeping bag. More than 50 of his Bible students have been baptized, and at the age of 84, he is still conducting four Bible studies. His hard work and sacrifices have borne excellent fruit—there are now thriving congregations and Kingdom Halls in most of the towns he used to visit.

In return, those willing brothers who came here to help have benefited. Many have described what an enriching experience it has been for them to get to know the local people and their way of life. “It widens your view,” explains Reino Keski, “and helps you to see things a little more the way Jehovah must as he looks at the whole world.”

FIRST CIRCUIT OVERSEERS' VISITS

At that time of rapid growth, the encouraging visits of traveling overseers did much to fortify the congregations. The circuit overseers poured themselves

into their assignments, often putting in 15-hour days—sharing in field service, attending and conducting meetings, and answering the many questions that the brothers asked.

The first circuit to be formed covered Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Kaliningrad. Within that territory, there were 46 congregations and 12 groups, in four languages! The circuit overseer also had additional time-consuming assignments, such as handling registration procedures in Latvia and Lithuania. Now, in Estonia alone, there are four circuits.

“The publishers appreciated the circuit overseer’s visits so much,” remembers Lauri Nordling, a local brother who served as a circuit overseer in 1995. “Often when we met for field service, the room was full of people. Once a tiny one-room apartment was jammed with about 70 brothers and sisters. If you had thrown an apple in the air, there would not have been anywhere for it to land on the floor.”

CHALLENGES OF LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE

It is a challenge for most people to learn a new language, and Estonian is a particularly difficult one to master. For example, Markku Kettula, a new missionary, was talking to a man about Jesus Christ. Instead of saying that Jesus is the *Rahuwürst*, the Prince of Peace, he stressed a few times that Jesus is the *rahuworst*—the sausage of peace. Only when Markku opened the Bible to Isaiah 9:6 did the puzzled man grasp that the true source of peace is not something that can be eaten!

A pioneer sister was learning Russian after she moved to Estonia. While engaging in the preaching work, she inadvertently knocked on the door of a lo-

cal elder, whom she did not recognize. Dictionary in hand, she began her presentation. The brother tried to explain that he was an elder in the congregation. She quickly looked up the word “elder” and found the word “old.”

“Oh,” said the sister, “you’re not that old! Besides, in the Paradise you can grow young again.” Only after he showed her the theocratic publications in his apartment did she understand that he was not so old but was actually an elder.

AN ATHEIST JUDGE LEARNS THE TRUTH

During the Soviet era, Viktor Sen was sentenced to prison for two years because he refused to do military service. After serving a year in prison, he petitioned to be voluntarily exiled to Siberia as a free set-

Reino and Lesli Kesk



tler, an option that would give him more freedom. At the parole hearing, the judges vented their indignation on him, one judge even saying that people like him should be hung or shot.

A few years later, at a convention, a brother introduced Viktor to a group of interested people and asked him, “Do you recognize anyone?”

“No,” responded Viktor.

“Really?” asked the brother. Then, pointing to

TIME LINE Estonia

The Estonian brothers enjoyed the last assembly to be held in freedom for five decades. ▼



The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society is registered. **1933** —■

1940 —■

Witnesses write letters of protest to Stalin. **1949** —■

Nearly 300 Witnesses and many of their relatives are exiled to Siberia. **1951** —■

The first Russian-speaking congregation is formed. **1972** —■



◀ The first Gilead missionaries arrive. **1992** —■

A translation office is opened in Tallinn. **1994** —■

◀ Assembly Halls are built in Tallinn and Tartu. **1998** —■

The first Ministerial Training School class is conducted. **2000** —■



1930

1950

1970

1990

2010

1920

- 1923 Martin Kose returns to Estonia to preach.
- 1926 A branch office is opened in Tallinn. Foreign colporteurs arrive to help preach. ▼
- 1928 The first convention is held in the branch office.

1940

- Some Witnesses are sent to prisons and prison camps in the Soviet Union.
- 1948
 - 1953 Stalin dies; Witnesses begin to be released.



1960

A translation office is opened in Tartu.

- 1991 Religious freedom is granted to Jehovah's Witnesses. The first convention ever held in the Soviet Union takes place in Tallinn. ►



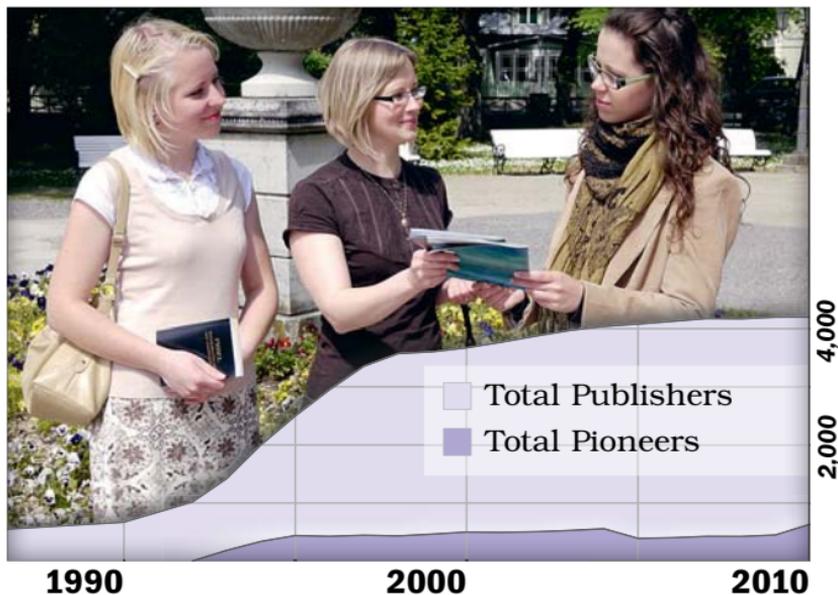
1980

- 1993 Estonia's first Kingdom Hall is built.

2000

- 1999 Estonia again becomes a branch.
- 2009 *The New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* is released in Estonian. ►

PIIBEL
Kreekakeelse osa
uue maailma tõlge



one of the men in the group, who was clearly very embarrassed, he asked, “What about this man?”

Viktor still did not recognize the man. How surprised Viktor was to find out that the man was Yuri, one of the associate judges at his parole hearing. Now he was studying the Bible and was at the convention with Viktor. What had changed Yuri’s mind about Jehovah’s Witnesses?

“I was raised in a family of aggressive atheists,” explains Yuri. “During my schooling, I often gave speeches about the danger of religion. Then, years later, I sat in on a few of my friends’ Bible studies with Jehovah’s Witnesses. I realized that while I had a good knowledge of religious lies, I really didn’t know anything about the Bible. I thus became interested in learning more about the Bible.”

After Yuri was baptized, he said to Viktor: “When we were last in court together, we sat on different benches. But if we ever end up at a similar trial again, we’ll be sitting on the same bench! I will never be the one to sentence you.” Yuri and Viktor now both serve as elders in Tallinn.

A MEMORABLE MEMORIAL

A brother who had just moved to Estonia approached Pavel and Margarita and in broken Estonian managed to say, “If you want everlasting life, you must come to the Memorial of Christ’s death tonight.” Intrigued, the couple decided to attend.

Pavel and Margarita were warmly welcomed at the Memorial. But as the program proceeded, they were somewhat alarmed when they saw a man walking up and down the aisle looking at people and making notes. They did not realize that he was only counting how many were in attendance. Pavel and Margarita began to doubt whether they should have come, but they were afraid to leave because it looked to them as if two big men were guarding the doors. Not realizing that the brothers were simply attendants, Pavel

Yuri and Viktor



and Margarita decided that it would be better not to try to leave.

At the end of the Memorial talk, though, Pavel and Margarita were interested when they heard the speaker offer a free home Bible study to anyone who wanted one. Their fears were allayed when the brothers warmly introduced themselves afterward, so the couple asked for a Bible study. Because they planned to move away in two weeks, they asked if they could have a study each day. When they did move into their new home, they eagerly phoned the brothers nearby, introduced themselves, and resumed their Bible study.

‘EYEWITNESSES OF YOUR FINE WORKS’

Jehovah’s Witnesses in Estonia express love for one another, as do their brothers and sisters earth wide. (John 13:35) Others observe such expressions and are drawn to true worship.—1 Pet. 2:12.

Toivo received the book *Mankind’s Search for God* from a sister who had cut his hair at a barbershop. When he finished reading it, he wanted to attend a meeting at the Kingdom Hall, but he was hesitant because he had been warned about the Witnesses. So he decided to observe the Witnesses at the Kingdom Hall from the safety of his car. He wanted to see what kind of people went into the hall before the meeting and what they looked like when they came out of the hall after the meeting.

He was most impressed when he saw the sisters warmly embracing each other; he could readily see that these people truly cared for one another. He eagerly started attending meetings and began to study the Bible. He made rapid progress and was soon zeal-

ously preaching to others. He is now a baptized Witness.

“JEHOVAH HAS ANSWERED MY PRAYER!”

In 1997 a copy of *Kingdom News* No. 35 was handed to Maria in the tiny village of Tootsi. She read the tract and wrote to the branch office asking for a Bible study. Shortly thereafter, Markku and Sirpa Ketula, missionaries living in Pärnu, started to study the Bible with Maria. It was not long before Maria began to talk about the truth with others, and soon her daughter-in-law, Ingrid, and Ingrid's neighbor Malle both joined the study. When Maria wanted to participate in the ministry, the elders recommended that she first attend congregation meetings regularly. However, the nearest congregation was in Pärnu, 25 miles away, and she didn't have much money to travel. So at the encouragement of the missionaries, Maria prayed for Jehovah's help.

“Jehovah has answered my prayer!” said Maria happily the next time the missionaries visited her.

“How did he answer your prayer?” Markku and Sirpa inquired.

“I will gather some people together at my house,” she explained enthusiastically, “and you can arrange meetings and establish a congregation here. Then I can attend the meetings and also start in the field service.”

The missionaries did not want to stifle her eagerness, but they tactfully explained that forming a new congregation was not that simple. They encouraged her to try to get to the meetings in Pärnu, at least on Sundays for a start.

Again Maria made her meeting attendance a matter of prayer. In addition, Maria decided to save money by canceling her newspaper. Soon she had enough money to attend meetings four times a month and was delighted to begin sharing in the preaching work. But Maria was to enjoy even greater blessings.

In view of the growing interest in Tootsi, the elders arranged to have a book study there, which Maria, Ingrid, Malle, and other interested ones could attend. Just a few months later, both Maria and Malle were baptized, and Ingrid was baptized the following summer. Malle's husband was baptized not long afterward, and Malle's sister was baptized the following winter. The thriving little group in Tootsi is grateful that *Kingdom News* No. 35 introduced the truth to their small village and that they have experienced Jehovah's blessing in response to their many prayers.

The last two decades have been full of fruitful Kingdom activity and much joy as many honesthearted people have flocked to Jehovah's organization. Where, though, would all those righteously disposed people gather to worship the true God and be taught by him?

KINGDOM HALLS URGENTLY NEEDED!

The first meeting place to be constructed was in Rāpina, in southern Estonia, and it served the brothers well for many years. But it was clear that local building efforts would not be able to keep pace with the rapid growth in the number of publishers. The Engineering Office in the Finland branch came to the rescue and started to design Kingdom Halls and office facilities for the Baltic countries. What a delight it was, in 1993, to see the first Kingdom Hall go up in Maardu, to be followed rapidly by many others.



***Maardu Kingdom Hall,
and Tartu Assembly Hall***



Presently, in Estonia, there are 33 Kingdom Halls for the 53 congregations. The brothers are happy that they also have two Assembly Halls, one in Tallinn and the other in Tartu, both of which were completed in 1998.

Longtime Witness, Alexandra Olesyuk, recalls: "We had dreamed of building a Kingdom Hall in Tartu. So when we were asked to go and clear the land where the Kingdom Hall was to be built, I was the first one there to help, although I was 79! I cleaned and carried things. Every time I rode by the Kingdom Hall

site on the bus, I cried for joy. And I cried when the hall was completed too.”

NEW TRANSLATION OFFICE

As the number of publishers continued to soar, larger facilities were needed to meet the needs of the country and particularly those of the translation team. An unfinished apartment building that seemed suitable was found in Tallinn at 77 Herzeni (now Puhangu) Street. However, it needed thorough remodeling.

The Finland branch provided architectural plans, materials, money, and a workforce to carry out the project. Without their help, it would have been almost impossible. For example, local building materials were of poor quality or were simply not available at the time. Additionally, only a few Estonian brothers initially had the construction skills needed to do the work. However, local brothers were progressively trained and helped to gain more experience. By February 1994, the first part of the office complex was complete. That year, a Country Committee (Toomas Edur, Reino Keskk, and Lembit Reile) was appointed to serve the three Baltic countries under the supervision of the Finland branch. Because more room was needed, additions were made to the complex in 1997 and 1999.

The water company, which occupied the adjacent building at the time, expressed interest in the design of the Bethel garden. Consequently, in exchange for reduced water rates, the brothers helped them design their garden, fence, and lighting systems. As a result, their building actually ended up looking very much like Bethel. Later, they sold their building to the

brothers at a very reasonable price. The extra space is being put to good use as a recording studio for producing convention dramas and DVDs, including sign-language DVDs. The Ministerial Training School too has been accommodated in a remodeled part of the building.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS IN TALLINN

How thrilled the Estonian brothers and sisters were to be informed that they would host “Messengers of Godly Peace” International Conventions in 1996. Two conventions held in Tallinn served Estonian- and Russian-speaking delegates as well as brothers from Latvia and Lithuania. Delegates were also invited from 15 other countries. The two 3-day programs took place in August. Five members of the Governing Body—Brothers Barber, Henschel, Jaracz, Schroeder, and Sydlik—were present to strengthen the brothers with their encouraging talks. A peak of 11,311 attended the conventions, and 501 newly dedicated ones were baptized.

The conventions gave a wonderful witness and generated a great deal of publicity. Reports included a ten-minute interview on a TV talk show. The owner of a radio station broadcast a program that praised the Witnesses for being such “good people.”

The warm brotherly love of the delegates was readily apparent when each convention ended and it was time to say good-bye. The sea of waving arms and handkerchiefs and the tears of joy expressed the deep-seated emotions of Jehovah’s true worshippers. The sustained applause of the entire audience after the concluding prayer expressed their deep gratitude to our most generous and loving heavenly Father,



Estonia Branch

Branch Committee, from left to right: Tommi Kauko, Toomas Edur, and Lembit Reile



Jehovah. Those conventions remain a milestone in the history of Jehovah's Witnesses in Estonia.

A BRANCH ONCE AGAIN

Between 1926 and 1940, an office operated in Tallinn. Then, beginning in 1994, a Country Office functioned in Estonia, under the oversight of the Finland branch. Much was accomplished, and many wondered if Estonia would again have its own branch. The answer came on March 1, 1999, when the Governing Body appointed Toomas Edur, Reino Keski (now serving in the Democratic Republic of Congo), Lembit Reile, and Tommi Kauko to serve on the Estonia Branch Committee. Presently, there are about 50 individuals serving at the branch, caring for the needs of 4,300 hardworking and loyal servants of Jehovah in Estonia.

FACING THE FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE

What does the future hold for Jehovah's people in Estonia? Jehovah has never failed to guide and strengthen his loyal servants. Indeed, the brothers and sisters who maintained integrity during Nazi and Soviet persecution in Estonia have experienced Jehovah's strength in unique and unforgettable ways. Along with their brothers and sisters worldwide, they rejoice that Jehovah's great name has been made known and sanctified in the farthest reaches of the republics of the former Soviet Union.—Mal. 1:11.

At the same time, there are still many humble and sincere people in Estonia who want to learn about the true God. The present climate of religious freedom permits Jehovah's Witnesses to proclaim as never before the good news of Jehovah's Kingdom.

Would you welcome more information?
You may contact Jehovah's Witnesses at **www.jw.org**.