

THE PEOPLE

Lessons 1-4

Jehovah's Witnesses are found in 240 lands and are from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. What has brought this diverse group together? What sort of people are Jehovah's Witnesses?



OUR ACTIVITIES

Lessons 5-14

Our preaching work is well-known. We also meet together at our Kingdom Halls to study the Bible and to worship. What are the meetings like, and who may attend?



OUR ORGANIZATION

Lessons 15-28

This is an international, nonprofit religious organization of people who willingly serve God. How is it structured, directed, and funded? Is it truly doing Jehovah's will today?



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To make a donation, please visit www.jw.org.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

Who Are Doing Jehovah's Will Today?

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HOW TO USE THIS BROCHURE

Take a few minutes each week to examine one of the following lessons and to answer the review questions. Also, as suggested in the "Find Out More" boxes, try to familiarize yourself with us, learn about our activities, and see our organization in action.





What Is God's Will?

God wants us to live in peace and happiness on a paradise earth forever!

You may wonder, though, 'How could that ever happen?' The Bible says that God's Kingdom will make it possible, and it is God's will that all people learn about that Kingdom and his purpose for us.—Psalm 37:11, 29; Isaiah 9:7.

God wants us to benefit ourselves.

Just as a good father wishes the best for his children, our heavenly Father desires that we enjoy eternal happiness. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) He has promised that "the one who does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

God wants us to walk in his paths.

The Bible says that our Creator wants to "instruct us about his ways" so that we can "walk in his paths." (Isaiah 2:2, 3) He has organized "a people for his name" to make his will known throughout the earth.—Acts 15:14.

God wants us to unite in worship of him.

Instead of dividing people, Jehovah's pure worship unites them in genuine love. (John 13:35) Who today are teaching men and women everywhere how to serve God in unity? We invite you to find out by means of this brochure.

FIND OUT MORE

Study the Bible with us.

Have you started studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses? If not, would you like to have a personal Bible study? It is free. You will find that it is a fine way for you to draw closer to God.

Obtain free literature.

You may go to a local Kingdom Hall or speak to any of Jehovah's Witnesses and request a publication in your language that will help you to understand the Bible.

Learn about us online.

Visit the official website of Jehovah's Witnesses. There you can read the Bible online and view or print out many of our publications in over 750 languages.

www.jw.org



What Sort of People Are Jehovah's Witnesses?

How many of Jehovah's Witnesses do you know? Some of us may be your neighbors, work colleagues, or classmates. Or we may have engaged you in Bible discussions. Who really are we, and why do we publicly share our beliefs?

We are ordinary people. We come from various backgrounds and social conditions. Some of us formerly practiced a different religion, while others did not believe in God. Before becoming Witnesses, however, all of us took the time to examine carefully the teachings of the Bible. (Acts 17:11) We agreed with what we learned, and then we made a personal choice to worship Jehovah God.

We benefit from studying the Bible. Like everyone else, we have to deal with problems and our own weaknesses. But by trying to apply Bible principles in our everyday lives, we have experienced a marked improvement in our quality of life. (Psalm 128:1, 2) That is one reason why we share with others the good things that we have learned from the Bible.

We live by godly values. These values, as taught in the Bible, promote well-being and respect for others, along with such qualities as honesty and kindness. They contribute to the development of healthy and productive members of society, and they encourage family unity and morality. Convinced that "God is not partial," we belong to a spiritual brotherhood that is truly international, free of racial and political barriers. Although we are ordinary, we make up a unique people.—Acts 4:13; 10:34, 35.

- What do Jehovah's Witnesses have in common with other people?
- What values have the Witnesses learned from studying the Bible?



Denmark



Taiwan



Venezuela



India

Why Are We Called Jehovah's Witnesses?

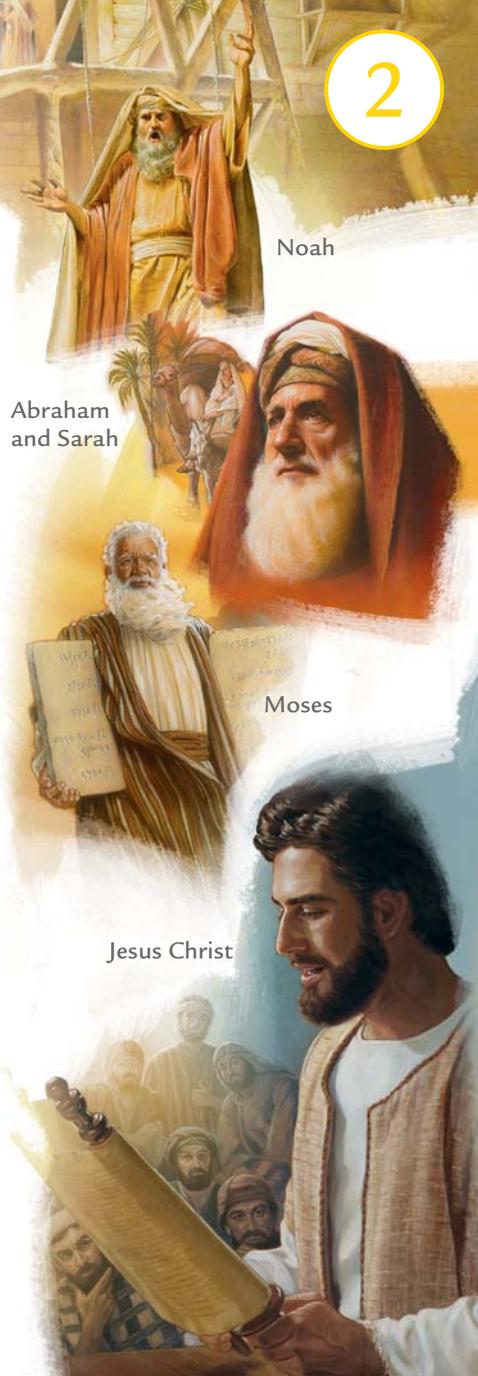
Many people think that Jehovah's Witnesses is the name of a new religion. However, over 2,700 years ago, the servants of the only true God were described as his "witnesses." (Isaiah 43:10-12) Until 1931, we were known as Bible Students. Why did we adopt the name Jehovah's Witnesses?

It identifies our God. According to ancient manuscripts, God's name, Jehovah, appears thousands of times in the Bible. In many translations this name has been replaced by titles, such as Lord or God. Yet, the true God had revealed himself to Moses by his personal name, Jehovah, saying: "This is my name forever." (Exodus 3:15) In this way, he distinguished himself from all false gods. We are proud to bear God's holy name.

It describes our mission. A long line of ancient people, beginning with the righteous man Abel, bore witness about their faith in Jehovah. Throughout the centuries, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, David, and others joined this "great cloud of witnesses." (Hebrews 11:4-12:1) Just as an individual may bear witness in court in behalf of an innocent person, we are determined to make known the truth about our God.

We are imitating Jesus. The Bible calls him "the faithful and true witness." (Revelation 3:14) Jesus himself said that he 'made God's name known' and kept 'bearing witness to the truth' about God. (John 17:26; 18:37) Christ's genuine followers must, therefore, bear Jehovah's name and make it known. This is what Jehovah's Witnesses are endeavoring to do.

- Why did the Bible Students adopt the name Jehovah's Witnesses?
- For how long has Jehovah had witnesses on earth?
- Who is the greatest Witness of Jehovah?



FIND OUT MORE

When you meet members of our local congregation, try to get to know them better. Ask them: "Why did you become one of Jehovah's Witnesses?"





Bible Students, 1870's



First issue of *The Watchtower*, 1879



The Watchtower today

How Was Bible Truth Rediscovered?

The Bible foretold that after the death of Christ, false teachers would arise among the early Christians and corrupt Bible truth. (Acts 20:29, 30) In time, that is exactly what happened. They mixed Jesus' teachings with pagan religious ideas, and a counterfeit form of Christianity developed. (2 Timothy 4:3, 4) How can we be sure that today we have a correct understanding of what the Bible *really* teaches?

The time came for Jehovah to reveal the truth. He foretold that during 'the time of the end, the true knowledge would become abundant.' (Daniel 12:4) In 1870 a small group of truth-seekers recognized that many church doctrines were not Scriptural. Therefore, they began searching for an understanding of the Bible's original teachings, and Jehovah blessed them with spiritual insight.

Sincere men carefully studied the Bible. Those earnest Bible Students, our predecessors, pursued a method of study that we still use today. They discussed the Bible subject by subject. When they came across a Bible passage that was difficult to understand, they looked for other verses to explain it. When they arrived at a conclusion that harmonized with the rest of the Scriptures, they wrote it down. By thus letting the Bible interpret itself, they rediscovered the truth about God's name and Kingdom, his purpose for mankind and the earth, the condition of the dead, and the hope of the resurrection. Their search set them free from many false beliefs and practices.—John 8:31, 32.

By 1879 the Bible Students discerned that the time had come to make the truth widely known. So in that year, they began producing the magazine that we still publish today, *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*. Now we are sharing Bible truths with people in 240 lands and in over 750 languages. Never before has true knowledge been so abundant!

- After the death of Christ, what happened to Bible truth?
- What has enabled us to rediscover the truth from God's Word?

Why Have We Produced the *New World Translation*?

For decades, Jehovah's Witnesses used, printed, and distributed various versions of the Bible. But then we saw the need to produce a new translation that would better help people to learn the "accurate knowledge of truth," which is God's will for everyone. (1 Timothy 2:3, 4) Thus, in 1950 we began to release portions of our modern-language Bible, the *New World Translation*. This Bible has been faithfully and accurately translated into over 130 languages.

A Bible was needed that was easy to understand.

Languages change over time, and many translations contain obscure or obsolete expressions that are difficult to understand. Also, ancient manuscripts that are more accurate and closer to the originals have been discovered, resulting in a better comprehension of Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

A translation was needed that was loyal to God's word.

Rather than taking liberties with God's inspired writings, Bible translators should be faithful to the original text. However, in most versions, the divine name, Jehovah, is not used in the Holy Scriptures.

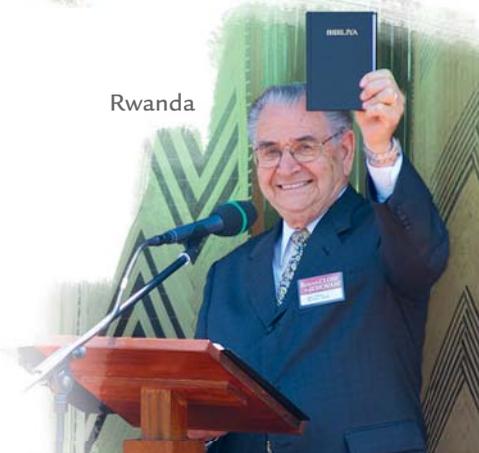
A Bible was needed that gives credit to its Author.

(2 Samuel 23:2) In the *New World Translation*, Jehovah's name has been restored where it appears some 7,000 times in the oldest Bible manuscripts as illustrated in the example below. (Psalm 83:18) The result of years of diligent research, this Bible is a pleasure to read, as it clearly conveys God's thinking. Whether you have the *New World Translation* in your language or not, we encourage you to get into a good routine of reading Jehovah's Word every day.—Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2, 3.

- Why did we decide that a new translation of the Bible was needed?
- What daily practice is good for anyone wanting to learn God's will?



Congo (Kinshasa)



Rwanda

FIND OUT MORE

Read the foreword of the *New World Translation*, and answer the question: "With what sense of responsibility did the translation committee produce this Bible?" Then compare their rendering of the following verses with that of other translations that you may possess: Genesis 25:29; Isaiah 14:23; Matthew 5:3; 11:12; 1 Corinthians 10:24, 25; Philippians 1:8.



Symmachus fragment containing the divine name at Psalm 69:31, third or fourth century C.E.

What Will You Experience at Our Christian Meetings?

Many people have stopped attending religious services because they find no spiritual guidance or comfort. Why, then, should you attend the Christian meetings organized by Jehovah's Witnesses? What will you find there?

The joy of being among loving and caring people. In the first century, Christians were organized into congregations, and they held meetings to worship God, to study the Scriptures, and to encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) Gathered in a loving atmosphere, they felt that they were among true friends—their spiritual brothers. (2 Thessalonians 1:3; 3 John 14) We follow the same pattern and experience similar joy.

The benefit of learning how to apply Bible principles. As was true in Bible times, men, women, and children all meet together. Qualified teachers use the Bible to help us discern how to apply its principles in our daily life. (Deuteronomy 31:12; Nehemiah 8:8) All may participate in audience discussions and in singing, allowing us to express our Christian hope.—Hebrews 10:23.

The blessing of having your faith in God strengthened. The apostle Paul told one of the congregations in his day: "I am longing to see you, . . . that we may have an interchange of encouragement by one another's faith, both yours and mine." (Romans 1:11, 12) At meetings, our regular contact with fellow believers strengthens our faith and determination to live a Christian life.

Why not accept this invitation to attend our congregation's next meeting and experience these things for yourself? You will be warmly welcomed. All meetings are free—no collections are ever taken.

- On what pattern are our congregation meetings based?
- How can we benefit ourselves by attending Christian meetings?

FIND OUT MORE

If you would like to see inside the local Kingdom Hall before you attend one of our meetings, ask one of Jehovah's Witnesses to take you there and show you around.



Malaysia

Argentina

Sierra Leone

Belgium

How Does Association With Fellow Christians Benefit Us?

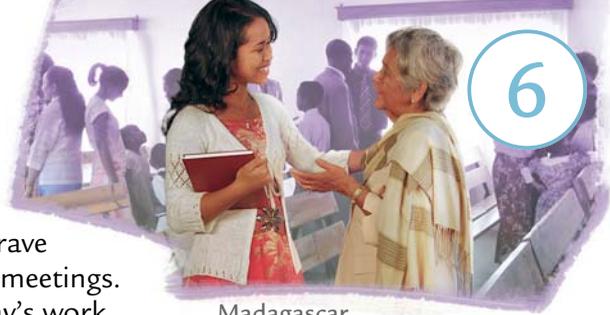
Even if we have to trek through dense jungle or brave harsh weather, we regularly attend our Christian meetings. Despite challenges of life and tiredness after a day's work, why do Jehovah's Witnesses make such an effort to associate with fellow believers?

It is good for our well-being. "Consider one another," wrote Paul, speaking of those with whom we associate in the congregation. (Hebrews 10:24) This expression means "to think about carefully," that is, to get to know one another. So the apostle's words encourage us to be concerned about others. By getting to know other Christian families, we discover that some of them have successfully overcome challenges similar to our own and that they can help us to succeed as well.

It builds lasting friendships. At our meetings, we gather together, not with mere acquaintances, but with a group of close friends. On other occasions, we spend time together in wholesome recreation. What beneficial effect does such association have? We learn to appreciate one another more, and that strengthens our bonds of love. Then, when our companions are facing problems, we readily help them because strong friendships have been established. (Proverbs 17:17) By associating with all members of our congregation, we show that we "have mutual concern for one another."—1 Corinthians 12:25, 26.

We encourage you to choose as your friends those who are doing God's will. You will find such friends among Jehovah's Witnesses. Please do not let anything hold you back from associating with us.

- Why is it in our best interests to associate together at the meetings?
- When would you like to get acquainted with our congregation?



Madagascar



Norway



Lebanon



Italy



New Zealand



Japan



Uganda



Lithuania

What Are Our Meetings Like?

Early Christian meetings consisted mainly of songs, prayers, and the reading and discussing of the Scriptures—all free of any ritual. (1 Corinthians 14:26) You can expect something very similar at our meetings.

The instruction is Bible-based and practical. On the weekend, each congregation meets to hear a 30-minute **Bible discourse** on how the Scriptures relate to our lives and to the times we live in. All of us are encouraged to follow along in our own Bible. After the discourse, there is a one-hour **“Watchtower” Study**, in which members of the congregation are welcome to participate in a discussion of an article from the study edition of *The Watchtower*. This discussion helps us to apply the Bible’s guidance in our lives. The same material is studied in every one of our more than 110,000 congregations earth wide.

We are helped to improve our teaching skills. We also meet together on a midweek evening for a three-part program entitled ***Our Christian Life and Ministry***, based on material provided in a monthly *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*. The first part of this meeting, *Treasures From God’s Word*, helps us to become familiar with a portion of the Bible that the congregation has read in advance. Next, *Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry* includes demonstrations of how to discuss the Bible with others. A counselor makes observations that help us improve our reading and speaking skills. (1 Timothy 4:13) The last part, *Living as Christians*, considers the practical application of Bible principles in day-to-day life. This includes a question-and-answer discussion that deepens our understanding of the Bible.

When you attend our meetings, you will no doubt be impressed by the quality of Bible education that you are receiving.—Isaiah 54:13.

- What can you expect to hear at the meetings of Jehovah’s Witnesses?
- Which of our weekly meetings would you like to attend next?

FIND OUT MORE

Examine some of the material that will be discussed at the next few meetings. Note what you will be able to learn from the Bible that can be useful in your everyday life.



Why Do We Dress Up for Our Meetings?

Have you noticed in the pictures in this brochure how well-dressed Jehovah’s Witnesses are when attending their congregation meetings? Why do we pay such attention to our dress and grooming?

To show respect for our God. It is true that God looks beyond our outward appearance. (1 Samuel 16:7) However, when we gather to worship him, our heartfelt desire is to show respect both for him and for our fellow worshippers. If we were to stand before a judge in court, we would likely give attention to our appearance out of regard for his position. Likewise, the way we appear at meetings shows our esteem for “the Judge of all the earth,” Jehovah God, and for the place where we worship him. —Genesis 18:25.

To reflect the values that we live by. The Bible encourages Christians to dress “with modesty and soundness of mind.” (1 Timothy 2:9, 10) Dressing “with modesty” means avoiding clothing that might draw attention to us by being showy, provocative, or revealing. Also, having “soundness of mind” helps us to choose attractive clothing that is not sloppy or extreme. These principles still leave room for a great variety of personal choices. Without our saying a word, our attractive and tasteful appearance can “adorn the teaching of our Savior” and “glorify God.” (Titus 2:10; 1 Peter 2:12) By dressing up for the meetings, we thus influence how others view the worship of Jehovah.

Do not let your clothing hold you back from attending the Kingdom Hall. Our clothes do not need to be expensive or fancy to be appropriate, clean, and presentable.

- How important is the way we dress when we worship God?
- What principles guide our choices in dress and grooming?



Iceland



Mexico



Guinea-Bissau

Philippines





Cambodia



Ukraine



FIND OUT MORE

Following the method outlined above, prepare for the *Watchtower* Study or the Congregation Bible Study. With your Bible teacher's help, prepare a comment that you might make at the next meeting.



How Can We Best Prepare for the Meetings?

If you are studying the Bible with one of Jehovah's Witnesses, you likely try to review the material in advance of each study. For the greatest benefit, it is good to do the same before attending a congregation meeting. The best results are achieved when we establish a good routine.

Determine when and where to study. When can you concentrate the best? Is it in the early morning before starting your day's work or later in the evening after the children have gone to bed? Even if you cannot study for long periods, decide how much time you can set aside, and try not to let anything interfere. Seek out a quiet place, and remove all distractions by turning off the radio, television, and cell phone. Praying before you study will help to relieve the anxious cares of the day so that you can concentrate on God's Word.—Philippians 4:6, 7.

Mark the material, and prepare to participate. Begin by getting an overall idea of the subject. Think about the title of the article or chapter, consider how each subheading relates to that theme, and examine any pictures and the review questions that highlight the main points. Then read each paragraph, and look for the answer to the printed question. Look up and read the scriptures that are cited, and think of how they support the material. (Acts 17:11) When you can answer the question, underline or highlight a few key words or phrases in the paragraph that will bring the answer back to your mind. Then, at the meeting, you can raise your hand if you wish and make a brief comment in your own words.

By examining the different subjects that are discussed each week at the meetings, you will add new thoughts to your "treasure store" of Bible knowledge.—Matthew 13:51, 52.

- What routine could you establish to prepare for the meetings?
- How can you prepare yourself to make a comment at the meeting?

What Is Family Worship?

Since ancient times, Jehovah has wanted each family to spend time together, fortifying their spirituality and strengthening their household. (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) That is why Jehovah’s Witnesses set aside a period each week for the family to worship together—discussing, in a relaxed setting, spiritual matters that are tailored to their needs. Even if you live alone, such time can be well-spent with God on a Bible study project of your choosing.

It is a time to draw closer to Jehovah. “Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.” (James 4:8) We get to know Jehovah better when we learn details about his personality and his actions through the pages of his written Word. An easy way to begin your family worship is to spend some of the time reading the Bible aloud together, perhaps following the weekly schedule for the Life and Ministry Meeting. A portion of the reading could be assigned to each family member, and then all can discuss what was learned from the Scriptures.

It is a time to draw closer to family members. Husbands and wives, as well as parents and children, strengthen their bonds with one another when they study the Bible as a family. It should be a happy, peaceful time and a highlight of the week. Depending on the ages of their children, parents can choose practical topics to discuss, perhaps using features from *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* or from our website, jw.org. You could talk about a problem that your children encountered at school and how to deal with it. Why not watch a program televised on JW Broadcasting (tv.jw.org) and discuss it together afterward? You may enjoy practicing the songs that will be sung at the meetings and having some refreshments after family worship.

This special time spent every week worshipping Jehovah together will help all in the family to find delight in God’s Word, and he will richly bless your efforts.—Psalm 1:1-3.

- Why do we set aside time for family worship?
- How can parents make this occasion enjoyable for all in the family?



South Korea



Brazil

Australia



Guinea

FIND OUT MORE

Get some ideas from others in the congregation about what they do for their family worship. Also, find out what publications are available at the Kingdom Hall to use in teaching your children about Jehovah.



Mexico



Germany



Botswana



Nicaragua



Italy

Why Do We Attend Large Assemblies?

Why is there such joy on the faces of these people? They are attending one of our assemblies. Like God's servants in the past, who were instructed to assemble three times a year, we look forward to meeting together in larger groups. (Deuteronomy 16:16) Every year, we have three events: two one-day ***circuit assemblies*** and a three-day ***regional convention***. How do we benefit from these gatherings?

They strengthen our Christian brotherhood. Just as the Israelites rejoiced at praising Jehovah “in assemblies,” we too enjoy worshipping him together at special events. (Psalm 26:12, footnote; 111:1) These gatherings create an opportunity to meet and associate with Witnesses from other congregations or even from other lands. At midday, we enjoy a meal together at the assembly location, adding to the friendly atmosphere of these spiritual occasions. (Acts 2:42) There we experience firsthand the love that unites our “whole association of brothers” in the world. —1 Peter 2:17.

They help us to make spiritual progress. The Israelites also benefited by having “understood the words” of the Scriptures that were expounded to them. (Nehemiah 8:8, 12) We too appreciate the Bible instruction that we receive at our assemblies. Each program is based on a Scriptural theme. Through interesting talks, symposiums, and reenactments, we learn how to do God's will in our life. We are encouraged when we hear the experiences of those who are successfully meeting the challenge of living as Christians in these difficult times. At regional conventions, costume dramas bring Bible accounts to life and teach us practical lessons. At every assembly, a baptism is held for those who want to symbolize their dedication to God.

- Why are the assemblies happy occasions?
- How might you benefit from attending an assembly?

FIND OUT MORE

If you would like to get to know our brotherhood better, please attend our next assembly. Your Bible teacher can show you a printed program so that you can see the sort of subjects that are discussed. Mark on your calendar when and where the next assembly will be held, and attend it if you can.



How Is Our Kingdom-Preaching Work Organized?

Shortly before his death, Jesus announced: “This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14) But how would this global preaching work be accomplished? By following the pattern Jesus set when he was on earth.—Luke 8:1.

We try to contact people at their homes. Jesus trained his disciples to preach the good news from house to house. (Matthew 10:11-13; Acts 5:42; 20:20) Those first-century evangelizers were assigned specific territories in which to preach. (Matthew 10:5, 6; 2 Corinthians 10:13) Similarly today, our preaching work is well-organized, and each congregation is given an assigned area to cover. This enables us to fulfill Jesus’ command to “preach to the people and to give a thorough witness.”—Acts 10:42.

We endeavor to reach people wherever they can be found. Jesus also set the example by preaching to people in public places, such as along the seashore or by a community well. (Mark 4:1; John 4:5-15) We too engage people in conversations about the Bible wherever we can—on the streets, in business places, in parks, or over the telephone. We also witness to our neighbors, workmates, classmates, and relatives when we have an appropriate opportunity. All these combined efforts have made it possible for millions of people earth wide to hear ‘the good news of salvation.’ —Psalm 96:2.

Can you think of someone with whom you would like to share the good news of God’s Kingdom and what that news means for their future? Do not keep this message of hope to yourself. Share it with them as soon as you can!

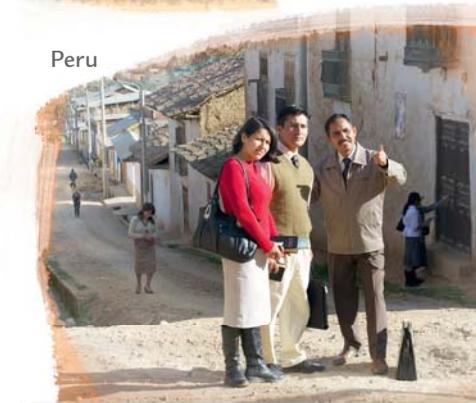
- What “good news” must be proclaimed?
- How are Jehovah’s Witnesses imitating Jesus’ method of preaching?



Spain



Belarus



Peru

FIND OUT MORE

Ask your Bible teacher to demonstrate how you might tactfully share with one of your acquaintances something that you have learned from the Bible.





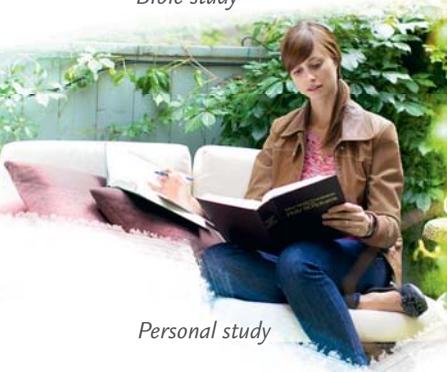
Canada



House to house



Bible study



Personal study

What Is a Pioneer?

The term “pioneer” often refers to those who explore new territories and open up a way for others to follow. Jesus was a pioneer of sorts, having been sent to the earth to perform a life-giving ministry and to open the way to salvation. (Matthew 20:28) Today, his followers are imitating him by spending as much time as possible ‘making disciples.’ (Matthew 28:19, 20) Some have been able to take up what we call the pioneer service.

A pioneer is a full-time evangelizer. All of Jehovah’s Witnesses are publishers of the good news. However, some have organized their life to serve as **regular pioneers**, spending 70 hours each month in the preaching work. To do this, many limit their secular work to part-time. Others are selected to serve as **special pioneers** in areas where the need for Kingdom proclaimers is greater, devoting 130 hours or more to the ministry each month. The pioneers are content to live a modest lifestyle, confident that Jehovah will supply them with the necessities of life. (Matthew 6:31-33; 1 Timothy 6:6-8) Those who cannot pioneer full-time may serve as **auxiliary pioneers** as they are able, increasing their preaching activity to 30 or 50 hours a month.

A pioneer is motivated by love for God and for people. Like Jesus, we notice the desperate spiritual condition that many find themselves in today. (Mark 6:34) But we have knowledge that can help them right now, giving them a solid hope for the future. Love of neighbor motivates a pioneer to give generously of his time and energy to help others spiritually. (Matthew 22:39; 1 Thessalonians 2:8) As a result, his faith is strengthened, he draws closer to God, and he experiences much happiness.—Acts 20:35.

- How would you describe a pioneer?
- What motivates some to pioneer full-time?

What Schooling Is Provided for Pioneers?

Theocratic education has long been a hallmark of Jehovah's Witnesses. Special schooling is provided for those who devote their full time to the Kingdom-preaching work so that they can 'fully accomplish their ministry.'—2 Timothy 4:5.

Pioneer Service School. At the end of a regular pioneer's first year of full-time service, he or she is enrolled in a six-day school that may be held at a nearby Kingdom Hall. Its purpose is to help the pioneer draw closer to Jehovah, become more effective in all aspects of the ministry, and continue on in faithful service.

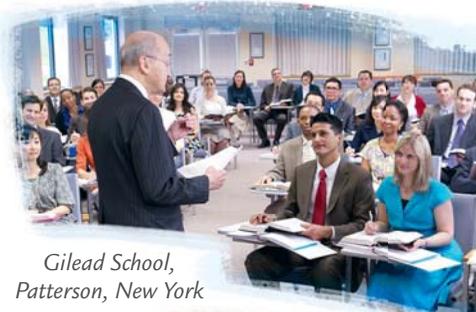
School for Kingdom Evangelizers. This two-month school is designed to train experienced pioneers who are willing to leave their home area to serve wherever they are needed. They say, in effect, "Here I am! Send me!" in imitation of the greatest Evangelizer who ever served on earth, Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 6:8; John 7:29) Moving far from home may involve having to adapt to a simpler standard of living. The culture, climate, and foods may be totally different from what one is used to. It may even be necessary to learn a new language. This school helps single brothers and sisters and married couples, ages 23 to 65, to cultivate the spiritual qualities they will need in their assignment and the skills that will enable them to be used more fully by Jehovah and his organization.

Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. In Hebrew, "Gilead" means "Witness Pile." Since Gilead's founding in 1943, more than 8,000 graduates of this school have been sent out as missionaries to give a witness "to the ends of the earth" with great success. (Acts 13:47) When graduates first arrived in Peru, there were no congregations in the country. Now there are well over 1,000. When our missionaries began serving in Japan, there were fewer than ten Witnesses in the country. Now there are well over 200,000. The five-month Gilead course includes a thorough study of God's Word. Those who are serving as special pioneers or field missionaries, are at branch offices, or are in the circuit work are invited to this school for intensive training to help stabilize and strengthen the worldwide work.

- What is the purpose of the Pioneer Service School?
- For whom is the School for Kingdom Evangelizers designed?



United States



Gilead School,
Patterson, New York



Panama



Finland



Teaching



Shepherding



Witnessing

How Do the Elders Serve the Congregation?

We do not have a paid clergy in our organization. Instead, as was done when the Christian congregation got its start, qualified overseers are appointed “to shepherd the congregation of God.” (Acts 20:28) These elders are spiritually mature men who take the lead in the congregation and shepherd, “not under compulsion, but willingly before God; not for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly.” (1 Peter 5:1-3) What work do they perform in our behalf?

They care for us and watch over us. The elders guide and help to protect the congregation spiritually. Aware that God has entrusted them with this important role, the elders do not dominate his people, but rather, they contribute to our well-being and joy. (2 Corinthians 1:24) Just as a shepherd diligently cares for each one of his sheep, the elders try to get to know every member of the congregation individually.—Proverbs 27:23.

They teach us how to do God’s will. Every week, the elders preside over the congregation meetings in order to strengthen our faith. (Acts 15:32) These devoted men also take the lead in the evangelizing activity, working with us and training us in all features of the ministry.

They give us personal encouragement. In order to care for our individual spiritual needs, local elders may visit with us in our home or at the Kingdom Hall to offer help and comfort from the Scriptures.—James 5:14, 15.

In addition to their work in the congregation, most elders also have secular jobs and family responsibilities that require their time and attention. These hardworking brothers deserve our respect.—1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13.

- What is the role of the congregation elders?
- In what ways do the elders show personal interest in us?

FIND OUT MORE

Who qualify to serve? You can read the Scriptural qualifications for elders and ministerial servants at 1 Timothy 3:1-10, 12, and Titus 1:5-9.



What Is the Role of the Ministerial Servants?

The Bible describes two groups of Christian men who care for congregation responsibilities—“overseers and ministerial servants.” (Philippians 1:1) Generally, there are a number of such brothers serving in each congregation. What work do the ministerial servants perform for our benefit?

They assist the body of elders. The ministerial servants are spiritually-minded, reliable, and conscientious men, some younger, others older. They care for the important but often routine organizational and physical tasks that must be handled in the congregation. This allows the elders to focus on teaching and shepherding responsibilities.

They render practical services. Some ministerial servants are assigned as attendants to welcome all who arrive at the meetings. Others may handle the sound equipment, the distribution of literature, the congregation accounts, and the assigning of witnessing territory to members of the congregation. They also assist in maintenance of the Kingdom Hall. Elders may ask them to provide help for elderly ones. Whatever responsibilities ministerial servants are given, their willingness to carry these out earns them the respect of all.—1 Timothy 3:13.

They set a good example as Christian men. Ministerial servants are chosen for their fine spiritual qualities. When they handle parts on the meetings, they strengthen our faith. By taking a lead in the preaching activity, they stimulate our zeal. Because of their cooperative spirit, they promote joy and unity. (Ephesians 4:16) In time, they too may qualify to serve as elders.

- What sort of men are the ministerial servants?
- How do the servants help the congregation to function smoothly?



Myanmar



Meeting part



Service group



Kingdom Hall maintenance

FIND OUT MORE

Each time you go to the Kingdom Hall, become acquainted with one of the elders or ministerial servants until you get to know all of them and their families.



How Do Circuit Overseers Help Us?

The Christian Greek Scriptures make frequent mention of Barnabas and the apostle Paul. These men served as traveling overseers, visiting the early congregations. Why? They were genuinely concerned about the welfare of their spiritual brothers. Paul said that he wanted to “return and visit the brothers” to see how they were. He was willing to cover hundreds of miles (km) in order to go and strengthen them. (Acts 15:36) That is the desire that our traveling overseers have today.

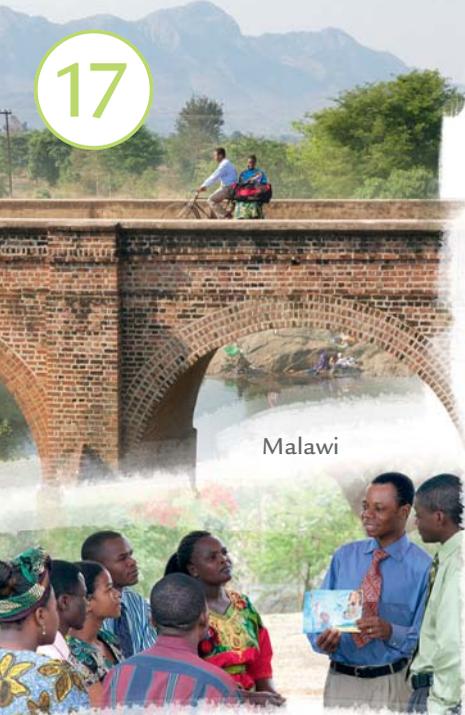
They come to encourage us. Each circuit overseer makes the rounds of 20 or so congregations, spending a week with each one twice a year. We can benefit greatly from the experience of these brothers and if they are married, that of their wives. They endeavor to get to know young and old alike, and they are eager to accompany us in the field ministry and on our Bible studies. These overseers make shepherding calls with the elders, and to strengthen us, they give encouraging talks at meetings and assemblies.—Acts 15:35.

They show an interest in all. Circuit overseers are keenly interested in the spiritual condition of the congregations. They meet with the elders and ministerial servants to review the progress made and to give them practical advice in handling their responsibilities. They help the pioneers to make a success of their ministry, and they enjoy getting to know newly associated ones and hearing about their spiritual progress. Each of these brothers freely gives of himself as “a fellow worker for [our] interests.” (2 Corinthians 8:23) We should imitate their faith and devotion to God.—Hebrews 13:7.

FIND OUT MORE

Mark on your calendar the dates of the circuit overseer’s next visit to the congregation so that you will not miss his talks at the Kingdom Hall. If you would like him or his wife to attend your Bible study that week so that you can get acquainted, let your teacher know.

- For what purpose do circuit overseers visit the congregations?
- How can you benefit from their visits?



Malawi



Service group



Field ministry



Elders' meeting



How Do We Help Our Brothers in Distress?

When a disaster strikes, Jehovah’s Witnesses immediately organize assistance to bring relief to their brothers who are affected. Such efforts demonstrate the genuineness of our love for one another. (John 13:34, 35; 1 John 3:17, 18) In what ways do we help?

We donate funds. When a great famine occurred in Judea, early Christians in Antioch sent financial help to their spiritual brothers. (Acts 11:27-30) Similarly, when we learn that our brothers in some part of the world are facing hardship, we send donations through our local congregation to supply material aid to those in critical need. —2 Corinthians 8:13-15.

We provide practical assistance. The elders who are at the scene of a disaster locate each congregation member to ensure that everyone is accounted for and safe. A relief committee may coordinate the supplying of food, clean drinking water, clothing, shelter, and medical help. Many Witnesses with the needed skills volunteer to go at their own expense and participate in the relief work or to repair damaged homes and Kingdom Halls. The unity that we enjoy as an organization and the experience we have gained in working together enable us to mobilize quickly in times of need. Although we extend our hand to “those related to us in the faith,” we assist others too when possible, whatever their religion.—Galatians 6:10.

We offer spiritual and emotional support. Victims of a disaster especially need comfort. At such times, we draw strength from Jehovah, “the God of all comfort.” (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4) We gladly share the Bible’s promises with those in despair, offering the assurance that soon God’s Kingdom will bring an end to all the tragedies that cause pain and suffering.—Revelation 21:4.

- Why are the Witnesses able to respond quickly during disasters?
- What spiritual comfort can we share with the survivors?



Dominican Republic



Japan



Haiti



Who Is the Faithful and Discreet Slave?

Shortly before his death, Jesus had a private conversation with four of his disciples—Peter, James, John, and Andrew. As Jesus was foretelling the sign of his presence in the last days, he raised a vital question: “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?” (Matthew 24:3, 45; Mark 13:3, 4) Jesus was assuring his disciples that as their “master,” he would appoint those who would provide a steady supply of spiritual food for his followers during the time of the end. Who would make up this slave?



We all benefit from our spiritual food

It is a small group of anointed followers of Jesus. The “slave” is closely identified with the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. It dispenses timely spiritual food to fellow worshippers of Jehovah. We are dependent on this faithful slave to keep giving us our “measure of food supplies at the proper time.”—Luke 12:42.

It manages the household of God. (1 Timothy 3:15) Jesus gave the slave the weighty responsibility of managing the work of the earthly part of Jehovah’s organization—looking after its material assets, directing the preaching activity, and teaching us through our congregations. Thus, to provide us with what we need when we need it, “the faithful and discreet slave” is distributing spiritual food by means of the publications we use in our ministry, as well as through the programs that are presented at our meetings and assemblies.



The slave is *faithful* to Bible truths and to its commission to preach the good news, and it is *discreet* about how it wisely cares for Christ’s interests on earth. (Acts 10:42) Jehovah is blessing its work with increase and abundant spiritual provisions.—Isaiah 60:22; 65:13.

- Who was appointed by Jesus to feed his disciples spiritually?
- In what ways is the slave faithful and discreet?

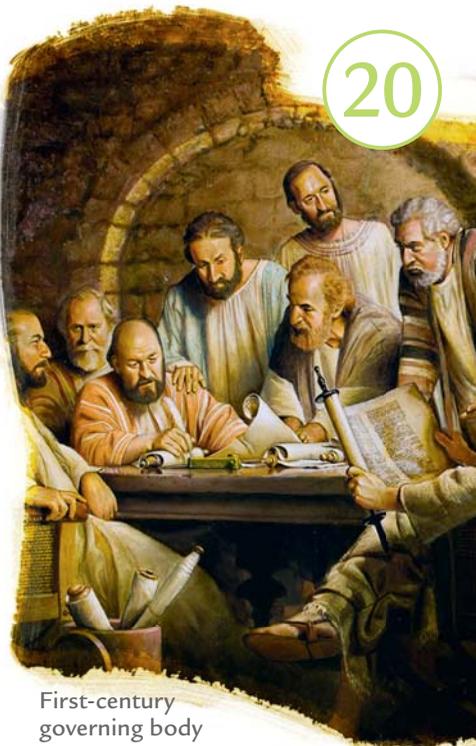
How Does the Governing Body Function Today?

In the first century, a small group, “the apostles and elders in Jerusalem,” served as a governing body to make important decisions on behalf of the entire anointed Christian congregation. (Acts 15:2) When they made a unanimous decision, it was a result of discussing what the Scriptures say and yielding to the influence of God’s spirit. (Acts 15:25) That pattern is followed today.

It is being used by God to do his will. The anointed brothers who serve on the Governing Body have an intense interest in God’s Word and much experience in handling practical and spiritual matters. They meet each week to consider the needs of the worldwide brotherhood. As in the first century, Bible-based instructions are provided either through letters or by means of traveling overseers and others. This promotes unity in thought and action among God’s people. (Acts 16:4, 5) The Governing Body oversees the preparation of spiritual food, gives impetus to the Kingdom-preaching work, and supervises the appointment of brothers to positions of responsibility.

It is responsive to the direction of God’s spirit. The Governing Body looks to the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah, and to the Head of the congregation, Jesus, for guidance. (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23) Its members do not regard themselves as the leaders of God’s people. They, along with all anointed Christians, “keep following the Lamb [Jesus] no matter where he goes.” (Revelation 14:4) The Governing Body appreciates our prayers in its behalf.

- Who were on the governing body in the first century?
- How does the Governing Body today seek God’s direction?



First-century governing body

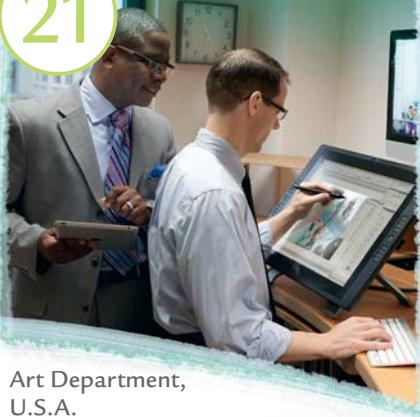


Reading the governing body’s letter

FIND OUT MORE

Read Acts 15:1-35, and see how the first-century governing body discussed and resolved a dispute with the help of the Scriptures and holy spirit.





Art Department,
U.S.A.



Germany



Kenya



Colombia

What Is Bethel?

Bethel, a Hebrew name, means “House of God.” (Genesis 28:17, 19, footnote) It is a fitting designation for the complexes that Jehovah’s Witnesses have established around the world from which the preaching work is directed and supported. The Governing Body serves at the world headquarters in New York State, U.S.A., and from there it supervises the activity of the branch offices in scores of countries. As a group, those who serve at these facilities are known as the Bethel family. Like a family, they live and work together, enjoy meals together, and study the Bible together in unity.—Psalm 133:1.

A unique place where family members give of themselves.

At every Bethel facility, there are Christian men and women who are devoted to doing God’s will and serving Kingdom interests full-time. (Matthew 6:33) Not one of them receives a wage or salary, but all are furnished with room and board and an allowance to assist with personal expenses. Everyone at Bethel has an assignment, whether in an office, a kitchen, or a dining room. Some serve in a printery or a bindery, or do housekeeping, laundry, maintenance, or other things.

A busy place that supports Kingdom preaching. The main objective of every Bethel is to make Bible truth available to as many people as possible. This brochure is one example of that. It was written under the oversight of the Governing Body, transmitted electronically to hundreds of translation teams around the world, printed on high-speed presses at several Bethel printeries, and shipped out to over 110,000 congregations. Every step of the way, Bethel families provide essential support to the most urgent of all tasks—preaching the good news.—Mark 13:10.

- Who serve at Bethel, and what provisions are made for them?
- What urgent work is supported by the activity at each Bethel?

What Is Done at a Branch Office?

Bethel family members serve in a variety of departments, caring for the preaching activity in one or several countries. They may serve on translation teams, print magazines, bind books, warehouse literature, do audio/video production, or care for other matters for the region.

A Branch Committee oversees the activity. The Governing Body entrusts the operation of each branch office to a Branch Committee made up of three or more well-qualified elders. The committee keeps the Governing Body informed of the progress of the activity in each land under that committee's jurisdiction and of any problems that may arise. Such reports help the Governing Body to decide what subjects should be considered in future publications and at meetings and assemblies. Representatives of the Governing Body are sent out regularly to visit the branches and provide guidance for the Branch Committees in handling their assignments. (Proverbs 11:14) A special program including a talk by the headquarters representative is arranged for the encouragement of those living in the branch territory.

Support is given to the local congregations. Responsible brothers at the branch office approve the formation of new congregations. Brothers also direct the activity of the pioneers, missionaries, and circuit overseers who serve in the branch territory. They organize assemblies and conventions, coordinate the construction of new Kingdom Halls, and see that literature is shipped to the congregations to supply their needs. Everything done at a branch contributes to the orderly accomplishment of the preaching work.—1 Corinthians 14:33, 40.

- How do Branch Committees assist the Governing Body?
- What responsibilities are cared for at a branch office?



Solomon Islands



Canada



South Africa

FIND OUT MORE

Visitors are welcome to take a guided tour of any of our branch offices, Monday through Friday. We invite you to do that. When you visit, dress as if you were attending a meeting. You will be benefited spiritually by seeing the place called Bethel.





Writing Department, U.S.A.



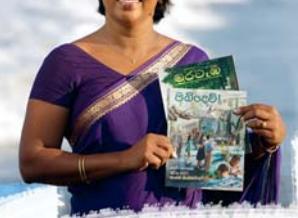
South Korea



Armenia



Burundi



Sri Lanka

How Is Our Literature Written and Translated?

In order to do our best to declare the “good news” to “every nation and tribe and tongue and people,” we produce literature in over 750 languages. (Revelation 14:6) How do we accomplish this challenging task? We do it with the help of an international writing staff and a group of devoted translators—all Jehovah’s Witnesses.

The original text is prepared in English. The Governing Body oversees the activity of the Writing Department at our world headquarters. This department coordinates the assignments of the writers who serve at headquarters and at certain branch offices. Having a diversified writing staff allows us to address multicultural subjects that give our publications an international appeal.

The text is forwarded to the translators. After the written material has been edited and approved, it is sent electronically to teams of translators around the earth, who translate, check, and proofread the text. They endeavor to select the “accurate words of truth” that will capture the full meaning of the English in their target language.—Ecclesiastes 12:10.

Computers speed up the process. A computer cannot replace human writers and translators. However, their tasks can be sped up by using computerized dictionaries, language tools, and research materials. Jehovah’s Witnesses designed a Multilanguage Electronic Publishing System (MEPS) by which text can be entered in hundreds of languages, merged with accompanying artwork, and composed for printing.

Why do we put forth all this effort, even for languages that are spoken by only a few thousand people? Because it is Jehovah’s will that “all sorts of people should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.”—1 Timothy 2:3, 4.

- How is the writing done for our publications?
- Why do we translate our literature into so many languages?

How Is Our Worldwide Work Financed?

Our organization publishes and distributes hundreds of millions of Bibles and other publications every year without charge. We build and maintain Kingdom Halls and branch offices. We support thousands of Bethelites and missionaries, and we provide relief aid in times of disaster. So you may wonder, ‘How is all of this financed?’

We do not tithe, charge dues, or take up collections.

Although the costs of supporting our evangelizing work are high, we do not solicit money. Over a century ago, the second issue of the *Watchtower* magazine stated that we believe we have Jehovah as our backer and that we “will never beg nor petition men for support”—and we never have!—Matthew 10:8.

Our activities are supported by voluntary donations.

Many people appreciate our Bible educational work and donate toward it. The Witnesses themselves happily contribute their time, energy, funds, and other resources to the doing of God’s will in all the earth. (1 Chronicles 29:9) At the Kingdom Hall and at our assemblies and conventions, there are contribution boxes where those who wish to make donations may do so. Or donations can be made through our website, jw.org. For the most part, the moneys received come from those of modest means, much like the needy widow Jesus spoke so well of who put two small coins into the temple treasury chest. (Luke 21: 1-4) Thus anyone can regularly “set something aside” to give “just as he has resolved in his heart.”—1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7.

We are convinced that Jehovah will continue to move the hearts of those who want to ‘honor him with their valuable things’ in support of the Kingdom work, so that his will may be accomplished.—Proverbs 3:9.

- What makes our organization different from other religions?
- How are the voluntary contributions used?



Nepal



Togo



Britain



Bolivia

Kingdom Halls—Why and How Are They Built?

As the name Kingdom Hall implies, the central Bible teaching discussed there focuses on God’s Kingdom—the theme of Jesus’ ministry.—Luke 8:1.

They are centers of true worship in the community.

From that location, the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom is carried out. (Matthew 24:14) Kingdom Halls vary in size and design, but all are modest structures, many accommodating more than one congregation. In recent years, we have built tens of thousands of new Kingdom Halls (an average of five each day) in order to keep up with the increase in our congregations. How is this possible?—Matthew 19:26.

They are built with donations made to a central fund.

These donations are sent to the branch office so that money can be made available to congregations needing to build or remodel a Kingdom Hall.

They are built by unpaid volunteers from all walks of life.

In many lands, *Kingdom Hall Construction Groups* have been organized. Teams of construction servants and volunteers move from one congregation to the next within a country, even in remote areas, assisting the local congregations with the construction of their Kingdom Halls. In other lands, qualified Witnesses have been appointed to supervise the building and renovating of Kingdom Halls within an assigned region. Although many skilled tradesmen from the region volunteer their labor at every building site, members of the local congregation make up the bulk of the volunteer labor force. Jehovah’s spirit and the whole-souled efforts of his people are making all of this possible.—Psalm 127:1; Colossians 3:23.

- Why are our places of worship called Kingdom Halls?
- How is it possible to build Kingdom Halls all around the world?

Nigeria,
before and after

Tahiti



How Can We Help Maintain Our Kingdom Hall?

Every Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses bears God's holy name. Therefore, we feel that sharing in keeping the building clean, presentable, and in good repair is a privilege and an important part of our sacred worship. All can participate.



Estonia

Volunteer after a meeting to do some cleaning. After each meeting, brothers and sisters happily do a light cleaning to tidy up the Kingdom Hall. Once a week, a more thorough cleaning is done. An elder or a ministerial servant coordinates the work, usually following a checklist of things to do. Depending on the need, individuals volunteer to sweep, mop, or vacuum the floor, do dusting, straighten the chairs, clean and disinfect the bathrooms, wash windows and mirrors, dispose of trash, or do exterior cleaning and care for the yard. At least once a year, a day is set aside to do a major cleaning. By including our children in some duties, we teach them to respect our place of worship.—Ecclesiastes 5:1.



Zimbabwe

Lend a hand in making any needed repairs. Every year, a detailed inspection is made of the Kingdom Hall, inside and out. Based on this inspection, regular maintenance work is done to keep the hall in good repair, helping to avoid unnecessary expenses. (2 Chronicles 24:13; 34:10) A clean and well-maintained Kingdom Hall is a worthy place in which to worship our God. By having a share in this work, we show how close Jehovah and our place of worship are to our heart. (Psalm 122:1) This also creates a favorable impression in the community.—2 Corinthians 6:3.



Mongolia

- Why should we not neglect our place of worship?
- What arrangements are made to keep the Kingdom Hall clean?



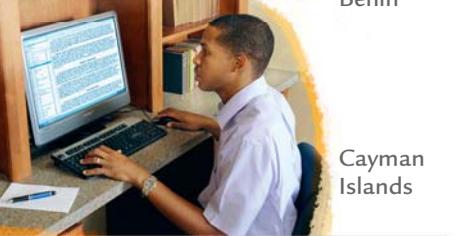
Puerto Rico



Israel

Czech
Republic

Benin

Cayman
Islands

How Can the Kingdom Hall Library Benefit Us?

Would you like to do some research to increase your knowledge of the Bible? Are you curious about a particular scripture or a person, place, or thing mentioned in the Bible? Or have you wondered whether God’s Word can help you with a personal concern that you have? Then visit the Kingdom Hall library.

It provides helpful research tools. Likely, you do not possess all the Bible-based publications of Jehovah’s Witnesses that are available in your language. But the library at the Kingdom Hall contains most of the recent publications. It may also have a variety of Bible translations, a good dictionary, and other helpful reference works. You are free to use the library before and after meetings. If a computer is installed, it may have *Watchtower Library* on it. This is an electronic program that contains a large collection of our publications and an easy-to-use search feature with which you can look up a subject, a word, or a scripture.

It is useful for students in the Life and Ministry Meeting. You may be able to make good use of the Kingdom Hall library when preparing your assignments. The Life and Ministry Meeting overseer is in charge of the library. He is responsible for making sure that the latest publications are there and that they are well-arranged. He or your Bible teacher can show you how to find the information that you need. However, no books should be taken out of the Kingdom Hall. And, of course, we want to handle the books carefully and not make any marks in them.

The Bible explains that to “find the knowledge of God,” we must be willing to search for it “as for hidden treasures.” (Proverbs 2:1-5) The Kingdom Hall library can help you to start your search.

- What research tools are available in the Kingdom Hall library?
- Who can help you to make the best use of the library?

FIND OUT MORE

If you would like to start building a personal library, see what is available at the literature counter. Your Bible teacher can recommend to you which publications you might want to obtain first.



What Can Be Found on Our Website?

Jesus Christ told his followers: “Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens.” (Matthew 5:16) To that end, we are making good use of modern technology, including the Internet. Our website, **jw.org**, is the official online source of information about the beliefs and activities of Jehovah’s Witnesses. What does it feature?

The Bible’s answers to commonly asked questions.

You can find the answers to some of the most important questions that people have ever asked. For example, the tracts *Will Suffering Ever End?* and *Can the Dead Really Live Again?* are available online in over 600 languages. You can also find the *New World Translation* in over 130 languages and a number of Bible study aids, including the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* and the current issues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* Many of these publications can be read or listened to online or downloaded in such popular formats as MP3, PDF, or EPUB. You can even print out a few pages to share with an interested person in his own language! Video publications are available in scores of sign languages. You can download dramatic Bible readings, Bible dramas, and beautiful music to enjoy at your leisure.

Factual information about Jehovah’s Witnesses. Also posted are the latest news and video clips about our worldwide work, events affecting Jehovah’s Witnesses, and our humanitarian relief efforts. You can find notices of upcoming conventions and contact information for our branch offices.

By these means, we are shining the light of truth into the remotest parts of the earth. People from every continent, including Antarctica, are benefiting. We pray that “the word of Jehovah may keep spreading rapidly” into all the earth, to God’s glory.—2 Thessalonians 3:1.

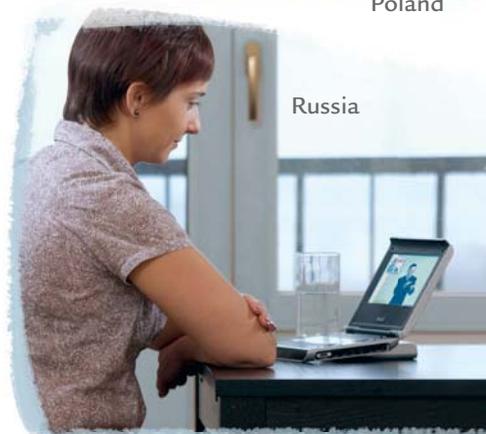
- How is **jw.org** helping more people to learn Bible truth?
- What would you like to explore on our website?



France



Poland



Russia

A NOTE OF CAUTION:

Some Internet sites have been set up by opposers to spread false information about our organization. Their intent is to draw people away from serving Jehovah. We should avoid those sites.—Psalm 1:1; 26:4; Romans 16:17.

Will You Do Jehovah's Will?

Thank you for taking the time to examine this brochure in order to familiarize yourself with Jehovah's Witnesses as a people, to learn about our activities, and to see our organization in action. We hope that it has helped you to identify us as the ones who are doing Jehovah's will today. We encourage you to keep on taking in knowledge of God, to tell the rest of your family and friends about what you are learning, and to associate regularly with us at our Christian meetings.—Hebrews 10:23-25.

You will find that the more you learn about Jehovah, the more you can see how much he truly loves you. You will then be motivated to do all you can to show your love for him in return. (1 John 4:8-10, 19) But how can you demonstrate that desire in your daily life? Why is obeying his moral standards in your best interests? And what will help you want to do God's will along with us? Your Bible teacher will be pleased to explore the answers with you so that you and your family can "keep yourselves in God's love, . . . with everlasting life in view."—Jude 21.

We warmly invite you to continue making progress in the way of the truth by studying this publication next . . .



"KEEP YOURSELVES IN
GOD'S LOVE"

