

2015

Yearbook of
Jehovah's Witnesses



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After serving a prison term for his Christian neutrality,
a brother in Armenia reunites with his parents



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Our colorfully dressed
Dominican brothers and
sisters

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My Spiritual Goals for 2015

Bible Reading and Study

Preaching and Teaching

Christian Living and Qualities

Families share in proclaiming
the good news



This book belongs to

2015

Yearbook of
Jehovah's Witnesses

Containing the Report for the
Service Year of 2014

“Give thanks to Jehovah, for he is good.”

Psalm 106:1

After being delivered from Pharaoh and his armies at the Red Sea, the Israelites had every reason to give thanks to Jehovah. We too can gladly give thanks to Jehovah. True, when we undergo trialsome circumstances, we can easily become discouraged. At such times, we can be comforted and strengthened by reflecting on our blessings.



Among our most cherished blessings is our sure hope of deliverance from everything that causes us pain and distress. Whatever hardships may come our way, we know that Jehovah will not abandon us. Our loving Shepherd provides everything we need to serve him faithfully. He never fails to be a “refuge and strength, a help that is readily found in times of distress.” (Ps. 46:1) Our keeping focused on such blessings will help us cope with even the most grievous ordeals. Throughout the coming year, may we reflect joyfully on our blessings and be moved to “give thanks to Jehovah, for he is good; his loyal love endures forever.”—Ps. 106:1.



A Letter From the Governing Body

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

“We always thank God when we mention all of you in our prayers, for we continually remember your faithful work, your loving labor, and your endurance because of your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.” (1 Thess. 1:2, 3) How beautifully these words convey our feelings about you! We thank Jehovah for you and for the good work that you are accomplishing. Why so?

Over the past year, you have been busy performing “faithful work” and “loving labor” in connection with Kingdom activities. Many of you have looked for ways to expand your ministry. Some have moved to serve in areas, even to other countries, where there is a great need for Kingdom evangelizers. Others have expanded their ministry by engaging in public witnessing. Many were motivated to auxiliary pioneer during the Memorial season, during the month of the circuit overseer’s visit, or during the special campaign in August 2014. Although your circumstances vary, we see that you are working whole-souled for Jehovah, and we commend you. (Col. 3:23, 24) Your “faithful work” is indeed a reason for us to thank Jehovah!

We also deeply appreciated your “loving labor” in connection with the construction of various theocratic facilities around the world. We urgently need such



WHERE CAN WE
FIND ANSWERS TO
LIFE'S BIG QUESTIONS?



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facilities, as the number of Jehovah's people continues to increase. (Isa. 60:22) Just imagine, our peak publishers this past year was 8,201,545, while our Bible studies averaged 9,499,933 each month. As a result of the increase, many branch offices are in need of expansion or renovation. Of course, this also means that we need more Kingdom Halls! At the same time, remote translation offices are needed in many parts of the earth so that our translators can live and work in the area where their language is spoken.

Consequently, we can ask ourselves, 'What can I do to support the construction of these facilities?' Some of us may be able to volunteer to share in the construction work. And, whether we have construction skills or not, we all have the privilege of contributing our valuable things toward these important projects. (Prov. 3:9, 10) At the time of the construction of the tabernacle, the Israelites were so moved to give that an announcement had to be made to restrain them from giving more. (Ex. 36:5-7) No doubt, such Scriptural examples touch our hearts and motivate us. Your "loving labor" in these important areas of sacred service is another reason for us to thank Jehovah!

We have special reason to rejoice as we see the steadfast endurance of our brothers. For example, consider our dear brothers in South Korea. Since 1950, young brothers in that land have been subjected to prison sentences of varying lengths because they would not violate their Christian neutrality. Generations of our brothers have endured this treatment, without waver-

ing. Their example of endurance strengthens our faith!

In Eritrea, three of our brothers have been imprisoned for more than 20 years. Others, including our sisters and their children, have been imprisoned for shorter periods. Many efforts have been made to gain their release, but none of them have thus far met with success. Our brothers have not compromised. They have kept their integrity under grievous circumstances. We do not forget these faithful ones in our prayers. —Rom. 1:8, 9.

Of course, most of you are not imprisoned because of your faith. Nonetheless, many of you are coping with advancing age, chronic health problems, opposition from unbelieving mates or relatives, as well as other personal challenges that may be known only by you. Even so, you continue to serve Jehovah faithfully! (Jas. 1:12) We commend you. Your faithful endurance is another reason for us to thank Jehovah.

Yes, your faithful work, your loving labor, and your endurance provide wonderful reasons for us to “give thanks to Jehovah, for he is good.” (Ps. 106:1) We truly love all of you, and we pray that Jehovah will strengthen you, sustain you, and bless you so that you may serve him forever.

Your brothers,

Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses



Highlights of the past year

Jehovah God inspired the prophet Isaiah to foretell: “Instead of the copper I will bring in gold, and instead of the iron I will bring in silver, instead of the wood, copper, and instead of the stones, iron.” (Isa. 60:17) During the past year, we have seen clear evidence that this prophecy continues to be fulfilled. Just as replacing an inferior material with a superior one denotes improvement, Jehovah’s Witnesses have experienced improvements in their organizational arrangements during this time of the end.—Matt. 24:3.

Geoffrey Jackson releasing the revised English edition of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* at the Jersey City Assembly Hall on October 5, 2013



Rapid Progress at Warwick

THERE is great excitement and much activity at the construction site of the future world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Warwick, New York. Hundreds of brothers and sisters have gone to great lengths to work on the project. Yet, many of them say, "We wouldn't trade working here for anything." Let us see what is happening at Warwick.





What is it like to work at Warwick?



“Warwick has become much more than just buildings. Jehovah is unifying the various construction teams and helping us to rethink how we design and plan major construction projects.”—*Enrique Ford.*



“Psalm 127:1 says: ‘Unless Jehovah builds the house, it is in vain that its builders work hard on it.’ Those words confirm that the true success of this project will be due to Jehovah’s blessing.”—*Troy Snyder.*



“This has been the most faith-strengthening experience of my life.”—*Richard Devine.*



1. Vehicle Maintenance Building

Now being used as a temporary dining room



2. Visitor Parking Garage



3. Maintenance Building

Workshops, powerhouse, and residents' parking



4. Bethel Home Services and Office Complex

Auditorium and dining room (each to seat 1,100), infirmary, kitchen, laundry, and a visitors' museum





Warwick, August 26, 2014



5-8. Four residence buildings
(578 rooms)



Worldwide Design/ Construction Department

THE rapid growth in Jehovah's organization is creating an increased demand for more Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, theocratic school facilities, remote translation offices, as well as branch buildings in various places. Hence, in October 2013, the Governing Body established a new department so that the work of designing, building, renovating, and maintaining our facilities could be carried out in the most efficient and economical manner. This new department, called the **Worldwide Design/Construction Department** (WDC), is located at our world headquarters in Brook-

lyn, New York, and functions under the direction of the Publishing Committee of the Governing Body.

The WDC oversees the **Regional Design/Construction Departments**, which are at the branch offices located in Australia, Germany, South Africa, and the United States. These departments coordinate the design, construction, and maintenance work in their respective regions. Their goal is to speed up the construction of Kingdom Halls. Previously, Kingdom Halls were built with the help of either the Regional Building Committee or the program for lands with limited resources. These two arrangements have now been merged into one, with a view to using the best of both systems to help accelerate our construction work.

To coordinate this ever-increasing need for Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls, a **Local Design/Construction Department** was formed in each branch. This department reports directly to the local Branch Committee. An exciting feature of these adjustments is that now all branches can assign full-time construction servants to help local brothers build Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls.

In April 2014, there were over 270 large projects that needed to be completed, including 90 remote translation offices, 35 Assembly Halls, and 130 branch projects. In addition, there is a pressing need for Kingdom Halls, with more than 14,000 that must either be built or undergo major renovation.

How faith-strengthening it is to see Jehovah's unified people transcending national boundaries, cultures, and languages to build facilities that bring praise and glory to his holy name! "There's a tremendous amount of

work that still has to be done,” says Dan Molchan of the Personnel Committee Office at world headquarters, “and because of this, we appreciate the prayers of our brothers and sisters, as well as their donations in support of the work. But we are very grateful for the brothers and sisters who offer themselves willingly to assist with the projects.”

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OVER 270 LARGE PROJECTS
THAT NEEDED TO BE COMPLETED, INCLUDING:



90 Remote
Translation Offices



35 Assembly Halls



130 Branch Projects

There is also a pressing need for more than 14,000 Kingdom Halls either to be built or to undergo major renovation.





A Bible That Is Made to Last

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES love the Bible more than any other publication. We study it regularly and use it to teach others about the good news of God's Kingdom. (Matt. 24:14) Therefore, our brothers spared no effort to ensure that the materials used to produce the 2013 revision of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* in English would be both attractive and durable.

When brothers from our printery in Wallkill, New York, U.S.A., discussed the prospective design of the new Bible with the president of a bookbinding company, he said, "The Bible you seek does not exist." He added, "It's sad but true that most Bibles are designed to look good on a coffee table or a shelf—not to be highly durable."

Some earlier editions of the *New World Translation* did not last very long. Therefore, brothers at our Wallkill printery carefully examined cover materials, adhesives, and binding methods in order to produce a Bible that would withstand intense use in various climates. Based on their findings, they produced prototype Bibles and had them field-tested by Witnesses in several countries with extreme climates.

After six months, the Bibles were returned, and the brothers made improvements and sent out another batch of prototypes. In all, more than 1,690 Bibles were field-tested. A few of them received rough treatment by accident. For example, one Bible was run over by a car, another was left out in the rain overnight, and another was submerged in the floodwaters of a hurricane.

In 2011, while the field tests were taking place, new high-speed bindery equipment was purchased for our printeries in Wallkill and in Ebina, Japan. Not only was there a need to print enough Bibles for the initial release but there was also a need to produce Bibles at both printeries that would be identical in appearance.

Curling Covers

Early in 2012, the two printeries began producing the 1984 edition of the *New World Translation*, using some of the new cover material. However, the new binding machines used a glue and a liner material in the cover that had not been field-tested, and the covers curled markedly. So production was stopped.

The makers of one of the materials admitted that the curling effect is a well-known problem in the bookbinding industry, so they felt that it could not be solved.



At first, the covers did not stay flat

Rather than switch to a hard cover, however, the brothers were determined to produce a Bible with a cover that was flexible, durable, and attractive. After nearly four months of testing many combinations of glue and liner material, they found a combination that enabled the printery to resume production of Bibles with flexible covers that would now stay flat.

The release of the revised *New World Translation* was scheduled for October 5, 2013, at the annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. The printeries received the electronic files of the finalized text on Friday, August 9, 2013, and began printing the next day. The first completed Bible was produced on August 15. Over the next seven weeks, the printeries in Wallkill and in Ebina operated day and night to produce and ship over 1,600,000



The bindery at the Wallkill printery

Bibles, enough for every person who attended the annual meeting to receive a copy.

While this Bible is beautiful and durable, its life-giving message is even more attractive. The day after she received her new Bible, a sister from the United States wrote, "Now that we have the new edition, I'm able to understand the Bible better."

Bible Translation

By August 31, 2014, the *New World Translation* had been translated in whole or in part into 124 languages. The following editions were released during the 2014 service year.



WHEN RELEASED	WHERE RELEASED	LANGUAGE	EDITION
September 6, 2013	South Africa	Swati	Greek Scriptures
September 20, 2013	Paraguay	Guarani	Greek Scriptures
January 17, 2014	Timor-Leste	Tetum	Greek Scriptures
July 5, 2014	Ukraine	Ukrainian	Complete Bible
August 8, 2014	Estonia	Estonian	Complete Bible
August 22, 2014	Britain	Persian	Greek Scriptures
August 22, 2014	Zambia	Chitonga	Complete Bible
August 22, 2014	Zambia	Kikaonde	Complete Bible
August 29, 2014	Kenya	Luo	Greek Scriptures



The Largest Gathering of Jehovah's Witnesses

ON Saturday, October 5, 2013, an audience of 257,294 in 21 lands attended the 129th annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania either in person or via a live Webcast. Later that weekend, other groups of Witnesses viewed a replay of the program. The total attendance was 1,413,676 in 31 lands—the largest gathering of Jehovah's Witnesses yet.

Since the 1920's, Jehovah's Witnesses have broadcast conventions to international audiences, using telephone lines along with vast radio networks. Now Internet technology allows people even in remote places to

hear and see events either as they happen or soon afterward.

Members of several branch offices worked for over a year to set up the Webcast. On the weekend of the Webcast, technicians monitored the program from a control center in Brooklyn, New York, and stayed on duty around the clock as it was shown at venues in 15 time zones.

Fast Facts—Webcast Venues

- **Primary:** Jersey City Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, New Jersey, U.S.A.
Attendance: 4,732

- **Largest:** Perth, Australia
Attendance: 7,186

- **Northernmost:** Fairbanks, Alaska, U.S.A.
Attendance: 255

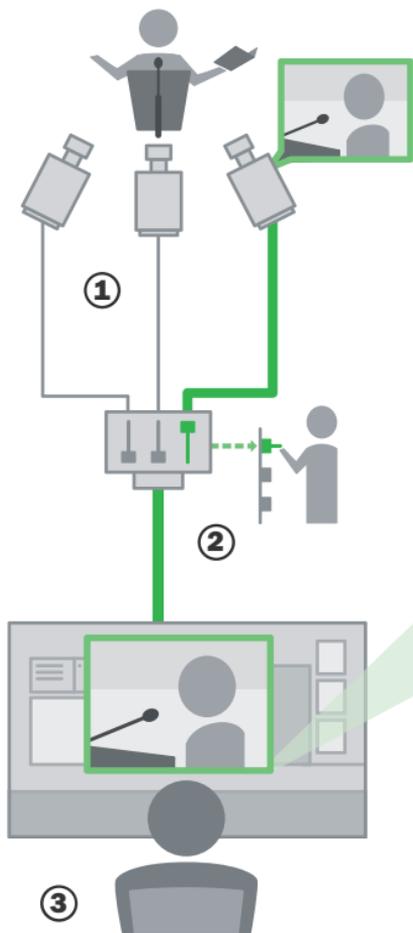
- **Southernmost:** Invercargill, New Zealand
Attendance: 190

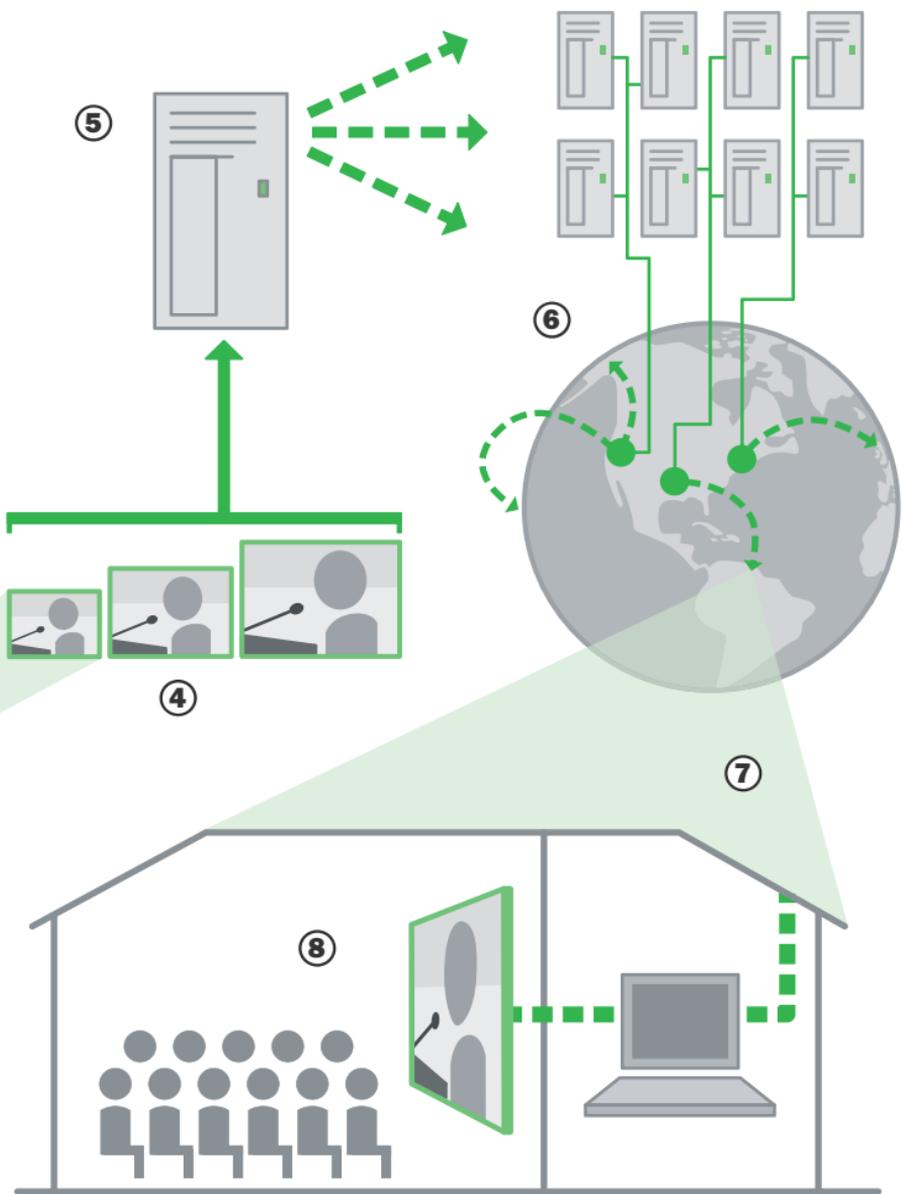


- **Most distant:** Perth, Australia, which is about 11,600 miles from Jersey City

How the Webcast Works

- 1.** Several video cameras capture the program.
- 2.** Video images are sent to a switcher, and the best shot is selected.
- 3.** The selected video signal is then sent to a computer in the control center.
- 4.** Low-, medium-, and high-resolution video streams of the live program are created.
- 5.** The video streams are sliced into ten-second segments.
- 6.** The segments are made available over the Internet by a network of Web servers.
- 7.** A device at each destination downloads the segments from the Web server and places them into a holding area, or buffer. The device then re-assembles the downloaded segments to make a smooth video stream.
- 8.** The audience sees and hears the program.







Sri Lanka Branch Dedication

LOCAL brothers and sisters dressed in traditional Sri Lankan garb warmly welcomed 130 delegates, who came from 19 countries to attend the branch dedication on this pretty island. A group of children sang Kingdom songs, and all enjoyed the fascinating cultural displays, delicious local food, and delightful music, along with warm Christian association.

Both the newly built and the renovated branch facilities were dedicated to Jehovah on Saturday, January 11, 2014, as an audience of 893 paid close attention to the program in three languages. There was sustained applause when Mark Sanderson of the Governing Body asked, “Would you like to dedicate these newly built facilities to Jehovah God?”

Sri Lanka: Mark Sanderson delivering the dedication discourse

The following day, 7,701 enjoyed a review of Saturday’s program and an encouraging talk by Brother Sanderson. Five large venues around the country were tied in. For the first time, video streaming to and from all venues made it possible for brothers and sisters on all parts of the island to see and hear one another as they sang Kingdom melodies. This historic occasion was certainly a cause for “great joy.”—Neh. 12:43.

Video streaming locations





Legal Report

ARMENIA Provides Alternative Civilian Service Program That Respects Christian Neutrality

In 2013, the Armenian government instituted an alternative civilian service program, allowing Jehovah's Witnesses in Armenia to choose alternative service rather than to serve a prison sentence because of conscientious objection to military service. In January 2014, the branch reported that 71 brothers began their work assignments under this new arrangement. Some brothers, for example, are assigned as kitchen workers or



Armenia: Some brothers are assigned by the government to perform their alternative civilian service in remote areas of the country. While there, they continue to participate zealously in the preaching work

as nurse's aides in hospitals. The supervisors of the program have commented positively regarding the work ethic and the attitude of the brothers in performing the often difficult work assigned to them. The brothers are grateful that provisions have been made for them to perform civilian service so that they can continue to maintain a clean Christian conscience.* One brother commented, "We are thankful to Jehovah that we can do alternative civilian service, which helps us to keep our neutrality and at the same time have the freedom to worship him."

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC Recognizes First Non-Catholic Religious Wedding Performed by Witnesses

In 1954, the Dominican Republic signed a concordat with the Vatican, making the Catholic Church the sole religion with the right to perform weddings. If a couple was not married by the Catholic Church, an official from the Civil Registry could perform the marriage. However, in 2010, the government adopted a new constitution that granted qualified representatives of other religions this right. The government organized training for those wishing to become licensed. The branch office in the Dominican Republic selected 30 elders to attend, and of the more than 2,000 individuals who applied for the license, only 32 qualified to receive it. However, all 30 of our brothers received their licenses to perform weddings for Witness couples.

* Whether to do alternative civilian service or not is a matter of conscience.

INDIA Determined to Preach Fearlessly

On January 27, 2014, the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission ruled that the Police Sub-Inspector (PSI) of Old Hubli Police Station in Karnataka had violated the human rights of Brother Sundeeep Muniswamy because the PSI failed to provide protection against a mob attack on June 28, 2011. The Commission held the PSI accountable for the human rights vi-

Sundeeep and Deepalakshmi Muniswamy



olations and not only directed the government of Karnataka to take disciplinary action against the PSI but also recommended that 20,000 rupees (\$326 U.S.) be paid to Brother Muniswamy as compensation. The Commission directed the government to recover the amount from the salary of the PSI.

Brother Muniswamy stated that he and his family are grateful to Jehovah for this extraordinary decision and are determined to continue to preach the good news fearlessly. The decision has strengthened the brothers' faith and their confidence in Jehovah's ability to protect his people. It also sends a strong message to the authorities to protect the human rights of Jehovah's Witnesses in Karnataka. A criminal case against Brother Muniswamy and another brother, related to the same incident, is still pending in the courts.

KYRGYZSTAN Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court Upholds Right to Conscientious Objection

November 19, 2013, was a significant day for conscientious objectors to military service. The Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court handed down a ruling in the cases of 11 of Jehovah's Witnesses and held that Kyrgyzstan's program of alternative service was unconstitutional. The law required those performing alternative service to make monetary payments directly to the military for the support of military activity. The law also required conscientious objectors to enroll in the reserves of the armed forces upon completion of the term of their alternative service. The Constitutional Chamber determined that it was a violation of the right to freedom of religion to compel conscientious objectors to perform alternative service in such circumstances. Subsequently, in the first few months of 2014, the Supreme Court of Kyrgyzstan applied the decision of the Constitutional Chamber and acquitted 14 of Jehovah's Witnesses who were criminally convicted under the former law. These favorable decisions now end a seven-year



Kyrgyzstan: Witnesses whose cases went before Kyrgyzstan's highest court

battle to gain the right to freedom of religion as conscientious objectors. The determination of these peaceful young men upholds Jehovah's name and our freedom of worship in the Kyrgyz Republic.

NIGERIA "Jehovah Had Rewarded Me"

In Nigeria's Abia State, Jehovah's Witnesses are often threatened and ostracized because they refuse to join age-grade associations*—whose community activities often include violence and spiritistic rites. One early November morning in 2005, members of the age-grade association of Asaga Ohafia invaded the home of Brother Emmanuel Ogwo and his wife and unlawfully took all their belongings as forced payment for membership levies. All that was left for the couple were

* An age-grade association is comprised of individuals, usually males, who are contemporaries living in the same village.

the clothes they were wearing. In 2006, the community evicted Brother Ogwo from his home and village. Brother and Sister Ogwo took refuge with a brother in another village, where their needs were cared for. Although Brother Ogwo returned to his home the following year, he continued to endure pressure to join the age-grade association, and his requests to return his property were ignored.

Finally, on April 15, 2014, the Abia State High Court ruled in favor of Brother Ogwo, upholding his constitutional rights to freedom of association and religion. Brother Ogwo's looted property has been returned to him, the Witnesses are not as severely ostracized by the community as they were before, and the brothers in Asaga Ohafia now preach freely in the community.

When the court's decision was announced, Brother Ogwo said: "I leapt with joy. I was very happy. I felt that Jehovah had won the case and that the angels were with me. Jehovah had rewarded me."

RUSSIA A Ruling in Favor of jw.org

The many legal challenges facing our brothers in Russia have "actually turned out for the advancement of the good news" in that country. (Phil. 1:12) Even though some government officials and religious leaders strongly oppose our worship, our brothers in Russia are maintaining their integrity, and Jehovah is blessing their efforts.

One indication of this is a legal victory in the city of Tver'. In 2013, the Tver' prosecutor's office filed a complaint in a local court to ban jw.org throughout Russia. Without informing any representatives of Jehovah's Witnesses of the trial, the court ruled in favor of the prosecutor. Our brothers learned of the court's decision and filed an appeal. On January 22, 2014, the Tver' Regional Court reversed the lower court's decision and

ruled in our favor. Thanks to Jehovah and the prayers of the international brotherhood, the majority of our Russian brothers can now enjoy the many spiritual benefits of being able to access jw.org.

TURKEY Continues to Ignore Right to Conscientious Objection to Military Service

Bariş Görmez, one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Turkey, spent over four years in prison for his refusal to serve in the military. While in detention he endured harsh treatment at the hands of military police who kicked him and beat him with clubs. He also suffered while he was in the prison cell. Because Brother Görmez is seven feet tall, he was unable to sleep on the bed provided, forcing him to sleep crosswise on two beds in a contorted position. Eventually, the prison authorities gave him permission to have a larger mattress, which was provided by the local congregation.

In 2008, Brother Görmez and three other Witnesses submitted an application to the European Court of Human Rights, claiming that Turkey violated their religious freedom by not recognizing their right to conscientious objection. On June 3, 2014, the Court ruled in favor of the four Witnesses* and directed the Turkish government to award damages and costs to the brothers. This is the third time that the European Court has ruled in favor of Jehovah's Witnesses and against Turkey on this issue. Although there are no Jehovah's Witnesses currently in prison in Turkey, the issue will not be completely resolved until Turkey recognizes the right of conscientious objection to military service.

* *Buldu and Others v. Turkey*, No. 14017/08, June 3, 2014.

Follow-Up to Previous Reports

Azerbaijan: The brothers continue to experience police raids at their meetings, censorship of their religious literature, arrests while preaching, and other human rights violations. Meanwhile, the government continues to refuse to grant re-registration to the Religious Community of Jehovah's Witnesses. Nineteen applications have been filed with the European Court of Human Rights against Azerbaijan on these issues. Despite these difficulties, Jehovah's blessing is evident in the continued growth in the number of publishers. The release of the complete *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* in Azerbaijani was further cause for rejoicing.

Eritrea: In that country our brothers continue to serve Jehovah faithfully while enduring severe persecution. Three brothers, Paulos Eyassu, Isaac Mogos, and Negede Teklemariam, have been in prison now for 20 years—since September 24, 1994. Eritrean authorities arrested about 150 Witnesses and interested ones at the Memorial of Christ's death on April 14, 2014. Those arrested ranged in age from 16 months to more than 85 years. The authorities arrested about 30 more Witnesses and interested ones during the special talk on April 27, 2014. Most have since been released.

Kazakhstan: The Agency for Religious Affairs has not allowed 14 of our publications to be imported into or distributed in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Also, our brothers are limited in sharing their personal beliefs outside of their registered places of worship, and approximately 50 brothers have been convicted for alleged illegal missionary activity. To defend individual freedom of expression, 26 complaints have been filed with the United Nations Human Rights Committee.



Dispatches

News From Around the World

They Share What They Download

Even though the Internet is still not widely available in **Cuba**, it is now possible to connect to it at shops that a telephone company has opened. The cost, however, is very high. Therefore, to help the brothers benefit from jw.org, the branch encouraged congregations to arrange for one publisher to download publications, recordings, and videos from the Web site and then share them with other Witnesses in local congregations. This arrangement is working well.

The Kingdom Hall Took Priority Over a Cell Phone

Teona, aged 10, and her eight-year-old sister, Tamuna, live in the **Republic of Georgia**. The girls wanted a cell phone. To help them buy one, their grandmother promised to give them some of her pension money each month. Sadly, the grandmother died suddenly. Nevertheless, the family gave her last pension payment to the girls so that they could buy the phone they wanted. After thinking about it, the girls wrote this to their congregation: “We know that in two weeks construction of our new Kingdom Hall will begin in our village of T’erjola. Our grandmother really wanted to help with this work, so we have both decided to give Grandmother’s last full pension payment to the congregation instead of buying our cell phone. Please build us a nice Kingdom Hall!”

Greek Scriptures in the Tetum Language

On January 17, 2014, in Dili, **Timor-Leste**, Geoffrey Jackson of the Governing Body released the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* in Tetum, the most widely spoken language in the country. Previously, the only copies of the Greek Scriptures in Tetum were printed and distributed by the Catholic Church, which refused to sell them to Jehovah’s Witnesses or people suspected of studying with the Witnesses. However, the Catholic translation had many inaccuracies, omissions, archaic words, and printing errors. In contrast, regarding the *New World Translation*, Darren, a missionary in Timor-Leste, stated: “Many Timorese

who read the *New World Translation* are impressed by its accuracy, and they immediately request copies. They find it easy to read, and they appreciate the large text, especially since many homes have poor lighting. Many who have obtained a copy are now studying the Bible.”

‘Jehovah Considers Me Worthy’

In January 2014, the translation work for the Romany language, which is spoken in **Macedonia**, reached a milestone. A permanent translation team was formed, and approval was given to produce publications in this language not only in Roman script but also in Cyrillic. This is a great help to the Romany-speaking people, who are more accustomed to Cyrillic, which is the official script in Macedonia.

Many of the Romany-speaking population are touched by the fact that Jehovah’s organization provides literature in their language. One sister said: “As

Macedonia: Preaching using Romany publications



someone who speaks Romanly, I often experience that people of other races look down on me, so I am very grateful to Jehovah that he considers me worthy of receiving literature in my own language. This draws me even closer to him.”

“I am very grateful to Jehovah that he considers me worthy of receiving literature in my own language”

A Change of Oversight

As of February 1, 2014, the United States branch office began to oversee the territory and congregations in **Jamaica** and the **Cayman Islands**. What unity exists among the more than 1.2 million publishers in the United States branch territory! This includes the 50 U.S. states, the Bahamas, Bermuda, the British and U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The Pioneers in Japan

The brothers and sisters in **Japan** continue to maintain a vibrant pioneer spirit, and the number of regular pioneers serving on this island country is the fourth largest in the world. At the beginning of the 2014 service year, 2,646 new ones joined the pioneer ranks, increasing the number of pioneers to 65,668. During March 2014, more than half of all publishers participated in some form of pioneer service.

“We Have Seen Wonderful Things”

ON ONE occasion when Jesus healed a paralyzed man, “all were seized with amazement, and they began to glorify God, and they became filled with awe, saying: ‘We have seen wonderful things today!’ ” (Luke 5: 25, 26) What Jehovah God is accomplishing today by means of his beloved Son, the faithful and discreet slave, and his faithful worshippers throughout the earth gives us even greater reason to echo the words: “We have seen wonderful things.”

New Jersey, U.S.A.: Delegates greeting and waving at one another





HIGHLIGHTS

A blind brother is baptized

Worldwide

LANDS

239

PUBLISHERS

8,201,545

TOTAL HOURS SPENT
IN THE FIELD MINISTRY

1,945,487,604

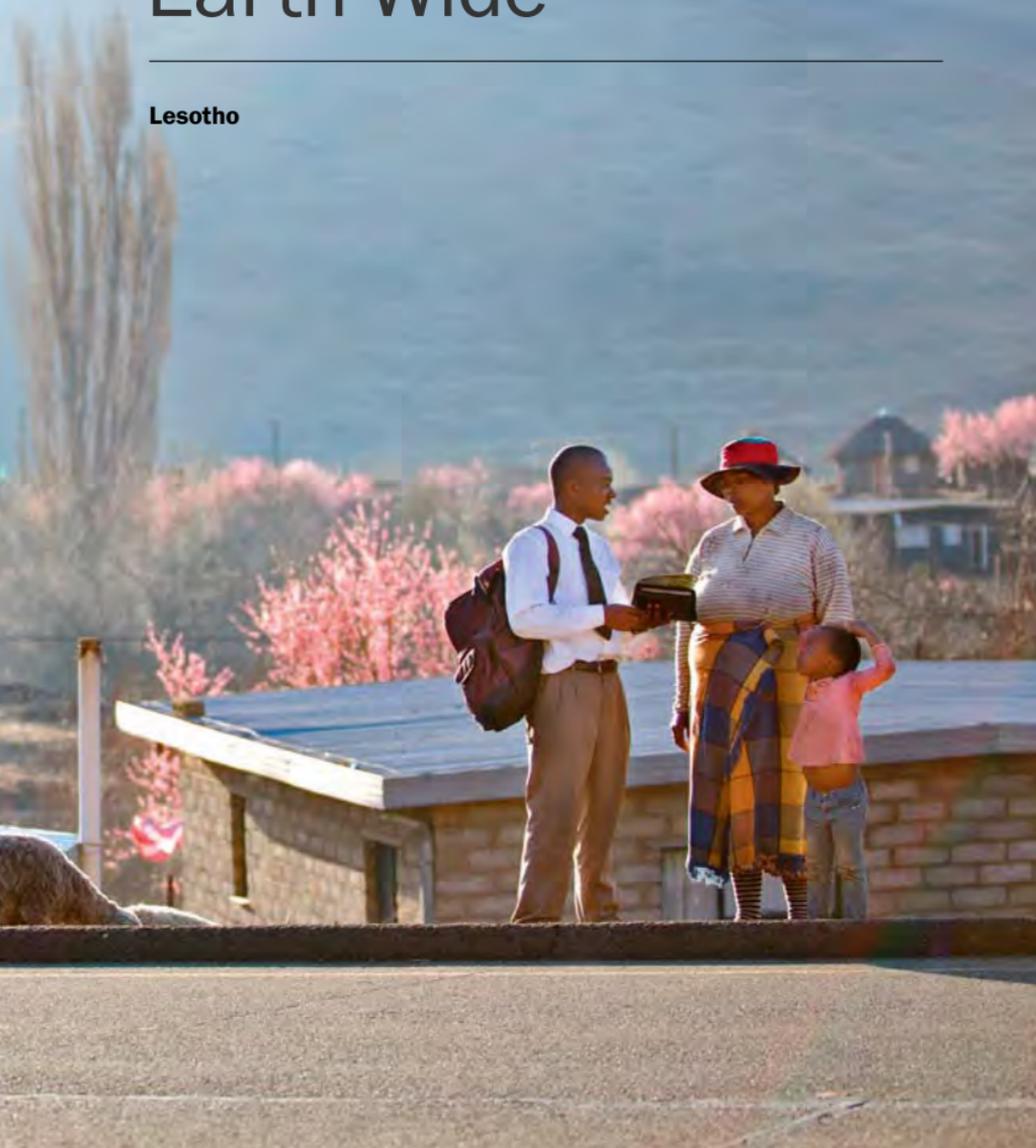
BIBLE STUDIES

9,499,933



Preaching and Teaching Earth Wide

Lesotho





LANDS

58

POPULATION

994,839,242

PUBLISHERS

1,421,375

BIBLE STUDIES

3,516,524

Africa

They Followed Their Teacher

José is a young pioneer brother who lives in the outskirts of Luanda, **Angola**. He works as a teacher at a school located close to the Kingdom Hall. Because he displays Christian qualities and is a skillful teacher, he is loved and respected by his 86 students. His midweek congregation meeting starts at 4:00 p.m., so he received permission to leave work early on that day of

Angola: José giving a talk at the Kingdom Hall with his students in the audience

the week. After work, he goes directly to the Kingdom Hall.

Some students wondered why José was leaving the school early and where he was going. One day, to satisfy their curiosity, two of his students followed him and attended the meeting. Sometime later, another three students attended the meeting on a day that José had an assignment on the Service Meeting. News about this spread quickly in the classroom. In the weeks that followed, the number of students attending the meeting rose from 5 to 21. The publishers at the Kingdom Hall offered Bible studies to all of them, and most accepted. When the students brought some publications with them to school, others became interested and started showing up at the meetings. By the end of the school year, 54 of his 86 students had attended a meeting. José reported that 23 of his students are making good spiritual progress and continue to attend meetings.

Not Enough Territory?

When special pioneers Joseph and Evezi arrived in their new assignment in **Nigeria**, several disheartened publishers told them: “We don’t have enough territory. It has been overworked.” After one year, Joseph wrote to the branch saying: “We work our territory every day of the week and are counteracting prejudice and apathy. We go out in the ministry with a portable DVD player to show videos to the children as well as to adolescents and adults. The result: Each month, my wife and I



Nigeria: Joseph and Evezi using a DVD player in the ministry

conduct 18 Bible studies, and at times we cannot meet the demand of visiting all our Bible students. Also, the children keep asking us to show them the ‘Caleb videos.’ ”

A Cry for Help From an Island

In April 2014, the branch office in **Congo (Kinshasa)** received a touching letter from a group of fishermen living on Ibinja Island on Lake Kivu. These fishermen

often travel from their island to surrounding cities for business. On one of their trips to the city of Bukavu, they met Jehovah's Witnesses. The Witnesses shared the good news with them and gave them a Bible and some literature.

The fishermen appreciated what they read and shared what they had learned with others on the island. Because many were interested, the fishermen had one of their men return to Bukavu to find the Witnesses so that he could invite them to Ibinja. When the man was not able to find them, he wrote to the branch office, saying: "Please, send Witnesses to help us so that we can know the Bible as they do and learn how to live forever. We are ready to accommodate them. I am ready to offer my property to build a church. We have learned from the Bible verses in your books that the priests and pastors teach us lies. We are convinced that we have found the true religion. There are many here in Ibinja who would like to study the Bible and become Jehovah's Witnesses."

The letter indicated that there were about 40 interested people on the island. There are more than 18,000 people in Ibinja but no Witnesses. The branch office immediately assigned to the island two special pioneers who spoke the local language.

The Pastor Now Listens

"I will never miss the Memorial ever again." This was the comment of the pastor of a prominent Protestant church in **South Africa**. What moved this religious leader to attend the Memorial in April 2014? It all started when two brothers of different races were sharing in the field ministry and knocked on his door. They knew



from past experience that the pastor likely would not want to speak with them. Adaine, one of the brothers, explains what happened: “To our amazement, he opened the door and invited us in. We had a lengthy discussion. He was surprised to see a white man preaching in a black community and speaking to him in his own language. The pastor began having a regular Bible study.”

Adaine continues: “This man had been a missionary and a pastor for more than 40 years, but only at the age of 80 did he find all the answers to his questions. He loves the book *Imitate Their Faith*. When we study, he memorizes some points and uses them in his church sermons. He showed the members of his congregation the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* He told them, ‘When Jehovah’s Witnesses come to your house with this book, welcome them and listen to what they have to say because this book is full of spiritual treasures.’”

The pastor told Adaine that he had been severely admonished by leaders of his church and had been warned not to speak about Jehovah’s Witnesses in his church sermons. He did not know what to do. Adaine remembered an account about a lay priest in Myanmar, which was related in the *2013 Yearbook of Jehovah’s Witnesses*. When Adaine read the account to the pastor, he said: “This is about me! I have a very important decision to make, and it cannot wait any longer.”

The pastor attended his first Memorial on April 14, 2014, and made the statement about never missing it

again. He has expressed his determination to cut off all ties with false religion.

Searching in the Cocoa Fields

Baffour and Aaron serve as special pioneers in Boka-bo, a cocoa-growing region in western **Ghana**. Their scattered territory, dotted with small houses, is accessible only by the many narrow footpaths snaking through the plantations. It is easy to get lost if one takes a wrong turn! One day, instead of taking the usual route, Baffour and Aaron chose a different path, which led to huts they had never visited. There they met Michael and Patience, who expressed interest in their message and eagerly accepted a Bible study. Later, Michael told them: "For the past two years, we stopped going to church because we saw things that were not in harmony with the Bible's teachings. Every evening since then, Patience and I have studied the Bible on our own, searching for answers to our questions. We have been praying for help to find the truth." Despite having to walk long distances through the plantations, they began attending meetings immediately. Within the past year, the couple were baptized and began serving as regular pioneers. Now they too are treading obscure paths across cocoa plantations in search of others who "have been praying for help to find the truth."



Michael and Patience walking through a plantation



LANDS

57

POPULATION

980,780,095

PUBLISHERS

4,034,693

BIBLE STUDIES

4,339,285

The Americas

Orphans Attend Meetings

Angela, who lives in **Suriname**, visited an orphanage near her home. The head of the orphanage was an inactive sister, so she readily gave Angela permission to preach to the children. Angela talked with 85 children and showed them videos from jw.org. Subsequently, she began to study with many of them. Two pioneers joined in, each one having his own group.

The inactive sister said that she had taught the children songs from one of our songbooks and would read Bible stories to them at night. She expressed a desire to attend meetings, but she could not leave the 85 children alone at the orphanage. Consequently, arrangements were made for all of them to come to the Kingdom Hall. Since the orphanage was within walking distance, brothers helped escort them to the Kingdom Hall. Now the sister and all 85 of the children regularly attend meetings.

Gabriel Helped His Grandfather

On the way home from a convention in **Paraguay**, six-year-old Gabriel pondered how important it is to preach the Kingdom message. He then realized that there was someone special whom he wanted to be with in Paradise—his grandfather. But his grandfather had never shown interest in the truth and had opposed his wife and children, who were Witnesses.

The same day, Gabriel asked his parents to place a video call to his grandparents who live in **Argentina**. Gabriel explained to his grandfather why it is so important to study the Bible and directly asked him, “Grandpa, do you want to study with me?” His grandfather agreed. Gabriel suggested that they study the brochure *Listen to God and Live Forever*. For the next few months, they studied the brochure together. Since they both had a hard time reading fluently, they practiced beforehand. For every study session, Gabriel would prepare his lesson and dress up in a shirt and a tie.



Paraguay: Gabriel talking with his grandfather

Later the grandparents decided to visit Gabriel's family for a few weeks. During their visit, his grandfather attended congregation meetings with the family. When Gabriel's grandfather returned to Argentina, he continued his Bible study with a local brother and has progressed to the point of becoming an unbaptized publisher. Now Gabriel's grandparents pray together every day. As for little Gabriel, he has progressed as well. He too is now an unbaptized publisher. The grandfather has expressed his desire to symbolize his dedication to Jehovah by water baptism.

“Your Visit Was No Coincidence”

In **Brazil**, while distributing the tract *Can the Dead Really Live Again?* Jennifer knocked at the door of a woman who was rushing to attend the funeral service of a dear friend. Jennifer told her that, coincidentally,

she wanted to give her a tract that discussed the hope of seeing our dead loved ones live again. The woman was momentarily taken aback by the title, but she accepted the tract. When asked if she would like to take some extra tracts along with her to give to the grieving family, the woman thought that it was a good idea and asked for nine more tracts.

Jennifer later made a return visit on the woman, who said to her: “On that day when we first met, I later realized that your visit was no coincidence. God had sent you with a comforting message that I needed so badly.” She had distributed all the tracts. A family member, who delivered the funeral sermon, read the entire tract out loud. Everyone appreciated it and thanked her for the comforting message. The woman accepted a Bible study.

Tap-Tap Witnessing

Three Bethelites in **Haiti** were traveling by public transportation in colorful taxis called tap-taps. During their two-and-a-half-hour journey, they shared the Kingdom hope with other passengers, placing a total of 50 magazines and 30 tracts. One of the Bethelites, Gurvitch, read an excerpt from an *Awake!* magazine to a passenger. A young man named Pépé listened in and quickly shared in the discussion. He asked for a Bible study, and as it turned out, he lived in the territory of the congregation where Gurvitch served. Since January 2014 when he was first contacted, Pépé has attended virtually all the meetings and assemblies. He speaks to others about his newfound faith and hopes to become an unbaptized publisher soon.



LANDS

48

POPULATION

4,315,759,010

PUBLISHERS

703,271

BIBLE STUDIES

732,106

Asia and the Middle East

He Asked if Others Could Come

A brother gave a Memorial invitation to a parking attendant in **Indonesia** two days before the occasion. The attendant, a Muslim, asked if others could come since he had only one invitation. The brother explained that others could also come. The man said that he had a large family and asked for more invitations. The brother handed him 20 invi-

tations and explained that the occasion was the Memorial of Jesus' death and that all, including Christians and Muslims, were welcome. The man said that he would bring about 60 to 70 people with him.

Shortly after the beginning of the Memorial talk, with 248 already in attendance, the parking attendant showed up with about 100 additional people—men, women, and children, including elderly people and a woman who was well along in her pregnancy. They had rented several cars for transportation to the hotel where the Memorial was being held. At seeing such a crowd, the hotel's security guards initially prevented them from entering. They wondered why so many Muslims wanted to attend a Christian event. After the people showed the guards their Memorial invitations, the guards escorted the group to the auditorium. About 60 people from the group were allowed to enter the overcrowded auditorium.

A few days later, the brother visited the parking attendant and asked if the group had enjoyed the program. While he admitted that all had been a bit shy about attending, he commented that they were impressed because everyone was so nice, greeting them and shaking hands afterward. The brother then invited him to the special talk that was being held on the following Sunday. This time he came with some 40 family members and neighbors. Since they arrived toward the end of the meeting, the elders decided to present the talk a second

Mongolia: With permission, publishers distributed literature for the passengers

time. The chairman introduced the talk again, briefly explaining the program, including the song and the prayer. To help these people who had a Muslim background, throughout the talk the speaker used terms familiar to them, such as “the Holy Book” instead of “the Bible” and “the prophet Isa” instead of “Jesus.”

Later, an elder visited the parking attendant at his home and started a Bible discussion with him based on the brochure *Listen to God*. Twelve others joined the discussion, including some Muslim women and a few children.

Reading Material for the Buses

Buses departing from Ulaanbaatar, **Mongolia**, travel to all parts of the country. Such bus trips can take up to 48 hours. Passengers either stare out the window or go to sleep. No reading material is provided even though Mongolians enjoy reading. With this in mind, some of the brothers from the Songinokhairkhan Congregation approached the bus drivers and said: “We would like to give you a fine book as a present. On airplanes, there is always something to read in the seat pockets. If you think your passengers would like something to read, we can put literature in the seat pockets for them.” Eight bus drivers accepted this offer. As a result, the brothers placed 299 magazines and 144 brochures. They also made arrangements to replace the magazines with the current issues once they are published.



Mistaken Identity

In **one Asian country**, two elders were asked to visit a sister who had been inactive for eight years. Having never met the sister, the brothers called her and arranged to meet her at her shop in a large wholesale shopping market. After walking around a confusing maze of alleyways, they finally found a shop matching the sister's address. As they entered they were greeted by a woman who had a small Bible on her desk. After confirming her family name, hometown, and the age of her two children, the brothers concluded that this was the inactive sister. "We are your brothers, Jehovah's Witnesses," they said.

"I am a Christian," she replied with a perplexed look on her face. Her reaction seemed strange to the brothers. Nevertheless, they gave her some Bible literature, and she was very grateful.

"I felt truly humbled because even though I was inactive for so long, Jehovah never forgot me"

However, as the brothers were leaving, they realized that they had visited the wrong shop! They had meant to call at shop 2202, but this was shop 2200. One of the brothers said: "I felt a chill go down my spine, as if the angels had prompted us

to go to that shop. The woman and the sister had the same last name, the same hometown, and their children were close in age! If the woman had had a different last name or hometown, we would have known that she was the wrong person." Two shops down, the

brothers finally found the inactive sister who had been waiting for them to visit her.

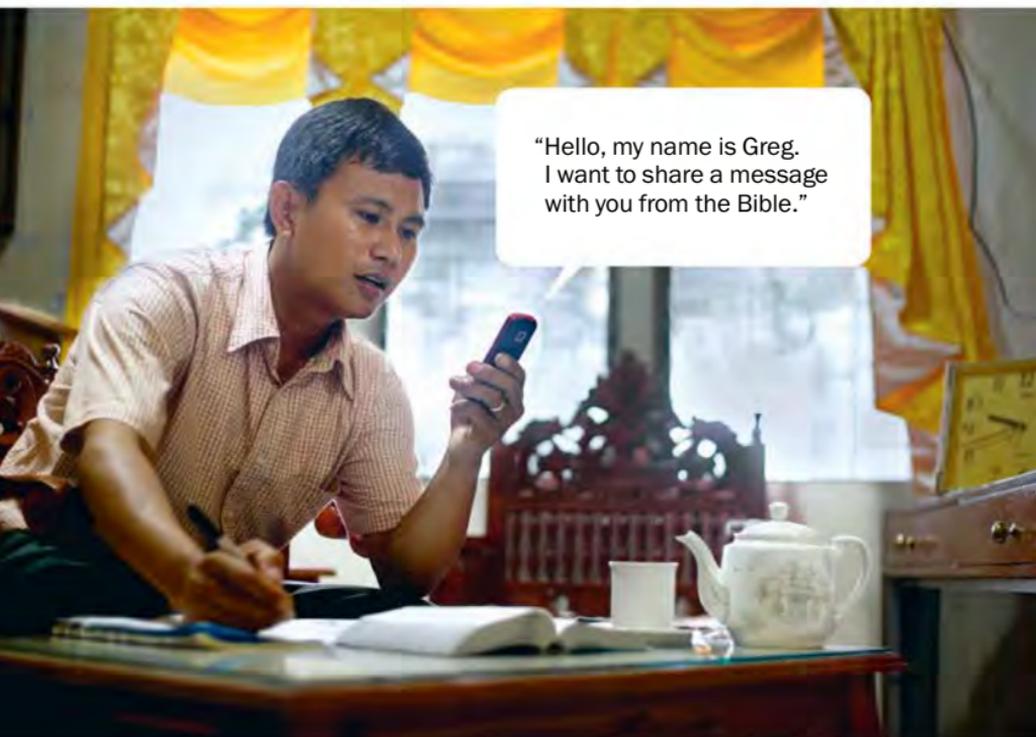
As a result of this mistaken visit, the first woman began studying the Bible and attending meetings. The inactive sister began attending all the meetings and having a regular share in the ministry. She said, “I felt truly humbled because even though I was inactive for so long, Jehovah never forgot me.”

Text Messaging in Bad Weather

Greg and Alma moved to the island of Catanduanes in the **Philippines** to serve where there is a greater need for Kingdom proclaimers. Some of the terrain there is mountainous, so Greg and Alma have to walk 12 miles to reach some of their territories. At other times, they paddle a boat for up to two hours to preach on other islands. During the rainy season, they find it very difficult to make such journeys. Rather than just staying at home and not doing any preaching, they decided to take advantage of promotional rates offered by their mobile phone company that allows them to send unlimited text messages at minimal cost.

Greg says that he starts the message by stating his name. Then he adds, “I want to share a message with you from the Bible.” One of the scriptures he has found to be effective is John 17:3. After quoting it, he asks two questions: Who is the true God? and Who is Jesus Christ? He then invites the person to reply. If the person answers, Greg shares an additional scripture, such as Psalm 83:18. If the person keeps responding to his text messages, he asks if he can continue the conversation over the telephone. Greg and Alma say that many do respond.

One woman whom Greg and Alma contacted had several questions about the Bible, thus many text messages went back and forth. This texting eventually led to a Bible study. The woman shared what she was learning with her nephew and a workmate. As a result, all three were eventually baptized.



Philippines: Greg sending text messages



Europe



The Class Visited the Kingdom Hall

Ines, a fourth-grade pupil in **Finland**, heard that her class was going to discuss Jehovah's Witnesses as part of their religious instruction, so she decided to invite the class to visit the Kingdom Hall. Both the students and the teacher thought that this was a good idea.

The next week, 38 pupils rode their bicycles about three miles

LANDS

47

POPULATION

741,311,996

PUBLISHERS

1,611,036

BIBLE STUDIES

847,343

to the Kingdom Hall. Two teachers and the headmaster also came. Two brothers and three sisters met them at the Kingdom Hall. While having some refreshments, the pupils asked questions about the hall and the Witnesses: “What takes place at the meetings?” “What is that room over there?” They were referring to the library. “Why is ‘six divided by ten’ on the wall?” The yeartext was Matthew 6:10.

Because the school participates in a project to prevent school bullying, the brothers showed the class the whiteboard animation video *Beat a Bully Without Using Your Fists*, on jw.org. They also showed them other sections of our Web site and played a Kingdom song. The visit lasted about one hour.

The headmaster, the teachers, and the children were enthusiastic about the visit. The headmaster was interested in the material on our Web site because he felt that it could be used during the lessons on religion. He was delighted to hear that other classes were welcome to visit the Kingdom Hall. As a result, a teacher of another class contacted the Witnesses the very next day and asked if they too could visit the hall.

She Found a Treasure in a Garbage Dump

Cristina, who lives in **Romania**, never went to school and could not read or write. She was very poor and made a living by searching the city’s garbage site for cans and plastic bottles. One day while she was doing this, something caught her attention—it was Bible literature with beautiful pictures of happy people. She said to herself, ‘Such people must exist somewhere in the world.’ Cristina was curious about what was in the publications, so she asked someone to read them to her. On



Finland: Fourth graders visit the Kingdom Hall

hearing that the publications discussed religious subjects, she was saddened that people had thrown information about God's Word in the garbage. Cristina continued to go to the dump to collect brochures, tracts, and magazines. Some of them were complete, and others were torn to pieces. She learned how to read so that she could find out more about the publications.



Germany: Margret conducting a Bible study in the forest

Later, Cristina was contacted by the Witnesses, and a Bible study was started. She was very happy to know that Jehovah had drawn her to him by means of publications that other people had not appreciated. She attends the congregation meetings and is fascinated by what she is learning. One of her greatest joys is that she now has new magazines, books, and brochures. She no longer has to look for them in the garbage. Indeed, Cristina found a treasure in the garbage dump!

The “Forest” Bible Study

Every morning Margret goes for a walk with her dog in a forest in **Germany**. “I try to talk to passersby,” she says. “If they are relaxed, I direct the conversation to the Bible.”

One day she met a woman in her seventies who was also walking her dog. Margret initiated a conversation with the woman. The woman enjoyed the chat and told Margret that she prays to God and reads the Bible every day. From then on, they met daily and talked about spiritual things. One day the woman asked Margret: “How do you know so much about the Bible?” Margret explained that she is one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Several times Margret offered the woman a home Bible study, but she rejected the offer. The conversations, however, continued. Some months later Margret again offered her a home Bible study. This time the woman disclosed that she was afraid to study because the man she was living with disliked Jehovah’s Witnesses.

The next time Margret went for a walk in the forest, she took a Bible and the *Bible Teach* book with her.

When she saw the woman, Margret courageously said: “This time I don’t want to offer you a home Bible study but a ‘forest’ Bible study.” With tears in her eyes, the woman readily accepted. She comes for her “forest” Bible study six days a week. Depending on the season and the weather, Margret sometimes has to conduct the Bible study with an umbrella and a flashlight.

A Confusing Headshake

A sister named Delphine studied the Bible with Irina in **Bulgaria**. Irina appreciated what she was learning and regularly attended the meetings. However, Irina’s husband did not want her to have any contact with the Witnesses. He moved the family to a small village in Sweden, and Irina lost contact with Delphine. However, two pioneers, Alexandra and Rebecca, met Irina, who did not speak any Swedish. The sisters used the booklet *Good News for People of All Nations* and let Irina read the message in Bulgarian. Afterward, with the help of the booklet, they asked her if she wanted to have literature in her language. Irina shook her head vigorously from left to right. The sisters left, concluding that she was not interested.

Alexandra later remembered that Linda, a Swedish sister serving in Bulgaria, was coming to visit in a few weeks. She thought that it might make a difference if Irina heard the truth in her own language. When Linda arrived, she and Alexandra visited Irina. Irina told Linda that she had been praying to Jehovah every night, asking him to help her to be able to continue her Bible study. She often carried her Bulgarian *Bible Teach* book with her. She wanted to be ready to show it to the Wit-

nesses if she met them on the street, but she never saw any Witnesses. How happy Irina was to receive more literature in Bulgarian!

Linda asked Alexandra why she had concluded after the first visit that Irina was not interested. Alexandra explained that she had shaken her head to indicate that she was not interested. Linda smiled and explained that Bulgarians shake their head up and down to indicate disagreement and sideways for agreement. So, until she learns Swedish, Irina continues her Bible study in Bulgarian. How? She was reunited with Delphine and studies via videoconferencing.

A Father's Good Example

Jemima, who lives in **Spain**, was taught the truth as a child. However, when she was seven, her life was turned upside down. Her mother decided that she no longer wished to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses and divorced her father. At the age of thirteen, Jemima stopped associating with the Witnesses and refused any spiritual help from her father.

As Jemima grew up, she got involved in social and political movements, seeking "justice" for the common people. Later, when she found herself without work, her father, Domingo, offered her a job with him as a painter.

One day while they were working together, Domingo offered Jemima a Bible study. She refused, however, saying that if she were ever interested, she would let him know. Domingo listened to Bible and magazine recordings while he was painting, but his daughter preferred to listen to pop music with her earphones.

In November 2012, Domingo, who had remarried, received an invitation to the Bible School for Christian Couples. It impressed Jemima that her father would go to a Bible school for two months and then leave everything and go wherever he was sent. For the first time, Jemima realized how deeply the truth was rooted in her father's heart, and she wanted to know why.

Jemima stopped listening to her music and began to listen to her father's recordings. She also started to ask questions. One day when Domingo was up on the ladder painting, Jemima said: "Do you remember when I said that I would tell you when I was ready to study the Bible? Well, now is the time."

Domingo was delighted to hear this. In January 2013, they began to study together twice a week. The school began in April, and he continued conducting the study by videoconferencing. Jemima came to his graduation, and she enjoyed the program very much. On December 14, 2013, Jemima was baptized.

"Jehovah has shown me a lot of patience, and I know that he never gave up on me," says Jemima. "He has given me what I never found in the world—true friends. The worldwide brotherhood makes me appreciate Jehovah's great love even more."

The Power of Respect

On March 30, 2014, Vasilii, a longtime member of the **Russia** Bethel family, was witnessing with a literature cart near the branch office when a police car approached. A policeman got out of the car and politely asked Vasilii to stop his activity, since there had been complaints from some in the neighborhood. Another

policeman videotaped the discussion. Vasilii decided that it would be best to obey the police and not argue about his rights. By this time, quite a few passersby had stopped to see what was going on. Vasilii left, but two days later he requested a meeting with the police chief. His request was granted. During the meeting, Vasilii thanked the chief for the important service that the police perform for the community and for their polite conduct when they spoke to him two days earlier. The chief turned to his assistant and said, "In all my 32 years of serving on the force, I have never heard anyone thank us for our work!" During the course of the discussion, the police chief was helped to understand that our public preaching activity is completely lawful. The chief asked Vasilii why he, although knowing that he was fully within his rights, did not object to the policemen's demands for him to stop his activity? Vasilii replied: "I respect the police. Imagine how it would have appeared in the presence of all those onlookers if I had accused the police of not knowing the law." The chief and his assistant were very impressed, and they assured Vasilii that there would be no more problems with his using the literature cart in the future.



Oceania

They Left Packets of Literature

Many islands of Micronesia have rarely been reached with the good news, so a group of publishers in the **Marshall Islands** planned a two-week boat trip. Departing from the island of Majuro, they reached the islands of Wotje and Ormed in the Wotje Atoll.

In order to give a witness to as many as possible, the group had prepared literature packets

LANDS

29

POPULATION

40,208,390

PUBLISHERS

97,583

BIBLE STUDIES

64,675

before departing on their trip. Each packet contained four magazines and two brochures. Since the publishers did not know when they would return to the islands, they left a packet with those who were interested and encouraged them to share the literature with their family and friends. During the two-week trip, the publishers placed a total of 531 brochures, 756 magazines, and 7 books.

“Thank You for Not Forgetting About Us”

In February 2014, six Witnesses from **Papua New Guinea** set out on a ten-day preaching tour of villages on volcanic Karkar Island. They found many responsive ones and placed 1,064 publications. A sister named Relvie said: “On our first day in the ministry, we were still preaching at 3:00 p.m. By then our water bottles were empty, our jaws were tired, and our mouths were dry from nonstop talking. I was speaking to a young girl. I wanted to read a scripture, but I couldn’t because I was so thirsty. Just then she offered me water.”

The night before leaving one village, there was a big meeting with members of the community, and local church leaders were present. Relvie recalls, “I felt like Stephen before the Sanhedrin when he had to defend the truth, only our audience was friendly.” After the six publishers had finished speaking, the Lutheran Sunday school coordinator stood up and thanked her aunt, who was one of the publishers, for bringing the truth to her people. “Your good example,” she said, “is like the Samaritan woman who went and told her family

about the good things she heard from Jesus. Thank you for not forgetting about us.”

Too Young to Preach?

One morning, Teariki, a seven-year-old boy on the island of Tarawa, which is a part of **Kiribati**, was working with his father, Tueti, in the ministry when they entered a home and met a group of about ten men and women in their 20's. After Teariki's father shared the Kingdom message with the group, one of them said to Tueti: “We noticed that all of you are out preaching with your young children. Why do you make them come along? They are too young to preach about God.”

Tueti replied: “Would you like to see if my son is capable? Perhaps I could step outside, and you can hear what he has to say.” The group unanimously replied, “Yes, we'd like to hear from him.”

After Tueti stepped outside, Teariki asked the group, “Do you know God's name?”

“Yes. It's Jesus!” said one of them. “God,” said another. Still another said, “Lord.”

Teariki said: “Let's find out what the Bible has to say. If we turn to Isaiah 42:5, we can read it together.” After reading the scripture, he asked, “Who is this scripture talking about?”

One young person replied, “God.” Teariki then said: “Yes, the true God. If we read on in verse eight, what does the true God tell us? ‘I am Jehovah. That is my name; I give my glory to no one else.’ Did you see what God's name is?”

The group replied, “Jehovah.”

Now that everyone was paying attention, Teariki asked: “What is the benefit of using God's name, Jeho-

vah? We can turn to Acts 2:21 to find out. It reads: 'Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.' What is the benefit of using God's name?"

A young person from the group said, "Our salvation."

At this point Teariki's father returned to the room. He then asked the group: "OK, what do you think? Are our young ones capable of preaching? Is it right for us to bring them with us?" The group unanimously agreed that the children were very capable and that it was right for them to participate in the preaching work. Tueti then said, "You too could share truths from the Bible, just as Teariki did, if you learned what it contains."

Kiribati: Teariki and Tueti



The Good News Reaches a Mountain Village

In November 2013, Jean-Pierre, who works at the remote translation office in Port-Vila on **Vanuatu**, flew to his native island for a circuit assembly. When Jean-Pierre landed at the island airstrip, a group of interested people from the southern part of the island came to him and asked for Bible literature. He placed almost all the magazines he had with him. Then a religious leader approached Jean-Pierre and also asked for literature. This man urged him to come to his village, saying: "We are spiritually starving. You should come to our village and answer all our questions." The day after the assembly, early in the morning, Jean-Pierre set off for a long walk up a steep mountain. Eventually, he reached the top of the mountain where the remote village was located. After a warm welcome by the villagers, Jean-Pierre discussed *Kingdom News* No. 38 entitled "Can the Dead Really Live Again?" He encouraged all those listening, about 30 people, to follow along in their own Bible. The discussion lasted almost seven hours. The villagers were starving indeed! A 70-year-old man stated, "In all my life, I have never heard such a clear explanation about the dead!"

Jean-Pierre spent the night at the village. He shared a room with the pastor. When he woke up the next morning, the pastor was reading one of our magazines. Jean-Pierre asked him what he was reading about, and he excitedly said that he was reading about God's Kingdom. He agreed that God's Kingdom was not in the hearts of the Pharisees, whom Jesus condemned at Luke 17:21. He concluded that God's Kingdom cannot exist in a person's heart, as taught by his church. Back



Vanuatu

in Port-Vila, Jean-Pierre continues to follow up on the interest he found in the village by means of telephone calls. Three brothers from a nearby congregation volunteered to go to the village for the Memorial, and 109 attended!



Dominican Republic

IN 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed to the New World—exciting new lands that offered wealth and adventure. He named one of the islands on which he landed La Isla Española, or Hispaniola, about two thirds of which is now occupied by the Dominican Republic. More recently, thousands of inhabitants of the Dominican Republic have made a far different discovery—a coming new world of everlasting righteousness under God’s Kingdom. (2 Pet. 3:13) What follows is the gripping history of the right-hearted people who have made this priceless discovery.



An Overview of the Dominican Republic

Land The Dominican Republic makes up about two thirds of the island of Hispaniola; the other third is occupied by Haiti. The country's diverse geography includes tropical rain forests, towering mountains, mangrove swamps, and deserts. The highest peak in the Dominican Republic, Pico Duarte, is 10,417 feet above sea level. Much of the coastline

has gorgeous white-sand beaches, and in the interior, there are fertile valleys, such as the productive Cibao Valley.

People The inhabitants are mostly of mixed European and African origins. There are several minority groups; Haitians form the largest.

Language Spanish is the official language.



Children enjoying a game of *la placa*

ATLANTIC OCEAN



LAND (square miles)

18,792

POPULATION

10,404,000

PUBLISHERS IN 2014

38,161

RATIO, 1 PUBLISHER TO

273

MEMORIAL

ATTENDANCE IN 2014

132,760

Livelihood The mining, sugar, coffee, and tobacco industries have traditionally been major sources of revenue. More recent economic growth has taken place as a result of tourism and manufacturing.

Climate The island basks in a mild, tropical climate, with an average annual temperature of 77 degrees Fahrenheit. The average annual rainfall ranges from more than 80 inches in the mountainous northeast to fewer than 30 inches in the drier regions. The island is occasionally battered by tropical storms and hurricanes.

Culture Staple foods include rice, beans, and vegetables. Dominicans also enjoy seafood, tropical fruits, peppers, and fried plantains. Some of these foods are found in the ever-popular dish known as *La Bandera Dominicana* (the Dominican flag). Islanders have a passion for baseball, music, and dancing, especially the merengue. The guitar is very popular, as are drums, flutes, and marimbas.

Brothers and sisters
enjoying happy association

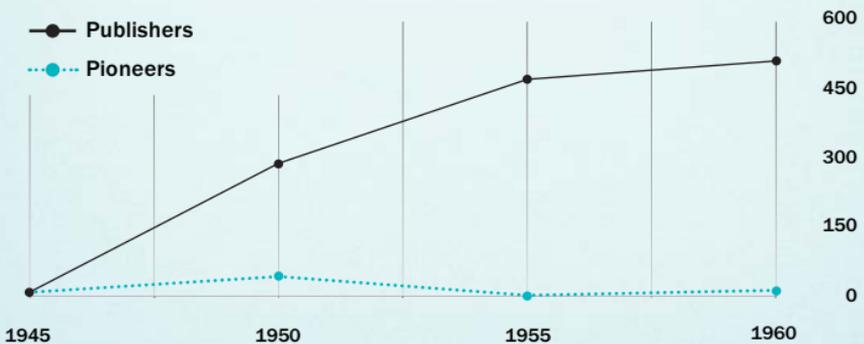






1945 to 1960

The Word Takes Root.—Mark 4:14-20.



The Discovery Begins

On Sunday, April 1, 1945, Gilead graduates Lennart and Virginia Johnson arrived in Ciudad Trujillo (now Santo Domingo), the capital of the Dominican Republic. As the first Witnesses in the country, they were entering a land whose history was riddled with conflict and struggle.* “This is a real pioneering territory,” reported the 1946 *Yearbook*, “and these Gileadites had to start from scratch.” Just imagine: There was no branch office, there were no Kingdom Halls, and there were no congregations. The missionaries knew no one in the country, they knew very little Spanish, and they had neither a home nor any furniture. What would they do?

“We went to the Victoria Hotel and acquired accommodations—five dollars a day for the two of us, including meals,” recalled Lennart. “That very afternoon we started our first home Bible study. It happened this way: Two Dominican women with whom we had studied the Bible in Brooklyn had given us the names of relatives and acquaintances, one of whom was a Dr. Green. When we visited him, we also met his neighbor Moses Rollins. After they learned how we got their names and addresses, they listened intently to the Kingdom message and agreed to a Bible study. Soon Moses became the first local Kingdom publisher.”

Four more missionaries arrived early in June 1945,

* Watch Tower literature was distributed in the Dominican Republic as early as 1932, but personal instruction of interested people began in 1945, when the Johnsons arrived.

and soon they had placed a considerable amount of literature and had started many Bible studies. By October it became apparent that a meeting place was needed. So, the missionaries modified the living and dining rooms of their missionary home to make an improvised Kingdom Hall. As many as 40 people were attending the meetings.

One of the first people to respond to the truth was Pablo Bruzaud, known to everyone as Palé. He operated a bus line between Santiago and Ciudad Trujillo, so he made frequent trips to the capital. One day while in Ciudad Trujillo, Palé spoke with some Witnesses and accepted the book *"The Truth Shall Make You Free."* He began studying the Bible daily with them. Palé soon began preaching with the missionaries and providing transportation for them. Later, he met Lennart Johnson and traveled with him from Ciudad Trujillo to Santiago and over the mountains to the coastal town of Puerto Plata to visit a group of interested people who had written to the world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, for information.

A Visit From Brothers Knorr and Franz

In March 1946, Nathan Knorr and Frederick Franz from world headquarters visited the Dominican Republic. There was much anticipation for the visit, and in addition to the brothers, 75 interested people attended a talk given by Brother Knorr. During the visit, Brother Knorr made arrangements to establish a branch office in the Dominican Republic.

More missionaries arrived, and by the end of the 1946 service year, there were 28 publishers in the country. Since the good news was just getting established in

this land, the missionaries spent many evenings meticulously mapping out the territory to ensure an organized and thorough preaching campaign.

The Work Expands

In 1947, there were over 59 publishers participating in the preaching work. That same year, some missionaries who had served in Cuba were reassigned to the Dominican Republic. Among them were Roy and Juanita Brandt. Brother Brandt was appointed as branch servant and continued as such for the next ten years.

By the end of the 1948 service year, there were about 110 publishers preaching the good news alongside the hardworking missionaries. However, those zealous preachers did not realize that extremely difficult times were on the horizon.

Brothers Knorr and Franz at the country's first Kingdom Hall, Ciudad Trujillo



“One Day We Will Find Them”

About 1935, in a region of the country called the Cibao Valley, Pablo González began reading the Bible. He associated briefly with a Protestant group, but he left when he saw that their conduct did not line up with what he had read in the Scriptures. However, he continued studying God’s Word on his own and began telling others what he was learning—first his family and neighbors and then others in nearby communities. He sold his farm and cattle and used the money to finance his traveling ministry.

By 1942, Pablo was visiting at least 200 families in the surrounding areas and holding regular meetings, although he had not come in contact with Jehovah’s Witnesses. He urged people to study the Bible and to live in harmony with it. Many took to heart what he said and stopped using tobacco and practicing polygamy.

Among those who listened to Pablo’s Biblical message was Celeste Rosario. “When I was 17,” she recalled,

Pablo Bruzaud, Pablo González, and Celeste Rosario were among the first to accept the truth



“my mother’s cousin, Negro Jiménez, belonged to one of the groups directed by Pablo González. He visited my family and read some scriptures from the Bible, and that was enough for me to decide to leave the Catholic Church. What was read to us in church was in Latin, which we didn’t understand. Shortly thereafter, Pablo González visited us and encouraged us. He said: ‘We don’t belong to any of the many religions that we know, but we have brothers around the world. We don’t yet know who they are or what they are called, but one day we will find them.’ ”

Pablo had formed groups of Bible students in Los Caños Salcedo, Monte Adentro, Salcedo, and Villa Tenares. In 1948, when he stopped in Santiago to change buses, he saw some Witnesses preaching on the street, and they gave him a *Watchtower*. On another trip, a sister placed two books with Pablo and invited him to the Memorial of Christ’s death in Santiago. At the Memorial he was very impressed by what he heard and came to the conclusion that he had at last found the truth and



Early History



Missionaries Lennart and Virginia Johnson arrive



1945



Visit of Brothers Knorr and Franz



1946



First circuit assembly

1949

28 were baptized
in the North Yaqu River



Jehovah's Witnesses
banned

1950



that those present at that meeting were the ones whom he had been hoping to find.

The missionaries visited those with whom Pablo had been studying. At one of Pablo's meeting places, they found 27 adults happily waiting for them. Some of those in attendance had trekked 15 miles on foot; others had come 30 miles on horseback! At the next meeting place, 78 people were present, and at another location, 69 had gathered for the meeting.

Pablo gave the missionaries a list of some 150 interested people. Those humble and spiritually-minded people were already studying the Bible and applying its principles. What they needed was organization and direction. "The missionaries visited us, and we had a meeting," recalled Celeste. "Arrangements were made to have a baptism. I was the first one in my family to be baptized. Later my mother, Fidelia Jiménez, and my sister, Carmen, were baptized."

The first circuit assembly in the Dominican Republic, which was held in Santiago on September 23-25, 1949, provided further impetus to the preaching work. Many inquisitive ones came, and the attendance swelled to 260 for the public talk on Sunday. Twenty-eight were baptized. The three-day assembly convinced many new ones that this was the organization that God was using to accomplish his will.

Imprisoned for Neutrality

On June 19, 1949, a group of exiled Dominicans flew to the Dominican Republic in an attempt to overthrow dictator Rafael Trujillo. Although the invasion was quickly crushed, Trujillo's government imprisoned



Enrique Glass and the dungeon where he was imprisoned for two weeks

those who refused to perform military service, as well as any whom the government viewed as foes. Among the first Witnesses to be imprisoned for refusing to do military service were León, Enrique, and Rafael Glass, along with some of León's fellow employees, who were also Witnesses.

"[My fellow employees and I] were arrested and questioned by the military secret service," explained León. "After being threatened, we were released, only to be called up for military service a few days later without the usual procedure. On refusing to meet

‘Even when we were whipped or beaten with sticks and rifles, we bore it well, since Jehovah gave us the strength to endure’

the demands, we were sent to prison. There we found four other Witnesses, two of whom were my fleshly brothers. After our release, we were again sentenced. This happened three times, with only one or more days between terms. We spent close to seven years in pris-

on, the last term being five years.”

Prison life was a constant test for the brothers. Prisoners and guards taunted them day and night. The commander of Fort Ozama, where they were initially incarcerated, said: “Jehovah’s Witnesses, when you become witnesses of the Devil, advise me, so that I can let you out.” However, opposers could not break the integrity of those faithful brothers. León explained why: ‘We always had strength from Jehovah to endure and we could see even in little details His intervention in our favor. Even when we were whipped or beaten with sticks and rifles, we bore it well, since Jehovah gave us the strength to endure.’

Jehovah’s Witnesses Banned

Elsewhere throughout the country, enemies of true worship were intensifying the persecution. Even so, by May 1950, there were 238 publishers in the Dominican Republic, in addition to the missionaries. Twenty-one of the publishers were full-time pioneers.

About that time, a secret service agent wrote to the Presidential Secretary, saying: “The members of the re-

ligious sect Jehovah's Witnesses have enthusiastically continued their activities throughout all of the sectors of this city [Ciudad Trujillo]." He further stated: "Once again I say that special attention must be given to Jehovah's Witnesses, since their preaching and activities are creating a misleading consciousness in certain sectors of public opinion, especially with the popular masses."

The Secretary of the Interior and Police, J. Antonio Hungría, asked Brother Brandt to submit a letter stating the position of the Witnesses on military service, flag salute, and the paying of taxes. He wrote a letter using information from the book "Let God Be True." Nevertheless, on June 21, 1950, Secretary Hungría issued a decree that banned the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Dominican Republic. Brother Brandt was summoned to Hungría's office to hear the decree personally. Brother Brandt asked if the missionaries had to leave

A newspaper announces prison sentences for our brothers in connection with neutrality

Dieciocho Meses de Prisión A Cuatro Testigos de Jehová Se Negaron Cumplir Con Servicio Militar

El Comité ejecutivo internacional de la secta religiosa "Los Testigos de Jehová", que se niega a cumplir con la ley que establece el servicio militar obligatorio, después que se le negó a prestar sus servicios, por ser inconsecuente con sus doctrinas religiosas, fue sancionado ayer en la ciudad de la República Dominicana por un decreto que impone un período de prisión de dieciocho meses para el desobediencia y un período de seis meses para el incumplimiento de las obligaciones de la ciudadanía. Los cuatro miembros del Comité ejecutivo internacional de la secta religiosa "Los Testigos de Jehová" que se negaron a cumplir con el servicio militar obligatorio, fueron: Manuel Pérez Bona, José, y otros.

La sentencia fue dictada por el juez José María Martínez, quien dictó la sentencia en el Tribunal de Instrucción número 10, en la ciudad de la República Dominicana.

Los cuatro hermanos internacionalistas, quienes se negaron a cumplir con el servicio militar obligatorio, fueron: Manuel Pérez Bona, José, y otros. Los cuatro hermanos internacionalistas, quienes se negaron a cumplir con el servicio militar obligatorio, fueron: Manuel Pérez Bona, José, y otros.

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De izq. a dcha. se encuentran, Demetrio Tomás Vazco y los hermanos Clara Méndez, uno de los cuatro Testigos de Jehová, que fueron condenados ayer en la República Dominicana, con otros y medio de prisión por negarse a cumplir con el servicio militar obligatorio. Los que se negaron a cumplir con el servicio militar obligatorio, fueron: Manuel Pérez Bona, José, y otros.

Los cuatro hermanos internacionalistas, quienes se negaron a cumplir con el servicio militar obligatorio, fueron: Manuel Pérez Bona, José, y otros.

the country. Hungria assured him that they could stay as long as they obeyed the law and did not talk to others about their religion.*

Missionaries Carry On the Work Underground

The ban on the work was the beginning of a very difficult time for the brothers. 'Our Kingdom Halls were closed, and the work was prohibited,' explained missionary Alma Parson. 'Many were the trials and sufferings of the dear ones there.' There was also loss

* In the weeks leading up to the decree, Catholic priests wrote lengthy newspaper articles denouncing Jehovah's Witnesses and falsely linking them with communism.

Roy and Juanita Brandt were among those who remained in their assignment during the ban



of employment and imprisonment. However, she fondly remembered: 'Jehovah's guiding hand and protection were clearly manifest so many, many times.' Trusting in 'Jehovah's guiding hand,' the brothers continued the work underground.

We were not permitted to have congregation meetings. Lennart Johnson recalled: 'The brothers began meeting quietly in small groups in private homes. There we studied *Watchtower* articles that were copied by mimeograph. All the loyal ones greatly cherished the spiritual strength that Jehovah kept giving us in these small study groups.'

In the meantime, government surveillance and harassment intensified. But the brothers and sisters were not intimidated. On September 15, 1950, in a communication to the President of the Republic, Secretary Hungría wrote: "Mr. Lee Roy Brandt and other directors from the group Jehovah's Witnesses have been repeatedly called into this office and admonished to cease all propaganda regarding this society, which was legally dissolved in this Republic—an order which they apparently are not following. Daily, we receive reports from different parts of the country that they are continuing secretly with their propaganda, mocking government dispositions." The letter concluded by recommending the deportation of the "principal foreign directors" of Jehovah's Witnesses.

"A Source of Strength"

At the end of 1950, Brothers Knorr and Henschel visited the country. Thereafter, some of the missionaries



“Grocery list”

Lechosas (papayas) = books
Frijoles (beans) = booklets
Huevos (eggs) = magazines
Repollo (cabbages) = return visits
Espinacas (spinach) = hours

were reassigned to Argentina, Guatemala, and Puerto Rico. Others obtained secular work so that they could stay in the country. For example, Brother Brandt worked for the electric company, and others worked as English teachers. A report in the 1951 *Yearbook* says of those missionaries: “Their very presence in the land, not running away, is a source of strength to the faithful followers of the Lord who have learned the truth from them. All are glad to see their courage manifest by sticking to their work.”

Dorothy Lawrence was one of the missionaries who taught English classes. In addition to teaching English, she was also giving Bible studies to interested ones. As a result, she helped several into the truth.

Jehovah’s loyal worshippers took other steps to continue going in field service in the face of constant surveillance. At times, they took books apart and carried a few folded pages in a shirt pocket or in a bag of groceries so that they could preach without attracting attention. Field service report slips were made to look like grocery lists. In place of books, booklets, magazines, return visits, and hours, the field service report list-

ed papaya, beans, eggs, cabbage, and spinach. Mimeographed copies of *The Watchtower* were called yuca, after the yuca, or cassava, plant commonly found in the region.

The Disciple-Making Work Continues

On June 16, 1954, Rafael Trujillo signed a concordat with the Vatican that granted special privileges to the Roman Catholic clergy in the Dominican Republic. At the time, the ban had been in force for some four years. Nevertheless, by 1955 there were 478 publishers in the Dominican Republic. How was it possible to experience such growth in spite of the difficult circumstances? “The whole secret of our strength is Jehovah’s spirit,” stated a report in the 1956 *Yearbook*. “The brothers are unified and strong in faith and they go ahead with courage.”

In July 1955, a formal, notarized letter from world headquarters was delivered to Trujillo. The letter explained in detail the neutral position of Jehovah’s Witnesses and requested that Trujillo ‘lift the proscription



Manuel Hierrezuelo was killed during questioning by authorities

against Jehovah's Witnesses and the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.' What was the outcome?

Unexpected Freedom

Throughout the difficult years of the ban, Lennart and Virginia Johnson and Roy and Juanita Brandt remained in their missionary assignment. "Roy Brandt and I were called in for official questioning," recalled Lennart. "Officials of the Trujillo government had earlier invited Brother Manuel Hierrezuelo to come and see them." Tragically, Manuel was killed during the interrogation, having kept his integrity to the end. So, what happened to Lennart and Roy? Lennart continued: "Upon arriving, we were questioned separately, our answers evidently being recorded. Nothing more took place then, but two months later the newspapers announced that the Trujillo government was removing the ban on Jehovah's Witnesses and that we could resume our activities."

Before the ban in 1950, there were 261 publishers engaging in the preaching activity in the Dominican Republic. When the ban was lifted in August 1956, there were 522 declaring the good news. It was thrilling for the brothers to learn that they would be free to carry out their ministry openly after six years of imprisonments, restraint, and constant surveillance.

How did Jehovah's people respond to that surprising turn of events? Right away, they began reorganizing the work! They searched for places to meet as congregations and made new territory maps and congregation files. The brothers were delighted to be able to order and receive literature. They zealously took advantage of

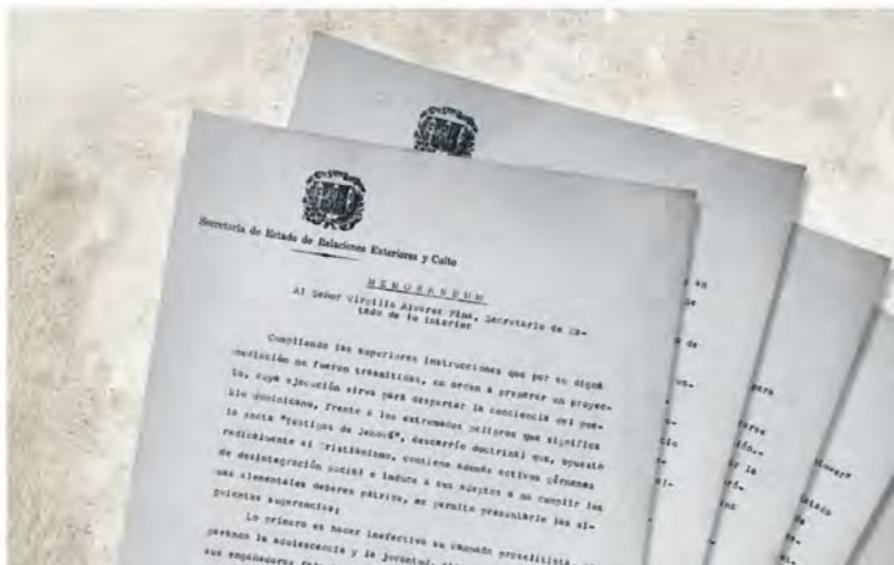
their newly acquired freedom to preach. As a result, in just three months, by November 1956, there were 612 publishers engaging in the preaching work.

The Clergy's Hate Campaign

However, the Catholic clergy immediately began scheming to discredit the Witnesses. Backed by the concordat that Trujillo had signed with the Vatican, the clergy intensified their efforts to influence the government to eliminate the Witnesses. Catholic priest Oscar Robles Toledano sent a memorandum to the State Secretary of the Interior, Virgilio Álvarez Pina, asking the government to support him in his effort to “awaken the conscience of the Dominican people to the extreme dangers posed by the sect ‘Jehovah’s Witnesses’.”

Toledano explained that his primary objective was “to make ineffective the proselytizing campaign of

Toledano’s memorandum outlined plans to prevent our publications from getting into the country





The Catholic Church and Trujillo

WHAT sort of relationship did Trujillo have with the Catholic Church? A political analyst stated: “During the long Trujillo era, 1930-1961, Church and state in the Dominican Republic were mutually supporting institutions; the dictator favored the Church and it, in turn, supported his regime.”

In 1954, Trujillo traveled to Rome and signed a concordat with the Pope. Trujillo’s one-time confidant, Germán Ornes, wrote: “Since the Dominican Church is overwhelmingly pro-Trujillo, [it] has been a great source of support for ‘the Chief’ [Trujillo]. The clergy, headed by the Archbishops Ricardo Pittini and Octavio Beras, are among the foremost propagandists for the regime.”

“At every propitious opportunity,” Ornes went on to explain, “the Pope cables cordial greetings to Trujillo. . . . To the 1956 Congress of Catholic Culture, held in Ciu-

dad Trujillo under [Trujillo's] sponsorship, Francis Cardinal Spellman brought, as the Pope's special representative, a warm-hearted message. Cardinal Spellman traveled down from New York to be triumphantly received by the Generalissimo [Trujillo] himself. Their cordial embraces were displayed in all Dominican front pages the next day."

In 1960, *Time* magazine reported: "Until now, Trujillo and the church have got along well. Archbishop Ricardo Pitini, Primate of the Americas, is now 83 and blind, but four years ago he signed a letter to the *New York Times* praising Trujillo and saying that 'this "dictator" is loved and honored by his people.'"

However, after three decades of loyally supporting Trujillo's brutal dictatorship, the Catholic Church started shifting its stance as the political climate changed. "As opposition to the dictatorship grew," explains the analyst, "and, later, as an attempt was made to establish democracy in the country, the Church, which had long been on most friendly terms with Trujillo, was forced to alter its position."

Ultimately, in 2011 the Church was compelled to apologize to the Dominican people. A pastoral letter quoted in the newspaper *Dominican Today* stated: 'We confess to having committed our errors and to not always keeping true to our faith, vocation, and responsibilities. For that reason, we ask for pardon and we beseech the understanding and indulgence of all Dominicans.'

Jehovah's Witnesses." Toledano's memorandum also recommended that our publications not be allowed into the country, "especially the book *'The Truth Shall Make You Free'* and the *Watchtower* magazine."

Banned Again

The religious leaders and their accomplices in Trujillo's government joined in the plot to attack the Witnesses. Francisco Prats-Ramírez, president of the Dominican Party, wrote a memorandum to Trujillo in June 1957, explaining: "I am planning a series of meetings to combat the pernicious, antipatriotic tendencies of Jehovah's Witnesses."

This slander campaign had an immediate impact, as explained in the book *Trujillo—Little Caesar of the Caribbean*: "During the summer months of 1957 the Dominican press printed a string of accusations by high Government officials charging the Jehovah's Witnesses with 'seditious and pernicious' activities. The chain reaction was set off the day a Jesuit priest named Mariano Vásquez Sanz denounced the sect over the Trujillo-owned radio network, *La Voz Dominicana* [the Dominican Voice], as servants of Communism and labeled its adherents as 'a perverse, astute, criminal, traitorous enemy.' Thereupon a pastoral letter signed by Archbishops Ricardo Pittini and Octavio Antonio Beras invited the priesthood to protect their parishioners from this 'terrible heresy.'"

The joint effort of Church and State achieved its objective. In July, the Congress of the Dominican Republic passed a law banning Jehovah's Witnesses. Soon, our brothers were subjected to beatings and police brutality. In all, some 150 brothers were arrested.

“They Will Be Exterminated”

Borbonio Aybar was baptized on January 19, 1955, while the work was still under ban. After his baptism, he conducted many Bible studies in Monte Adentro and in Santiago. When the ban was lifted in 1956, some of his students were baptized, including his wife.

In mid-July 1957, government officials met in Salcedo to speak against the Witnesses. “Francisco Prats-Ramírez was the principal speaker,” explains Brother Aybar. “Prats-Ramírez stated, ‘In just a few more days, they will be exterminated.’” A few days later on July 19, 1957, the police rounded up all of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Blanco Arriba, El Jobo, Los Cacaos, and Monte Adentro.

“I was among those arrested,” recounts Brother Aybar. “We were taken to the military headquarters in Salcedo. As soon as we arrived there, a colonel by the name of Saladín gave me a beating. His eyes were bulging with anger as he threatened us. Then, we were put in two lines, one for the men and one for the women. The guards began kicking and beating the men and hitting the women with their sticks, all the while saying, ‘I’m Catholic and I kill.’”

Brother Aybar was fined and sentenced to three months in prison. He continued: “During our time of confinement, an army general named Santos Mérido Marte visited us. He told us: ‘I have read the Bible, and I know that Jehovah is God. You haven’t done anything deserving of a prison sentence, but I can’t do anything for you because the ones behind your imprisonment

“I have read
the Bible, and
I know that
Jehovah is God”

are the Catholic bishops. The only ones who can cut your sentence short are those same bishops or the jefe ("the boss," Trujillo).'

"So You're the Boss?"

Among those arrested were the daughter and the nieces of Fidelia Jiménez, all of whom had studied with her. Even though Fidelia was not initially apprehended, she presented herself to the authorities to be imprisoned in order to encourage those already in prison. During that time the infamous high-ranking military commander, Ludovino Fernández, known for his arrogance and cruelty, made an official visit to the prison. He had Fidelia brought to him and asked her, "So you're the boss?"

"No," replied Fidelia. "All of you are the bosses."

"Well," countered Fernández, "you're the pastor."

"No," responded Fidelia. "Jesus is the pastor."

"Are you not the reason why all these people are imprisoned?" asked Fernández. "You were the one who taught them, right?"

"No," said Fidelia. "The Bible is the reason why these people are imprisoned. They are practicing what they learned from the Bible."

Just then, two brothers who had also been arrested, Pedro Germán and Negro Jiménez, who was Fidelia's cousin, passed by in the hallway. They were being escorted from solitary confinement to a regular prison cell. Negro's shirt was covered with dried blood, and Pedro's eye was badly swollen. Seeing that they had been cruelly beaten, Fidelia asked the commander, "Is this the way you treat good, honest, God-fearing peo-

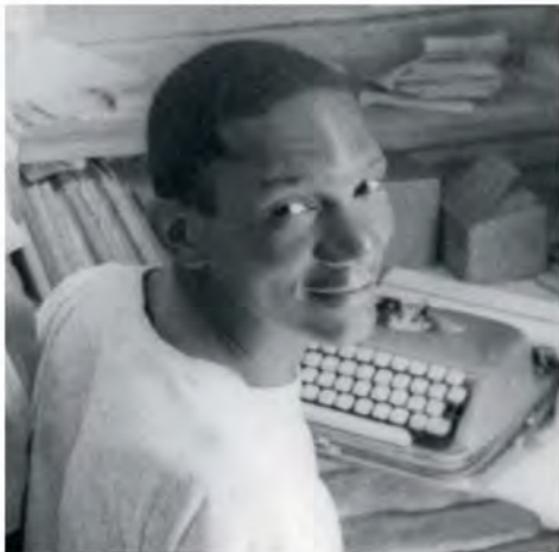
ple?” Realizing that he could not intimidate her, Fernández ordered that Fidelia be returned to her cell.

Jehovah’s loyal servants had to be courageous in the face of such violent opposition—and courageous they were! Even government officials recognized this. For example, on July 31, 1957, Luis Arzeno Colón, an inspector for the president, wrote to the secretary of state, lamenting: “Although the law recently proclaimed by the National Congress declares illegal the religious activity of the sect known as Jehovah’s Witnesses, the majority of its members continue in their steadfastness.”

“Leave Their Brotherhood Headless”

On July 13, 1957, Inspector Colón wrote to the secretary of state: “There is a popular old maxim that says: ‘You have to strike a snake in its head.’ A big step toward eradicating the sect Jehovah’s Witnesses from the country would be to find a way to remove their missionaries. Such an action would leave their brotherhood headless, and without a head, their ideas will not have success.”

Shortly thereafter, Secretary of Security Arturo Espailat ordered the ten remaining missionaries to leave the country. On July 21, 1957, Roy Brandt wrote to Trujillo, requesting to meet with him to explain our situation. In part the letter said, “The hate campaign that certain people in the country are waging against the name of Jehovah God is the same as the campaign that misinformed individuals waged against Jesus’ apostles.” Brother Brandt then encouraged Trujillo to read Acts chapters 2 to 6 and explained, “The sound and straightforward counsel given by Judge Gamaliel at that time is just as good today as it was back then.” Brother Brandt



Donald Nowills looked after the work at the branch when he was only 20 years old

then quoted Acts 5:38, 39 in capital letters: “LEAVE THESE MEN ALONE BECAUSE IF THE WORK THEY ARE DOING COMES FROM GOD, YOU MIGHT FIND OUT SOME DAY THAT YOU HAVE MADE WAR WITH GOD.” But his appeal fell on deaf ears. On August 3, 1957, the missionaries were taken to the airport and were deported.

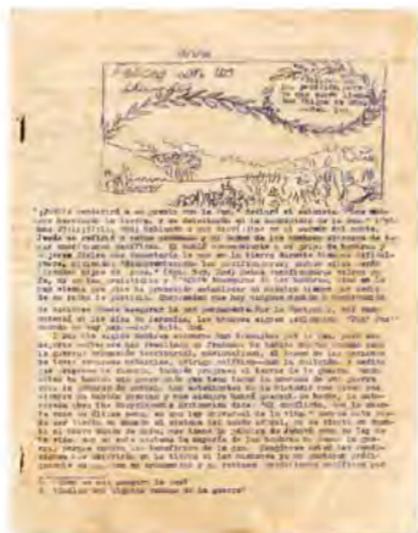
‘Jesus Is the Head’

What would happen to the local brothers and sisters now that the missionaries were gone? Would they be left “headless,” as Inspector Colón had predicted? To the contrary, Jesus “is the head of the body, the congregation.” (Col. 1:18) Therefore, Jehovah’s people in the Dominican Republic were not left “headless.” Rather, they continued to be cared for by Jehovah and his organization.

Donald Nowills, who was assigned to oversee the work at the branch after the missionaries were deported, was just 20 years old and had been baptized for only four years. Although he had served as a circuit overseer for a few months, his work at the branch was new to him. Brother Nowills had a modest little office in his house, which was made of wood and galvanized iron and had a dirt floor. It was located in Gualey, a very dangerous section of Ciudad Trujillo. With the help of Félix Marte, he made copies of *The Watchtower* for the entire country.

Mary Glass, whose husband, Enrique, was imprisoned at the time, assisted Brother Nowills. "I would leave my secular work at 5:00 p.m.," she explains, "and go to Brother Nowills' office to type *The Watchtower*. Then Brother Nowills would duplicate copies on a mimeograph machine. Then, a sister from Santiago, code-named 'the angel,' would put the mimeographed

A mimeographed
1958 *Watchtower*



Reproducing Spiritual Food Under Ban

- 1 The Watchtower is typed onto mimeograph stencils.
- 2 Copies are printed on a mimeograph machine.
- 3 Printed copies are placed in a large, clean oil can and covered with a cloth.
- 4 The can is filled with cassava, potatoes, or taros and covered with a burlap sack.

How were the magazines concealed?



3





magazines in the bottom of an empty five-gallon vegetable-oil can. She then laid a cloth over the literature and covered it with cassava, potatoes, or taros. Next, she placed on top of that a burlap (hessian) sack. Then she would take public transportation to the north of the country and leave one copy with each congregation. Families took turns borrowing that copy so that they could study it together.”

“We had to be very cautious,” adds Mary, “since the streets were crawling with government agents who were trying to discover where *The Watchtower* was being printed. But they never did. Jehovah always protected us.”

“Cautious as Serpents and Yet Innocent as Doves”

It was vital that Jehovah’s loyal servants continue receiving spiritual food during the ban, but it was a dangerous time in the country for true worshippers. During those years, many brothers were arrested and sentenced to several prison terms.

“When I learned the truth in 1953,” explains Juanita Borges, “I knew very well that, as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, I ran the risk of being arrested. And that is exactly what happened. In November 1958, while I was visiting Sister Eneida Suárez, the secret police came and accused us of having a meeting. We were sentenced to three months in prison, and we each had to pay a fine of 100 pesos—then equivalent to \$100 (U.S.).”

The government did all it could to stop the Witnesses from meeting together, but the brothers were not deterred. However, they had to be “cautious as serpents and yet innocent as doves.” (Matt. 10:16) Andrea

Almánzar recalls: “When attending the meetings, we had to arrive at different times. Then, we often left very late in the evening because we had to stagger our departures to avoid creating suspicion.”

Jeremías Glass, born while his father, León, was in prison, became a publisher in 1957 when he was seven years old. He remembers the secret meetings that were held in his home and the precautions that they took to avoid detection. “All in attendance were given a small piece of cardboard with a number on it indicating the order in which they should leave,” explains Jeremías. “When a meeting ended, my father would put me in the doorway to check the numbers on the pieces of cardboard and to direct those departing to do so in twos and to leave in alternating directions.”

Another precaution was to schedule meetings at times when the risk of getting caught was lower. For example, Mercedes García learned the truth from her uncle, Pablo González. When she was only seven years old, her mother died while her father was imprisoned, leaving her and her nine brothers and sisters on their own. Mercedes was baptized in 1959 when she was nine years old. To avoid detection, the brothers had the baptism talk at 3:30 a.m. The talk was held at a brother’s house, and then the immersion took place in the Ozama River, which runs through the capital. Mercedes says, “We were on our way home by 5:30 a.m. while the rest of the neighborhood was just waking up.”

Preaching With Discretion

Rafael Pared, who serves at Bethel with his wife, Francisca, became a publisher in 1957 when he was 18 years old. He remembers how undercover policemen would

follow him when he went out preaching, looking for an opportunity to arrest him and those with him. “At times,” says Rafael, “we had to slip away through the back streets and alleys, jumping over fences to avoid being apprehended.” Andrea Almánzar explains what she and others did to avoid being arrested: “We had to use discretion. In the ministry we would preach at one house and then skip ten houses before preaching at another.”

Relief at Last!

By 1959, Trujillo’s reign had lasted almost 30 years, but the political climate was changing. On June 14, 1959, Dominican exiles invaded the Dominican Republic in another attempt to overthrow Trujillo. Although the invasion was thwarted and the conspirators were either killed or imprisoned, a growing number of Trujillo’s enemies felt that his government was not invincible, so they intensified their opposition.

On January 25, 1960, after years of cooperation with Trujillo’s government, the Catholic Church hierarchy issued a pastoral letter protesting the abuse of human rights. Dominican historian Bernardo Vega explains: “The invasions of June of 1959 and the repression unleashed against those involved in the expedition, and later against the internal clandestine resistance movement, put pressure on the Church to adopt, for the first time, a hostile position toward Trujillo.”

Interestingly, in May 1960 the government lifted the ban on Jehovah’s Witnesses. After years of proscription, relief came from an unexpected source—Trujillo himself—after his falling-out with the Catholic Church.



Luis Eduardo Montás

BORN 1906**BAPTIZED** 1947

PROFILE A former official in Rafael Trujillo's political party. He learned Bible truth and served Jehovah faithfully until his death in 2000.

“I Fought Like a Lion”

LUIS, a relative of Trujillo, served as treasurer of the ruling political party, *Partido Dominicano* (the Dominican Party). However, Trujillo's political machine was repugnant to Luis, and though he often tried to retire from his post, the dictator refused to allow it.

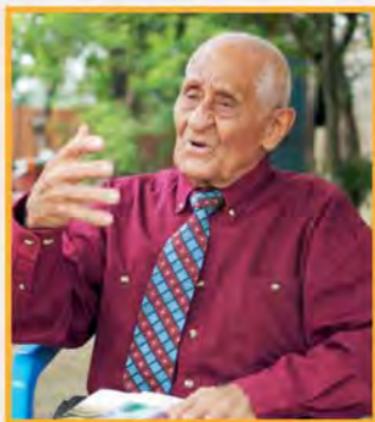
When Trujillo had two of Luis' brothers killed, Luis tried twice to assassinate the dictator. However, he was never linked to the attempts. Luis even visited spirit mediums, looking for help to kill this man of whom he said: “He behaved as a beast and considered himself above everyone else.” On a table in the house of one of the spirit mediums, he saw the book *“The Truth Shall Make You Free”* and began reading it. Luis was so interested in the book that he took it home with him and later concluded that this was the religious truth he was looking for.

When Luis traveled to Ciudad Trujillo, he attended a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses and obtained several books and magazines. He spent all night reading the literature and later asked for a Bible study. As he progressed, Luis decided to leave Trujillo's regime. When the dictator found out, he offered Luis the prestigious post of Dominican consul in Puerto Rico. But Luis declined the offer, even though he knew that his decision was likely to result in persecution.

"I suffered every type of mistreatment," recalled Luis, "and the government put before me every kind of trap imaginable. But I had resolved to forgo the pleasures of this world." Luis became such an outspoken publisher of the good news that local Catholic priests dubbed him "the preacher." On October 5, 1947, six months after attending his first meeting, Luis was baptized.

After his baptism Luis was hunted down, imprisoned, and put in solitary confinement. Various attempts were made on his life. Yet, whenever he was arrested and taken to court, he used the situation to give a witness. "I fought like a lion defending my faith," Luis said, "and I recall it with joy."

Luis' record as a faithful servant of God did not go unnoticed in the community. In 1994, the Dominican newspaper *El Siglo* stated regarding Luis: "Mr. Luis Eduardo Montás is known in San Cristobal to be serious-minded. He is a gift of a man, a man with fellow feeling and a mild spirit. Everything that is known about this figure in the history of San Cristobal is related to his vocation as a Christian man."



Efraín De La Cruz

BORN 1918

BAPTIZED 1949

PROFILE Despite being imprisoned and cruelly beaten in seven penitentiaries, he never wavered in his determination to preach the good news of God's Kingdom.

The Kingdom Hope Is Not a Dream

IN 1948, my wife, Paula, my daughter, and I began attending meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses in Blanco Arriba. We had to walk 25 miles round trip, but we never missed a meeting. On January 3, 1949, Paula and I were baptized.

Six months later some from our congregation were arrested and sentenced to three months in prison. We had to sleep on the floor and were fed only one meal a day—green bananas and tea. When we were released from prison, the government officials threatened us and assumed that we would stop preaching. But, when we returned home, we clandestinely resumed attending meetings and preaching. Because government agents were constantly watching us, we met in private homes, in coffee fields, or on farms. Instead of gathering in the same place repeatedly, we announced at the end of each meet-

ing where the next meeting would be held. When we preached, we did so alone; we wore work clothes, and we did not use literature or a Bible. Even so, between 1949 and 1959, I was in and out of seven different prisons, serving sentences of three to six months each time.

I had to be extremely careful because some of my persecutors were my own relatives. Even though I slept in the mountains or on a farm to avoid detection, I sometimes still got caught. After one of my arrests, I was sent to La Victoria prison in Ciudad Trujillo, where there were 50 to 60 prisoners to a cell. There, we received two meals a day—cornmeal in the morning and a small ration of rice with beans at noon. Of course, all the Witnesses there preached to fellow prisoners, and we regularly held our meetings, which were conducted by reciting Bible texts from memory and relating experiences from our ministry.

The last time I was imprisoned, a soldier beat me on the head and on my ribs with the butt of a rifle. Even though I still suffer from the physical effects of that beating and other mistreatment, those tests strengthened my faith, my endurance, and my determination to serve Jehovah.

Now, at 96 years of age, I serve as a ministerial servant in the congregation. Although I can no longer walk long distances, I sit in front of my house and preach to all who pass by. The Kingdom hope is not a dream to me. It is a reality, and I have been preaching about it for more than 60 years. The new world is as real to me today as it was the first day that I heard the Kingdom message.*

* Efraín De La Cruz died while this account was being prepared.



Ana María (Mary) Glass

BORN 1935

BAPTIZED 1956

PROFILE A fervent young Catholic who learned Bible truth and courageously endured opposition from family, Church, and State.

I Will Continue to Be One of Jehovah's Witnesses

I WAS very religious and actively involved in the Catholic Church. I sang in the church choir and accompanied the priests to country retreats, where they offered Mass. Then, in 1955 my sister spoke to me about the coming Paradise. She gave me a Bible, the booklet *"This Good News of the Kingdom,"* and the book *"Let God Be True."* I was fascinated, so I asked the priest if I could read the Bible. He told me that I would "go crazy," but I decided to read it anyway.

After I moved to my grandparents' home in Boca Chica, a priest asked me why I was not going to church. I explained that I had discovered that many church doctrines are not found in the Bible. The priest was enraged. "Lis-

ten, young lady,” he shouted, “you are a sheep that has strayed away from my flock.”

“No,” I replied, “you are the one who has strayed from Jehovah’s flock, because the sheep belong to Jehovah and not to any man.”

I never went back to church. I moved in with my sister, and just six months after I first heard the truth, I was baptized. Right away, I began regular pioneering. A year later I married Enrique Glass, who was serving as a circuit overseer. Once while we were preaching in a park in La Romana, the police arrested Enrique. As they took him away, I chased after them and said: “I am also one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, and I too was preaching. Why aren’t you taking me as well?” But they did not want to arrest me.

Enrique had already served prison sentences totaling seven and a half years. This time he was sentenced to serve 20 months. Every Sunday I visited Enrique. During one of my visits, a prison captain asked me, “Why are you here?”

I explained, “My husband was imprisoned because he is one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.”

“You are young and have a good future,” he responded. “Why waste your time with Jehovah’s Witnesses?”

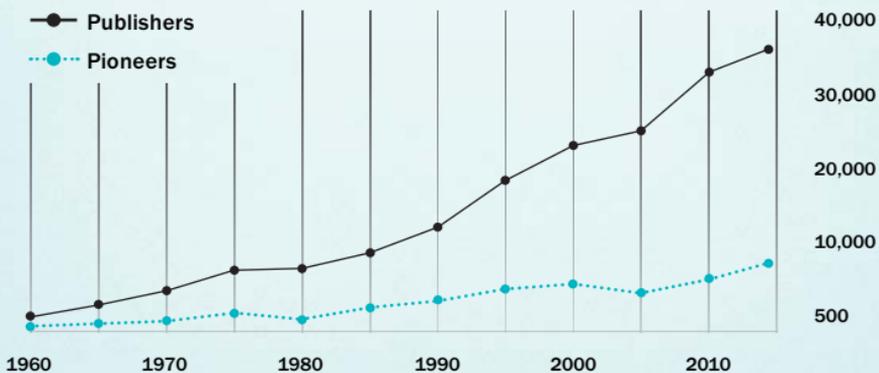
“I too am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses,” I replied. “Even if you kill me seven times and resurrect me seven times, I will continue to be one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.” He had heard enough and ordered me to leave.

After the ban was lifted, Enrique and I served for a number of years in the circuit and district work. Enrique fell asleep in death on March 8, 2008. I continue to serve as a regular pioneer.



1960 to 2014

God Makes It Grow.—1 Cor. 3:7.



Trujillo Assassinated

By 1960, Trujillo's dictatorship was experiencing growing international criticism and internal opposition. In the midst of all this political tension, Milton Henschel from the world headquarters visited the country and attended a three-day assembly in January 1961. There were 957 at the public meeting, and 27 were baptized. During his visit, Brother Henschel helped the brothers to begin reorganizing the work and mapping out the territory.

Two circuit overseers, Enrique Glass and Julián López, were assigned to visit congregations. "My circuit," explained Julián, "consisted of two congregations in the east of the country and all the congregations in the north. Enrique's circuit covered the rest of the east and the entire south." Those visits restored contact between the congregations and the organization and helped to build up the brotherhood spiritually.

Salvino and Helen Ferrari, graduates of the second class of Gilead, arrived in 1961. Their experience as missionaries in Cuba proved to be very useful in the great spiritual harvest in the Dominican Republic. Salvino eventually served on the Branch Committee until his death in 1997, and Helen has been in the full-time service for 79 years, most of which she has spent as a missionary.

Shortly after the arrival of the Ferraris, Trujillo's reign of terror was brought to a violent end on the night of May 30, 1961, when assassins riddled his car

with bullets. However, his assassination did not result in political stability, so the country continued to experience civil and political upheaval for several years.

The Preaching Work Moves Forward

In the meantime, more missionaries arrived. William Dingman of the first class of Gilead and his wife, Estelle, along with Thelma Critz and Flossie Coroneos, were transferred from the Puerto Rico branch to the Dominican Republic just two days after Trujillo's assassination. "The country was in a state of upheaval when we arrived," explained William, "and there was quite a bit of military activity. A revolution was feared, and soldiers were searching everyone on the highway. We were stopped at several checkpoints, and at each one our luggage was searched. Everything was taken out of our suitcases, even the smallest items." It was a challenge to preach in such a volatile political climate.

"During Trujillo's dictatorship," said William, "the public had been told that Jehovah's Witnesses were Communists and were the worst kind of people. . . . Little by little, though, we were able to break down prejudice." As a result of the renewed activity, a growing number of sincere individuals were responding to the Kingdom message. By the end of the 1961 service year, there were 33 special pioneers in the country.

Top: Salvino and Helen Ferrari en route to the Dominican Republic, 1961

Bottom: Thelma Critz and Estelle and William Dingman are still in the country after 67 years of zealous missionary service



Juana Ventura
(right) in the
ministry



They Found the Truth

Juana Ventura began studying while the preaching work was banned, and she was baptized in 1960 in the Ozama River. On one occasion, an evangelical pastor in Santo Domingo wanted her imprisoned because he said that she was “taking away his parishioners.” In an attempt to prove that Jehovah’s Witnesses are liars and to discredit Juana, the pastor invited her to appear before his church to answer questions about her new beliefs.

“He asked me three questions,” relates Juana, “‘Why don’t you vote? Why don’t you go to war? Why do you call yourselves Jehovah’s Witnesses?’ As I answered each question from the Bible, all of his parishioners looked up the Bible texts and were surprised by what they read. Many of them realized that they had found

the truth. The whole group began studying, and eventually 25 of them dedicated themselves to Jehovah.” This dramatic event gave impetus to the work in Santo Domingo.

Jehovah’s Witnesses Are Here to Stay

The political fallout after the Trujillo assassination was significant. The *1963 Yearbook* reported: ‘Soldiers lined the streets, and days were filled with strikes and violence.’ In spite of the political upheaval, the preaching and disciple-making work went forward, and by the end of the 1963 service year, a peak of 1,155 publishers had been reached.

When Nathan Knorr came from the world headquarters to visit the Dominican Republic in 1962, he arranged to buy property in order to build larger facilities to care for the rapidly expanding preaching work. A two-story building and a Kingdom Hall were constructed on the new property. On Saturday, October 12, 1963, Frederick Franz, another visitor from world headquarters, delivered the dedication talk for the new branch facilities. It was clear that Jehovah’s Witnesses intended to remain in the Dominican Republic. Shortly after the dedication, Harry and Paquita Duffield arrived, the last Witness missionaries to be expelled from Cuba.

Increase in Spite of Revolution

On April 24, 1965, the country was wracked by a revolution. In the troubled days that followed, Jehovah’s people prospered spiritually. By 1970, there were 3,378 publishers in 63 congregations. More than half had come into the organization in the preceding five years.

The *1972 Yearbook* reported: "They came from all walks of life: Auto mechanics, farmers, public car drivers, accountants, builders, carpenters, lawyers, dentists, yes, and ex-politicians; all drawn together by love of truth and love of Jehovah."

The Good News Reaches Remote Areas

In time, more missionaries arrived, including Pete Paschal, Amos and Barbara Parker, Richard and Belva Stoddard, who had served in Bolivia, and Jesse and Lynn Cantwell from Colombia. The missionaries gave further support to the burgeoning preaching work. By 1973 there was much activity in the Bible education work in the towns and cities in the Dominican Republic, but the good news had not yet reached those living in remote areas. Hence, arrangements were made to care for the spiritual needs of the rural population. When volunteers were invited to spend two months preaching in the countryside, 19 regular pioneers made themselves available. Between December 1973 and January 1977, groups of pioneers were assigned to places where there had been little or no preaching activity.

One pioneer who participated in this special work related: "After a day of introducing the Bible's message and leaving literature with people, we would spend a second day making return visits on those who showed interest. As the country folk had little money, we exchanged publications for chickens, eggs, and fruits. Thanks to Jehovah, we never went hungry." Many heard the Bible read to them for the very first time in their life. In some cases, religious leaders had told

people that Jehovah is the Devil. How surprised they were to read Bible texts such as Psalm 83:18: “You, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth”! In some places the interest was so great that public meetings were organized.

“We exchanged publications for chickens, eggs, and fruits”

More Missionaries and a New Branch

In September 1979, Abigail Pérez and his wife, Georgina, arrived as missionaries. They were assigned to the circuit work. Later, in 1987, Gilead graduates Tom and Shirley Dean came to bolster the preaching work. The territory also benefited from an influx of special full-time servants from Puerto Rico. In August 1988, Reiner and Jeanne Thompson were assigned to the Dominican Republic, their fifth missionary assignment.

By 1989, the average number of publishers had increased to 11,081, and the potential for future growth was evident, as 20,494 Bible studies were reported. This kind of growth presented challenges. For instance, the existing branch building had served its purpose well, but by the late 1980's, it was no longer adequate. “It was so overcrowded,” says Reiner Thompson, “that it became necessary to find housing and to use warehouses in different parts of the city.”

“Finding suitable land for a new branch proved to be difficult,” continues Reiner. “Then a businessman who heard that we were searching for land contacted us. He explained that he would like to sell some choice land, but only to Jehovah's Witnesses. In the past he had owned a large sewing business, and his secretary and

several other employees were Jehovah's Witnesses. He had observed their exceptional honesty and respectful conduct for years and was greatly impressed. Because he had a high regard for Jehovah's Witnesses, he offered the land at a greatly reduced cost." The property was purchased in December 1988, and three adjacent sections of land were obtained later. In total, the branch and adjoining Assembly Hall occupy some 22 acres.

Hundreds of local and international volunteers helped with the construction of the new branch and Assembly Hall. The facilities were dedicated in November 1996 when Governing Body members Carey Barber, Theodore Jaracz, and Gerrit Lösch came and participated in the Saturday dedication activities. The following day special programs were held in two of the country's largest stadiums, and over 10,000 visitors toured the new branch facilities.

'Stepping Over Into Macedonia'

The history of Jehovah's people in the Dominican Republic would be incomplete without telling about the large number of Witnesses who have moved to the country to serve where the need is greater. Spurred on by reports of a spiritually fertile field where one can conduct numerous Bible studies, many began migrating to the country in the late 1980's to "step over into Macedonia," as it were. (Acts 16:9) These volunteers spoke to others about the joys they were experiencing in the harvest work in the Dominican Republic. The result was that the migration dramatically gained momentum in the 1990's.



Stevan and Miriam Norager from Denmark have been serving in the Dominican Republic for over 13 years

Stevan and Miriam Norager from Denmark, for example, have served in the Dominican Republic since 2001. Prior to that, Miriam had served in the country for a year and a half with her sister. What motivated this couple to move to a distant land that has a different culture and language? “We both come from spiritually strong families with parents who served as special pioneers when they were young,” says Miriam, “and who served as regular pioneers after having children. Our parents always encouraged us to give our all to Jehovah in the full-time service.”

Stevan and Miriam have been special pioneers since 2006 and have helped many to learn the truth. “The blessings are countless,” says Stevan. “Whatever the difficulties or health problems, they are nothing in



Jennifer Joy has served here more than 20 years, helping in the sign-language field

comparison to the wonderful experiences we have had and the joy of helping sincere people to get to know and love Jehovah. We have also gained a large family of loving friends. Serving in the Dominican Republic has taught us humility and patience, and leading a simple life has really strengthened our faith and trust in Jehovah.”

Jennifer Joy is one of many foreign single sisters who is preaching in the Dominican Republic. When Jennifer came in 1992 to visit her aunt, longtime missionary Edith White, she experienced good results in the ministry. She also met other foreign sisters who were serv-

ing as “need greater.” “I was shy and not very confident,” says Jennifer. “But I thought, ‘If they can do it, perhaps I can too.’”

At first, Jennifer planned to stay for just one year but, year after year, she stayed and has now been serving in the Dominican Republic for more than 20 years. She has helped many of her Bible students to become worshippers of Jehovah. Jennifer has enjoyed helping with the development of the sign-language field in the country and has also assisted with the preparation of the curriculum for language classes.

How does Jennifer support herself? “I go back to Canada to work for a few months every year,” she explains. “Over the years I have done a variety of jobs, such as photofinishing, photography, painting houses, cleaning offices, fabricating headlights, and making carpet. I have also worked as a tour guide, a travel agent, an English teacher, and an interpreter.” Jennifer likens her situation to that of the ancient Israelites in the wilderness. “They lived on every word coming from Jehovah’s mouth,” she says. “His word was that he would take care of them, and he did just that. They had food every day, and their clothes and sandals did not wear out. (Deut. 8:3-4) Jehovah promises to take care of us too. (Matt. 6:33) He has cared for me up till now, so why should I doubt that he will take care of me next year?”

Up to 1,000 self-sacrificing evangelizers have come from places as diverse as Austria, Japan, Poland, Puerto Rico, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, and the United

‘Jehovah has cared for me up till now, so why doubt that he will take care of me next year?’

The Harvest Is Great.—Matt. 9:37

ABOUT 1,000 volunteers from 30 lands have responded to the call to help various language groups in the Dominican Republic. Could you serve in one of these fields?

Language	Congregations	Groups
 Haitian Creole	57	29
 American Sign Language	26	18
 English	10	1
 Chinese	2	
 Russian	1	1
 Italian	1	
 French		1
 Japanese		1





The 2014 Memorial attendance shows the potential for growth.

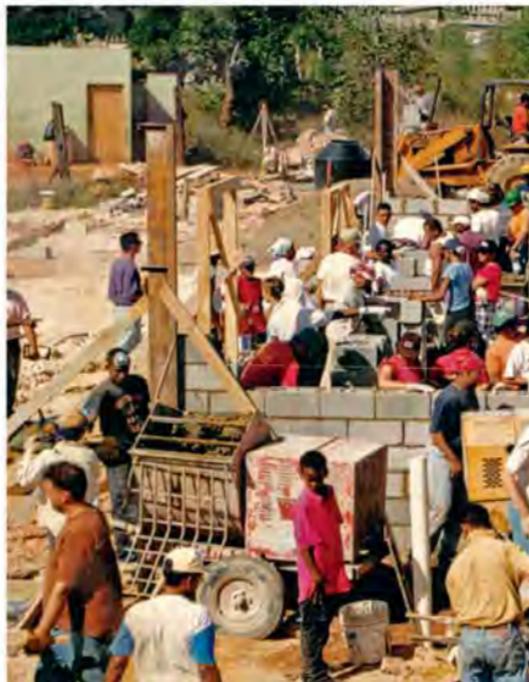


States. “Need greater” from as many as 30 different nationalities have become integrated into American Sign Language (ASL), Chinese, English, Haitian Creole, Italian, Russian, and Spanish congregations. Like the apostle Peter, they have said: “Look! We have left all things and followed you.”—Mark 10:28.

A New School Helps to Meet a Growing Need

Jehovah blessed the hard work of his servants in the Dominican Republic. In 1994 there was an average of 16,354 Kingdom publishers in 259 congregations. With that thrilling increase, there was a growing need for capable elders and ministerial servants. In that same year, the Governing Body gave approval for the Ministerial Training School, now replaced by the School for Kingdom Evangelizers, to be conducted in the Dominican Republic.

Volunteer relief workers rebuild a Kingdom Hall that was destroyed by Hurricane Georges



By October 2011, some 600 students had graduated from the 25 classes that had been held in the country. Currently, over half of the graduates are serving in some form of full-time service, 71 are assigned as special pioneers, and 5 are in the circuit work. The branch hosted the first ten classes of the school, but since the eleventh class, the school has been held at its own facility in Villa González.

“Jehovah’s Witnesses Take Care of Their Brothers”

On September 22, 1998, Hurricane Georges tore through the Dominican Republic with winds of 120 miles per hour, causing extensive damage. Thousands were left homeless, and over 300 were killed. A Disaster Relief Committee set up a relief center on a Kingdom Hall property in La Romana, with the help of a Regional Building Committee. Approximately 300



volunteers assisted with the relief work, including Witnesses from 16 other countries.

In total, 23 Kingdom Halls and over 800 homes of our brothers and sisters had to be repaired or rebuilt. For example, Carmen, an elderly regular pioneer, was devastated when the hurricane destroyed the house in which she had lived for 38 years. However, her joy could not be contained when a team of 15 brothers arrived to pour the foundation for her new home. "Jehovah always keeps us in mind," says Carmen, "and he takes care of us. Look at this beautiful house that the brothers are building for me. My neighbors said: 'Jehovah's Witnesses take care of their brothers; they truly love one another.'" Similar expressions were heard country-wide as relief workers assisted their traumatized brothers and sisters.

Although Hurricane Georges was a major disaster, the loving efforts of Jehovah's people brought physical and spiritual comfort to our brothers who were victims of that storm. Most important, the self-sacrificing effort of the volunteers brought praise to Jehovah, the source of genuine comfort.

Kingdom Hall Construction Accelerates

With the rapid influx of new disciples, there was an increasing need for more Kingdom Halls. Consequently, in November 2000, the brothers in the Dominican Republic began to construct Kingdom Halls with assistance from the program for lands with limited resources. As a result, a congregation can build a comfortable and attractive Kingdom Hall in about eight weeks. By September 2011, two construction groups had built

or renovated some 145 Kingdom Halls.

These buildings as well as the construction volunteers have given a powerful witness. For example, in a small town in the

northwest of the country, the brothers found a possible site for a new Kingdom Hall. A special pioneer asked the owner about purchasing the property. "Don't waste your time," responded the man, "I'm not going to sell you this property, especially if you are going to build a church on it."

Shortly after that conversation, the property owner went to Puerto Plata to visit his elderly brother who is one of Jehovah's Witnesses. When he arrived, he discovered that a family of Witnesses had brought his ailing brother into their home to care for him. The family took him to the doctor, to the meetings, and out in the preaching work. The man asked his brother how much he paid for all the care that he was receiving. He said: "It costs me nothing. These are my brothers."

The property owner was so moved by the outstanding kindness of the Witnesses that he called the special pioneer who had contacted him earlier and told him that he had changed his mind and was willing to sell the property. The brothers purchased the property and started building the hall. Previously, the property owner's wife had a very negative opinion of Jehovah's Witnesses. But, when she saw the way the brothers worked together on the construction site, she said, "This is the most united and kind group of people I have ever seen."

"This is the most united and kind group of people I have ever seen"

“All Sorts of People Should Be Saved”

It is Jehovah’s will that “all sorts of people should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.” (1 Tim. 2:4) In harmony with this divine viewpoint, Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Dominican Republic have made a conscientious effort to reach people in every corner of their territory, including those imprisoned in the country’s penal institutions.

In 1997 two special pioneers were making their weekly visit to the Najayo Prison in San Cristóbal when they met Gloria, a 23-year-old Colombian woman who had been imprisoned for drug trafficking. She had been having discussions with a sister who was wrongly imprisoned. To help answer Gloria’s Bible questions, the brothers brought her the book *Reasoning From the Scriptures* and other publications. Her enthusiasm and zeal for learning affected other prisoners, so the group that received the weekly visit kept increasing.

The truth produced extraordinary changes in Gloria, and in 1999 she qualified to be an unbaptized

Gloria Cardona learned the truth in prison. She now pioneers along with her husband



publisher. Each month she spent more than 70 hours preaching in her prison territory, and she conducted six progressive Bible studies with other inmates. Then, in 2000, she applied for and was granted a presidential pardon because of her good conduct. She was released and sent back to Colombia. In 2001, shortly after arriving in her home country, she was baptized, even though her family strongly opposed her decision.

After Gloria's baptism, she began pioneering. She married a brother who is an elder, and they are both regular pioneers. They are currently serving in an area of Colombia where the need is greater. Gloria has helped several of her students to the point of dedication and baptism. She says that she feels indebted to Jehovah, and the best way to repay him is to do for others what was done for her—help them to know the truth.

As Gloria's experience shows, iron bars have not been able to stop prisoners from learning lifesaving truths. Representatives from the branch met with officials from the General Bureau of Prisons to request permission for the brothers to gain access to more prisons in order to conduct Bible studies. As a result, 43 brothers and 6 sisters have been issued permits to participate in Bible education work in 13 prisons.

“Lengthen Your Tent Cords”

By the end of the 20th century, the Dominican Republic was reporting 21,684 publishers of the good news in 342 congregations, and 34,380 Bible studies were being conducted. The Memorial attendance was 72,679. As a result of the growth, Jehovah's people have responded with urgency to the words of Isaiah: “Make



Assembly Hall in Villa González

the place of your tent more spacious. Stretch out the tent cloths of your grand tabernacle. Do not hold back, lengthen your tent cords.”—Isaiah 54:2.

One challenge was acquiring an Assembly Hall that would accommodate the growing number of publishers. In 1996 the Assembly Hall adjacent to the branch in Santo Domingo was completed, and it served the capital and its surrounding areas very well. However, the Assembly Hall in Villa González, which served the rest of the country, was in desperate need of repair or replacement.

In 2001, the Governing Body approved the construction of a 2,500-seat Assembly Hall on the property in Villa González. The brothers were thrilled to hear that, in addition, a facility would be built to host the Ministerial Training School (now replaced by the School for

Kingdom Evangelizers). It would be adjacent to the Assembly Hall and would have residential rooms, a classroom, a library, a kitchen, and a dining room. In 2004, Theodore Jaracz of the Governing Body gave the dedication talk for the new facilities. Since then, 15 classes have graduated from the school.

Opening the Haitian Creole Field

The Spanish-speaking field has been very productive. Over time, though, people who speak other languages have moved to the country and have also been responding to our message of hope. In neighboring Haiti, Haitian Creole is the primary language. Although the relationship between the countries of the Dominican Republic and Haiti has at times been difficult, thousands of Haitians make up a sizable part of the workforce in the Dominican Republic, and their numbers have increased dramatically in recent times.

For years, Haitian Creole-speaking individuals who showed interest in the truth were directed to Spanish congregations for spiritual assistance. However, to provide better spiritual help for such ones, in 1993 the Governing Body directed the Guadeloupe branch to invite special pioneers from their territory to serve in the Haitian Creole field in the Dominican Republic. Barnabé and Germaine Biabiany were one of three couples who volunteered to move. “At first we had only two brochures in Haitian Creole,” says Barnabé. “All the other literature was in French, so we had to translate everything from French to Haitian Creole.”

In January 1996, there were nine publishers in Higüey and ten publishers in Santo Domingo who were

willing to support a Haitian Creole group. So a group was formed in each of those cities, and in time both groups became congregations. However, those congregations were dissolved, since it seemed that many Haitians wanted to learn Spanish and so preferred to attend a Spanish congregation. “We met with the brothers from the Service Department,” explains Barnabé, “and it seemed advisable to stop the work in the Haitian Creole field for the time being.”

Haitian Creole Field Revitalized

In 2003, the Governing Body assigned missionary couple Dong and Gladys Bark to work in the Haitian Creole field in the Dominican Republic. For two years, they worked the territory in Higüey and began to see good results. On June 1, 2005, a Haitian Creole congregation was formed. Dong Bark, Barnabé Biabiany, and another missionary named Steven Rogers, traveled tirelessly throughout the country cultivating the Haitian Creole field.

The work progressed well, and more congregations were established. On September 1, 2006, the first Haitian Creole circuit was formed. There were seven congregations and two groups, and Barnabé Biabiany served as circuit overseer.

In subsequent years, several more missionaries were assigned to the Dominican Republic to work in the Haitian Creole field. Also, many other volunteers arrived from Canada, Europe, the United States, and elsewhere to offer their help. A team of qualified brothers was assigned to prepare a language course in Haitian Creole for foreign as well as local brothers and sisters.

The fact that so many Dominicans are making an effort to learn Haitian Creole is having a beneficial impact on the Haitian people. Now, when a Dominican publisher explains Bible truths in Haitian Creole, it dissipates tension and creates

a favorable atmosphere for sharing the Kingdom message. So many of our brothers have learned the language that many assume that non-Haitians who speak Haitian Creole are Jehovah's Witnesses.

To illustrate the powerful effect of showing interest in people of a different culture, consider the experience of a Dominican pioneer sister who attended a language course in Haitian Creole. While in the ministry, this sister found an interested Haitian couple. She made a return visit on them to begin a Bible study. "When I arrived," she relates, "I greeted the wife with a kiss on the cheek, as is the custom among women in the Dominican Republic. The woman began to cry. I asked her, 'What's the matter?' She replied, 'This is the first time in all the years that I've lived in this country that someone has greeted me with a kiss.'"

Jehovah's blessing on the hard work in this field has resulted in phenomenal growth. By September 1, 2009, there were 23 Haitian Creole congregations and 20 groups, so a second circuit was formed. The Memorial attendance in 2011 highlighted the potential for future growth. For example, the 11 publishers in the small town of Río Limpio were delighted to have 594 at their Memorial. And when arrangements were made to

Many assume that non-Haitians who speak Haitian Creole are Jehovah's Witnesses



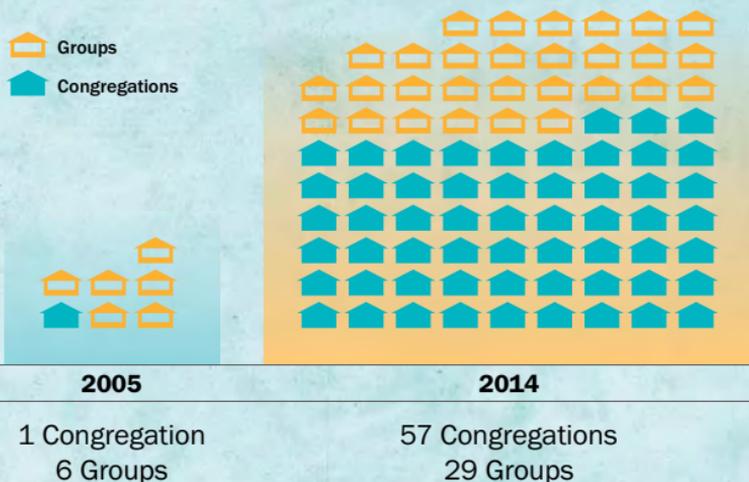
Learning Haitian Creole

have the Memorial in the town of Las Yayas de Viajama, where there are no publishers, 170 attended the Memorial. By September 2011, there were 33 congregations and 21 groups in the Haitian Creole field. Thus, another circuit was formed in 2012.

The Dominican Republic and Haiti branches have worked together to train brothers from both countries. Five classes of the Bible School for Single Brothers were conducted in Haitian Creole as well as four classes of the Bible School for Christian Couples.

Growth in the Haitian Creole Field

From 2005 to 2014



Growth in the Chinese Field

In 2005, the branch appointed a Chinese-speaking Bethelite, Tin Wa Ng, as a special pioneer to preach to the large Chinese population in the country. He was born and raised in the Dominican Republic. His parents had immigrated to Santo Domingo from China.

On January 1, 2008, a Mandarin Chinese congregation was established in Santo Domingo, and in 2011 a group was formed in Santiago. The 70 publishers, including 36 regular pioneers and several auxiliary pioneers, conduct an average of 76 Bible studies each month.

Searching Out English-Speaking Disciples

By 2007, there were 27,466 publishers participating in the ministry in 376 congregations, and 49,795 Bible studies were being conducted. However, there was no congregation for the sizable English-speaking population. So, in April 2008, the branch assigned missionaries Donald and Jayne Elwell to Santo Domingo in order to form an English-speaking group. A small but enthusiastic group of publishers first took a census to establish where English-speaking individuals lived. Then they organized the territory so that they could give a thorough witness.

As a result of those efforts, the English group in Santo Domingo continued to grow, and a congregation of 39 publishers was formed in July 2009. Similar steps were taken in other areas of the country. By November 2011, there were seven English congregations and one group in the country.

A Deaf and Blind Woman Takes a Stand for Jehovah

Lorys, who has Usher Syndrome, grew up as an orphan. She was born deaf and began to lose her vision when she was 16. She can see to some extent in daylight but is completely blind at night. The only way she can communicate after sundown is by means of tactile signing.

A special pioneer couple met Lorys when she was 23 years old. At the time, she was living with a deaf man and their one-year-old hearing daughter. Lorys accepted an invitation to attend a congregation meeting and was moved by what she learned.



Witnessing to a Chinese woman at a local market

Lorys quickly made changes in her life. For example, when she learned that it was improper to be living with her partner without being married to him, she discussed with him the importance of legalizing their relationship and explained that she would not compromise the Bible's moral standards. Surprised by her outspokenness, he agreed to marry her.

After they were married, Lorys became a publisher



A special pioneer communicates with Lorys by means of tactile signing

and in a short time was baptized. In the meantime, as a result of her study with the Witnesses, she learned American Sign Language (ASL). Since then, she has been helping her daughter learn ASL and is teaching her the truth.

A Devastating Earthquake Strikes Haiti

Tuesday, January 12, 2010, will long be imprinted on the minds of Dominicans and Haitians. That was the day a catastrophic earthquake struck Haiti. The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses immediately authorized the Dominican Republic branch to send money to the Haiti branch to provide relief aid. Since the sum of money to be delivered was considerable, the six-foot-three-inch, 280-pound Bethel doctor, Evan Batista, was assigned to be the courier.

The decision to send Brother Batista proved to be providential because when he got to the border, he was informed that there was a desperate need for qualified medical help. Many critically injured earthquake victims were being brought to the Assembly Hall adjacent to the Haiti branch for medical treatment. When the Haitian brothers realized that the courier was the branch doctor, they telephoned the branch in the Dominican Republic and asked if Brother Batista could remain in Haiti. Of course, permission was granted, and thus began a massive relief effort to help our spiritual brothers in Haiti—mere hours after the earthquake had struck.

The Purchasing Department at the Dominican Republic branch immediately got in touch with their regular food suppliers. As a result, over 15,000 pounds of rice and beans and other basic food items were obtained and sent to Haiti at 2:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 14—apparently the first relief shipment from outside of the country to reach the border. Later that same day, three additional medical doctors from the Dominican Republic made the seven-hour-long road trip to the Haiti branch. It was well into the evening when they arrived, but instead of going to their accommodations, they went directly to the injured and toiled until midnight. By the next day, another four doctors and four nurses had arrived from the Dominican Republic. Surgical procedures were performed under very difficult conditions, using a make-shift operating room set up at the Assembly Hall. For the next week, these 12 treated over 300 injured people.

Every day the most serious cases were sent to the Dominican Republic to be treated. At times, the very

Jehovah's Witnesses distributed more than a million pounds of donated goods, which included 400,000 meals

vehicles that had taken relief supplies to Haiti rushed the injured to various medical centers throughout the Dominican Republic. The branch organized Patient Visitation Groups to encourage the injured and to make sure that they had the necessary medicine and supplies. Local congregations provided food and accommodations for family members who had accompanied their injured loved ones.

The tireless and selfless efforts of Jehovah's people in the aftermath of this disaster epitomize the reassuring words found at Proverbs 17:17, which says: "A true friend shows love at all times, and is a brother who is born for times of distress." Experience after experience shows how by means of his spirit and the Christian brotherhood, Jehovah has sustained his loyal ones even in the face of death. Intense relief activity continued for months. Jehovah's Witnesses distributed more than a million pounds of donated goods, which included 400,000 meals. Some 78 brothers and sisters who are medical professionals from different parts of the world came and gave freely of their time and skills along with countless other volunteers.*

The brothers rallied to provide help following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti

* For a more comprehensive report, see pages 14-19 of the December 2010 issue of *Awake!*



A Good Reputation

Jehovah's Witnesses have now been in the Dominican Republic for some seven decades. During this time, they have earned a very good reputation. People often approach publishers in the ministry and ask for literature, and it is not unusual to hear comments from people in the territory, such as: "I like this religion" or "You people really live by the Bible."

Consider, for example, what happened when a Kingdom Hall was built on a lot that had been donated by a brother. When the brother went to register the property, he discovered that someone else had fraudulently registered it, and this individual accused the brother of trying to take the land from him. The matter was taken to court. It was a perplexing case because the person had documents that claimed that the property was in his name.

At one point, the judge asked the attorney for the brother to clarify whom he was representing. When the attorney explained that he represented the interests of an association used by Jehovah's Witnesses, the judge responded: "If that is the case, then there is no reason to doubt the truth of these claims. I know Jehovah's Witnesses, and I am well aware that they are honest. They would never attempt to defraud someone and take what does not belong to them."

When the evidence was presented to the court, it was clear that the defendant had used fraudulent documents, so the judge ruled in favor of the Witnesses. "This is not an isolated case," said the Witness attorney. "In courtrooms throughout the country, whenever Je-

hovah's Witnesses are mentioned, the response is always one of deep respect."

Looking to the Future

Time will tell how many more righteously inclined people will learn Bible truths and become worshippers of the true God. In the meantime, every effort is being made to reach such ones. For example, in 2013 Jehovah's Witnesses in the Dominican Republic spent over 11 million hours preaching, and they conducted 71,922 Bible studies. It was also very encouraging to see that 9,776 participated in some form of pioneer service. In August of the same year, 35,331 publishers were actively participating in the ministry. Furthermore, prospects for future growth look very bright because 127,716 attended the Memorial.

The preaching and disciple-making work in the Dominican Republic has come a long way since that Sunday in April 1945, when Lennart and Virginia Johnson first arrived and began preaching the good news of the Kingdom. Jehovah's Witnesses in the Dominican Republic treasure their rich spiritual heritage. They appreciate the courageous sacrifices made by earlier generations of true worshippers. But, even more so, they cherish the privilege that they now have of "bearing thorough witness concerning the Kingdom of God." (Acts 28:23) They look forward to the day when all on this island along with their fellow worshippers throughout the world will join together in singing: "Jehovah has become King! Let the earth be joyful. Let the many islands rejoice."—Psalm 97:1.



JW.ORG Booth Yields Results

Set up at a local book fair, this booth attracted **4,723 visitors in just 12 days.**



- Nearly 400 people visited the booth each day.
- 265 Bible studies were requested.
- 1,159 visitors were shown how to navigate the jw.org Web site.



Leonardo Amor

BORN 1943

BAPTIZED 1961

PROFILE He learned the truth as an adolescent and has served Jehovah full-time for over 50 years.

Jehovah Has Opened So Many Hearts

ABOUT a month after Trujillo's assassination in 1961, I was baptized while I was studying law at a university. My father wanted me to enter the legal profession, but I could see the superiority of divine education. So, in spite of pressure from my father, I left the university. Shortly afterward, I was appointed as a special pioneer.

One of my assignments was in La Vega, a longtime Catholic stronghold. During my time there, no one accepted the truth. When I gave public talks, the only person in the audience was my pioneer partner. Yet, Jehovah sustained me through personal Bible study, attendance at assemblies, and fervent prayers. In prayer, I asked Jehovah if there would ever be a congregation in La Vega. I am

happy to report that there are now 6 Kingdom Halls, 14 congregations, and over 800 Kingdom publishers there.

I married my wife, Ángela, in 1965, and in 1981 we were invited to Bethel. When I was baptized, there were only 681 publishers in the country. Now we have more than 36,000 publishers, and many thousands gather at our various assemblies. Looking back, I am amazed to see how Jehovah has opened so many hearts to Bible truths.

Branch Committee, from left to right: Reiner Thompson, Juan Crispín, Thomas Dean, Leonel Peguero, Leonardo Amor, and Richard Stoddard





Twenty-Two People Left the Church

GERMAN GOMERA was the second youngest of 11 children. After his father and two of his sisters died, his mother, Luisa, moved the family into town. There, they joined the Mennonite Church, where Luisa's brothers and their families were members.

"In 1962, a special pioneer couple arrived in our town," recounts German. "It was said that they were subverting the townsfolk with 'diabolical teachings.' Nevertheless, when the couple came to the home of the Piña family, they were invited in. The Piñas were a large family. They were impressed by the pioneers' kind and friendly manner, so they listened attentively to their presentation. As a result of that visit, the Piña family and my three older sisters began studying.

"One day when the pioneers were visiting the Piña family," continues German, "Mom was invited over. They read Bible texts that highlighted the hope of living forever on earth. Mom asked, 'Why, then, do they say in my church that we go to heaven?' After the brother answered her from the Bible and explained what the Scriptures say

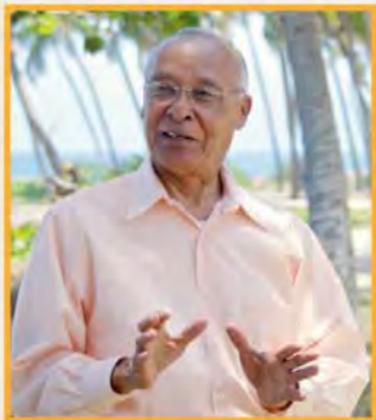
about the earthly resurrection, Mom responded favorably and began to tell others about what she had learned.

“When the pastors of the Mennonite Church found out that their members were studying with Jehovah’s Witnesses, they tried to persuade them to stop. However, they did so in an aggressive and threatening way. Maximina, the mother of the Piña family, told them, ‘Look! I am an adult, and I make my own decisions.’

“Eventually,” says German, “22 people left the Mennonite Church and started attending congregation meetings in a rented home. Mom was baptized in 1965, and I was baptized four years later in 1969 when I was 13 years old.”

German with his sisters today. All serve Jehovah faithfully





Juan Crispín

BORN 1944

BAPTIZED 1964

PROFILE A former atheist who has served Jehovah faithfully for the past 50 years.

From Militant Atheist to Servant of God

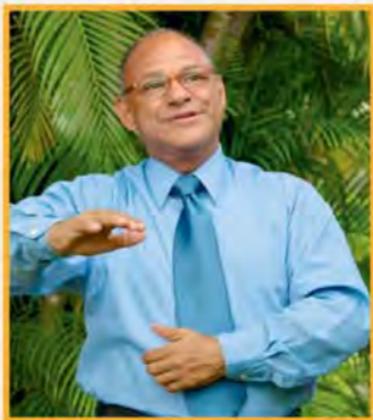
AS A young man, I was disillusioned by the hate-filled history of religion. I also did not understand why God had not put an end to poverty and injustice or why so many religious people do not practice what the Bible says. So I became an atheist, believing that only political revolution could fix the world.

In 1962, I began reading the *Awake!* magazine. Then, in 1963, I agreed to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. What I learned had a powerful impact on me. I came to understand that God was not to blame for the atrocities committed by various religious groups and that he has a loving purpose for mankind. Two months after my first study, I started telling others that God's Kingdom will replace this corrupt system of things. I was baptized

in 1964 and was appointed as a special pioneer in 1966. I believe that the truth saved my life, because many of the young militants with whom I associated either died a violent death, were imprisoned, or had to flee the country. I thank Jehovah that he transformed me from an atheist without hope to a servant of the God who promises a righteous new world.

Brother Crispín conducting morning worship at Bethel





José Pérez

BORN 1960

BAPTIZED 1982

PROFILE As a young boy, José was drawn to the truth by the love of the brothers, even though no one in the congregation knew sign language.

The First Deaf Person to Accept the Truth

WHEN I was a child, I lost my hearing and learned sign language in a school for the deaf. At age 11, I had my first contact with the truth when a Witness family in my neighborhood invited me to attend a congregation meeting. Although I did not understand the talks, I was warmly welcomed and decided to continue attending. Many in the congregation invited me to meals and other activities.

I became a publisher in 1982, and later that year I got baptized. In 1984 I married Eva, who is also deaf. Even though we did not have a deep understanding of some Bible truths, we recognized Jehovah's organization by the identifying mark of love and we enjoyed being in the congregation.—John 13:35.

In 1992 arrangements were made to teach American

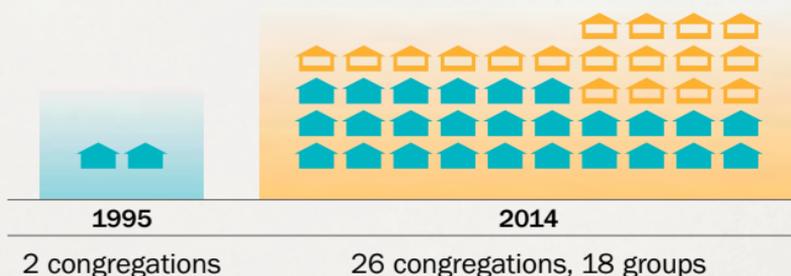
Sign Language (ASL) to some brothers and sisters. These publishers soon began locating deaf people and preaching the good news to them. Then, in 1994, the work in the sign-language field gained impetus when a couple from Puerto Rico was invited to the branch to teach sign language to 25 brothers and sisters.

Later that year, Eva and I began attending the meetings of the newly formed sign-language group. It was only after attending sign-language meetings that we began to grasp more fully the details about Bible teachings such as Satan's challenge to Jehovah's universal sovereignty and the role of the Messianic Kingdom in God's purpose.

On December 1, 1995, ASL congregations were formed in Santo Domingo and in Santiago. By August 2014, there were 26 sign-language congregations and 18 groups.

Eva and I taught our three children sign language as their first language. Our eldest son, Éber, assists with sign-language translation at the United States branch. I serve as a ministerial servant in the congregation, and Eva is a regular pioneer.

Growth in the American Sign Language field from 1995 to 2014





José Estévez

BORN 1968

BAPTIZED 1989

PROFILE As a young boy in search of a better life, José moved from the country to the city. There, he learned the truth and, through the years, he has zealously put God's Kingdom first.

Finding Purpose in Life

WHEN 11-year-old José moved to Santo Domingo, he shined shoes and sold shaved ice and oranges to earn a living. By the time he was a young man, he had earned the reputation of being a serious hard worker. Some years later, his brother, who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, asked him to look after his house. On the dining-room table, José saw the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, and he stayed up all night reading it. He realized that he had found something that gave purpose to his life.

The next weekend, José went to the nearest Kingdom Hall and presented himself as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He told the brothers that he had learned that he should attend meetings and preach the good news. He also informed them that by reading the *Live Forever* book, he had learned the things that Christians should not do,

and he assured them that he was not doing any of those things. Fifteen days later, José was approved as a publisher. He was baptized six months after that, when he was 21 years old.

Since José's work schedule interfered with the meetings, he left his job for one that paid only a quarter of what he had been earning. He now had a schedule that allowed him to attend the meetings and to regular pioneer. Later, though, when he married and became father to two boys, he had to stop pioneering.

José was determined to teach the truth to his sons from infancy. So, when his wife, Josefina, was three months pregnant with their firstborn, Noé, José would read aloud from *My Book of Bible Stories*, hoping that the baby could hear him in the womb. By the time Noé was born, José had read the entire book to him. He did the same thing with their second son, Neftalí.

Over time, José became the general manager of a business where he had a salary that was ten times that of his previous job. However, in 2008, when his boys were 10 and 13 years old, he left his managerial position and started regular pioneering again—this time with his wife and children. Since his income had decreased considerably, the entire family had to cooperate to keep expenses down. The four of them conduct about 30 Bible studies each month. Jesus assures us that if we put the Kingdom first, Jehovah will bless us. (Matt. 6:33) José and his family have trusted in that promise and have learned firsthand that Jehovah fulfills his word.



Martín Paredes

BORN 1976

BAPTIZED 1991

PROFILE Martín was studying to be a priest when he learned the truth. Since then, he has helped many to become true worshippers.

I Wanted to Quit Serving God

I GREW up in a very religious Catholic family that wanted me to become a priest. So when I was 12 years old, I took three courses in which I was instructed by different priests. Then, in 1990, when I was 14, I was invited to one of the best seminaries in the country.

I progressed rapidly and was told that if I continued to apply myself, I could become a bishop. However, I became disillusioned. Instead of studying the Bible, we studied human philosophy. Also, the priests were very immoral. When I became a target of their sexual harassment, I wanted to quit serving God.

At that time, a missionary couple called on the seminary accountant and gave him the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*. I borrowed it and read it from cover to cover. I said to myself, ‘This is what I’m look-

ing for.' I left the seminary, started studying with the Witnesses, and began attending meetings. Eight months later, in July of 1991, I was baptized. I began regular pioneering and later married a pioneer sister named María. Since 2006, we have served as special pioneers. Instead of giving up on serving God, I now love helping truth-hungry people to become his true worshippers.

Martín and María Paredes witnessing at a park in Santiago



One Hundred Years Ago **1915**





“THE present is a time of testing,” stated *The Watch Tower* of March 1, 1915. “Have we in the past been active merely because we hoped for our glorious change in A.D. 1914, or have we been active because of our love and loyalty to the LORD and His Message and the brethren!” During 1915, some Bible Students battled with feelings of disappointment. Much of the world, however, fought battles of a different kind.

The Great War, later known as World War I, was enveloping Europe. Mechanized warfare was changing the nature of war, affecting civilians on an unprecedented scale. For example, in 1915, German submarines, or U-boats, began plying the waters surrounding Great Britain. On May 7, 1915, one of these U-boats sank the British passenger ship *Lusitania*. More than 1,100 people died.

The Issue of Neutrality

The Bible Students wanted no part of this war. However, they did not then fully understand the Christian position of strict neutrality. While they did not voluntarily enroll in the army, some of them accepted conscription and endeavored to obtain noncombatant roles. If forced into the trenches, others felt that they could simply “shoot over the enemy’s head.”

The Watch Tower of July 15, 1915, published the story of a Hungarian soldier who was baptized while recovering from his injuries and who later returned to the front lines. The account relates what happened next: “They [the Hungarian soldiers] came within 800 feet of the Russian line, and they received the command, ‘A bayonet charge!’ The Hungarian brother was at the end of the left wing. He sought only to protect himself from the enemy, hence endeavored merely to knock the bayonet from the hand of

the Russian with whom he was confronted. Just then he observed that the Russian was endeavoring to do likewise . . . The Russian let his bayonet fall to the ground; he was weeping. Our brother then looked at his 'enemy' closer—and he recognized a 'Cross and Crown' pin on his coat! The Russian, too, was a brother in the Lord!""*

"Christian Duty and the War," an article published in *The Watch Tower* of September 1, 1915, addressed the issue of Christian neutrality. It stated: "To become a member of the army and to put on the military uniform implies the duties and obligations of a soldier as recognized and accepted. . . . Would not the Christian be really out of his place under such conditions?" In time, it became clear that Christians could have absolutely no part in war.

Adjustments at Headquarters

In 1915, seventy members of the Bethel family in New York were informed that because of a lack of funds, they would have to leave Bethel to continue their service in the field. They were told: "We must not involve ourselves in debt nor jeopardize the work in general; hence the decision for the reduction of the expenses along every line."

Clayton J. Woodworth and two other brothers signed a joint letter from "the Departing Seventy." This letter was published in *The Watch Tower* of May 1, 1915. Those leaving noted that they were doing so "with a feeling of joy and thankfulness for the many blessings and privileges" they had enjoyed "as members of the 'Bethel Family.'"

That change of assignment, while difficult, gave those brothers the opportunity to show where their true loyalties

* For years, the Bible Students wore a cross-and-crown pin as a badge of identification. This symbol was on the front cover of *The Watch Tower* for many years. By the early 1930's, Jehovah's Witnesses had abandoned the use of the cross-and-crown emblem.

lay. Would they stay faithful to God or become embittered? Brother Woodworth continued preaching, later returned to Bethel, and in 1919 became the first editor of *The Golden Age*, the magazine known today as *Awake!* He served as its editor until 1946.

Opportunities for Service

Throughout that difficult year, *The Watch Tower* urged our brothers to continue preaching. Individuals who had shown interest in the past were given special attention. “We have lists from all over the country of people who have sent in their cards requesting literature,” stated the December 15, 1915, issue. “Our suggestion is that these be called upon . . . with a view to seeing whether they have been side-tracked.” The goal was to fan their interest “into a flame—a zeal for God and for the Truth.”

Then, as now, it was important for Christians to remain focused on Kingdom interests. “We who are now awake should be very active and energetic in the service of God,” stated *The Watch Tower* of February 15, 1915. God’s servants needed to remain alert. *The Watch Tower* continued: “We are to *watch*. What should we watch? Preeminently we should watch *ourselves*, to keep ourselves from the snares of the present time.”

The yeartext for 1916 exhorted the brothers to remain “strong in faith,” according to Romans 4:20 in the *King James Version*. This scripture would encourage the faithful in the coming year, a year that brought its own trials.

2014 Grand Totals

Branches of Jehovah's Witnesses:	90
Number of Lands Reporting:	239
Total Congregations:	115,416
Worldwide Memorial Attendance:	19,950,019
Memorial Partakers Worldwide:	14,121
Peak of Publishers in Kingdom Service:	8,201,545
Average Publishers Preaching Each Month:	7,867,958
Percentage of Increase Over 2013:	2.2
Total Number Baptized:	275,581
Average Auxiliary Pioneer Publishers Each Month:	635,298
Average Pioneer Publishers Each Month:	1,089,446
Total Hours Spent in Field:	1,945,487,604
Average Home Bible Studies Each Month:	9,499,933

During the 2014 service year, Jehovah's Witnesses spent over \$224 million in caring for special pioneers, missionaries, and traveling overseers in their field service assignments. ■ Worldwide, a total of 24,711 ordained ministers staff the branch facilities. All are members of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses.

jw.org is available in more than
540 languages



Publications are available
for download in over
700 languages

850,000,000+
total visits were made to jw.org



Over **4 billion** Web
pages were viewed



Over **1 billion**
publication files were
downloaded



Over **159 million**
videos were viewed
or downloaded



100,000+
online Bible study
requests were received

2014 Service Year Report of Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide

Letter and number following each country's name indicates the country's location on maps following this chart.

Country or Territory	Population	2014 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Publisher to	2014 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 2013	2013 Av. Pubs.	2014 No. Bptzd.	Av. Aux. Pio. Pubs.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Congs.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Attendance
Albania (D-11)	3,204,000	5,351	599	5,190	5	4,923	267	766	1,175	82	1,976,622	6,349	13,151
American Samoa (N-26)	56,608	233	243	218	2	213	6	12	31	3	59,659	331	832
Andorra (F-4)	78,000	175	446	169	4	163		16	18	3	36,336	101	328
Angola (N-6)	19,813,180	108,607	182	102,753	9	94,182	7,025	6,788	12,329	1,432	28,709,394	449,984	414,639
Anguilla (O-32)	13,400	80	168	64	-6	68		3	3	2	12,353	90	315
Antigua (P-32)	81,000	490	165	478	-1	481	15	37	42	7	101,558	512	1,308
Argentina (N-36)	42,670,000	150,171	284	145,277	1	143,620	4,764	14,596	18,859	1,984	35,508,416	126,661	307,654
Armenia (G-9)	3,026,900	11,143	272	10,978		10,965	389	1,339	2,205	135	3,522,853	7,570	23,844
Aruba (Q-29)	107,397	965	111	931	2	915	29	65	67	12	176,443	999	2,772
Australia (O-19)	23,595,521	68,635	344	66,484	1	65,596	1,275	5,364	5,472	788	12,541,068	29,431	117,122
Austria (F-5)	8,504,850	21,319	399	20,990	1	20,873	416	1,588	1,372	298	3,852,446	11,668	34,521
Azerbaijan (G-9)	9,477,100	1,282	7,392	1,220	6	1,149	42	183	296	12	481,152	1,864	2,616
Azores (G-1)	247,599	762	325	748		748	27	64	86	15	184,920	861	1,761
Bahamas (G-35)	382,600	1,875	204	1,630	2	1,594	42	132	209	27	395,533	2,106	4,604
Bangladesh (J-14)	151,125,475	233	648,607	211	17	181	14	16	71	5	85,860	464	764
Barbados (Q-33)	285,916	2,606	110	2,524	1	2,492	51	232	209	30	492,637	2,371	6,608
Belarus (E-7)	9,468,000	5,767	1,642	5,579	5	5,300	212	651	1,245	72	1,964,128	5,008	10,247
Belgium (E-4)	11,132,269	25,839	431	24,531	1	24,243	516	1,855	1,579	374	4,266,059	10,598	44,635
Belize (H-33)	340,400	2,552	133	2,425	3	2,352	105	193	451	59	722,694	4,176	8,599
Benin (L-4)	10,703,000	12,167	880	11,352	4	10,872	635	1,028	1,492	175	3,325,248	27,927	43,619
Bermuda (F-36)	65,500	544	120	463	1	457	20	31	81	5	120,886	334	1,036
Bolivia (M-36)	10,027,254	24,850	404	23,976	4	23,014	1,185	2,966	4,298	305	7,776,518	41,357	76,283
Bonaire (Q-30)	18,779	132	142	116	5	110		8	12	2	27,457	162	347
Bosnia and Herzegovina (C-10)	3,871,643	1,212	3,194	1,180		1,182	68	132	189	16	352,300	593	2,123
Botswana (O-6)	2,039,000	2,216	920	2,122	3	2,070	94	195	256	48	563,690	4,404	6,531
Brazil (L-37)	203,067,835	794,766	256	767,449	2	748,940	29,870	60,096	84,550	11,562	170,475,134	841,136	1,728,208
Britain (E-3)	62,300,000	138,515	450	134,308	1	132,515	2,928	10,143	12,187	1,571	25,243,619	58,890	230,577
Bulgaria (F-7)	7,284,500	2,241	3,251	2,149	6	2,026	67	191	559	50	816,510	3,019	5,954
Burkina Faso (K-3)	17,581,000	1,767	9,950	1,598	2	1,563	77	146	257	44	500,157	3,235	5,425
Burundi (M-7)	9,069,000	12,773	710	11,852	7	11,082	870	1,293	1,702	256	3,991,209	34,599	55,203
Cambodia (K-16)	14,364,931	852	16,860	802	17	684	43	47	449	14	423,768	2,147	2,012
Cameroon (L-5)	20,653,254	39,121	528	37,319	3	36,288	1,228	2,720	3,802	329	9,375,553	72,194	97,497
Canada (C-31)	35,427,524	116,312	305	113,617		113,111	2,049	10,304	11,849	1,390	23,680,391	53,048	188,202
Cape Verde (K-1)	538,535	2,086	258	2,042	2	1,995	77	162	408	35	641,421	4,410	8,119
Cayman Islands (H-34)	59,200	237	250	228	2	223	5	18	34	3	58,728	236	703
Central African Republic (L-6)	4,616,417	2,585	1,786	2,471	-1	2,491	123	170	303	53	651,614	6,778	12,736
Chad (K-6)	12,825,314	749	17,123	646	3	628	39	38	73	17	168,213	1,178	4,328
Chile (M-35)	17,556,815	78,472	224	74,498	1	73,658	2,491	8,094	11,074	933	19,940,484	65,537	178,353
Chuuk (L-21)	48,651	58	839	48	9	44	4	6	11	1	20,129	154	233
Colombia (J-35)	48,771,000	166,049	294	161,876	3	157,395	7,614	12,168	22,337	2,477	40,758,876	229,723	510,217

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Congo, Dem. Republic of (M-6)	69,360,118	216,024	321	180,343	3	174,687	11,052	10,417	18,462	3,515	44,544,518	559,642	1,152,535
Congo, Republic of (M-5)	4,558,594	7,928	575	6,193	6	5,835	354	494	453	77	1,601,951	21,412	27,932
Cook Islands (O-26)	13,979	222	63	194	2	190	5	17	20	3	42,952	202	559
Costa Rica (J-34)	4,943,000	29,890	165	29,086	3	28,316	1,031	2,237	3,174	433	6,514,640	35,203	71,037
Côte d'Ivoire (L-3)	21,752,000	10,660	2,041	9,781	6	9,190	630	980	1,523	286	3,175,937	27,695	70,244
Croatia (B-9)	4,470,534	5,489	814	5,412	-2	5,509	93	568	479	67	1,204,236	2,344	9,315
Cuba (G-34)	11,167,325	96,263	116	95,592		95,656	2,987	9,292	9,628	1,486	20,767,619	177,524	238,497
Curaçao (Q-30)	154,843	1,969	79	1,931	3	1,883	71	136	176	25	393,527	2,326	5,444
Cyprus (H-7)	885,600	2,526	351	2,467		2,468	85	261	343	36	636,789	1,763	4,683
Czech Republic (E-5)	10,521,646	15,617	674	15,407	1	15,329	290	1,256	978	234	2,709,645	7,215	26,386
Denmark (D-4)	5,639,719	14,664	385	14,462	1	14,380	263	1,226	837	178	2,515,056	5,850	21,814
Dominica (P-33)	74,000	445	166	423	-1	427	9	31	62	10	112,970	694	1,448
Dominican Republic (O-29)	10,404,000	38,161	273	36,240	3	35,331	1,806	3,343	7,337	538	11,681,971	69,964	132,760
Ecuador (K-34)	15,983,000	85,344	187	82,547	4	79,566	2,999	7,655	13,895	951	23,592,416	142,223	271,240
El Salvador (H-33)	6,387,000	40,128	159	39,346	2	38,643	1,018	3,273	4,607	676	9,147,909	45,744	96,113
Equatorial Guinea (L-5)	722,254	1,690	427	1,574	9	1,442	120	119	206	15	471,765	5,264	5,851
Estonia (D-6)	1,315,819	4,186	314	4,091		4,108	91	336	489	53	883,447	2,708	6,875
Ethiopia (L-8)	87,500,000	10,168	8,605	9,768	3	9,515	513	972	2,255	214	3,406,954	7,465	25,896
Falkland Islands (Q-37)	2,840	11	258	10	-9	11		1		1	1,768	9	23
Faroe Islands (C-2)	49,947	121	413	117	4	112	1	11	30	4	34,642	94	197
Fiji (N-24)	881,065	3,063	288	2,938	5	2,807	58	244	466	73	770,319	4,676	12,334
Finland (C-7)	5,451,270	18,710	291	18,588		18,643	236	1,350	1,970	304	3,273,347	10,573	26,669
France (F-4)	63,928,608	127,961	500	124,298	2	122,456	2,505	11,165	13,808	1,666	28,115,751	56,777	220,643
French Guiana (J-37)	239,849	2,402	100	2,288	3	2,211	100	210	353	43	682,989	4,975	8,635
Gabon (M-5)	1,672,597	4,092	409	3,816	5	3,641	163	281	500	37	1,117,121	8,319	12,367
Gambia (K-2)	1,915,226	231	8,291	208	2	204	13	18	35	4	67,217	420	643
Georgia (G-9)	4,490,500	18,595	241	18,100	1	17,964	586	1,699	2,995	220	4,660,915	9,021	32,731
Germany (E-5)	80,780,728	166,262	486	163,246		162,459	2,998	10,776	11,857	2,201	29,429,812	76,740	270,683
Ghana (L-3)	26,781,812	125,443	213	119,199	5	113,392	6,257	7,311	11,702	1,757	29,437,338	382,408	347,725
Gibraltar (G-3)	29,000	138	210	124	9	114	7	11	21	2	32,214	52	203
Greece (G-6)	10,787,690	28,832	374	28,677		28,804	649	2,404	4,129	387	6,848,888	13,483	48,218
Greenland (A-38)	56,295	150	375	145	-1	147	3	11	22	6	33,822	133	308
Grenada (Q-32)	111,000	599	185	578	5	553	11	49	75	10	140,503	719	1,677
Guadeloupe (P-32)	411,507	8,339	49	8,025		7,993	212	621	579	125	1,549,265	8,588	19,528
Guam (K-20)	159,358	750	212	733		730	26	51	123	9	196,799	982	1,908
Guatemala (H-33)	15,892,000	38,266	415	37,192	4	35,598	1,786	3,086	5,329	775	9,737,005	49,355	99,410
Guinea (K-2)	11,750,000	767	15,319	737	4	708	42	52	123	18	227,533	1,845	3,280
Guinea-Bissau (K-2)	1,762,595	141	12,501	133	2	130	10	14	36	2	63,539	467	702
Guyana (J-37)	787,503	2,999	263	2,846	3	2,758	151	262	393	45	694,445	4,723	12,002
Haiti (O-28)	9,993,000	20,180	495	18,899	4	18,236	1,239	1,631	2,636	258	5,177,725	39,490	82,240
Honduras (H-33)	8,274,000	22,812	363	22,077	4	21,165	908	1,929	4,025	398	6,786,744	35,287	69,777
Hong Kong (J-17)	7,234,800	5,747	1,259	5,557	2	5,435	262	609	989	68	1,696,779	6,382	10,061
Hungary (A-10)	9,877,000	23,181	426	22,444		22,526	630	1,995	1,952	293	4,795,462	12,825	41,952
Iceland (B-1)	317,351	376	844	368	-1	370	5	36	50	7	84,363	270	670

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India (J-12)	1,264,216,000	41,310	30,603	39,355	7	36,869	2,000	4,780	5,360	542	10,016,150	49,681	116,674
Indonesia (M-17)	250,000,000	25,760	9,705	24,489	4	23,596	1,141	3,140	2,785	424	6,598,796	30,910	57,016
Ireland (E-2)	6,632,765	6,428	1,032	6,210	2	6,078	134	521	847	116	1,458,644	3,488	11,856
Israel (H-8)	8,357,855	1,502	5,564	1,450	4	1,391	46	126	181	23	372,601	1,163	2,657
Italy (G-5)	60,782,668	251,650	242	248,871	1	247,259	5,445	29,862	33,073	3,019	63,745,864	122,354	458,329
Jamaica (H-34)	2,798,800	12,126	231	11,889		11,843	412	915	1,490	187	2,570,175	13,530	37,981
Japan (G-19)	127,352,833	215,703	590	215,294		215,966	2,435	24,858	65,668	3,057	82,530,612	166,209	307,071
Kazakhstan (F-11)	17,098,546	17,843	958	17,475	1	17,321	624	1,896	3,278	240	5,236,585	13,425	31,870
Kenya (M-8)	44,611,800	27,491	1,623	25,820	3	24,965	1,435	1,673	3,444	596	6,891,729	44,736	67,780
Kiribati (M-24)	103,618	189	548	142	6	134	11	27	43	3	62,803	409	418
Korea, Republic of (G-18)	49,512,000	100,641	492	100,289		100,276	1,323	12,756	38,755	1,371	46,717,852	81,384	137,865
Kosovo (D-11)	2,350,000	240	9,792	237	7	222	11	21	85	6	110,254	422	609
Kosrae (L-22)	6,616	21	315	17	-19	21	2	1	7	1	7,737	54	91
Kyrgyzstan (G-12)	5,776,600	5,086	1,136	4,936	1	4,882	202	541	971	69	1,502,079	5,090	10,663
Latvia (D-6)	2,001,468	2,365	846	2,296		2,290	89	215	323	36	607,806	2,058	3,725
Lebanon (H-8)	4,831,233	3,702	1,305	3,659	2	3,602	106	297	177	57	625,948	2,171	6,575
Lesotho (P-7)	2,098,000	4,122	509	3,871	6	3,640	182	246	415	87	919,460	6,641	9,946
Liberia (L-2)	3,958,000	6,371	621	6,022	3	5,843	317	364	725	125	1,727,599	20,357	76,130
Liechtenstein (F-4)	37,132	91	408	88	-1	89		6	3	1	11,263	45	136
Lithuania (D-6)	2,928,897	3,184	920	3,130		3,126	103	318	487	51	857,448	2,698	5,451
Luxembourg (E-4)	549,680	2,068	266	2,028	2	1,988	11	152	130	32	375,124	1,112	3,939
Macao (J-17)	607,500	310	1,960	298	5	283	12	24	66	4	104,085	401	737
Macedonia (D-11)	2,091,719	1,342	1,559	1,323		1,320	44	149	200	24	393,406	1,122	3,146
Madagascar (O-9)	22,752,887	29,963	759	29,385	7	27,591	2,082	2,243	4,915	659	9,124,666	77,984	135,122
Madeira (H-1)	263,091	1,156	228	1,134		1,135	25	129	96	17	254,298	752	2,007
Malawi (N-8)	16,888,569	91,921	184	82,671	3	80,175	5,035	3,850	6,623	1,398	16,216,292	113,332	289,499
Malaysia (L-16)	30,273,416	4,803	6,303	4,668	5	4,440	118	395	1,206	113	1,631,220	8,700	12,659
Mali (K-3)	15,963,616	348	45,872	286	4	275	15	25	54	7	108,015	772	1,309
Malta (G-5)	425,000	663	641	623	8	578	16	61	59	7	130,117	216	1,164
Marshall Islands (L-23)	69,747	193	361	171	-2	175	14	22	21	4	50,692	456	815
Martinique (P-32)	398,864	4,839	82	4,749		4,771	131	413	579	63	1,135,269	5,379	10,592
Mauritius (O-10)	1,296,000	1,795	722	1,749	1	1,740	59	140	142	25	362,278	2,170	4,245
Mayotte (N-9)	224,282	149	1,505	130	11	117	7	8	38	2	46,365	251	300
Mexico (G-31)	123,921,000	829,523	149	802,903	3	777,429	27,701	51,491	132,750	12,833	202,857,069	1,091,008	2,306,486
Moldova (F-7)	3,466,000	20,055	173	19,846		19,856	534	1,728	2,151	239	4,204,777	13,450	38,324
Mongolia (F-15)	2,712,738	425	6,383	405	11	366	31	34	175	6	182,513	751	1,208
Montenegro (D-10)	631,490	274	2,305	265	7	248	8	40	52	6	96,887	192	700
Montserrat (P-32)	5,103	19	269	18	-14	21	1	2	5	1	7,345	55	94
Mozambique (O-7)	24,600,000	56,682	434	51,637	4	49,765	2,643	2,249	4,708	1,136	10,680,043	83,548	272,108
Myanmar (J-15)	51,419,420	4,079	12,606	3,941	4	3,803	256	198	511	73	877,639	3,982	8,094
Namibia (O-5)	2,348,000	2,422	969	2,208	10	2,012	105	163	267	43	564,187	4,362	8,198
Nauru (M-23)	10,388	19	547	15	-6	16	4	1	1	1	2,400	19	114
Nepal (H-13)	27,153,225	2,115	12,838	2,004	9	1,833	124	185	661	34	763,586	4,224	6,595
Netherlands (E-4)	16,859,325	30,285	557	29,495		29,356	587	1,945	1,613	359	4,859,368	12,098	52,452

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Nevis (P-32)	12,100	64	189	53	-4	55		3	3	1	10,007	57	245
New Caledonia (O-23)	266,447	2,169	123	2,047	3	1,983	151	241	151	29	467,109	2,620	6,551
New Zealand (Q-24)	4,526,561	14,501	312	13,884	1	13,789	359	1,158	1,231	186	2,739,646	8,457	26,909
Nicaragua (H-33)	6,176,000	27,300	226	26,169	5	24,984	1,051	1,969	4,012	418	7,062,137	45,664	88,389
Niger (K-4)	18,530,000	294	63,027	282	-2	288	12	24	41	7	83,846	413	1,121
Nigeria (L-4)	159,708,000	362,462	441	329,757	3	320,589	13,307	17,874	35,960	5,966	71,862,362	763,158	737,926
Niue (O-26)	1,398	26	54	25	-4	26		3	3	1	6,195	20	64
Norfolk Island (P-23)	2,165	12	180	8	-11	9		1		1	1,425	3	20
Norway (C-4)	5,137,679	11,756	437	11,359	2	11,133	239	939	866	164	2,001,922	5,535	18,150
Pakistan (H-12)	196,174,380	1,013	193,657	928	7	868	69	67	99	18	205,252	1,234	5,857
Palau (L-19)	21,108	91	232	78	4	75	3	6	18	2	23,964	137	241
Palestinian Territory (H-8)	4,550,368	73	62,334	70	3	68	4	6	5	2	14,515	65	142
Panama (J-34)	3,931,000	16,217	242	15,626	4	15,007	491	1,363	2,534	306	4,317,727	23,666	50,847
Papua New Guinea (M-20)	7,677,264	4,240	1,811	3,868	2	3,792	238	299	391	104	929,396	6,496	33,621
Paraguay (M-37)	6,800,236	9,760	697	9,309	4	8,947	420	861	1,449	192	2,845,363	14,682	22,962
Peru (L-35)	30,769,000	123,251	250	117,211	3	114,153	5,349	11,207	27,246	1,387	39,126,476	194,860	366,023
Philippines (K-18)	98,909,981	196,249	504	190,930	3	185,387	9,069	14,048	35,191	3,186	46,480,898	242,504	552,942
Pohnpei (L-22)	35,981	78	461	74	-3	76	5	10	19	1	24,749	173	274
Poland (E-6)	38,485,779	123,177	312	122,381	-1	123,278	2,089	9,894	8,226	1,350	20,439,749	52,719	201,135
Portugal (G-2)	9,976,649	49,402	202	48,706		48,843	1,210	4,809	4,077	642	10,377,198	28,788	95,575
Puerto Rico (O-31)	3,683,600	26,295	140	25,709		25,752	610	2,331	3,308	328	6,031,411	16,659	57,081
Réunion (O-10)	837,617	3,057	274	2,961	2	2,899	82	282	328	36	699,782	2,401	6,034
Rodrigues (O-11)	37,922	47	807	43	8	40	1	3	4	1	9,460	67	122
Romania (F-6)	21,290,000	40,605	524	40,371	1	40,154	953	3,212	3,711	541	8,093,580	25,866	83,419
Rota (K-20)	2,527	12	211	10	-41	17		1	3	1	3,979	15	30
Russia (C-15)	143,930,000	171,268	840	165,322	1	164,187	4,716	16,873	29,922	2,480	48,846,830	116,549	292,058
Rwanda (M-7)	11,000,000	25,035	439	23,507	6	22,152	1,561	2,680	4,145	563	9,025,774	61,621	86,975
Saba (O-32)	2,000	9	222	7	-13	8		1			955	12	24
St. Barthélemy (O-32)	9,171	29	316	24		24		4	4	1	8,280	30	86
St. Eustatius (P-32)	4,000	23	174	22	5	21		1	2	1	5,698	45	95
St. Helena (N-3)	4,000	121	33	115	-1	116	1	4		3	11,247	78	282
St. Kitts (O-32)	51,300	211	243	203	-1	206	1	12	33	4	56,527	294	774
St. Lucia (Q-33)	182,000	796	229	740	3	721	50	63	103	10	192,796	1,186	2,349
St. Maarten (O-32)	46,500	355	131	336	1	334	11	26	41	5	83,051	479	1,128
St. Martin (O-32)	36,992	328	113	311	6	294	2	34	32	5	82,052	535	1,112
St. Pierre and Miquelon (D-37)	6,311	16	394	15		15	1	3	3	1	4,792	6	15
St. Vincent & the Grenadines (Q-32)	109,400	338	324	332	-2	340	11	37	47	8	96,284	503	1,226
Saipan (K-20)	48,220	209	231	198	1	196	9	28	33	2	62,674	349	641
Samoa (N-25)	192,067	572	336	522	5	496	46	47	82	12	148,703	808	2,171
San Marino (F-5)	32,000	207	155	204		203		29	30	2	57,984	116	350
São Tomé and Príncipe (M-4)	190,428	735	259	708	5	673	54	70	149	10	270,836	2,750	3,552
Senegal (K-2)	13,508,715	1,204	11,220	1,150	1	1,136	54	107	140	26	328,418	1,927	2,840
Serbia (C-11)	8,118,146	3,892	2,086	3,857		3,851	106	425	588	61	1,087,810	2,300	8,552
Seychelles (M-9)	91,359	343	266	331		331	13	22	28	4	72,950	435	907

Country or Territory	Population	2014 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Publisher to	2014 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 2013	2013 Av. Pubs.	2014 No. Bptzd.	Av. Aux. Plo. Pubs.	Av. Plo. Pubs.	No. of Congs.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Attendance
Sierra Leone (L-2)	6,092,000	2,055	2,964	1,937	3	1,882	90	126	243	36	550,245	4,622	9,061
Slovakia (F-6)	5,417,750	11,367	477	11,105		11,056	201	875	694	153	1,872,925	3,938	21,345
Slovenia (B-8)	2,054,000	1,943	1,057	1,930	-1	1,948	40	178	235	30	465,480	1,000	3,160
Solomon Islands (M-22)	609,883	1,974	309	1,787	3	1,742	117	127	231	51	420,796	2,154	9,764
South Africa (P-6)	53,140,000	98,775	538	95,369	4	91,848	4,512	6,399	10,588	2,052	21,913,583	134,980	245,324
South Sudan (L-7)	10,727,600	1,271	8,440	1,201		1,207	99	70	161	30	327,644	3,117	4,389
Spain (G-3)	46,182,000	112,493	411	108,900	1	108,254	2,440	12,479	13,641	1,545	28,280,045	58,728	195,673
Sri Lanka (L-13)	20,480,000	5,833	3,511	5,615	5	5,359	415	480	737	100	1,295,798	8,131	14,195
Sudan (K-7)	26,507,000	574	46,179	515	13	456	13	45	75	17	154,984	1,172	2,055
Suriname (J-37)	540,000	2,836	190	2,765	5	2,644	136	317	277	54	668,354	4,989	9,500
Swaziland (P-7)	1,268,000	3,246	391	2,983	2	2,937	152	161	256	92	627,651	4,045	8,075
Sweden (B-6)	9,705,005	22,730	427	22,156	1	22,033	335	1,761	2,130	318	4,018,617	10,329	36,270
Switzerland (F-4)	8,139,631	19,106	426	18,323	2	18,038	332	1,264	977	271	3,065,692	9,075	32,145
Tahiti (M-27)	268,207	3,071	87	2,990	4	2,869	163	363	409	38	806,675	4,363	9,714
Taiwan (J-17)	23,404,243	9,485	2,468	9,256	5	8,853	455	1,103	2,964	128	3,957,401	14,716	19,449
Tanzania (M-8)	49,483,000	16,279	3,040	15,761	4	15,137	819	834	1,833	472	3,910,484	30,039	55,183
Thailand (K-15)	67,741,000	4,166	16,260	4,022	8	3,737	150	353	1,325	97	1,606,758	6,240	8,123
Timor-Leste (N-18)	1,202,107	271	4,436	242	17	207	19	20	61	4	92,868	520	905
Tinian (K-20)	3,136	16	196	15	15	13		1	3	1	4,683	30	36
Togo (L-4)	7,020,000	19,355	363	18,158	5	17,348	797	1,701	1,708	269	4,955,686	56,659	65,503
Tonga (O-25)	105,502	246	429	216	-3	223	4	19	26	5	48,660	263	563
Trinidad & Tobago (R-33)	1,334,824	9,737	137	9,503	2	9,347	280	969	1,240	119	2,165,795	11,481	25,269
Turkey (G-8)	75,600,000	2,465	30,669	2,408	5	2,291	86	251	348	30	660,140	1,590	4,619
Turks and Caicos (N-29)	33,700	338	100	323	3	315	16	32	57	6	102,976	675	1,084
Tuvalu (M-24)	10,016	76	132	60	13	53	11	3	3	1	8,027	71	322
Uganda (L-7)	37,579,000	6,737	5,578	6,468	6	6,093	566	613	994	141	2,051,550	18,142	23,192
Ukraine (E-7)	44,770,717	150,906	297	149,787		149,597	4,283	15,135	20,509	1,708	37,907,954	86,994	262,321
United States of America (E-32)	322,583,000	1,243,387	259	1,186,598	2	1,167,723	36,064	89,336	160,273	13,871	274,164,941	721,884	2,505,825
Uruguay (O-37)	3,304,000	11,791	280	11,471		11,464	291	992	880	156	2,204,238	9,175	23,531
Vanuatu (N-23)	264,938	587	451	525	1	520	43	35	71	10	139,379	1,300	3,308
Venezuela (J-36)	30,206,307	140,226	215	134,913	4	129,284	7,261	13,788	26,115	1,709	41,045,125	196,232	467,390
Virgin Islands, British (O-31)	28,600	268	107	260	-2	265		19	34	4	59,340	264	804
Virgin Islands, U.S. (O-31)	106,800	668	160	602	2	593	24	50	95	10	157,513	663	1,692
Wallis & Futuna Islands (N-25)	13,936	55	253	46	-6	49	2	2	5	1	9,977	76	242
Yap (L-19)	11,376	32	356	28	4	27	3	4	8	1	12,529	106	119
Zambia (N-7)	14,638,640	178,481	82	168,693	5	160,211	5,299	7,181	13,126	2,698	34,221,669	362,651	790,528
Zimbabwe (O-7)	13,323,770	43,130	309	41,688	4	39,999	3,341	3,105	5,019	1,123	10,531,088	92,569	110,570
30 Other Lands		39,123		33,372	-3.2	34,485	1,836	3,524	11,933	764	15,993,016	61,451	67,963
Grand Total (239 Lands)		8,201,545		7,867,958	2.2	7,698,377	275,581	635,298	1,089,446	115,416	1,945,487,604	9,499,933	19,950,019



For more information, visit www.jw.org or contact Jehovah's Witnesses.

My 2015 Service Report

	Books/ Sign-Language Videos	Brochures/ Tracts	Hours	Magazines	Return Visits	Bible Studies
January						
February						
March						
April						
May						
June						
July						
August						
September						
October						
November						
December						
Total						