

THE
WATCHTOWER
STORY



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WHAT does that word mean to you? Do you immediately think of that world-wide Christian organization, the *Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society*, or its official magazine *The Watchtower*? Do you visualize a group of sincere Christians, *Jehovah's witnesses*, who function internationally as an organized body under direction of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society?

Throughout the world *Watchtower* has that significance, but in Central Africa the word suggests to the minds of many certain indigenous native movements that are disobedient to laws and which have sprung up in Nyasaland, calling themselves "Watchtower", "Watchman Society" and the like, some of whose members are known to have carried the unscriptural and anti-social doctrines and practices of these sects into parts of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo. These indigenous so-called "Watchtower" movements have been linked with a number of native disturbances, but evidence has not been produced and cannot be produced to tie in the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, its missionaries, or Jehovah's witnesses with such movements or their lawless acts. Every resident of Central Africa should be informed concerning *the facts* that show the clear distinction between the two groups.

Because of the wrong doing of these indigenous native sects many false charges have been made against the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, including the one that it was responsible for the well-known "Native rising" which took place in Nyasaland in 1915. The facts are, however, that even the native "Watchtower movement" had no connection therewith. The extracts reproduced below are taken from

the book *Laws of Livingstonia* written by W. P. Livingstone and which book concerns the life work of Dr. Robert Laws who played a prominent part in the life of Nyasaland in those days. John Chilembwe, the leader of the "rising" and who founded what is known today as the Provident Industrial Mission (P.I.M.), was never at any time one of Jehovah's witnesses nor was he ever associated with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society nor the native so-called "Watchtower movement". The extracts follow:

(Page 257) When, after another sharp attack of fever, which caused grave concern to the Committee, he received a cablegram from Mr. White, the convener, 'Return home now,' he packed up, and he, Mrs. Laws, and Amy sailed from Bandawe in October 1801. He took with him Yurala Chirwa, a young Tonga teacher; *Charles Domingo*, his house boy; and another lad, with the purpose of leaving them at Lovedale [Union of South Africa] for training during his absence in Scotland . . . (Page 258) The Doctor went to Lovedale to leave the three native boys, and then visited all the leading Dutch churches in the Cape Colony, in order to interest the members in their side of the mission work; and at Cape Town he had an interview with Mr. Rhodes regarding the position of matters in the Nyasa district, and there he gave an address on Nyasa which had an unlooked-for result. Amongst the audience was one *Joseph Booth*, an exponent of the 'Africa for the African' principle, who made up his mind that the country described would be a good land in which to carry on his propaganda. He appeared later in the Shire Highlands, and, as will be seen, gave much trouble ere he was deported . . . (Page 339) It was a new experience for the Doctor to whirl up from the lower Shire round the Cataract hills to Blantyre in a railway train . . . To his sorrow he came across *Charles Domingo*, who, in his ambition and folly, had left Ngoniland and become mixed in some degree with the Ethiopian movement. This had been introduced by the *Joseph Booth* who had heard the Doctor at Cape Town, and had carried out his intention of visiting the country. He had projected a scheme for an *Industrial mission*, which for a time had official favour, . . . But his teaching introduced that spirit of racial antagonism which, . . . always becomes subversive of orderly conditions, and he was deported. He took one of his disciples named *Chilembwe*, a Yao, to America and had him educated at a negro college, where he was ordained after three years' study. Returning to Nyasaland

he carried on the same kind of propaganda, recruiting followers from the class of men with a grievance or those under discipline by the Missions. It was with Chilembwe that Domingo had dealings, but he never seems to have agreed with his extreme views, and when the Doctor met him he had broken with the sect, . . . and he made again for Ngoniland, where he established a pretentious church, . . . and gathered a following, his influence, unlike Chilembwe's, being for good. (Page 352) Early in 1915, what was called a native rising' occurred in the Shire Highlands led by John Chilembwe and confined to his sect, which consisted in the main of raw and uneducated natives of the Anguru tribe. It was one of the ebullitions common enough in areas where white and black meet and mingle, where the latter suffer from treatment which they consider unjust, and where, as a result, some man better educated, more capable and more sensitive and resentful (Page 353) than the rest inflames racial and religious passions to an extent which cares for no consequences. As a rule, personal feeling will be found to lie behind most uprisings of the kind. It was so in the case of Chilembwe.

His headquarters lay next to Magomero, the extensive property of Mr. A. L. Bruce, a nephew of Dr. Livingstone, whose policy was not to permit schools on his estate. The relations of Chilembwe with the manager, who happened to be called Livingstone, were very unfriendly: whilst the latter's treatment of the natives in his employment was often unduly harsh. The discontent in the district, fomented by Chilembwe, culminated in an attack on Livingstone's house. He and two others were murdered, and three women and five children were carried away. No articles were stolen, and the women were treated kindly and returned unhurt. The same night an attack was made on the Mandala store to secure arms and ammunition, but troops moved out, and the revolt was quickly suppressed. Chilembwe and several of his lieutenants were killed in attempting to escape, and twenty of their followers were caught and executed, and others were sentenced to various terms of penal servitude.

Dr. Laws had always believed that Ethiopianism had a germ of good in it which should have been recognized and wisely dealt with . . . Ethiopianism was simply the expression of a natural desire for responsibility, which, being unsatisfied, was exploited, by malcontents and developed into a political movement . . . It was in such a spirit that in the Legislative Council he moved for a Commission to inquire into the origin and aim of the outbreak. This was appointed. But in circles not favourable to missions the trouble was already attributed to the over-educat-

tion of the people, and Mr. Bruce made the reactionary proposal in the Council that all schools in the country under native teachers should be at once closed. Dr. Laws opposed the motion . . . (Page 354) The motion was not pressed, the matter being referred to the Commission . . . (Page 355) The report of the Commission was lame and unsatisfactory and, as Dr. Laws stated to the Governor, a serious defect was its silence as to the beneficial results of responsible mission work in the Protectorate. The Doctor sought to obtain a debate on it in the Council, but the Government temporized, and the whole matter was finally shelved and passed into the category of things that are best forgotten . . . the opinion of the older missionaries was that had men like Sharpe or Manning been at the head of affairs the trouble would not have occurred . . .

Though unconnected with the rising, Charles Domingo went down in the general cataclysm. The writer saw him in 1920 at Mzimba, where he was employed in the Government service . . .

It should be particularly noted that the "native rising" took place in 1915. The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society had no resident representative in Nyasaland or the Rhodesias prior to 1925. By 1925 some of the Society's publications had found their way into those countries, but there was no one, European or African, authorized to represent the Society.

MOVEMENT DIFFERENT FROM SOCIETY

Toward the end of 1924 reports began to reach the Cape Town office of the Society that there were indigenous groups in Nyasaland and in the Rhodesias using the name *Watchtower* (not Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society) and who were teaching doctrines quite contrary to anything contained in the Society's Bible commentaries and textbooks. Accordingly European representatives were sent up from the Union in 1925 to investigate the position. They travelled extensively in each country for more than a year and as a result of their enquiries the letter set out below was sent by the Society's representative at Cape Town to the responsible Government officials in Nyasaland, and a similar one to the Rhodesias.

Watch-Tower Bible and Tract Society
Cape Town
August 21st, 1926.

The Chief Secretary of Government Affairs,
Government House,
Zomba, Nyasaland.

Sir,

On behalf of the above Society I beg to inform you that our representatives in Nyasaland have been recalled and that for the time being we are discontinuing our work among the natives there.

It has never been our intention to undertake a native mission movement in either South or Central Africa. Our reason for sending Mr. & Mrs. Hudson into Nyasaland was due to the activities of certain self-styled native "Watch Tower" Churches. This movement we cannot endorse. It absolutely perverts the Society's teachings and in the main its followers show no inclination to submit to any direction or authority from us. We therefore entirely dissociate ourselves from it.

There is now therefore no one in Nyasaland with any authority to represent the Society or teach and preach in its name, or in the name of the International Bible Students Association. If your government allows the movement calling itself "Watch Tower" to continue it must do so upon its own responsibility. The movement will have no support or encouragement whatever from ourselves.

In the past, and in ignorance of the true situation, books and literature (in English) were supplied to natives making application when money was sent. We now know that except in rare instances these could not be properly understood or appreciated and were often misused. We will therefore discontinue to send books to natives in Nyasaland or the Rhodesias except we have absolute confidence in the bona fides of the applicant.

Thanking you for the courtesy and assistance extended by your department to our representatives when in Nyasaland,

I beg to remain, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

[Signed] T. A. Walder.

Manager, South Africa Branch.

Some years after the Society had made it clear that it had no connection with the native sects using the name "Watchtower" it became evident that there were those in Nyasaland and the Rhodesias who were genuinely interested in the educational work Jeho-

vah's witnesses were doing under the direction of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and who desired to share therein. Applications to establish book depots in these countries under European supervision were accordingly made to the governments concerned. Nyasaland welcomed the suggestion and since 1934 the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society has maintained an office in Nyasaland and the work of its genuine adherents, Jehovah's witnesses, has been carried forward under European supervision and control. These witnesses have obeyed the laws of the land, paid their taxes, lived clean lives, carried forward their work in an orderly manner, and lived at peace with their neighbours. They have done nothing by word or deed to merit the severe restrictions that were placed upon their freedom of worship by Government during the war years and it is hoped that all such restrictions, some of which it is sad to say still remain in force, will shortly be removed.

COPPER BELT DISTURBANCES

The Rhodesias did not take the same position as Nyasaland but in 1934 refused the Society's request to establish a depot and European control over its adherents in these countries. By this time some of the Society's publications had been published in Cinyanja and when a strike of mine workers broke out on the Copper Belt in 1935, it was easy, in view of the fact that the Society had been denied representation, for the false charge to be spread that "agitators connected with the Watchtower movement were behind the strikers" and that "the Watch Tower Movement originates in the United States of America. It appears . . . to consist of--Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society . . . International Bible Students' Association". It was also wrongly stated with reference to the native troublemakers that "Jehovah's Witnesses are the members of the Watch Tower Movement".

Mr. P. J. de Jager, a European representative of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and sev-

eral of Jehovah's witnesses resident on the Copper Belt appeared before the Commission of Enquiry and gave evidence that no one of Jehovah's witnesses took any part in the rioting or had any share in the instigation of it. At that time Mr. de Jager was requested to refer to passages in the Society's publications which instructed Jehovah's witnesses to obey the Government they are under. From publications prior to 1935 he made many quotations, included in which are the following that appear on page 49 of the official *Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into THE DISTURBANCES IN THE COPPERBELT NORTHERN RHODESIA October, 1935.*

Supremacy, page 51, paragraph 2:

A man must always do right if he pleases God. Every nation has laws and every citizen of such nation must obey those laws unless the law is in direct violation or contravention of God's law. . . .

From *Righteous Ruler*, page 28:

Avoid all controversies and strifes. If riots and revolutions come, keep away from them.

Commenting on Romans 18:7, *Watch Tower* 1929 states:

The words 'tribute' and 'custom' both refer to a commercial or financial obligation which the Government may lay upon those who reside thereunder to meet the Governmental expenses. Jesus and his disciples paid such tax (see Matthew 22, verse 21).

Paragraph 29 of the same article states:

For this reason the Christian obeys every law of the land that is in harmony with God's law. He does not obey merely because it is the law of the land, but because to obey is right.

Paragraph 32 states:

Every law of every nation of earth that is in harmony with God's law should be gladly obeyed by the Christian whether he be a citizen of that nation or not.

The evidence led by others, including Government officials, established the fact that it was the Wemba who were the ringleaders and such men stated they had no connection with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society or Jehovah's witnesses. Government

officials, who gave evidence before the Commission, made reference to the "indigenous Watchtower movement of the villages" as something different from Jehovah's witnesses, and that the views held by the native Watchtower movement were certainly not those of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. The Commission found "that the immediate impelling cause of the disturbance at Mufulira was the sudden bawling out of the mine police in the evening that the tax was increased all around to 15s; and that it was the false announcement of the success of the strike at Mufulira, together with the challenge to the natives to show that they were not old women, which was the immediate impelling cause of the disturbances at Nkana and Luanshya".

In view of the refusal of the Northern Rhodesia Government to permit the Society to establish European control, representations were made by the Society, at the time of the Copper Belt disturbances, direct to the H. M. Secretary of State for the Colonies, London. Recommendations were then made by the Colonial Secretary to the effect that the Society's request should be granted and since 1936 the Society has maintained a depot at Lusaka under European control. It has been possible since then for the Society to clearly differentiate between Jehovah's witnesses and the indigenous "Watchtower movement".

More recently a depot was established in Southern Rhodesia with European control. In Southern Rhodesia all war time restrictions on the Society's literature were removed 18 months ago and it is hoped that a similar position will shortly eventuate in Northern Rhodesia. Some relief has already been given and there does not appear to be any reason why Jehovah's witnesses in that country should not have access to all their Bible study books and their official magazine *The Watchtower*. Today Jehovah's witnesses are numerous in the Rhodesias, but happily the native "Watchtower movement" is practically dead.

In Nyasaland, however, the "Watchman Society" and other native sects using the name "Watchtower" and who engage in anti-social practices and refuse to pay taxes still exist. By the reading of this publication all who wish to be informed will see that such movements are not associated in any way with the Christian organization known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. The position is well known and understood by Government, and this was reassured in January 1948 when the president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Mr. N. H. Knorr, travelled from New York City to Zomba and interviewed the competent authority. But many Europeans and Africans in all of these countries do not know that there is a difference, and it is hoped that this publication will clarify the position. The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and Jehovah's witnesses strongly condemn the anti-social practices and lawless attitude adopted by these native sects.

WHO ARE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES?

On this question everyone is entitled to hear the side of Jehovah's witnesses. Jehovah's witnesses constitute a body or group of persons consecrated to do the will of Almighty God, under the leadership of his Son, Christ Jesus. They have drawn together for the purpose of declaring that he whose name alone is JEHOVAH is the Universal Sovereign, and that he is the Author and Creator of earth's permanent heavenly government of righteousness for which Christ Jesus taught his disciples to pray to Almighty God. To everyone they point out the only way to that kingdom which shall permanently take the place of all earth's present governments in God's due time.

Although Jehovah God has had His witnesses on earth for about sixty centuries, only in modern times did they draw together for organized world-wide work. In 1872 (A.D.), in America, at Allegheny near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Charles Taze Russell began a Bible class that met regularly to study the Scriptures

about Jehovah's kingdom and the second coming of Christ Jesus. Within a few years thereafter similar groups of students of the Bible, having these same interests, were organized throughout the United States. In due time such Bible-study classes were established in other countries. By following the course of study outlined by the headquarters in the United States those classes were unified and the students became of one mind, throughout the world, on what Almighty God through his Word teaches.

In time printed courses of studies in the Scriptures used by such students were offered from door to door by special representatives in many lands for the purpose of spreading the understanding of the Bible among all peoples. As a result other schools or congregations of students were organized throughout the earth. Ever since Jehovah's witnesses have been and now continue to be an international organization. They are to be found in every nation under the sun.

In 1884 the legal servant body of this international association was incorporated under Pennsylvania law. That non-profit corporation, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and the governing body of Jehovah's witnesses have been inseparably associated ever since. In 1909 the corporate headquarters were transferred from Pittsburgh to New York (Brooklyn) and then an associate charitable corporation was formed and used for carrying on the world-wide publishing work of Jehovah's witnesses. It is a New York corporation now known as Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Inc. In other lands other associate corporations are used, such as the International Bible Students Association in Great Britain and Canada.

Jehovah's witnesses have a firm belief in the Bible, both the Hebrew and the Greek Scriptures. They regard the Bible as the true Guide for man and accept it as the highest authority in matters pertaining to Jehovah God and his purposes. Even the name *Jehovah's witnesses* is taken from the statement by the

prophet Isalah (43:10; 44:8, *American Standard Version*), "Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah."

The method of teaching and preaching employed by Jehovah's witnesses is primitive. That is to say, they use the original method of preaching instituted by Jehovah's Great Witness, Christ Jesus. He and his apostles preached publicly and from house to house. (Acts 20:20) Every true Christian minister of the gospel is commanded to follow in their footsteps and must do likewise. (1 Peter 2:21; Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 10:39-42) Jehovah's witnesses establish free Bible studies in the people's homes. They go even farther than that by providing the people with opportunities to receive the message in public places. Books and booklets are used by Jehovah's witnesses in their preaching work for the convenience of the people. Such publications contain the truths of the Bible in a permanent form for study by the interested person at his convenience. Bible education is the work of Jehovah's witnesses, and it is important to all because the Bible contains the knowledge of God and Christ that is essential to gaining life, as stated at John 17:3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." In this way the work of Jehovah's witnesses becomes and is a great service to all the people.

Jehovah's witnesses have congregations or 'companies' throughout the world. To supervise the activities of these companies the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society appoints qualified ministers. Additionally, the Society sends travelling ministers as special representatives of the Society to visit the various congregations regularly and to give instruction concerning the ministry. It is not a loose organization without control, but rather it is a highly organized ministerial association.

It is hoped, by increasing the Society's European representation, to control the work of Jehovah's witnesses still more effectively in the future and prevent

any possibility of the misdeeds of the native "Watchtower" sects being attributed to Jehovah's witnesses. In the Belgian Congo there is still much confusion in the minds of the people over the native movements, but every effort is now being made by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society to provide adequate European representation and control. The disintegration of the native "Watchtower" movements in the Rhodesias since European representation was established by the Society is sufficient to indicate the fact that the solution to the problem in the Congo lies in the Government's granting permission to the Society's European representatives to enter the Belgian Congo.

To assist Government officials in Nyasaland to quickly distinguish between African witnesses of Jehovah and the indigenous "Watchtower" movement, the former will in the future be known by and called only by the name *Jehovah's witnesses* and not as representatives of the 'Watch Tower Society'. They also carry a letter of identification. The name Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society will be used only when referring to the Society's established office at Blantyre and, of course, to the publishers of the literature used by Jehovah's witnesses.

The fact that some natives, more than 40 years ago, got hold of some of the Society's publications in English and began calling themselves "Watchtower" or similar names while teaching and practicing things that have not the slightest resemblance to the Biblical truths set forth in the Society's publications is surely no reason why these publications should continue to be banned under the Penal Code and Jehovah's witnesses in Nyasaland be denied the opportunity of reading and studying the material which their brethren in every other country in the world have access to and use in the exercise of their worship of the Most High God. Publications of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society cannot be condemned because of the indigenous "Watchtower Movement", for which

the Society is not responsible, any more than the Bible itself could properly be discredited and withheld from the people if the natives had possessed copies of the Bible and then proceeded to commit lawless acts under the name "Bible Movement".

PEACEABLE SUBJECTS UNDER HUMAN GOVERNMENTS

If the literature of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society is such as will incite the people against Government, then Jehovah's witnesses would be found instigating riots and revolutions all over the world, for they are on every continent and the isles of the sea; but the facts show that a study of the Bible together with the Society's publications has made Jehovah's witnesses outstanding as conscientious Christians and law-abiding citizens of whatever country they may reside in. Their position is clearly set out in the 1948 *Yearbook of Jehovah's witnesses*, so clearly that no one can possibly misunderstand it, least of all Jehovah's witnesses themselves:

These witnesses, no matter under what nationality or form of government they happen to be born, always comply with the rules and regulations of that nation. They pay their taxes; they speak the language of the nation; they accept the education of the nation through its schools. They support all the laws of the land that are in full accord with God's principles of truth and righteousness . . .

Regardless of the country in which any witness of Jehovah lives, he is all-out for supporting God's kingdom and preaching it. He is an ambassador for Christ in this respect. Being an ambassador in this old world, at the same time being no part of it, he certainly is not opposed to the present governments of the earth; nor will Jehovah's witnesses ever try to fight against them. Nor should they fight against such governments. They have no reason to do so . . .

And from the book "*Let God Be True*", which was published in 1946 and has had a circulation of more than 3½ million copies in the English language alone, page 239, we quote:

Jehovah's witnesses are not subversive and do not engage in subversive activities within the nations where they dwell. They are not seditionists because they act within such

nations as ambassadors for God's kingdom. All enlightened nations guarantee freedom to worship Almighty God, which worship requires that the true servant of Jehovah be a minister of His government. People of all Christian nations have been taught to pray for the coming of God's kingdom to earth. Therefore those who, as ministers, advertise the answer of Almighty God to that prayer as being now near are not against the government of the nation wherein such preaching is done. As activities of the worldly ambassadors of foreign governments do not work against the interests of the countries wherein they each, respectively, dwell, so also the works of Jehovah's witnesses are not against the government of any land where they reside.

Jehovah's witnesses are interested in promoting the pure worship of Almighty God throughout the earth. They enjoy complete freedom of worship and freedom to distribute their Bible literature in the United Kingdom, and throughout the British Commonwealth of Nations, as well as in Belgium, France and other nations throughout the world, except for certain African territories, Russia, Yugoslavia, and Spain, where full freedom is denied. Jehovah's witnesses admit that there are technical disagreements with the orthodox religions as to the meaning of some statements made in the Bible, but it cannot be said that such disagreements constitute any reason for denying fundamental rights of worship and freedom of press. Jehovah's witnesses believe in freedom of worship for all. Surely it is not too much to expect it for themselves.

For additional information address:
Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society

Nyasaland: Box 81, Blantyre

Northern Rhodesia: Box 5, Lusaka

So. Rhodesia: "Grafton," P.O. Sauerstownship, Bulawayo

South Africa: 623 Boston House, Cape Town

Belgium: 28 Avenue General Eisenhower, Brussels 8