

A photograph of a man and a young child on a bicycle. The man is wearing a blue cap and a grey vest over a light-colored shirt. The child is sitting in a wooden basket on the back of the bicycle. They are on a grassy hillside with several tall, thin trees in the background. The sky is blue with white clouds. The text 'HOPE FOR STRANGERS IN STRANGE LANDS' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# HOPE FOR STRANGERS IN STRANGE LANDS

**twr** MAGAZINE

2024 VOL. 45 #1 • TWR.ORG

**INSIDE**

**PG 4** Nurturing Afghan resilience in exile

**PG 5** Drawing Somalis to Jesus



# BECAUSE YOU GAVE

## EXTENDING THE REACH OF THE GOOD NEWS

### TWR360

In 2023, TWR celebrated 10 years of TWR360.org, and since its launch, over 42 million people have accessed the Christian media resources in more than 140 languages and dialects. A user of the site in Canada said, "I am 13 years old, and I've been consistently listening to *Keys for Kids* to start my morning! The devotion always relates to the troubles I am going through in life. It is what I need to hear. *Keys for Kids* has helped me grow closer to God and understand the Bible." Your gifts of \$155,000 helped TWR spiritually encourage more people around the world.

### Guam Typhoon Damage Repair Fund

Broadcasting was disrupted for a few weeks while we made repairs. An added challenge was the loss of power and water at our missionary homes. Your gifts of support totaling \$587,000 were a great blessing during a stressful time for our staff. Thank you for standing with us in prayer and giving!

### Mission 66 in Spanish

*Mission 66* is an on-air Bible study by Pastor Luis Sayão of TWR Brazil, and we hope to produce the program in 10 of the world's most-spoken languages. Over 600 episodes cover all 66 books of the Bible. *Mission 66* in Spanish was launched in October from TWR Bonaire on AM radio for Latin America and multiple distribution channels for FM and digital stations throughout the Spanish-speaking world (see article on page 6).

Spanish speakers will be blessed by this fun and in-depth study of God's Word. Thank you for the \$129,000 you gave to make it possible!

### The Fiscal Year-End

Your support gave us a strong finish to the 2023 fiscal year. In 2022, we were able to count 47,508,778 meaningful interactions with our listeners in the form of letters, phone calls, email, web sessions, personal visits and more. And these were from just the ones who got in touch with us! God uses your prayers and support combined with TWR's ability to reach people in over 230 languages and introduces them to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank you!

### anniversary milestones

During the first half of 2024, we honor these colleagues at TWR (also known as Trans World Radio) who are celebrating milestones of five or more years of service. Join us in praising the Lord for their faithful service.

- 40 Kalman & Annamarie Dobos, U.S. remote  
Jim & Roberta Hill, U.S. remote
- 20 Tammy Stores, Cary, N.C.
- 10 Grant & Jenna Hodgins, Guam
- 5 Carol Chiappetta, Cary, N.C.  
Morgane Erisman, Cary, N.C.  
Dawn Cook, Cary, N.C.  
Kelly Gilbert, Cary, N.C.  
Nina Davis, U.S. remote  
Suzanne Sadler, Cary, N.C.



Picture in your mind's eye a group in a dark, damp basement producing biblical programming as explosions occur from rockets hitting buildings nearby. Portable generators supply power as the programming is beamed to a satellite to be broadcast on air, YouTube and digital phone apps.

Or imagine Jesus followers in a tightly controlled Muslim country huddled around an audio player in the night listening to teaching from the Bible.

These are true examples of believers in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Somalia, Russia, China, North Korea and other countries where believers live in tense situations. TWR is there, bringing hope and encouragement amid pressure-filled, dangerous places!

This year the global TWR ministries are focused on "Reaching the Last" places where people are persecuted, are suffering or haven't heard about Jesus' reconciling love. Paul, in Romans 15:20, said, "I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation." We are committed to bringing the good news of Jesus to those who haven't heard and encouraging those who are struggling to deepen their walk with him.

TWR has always been keen to provide in-depth Bible teaching to our global audiences. *Thru the Bible* is a staple biblical resource to many worldwide. God has used this effective ministry to encourage and equip believers in over 100 languages. *TTB* content is in use in small-group "radio

homes" in Asia and elsewhere. You can access it on the air, via published materials and by digital download on TWR360.

An addition to TWR's systematic Bible teaching content is *Mission 66*, developed by Luis Sayão, a Brazilian Bible translator and scholar. In 613 episodes, *Mission 66* effectively explains each book of the Bible to those from a secular background. It is being distributed over the air and digitally in Spanish, Portuguese and Mandarin, with an English version in production.

Our goal is to translate it into 10 major world languages as funding becomes available. Since the Spanish introduction in late October, hundreds of responses from radio listeners have been received and over 40,000 digital downloads have occurred.

One of our broadcast teams in Africa produces *Worship ConneXion*, a three-hour music and short-form program produced daily and distributed across Africa by satellite. Many smaller African FM stations carry this uplifting daily program, and it is available on TWR's large African stations.

I'm sure you've heard about artificial intelligence, or AI, in the news. TWR is utilizing this emerging technology to streamline and enlarge our ability to produce programming in new languages, thereby enlarging our program efforts. It has huge applications in video and audio formats.

Thank you for your prayerful financial partnership in the TWR ministry!

**COVER IMAGE** TWR gospel broadcasts reach out to Southeast Asia in 19 languages. Photo courtesy of IMB.org.

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# Nurturing Afghan resilience IN EXILE

By **Leanne Tan**, TWR Asia Writer

**Shortly after arriving in Pakistan, Joel\* sensed something wasn't quite right.**

"I saw many Afghan believers who were receiving financial support monthly, but not spiritual support, not spiritual food," he said of the city he had settled in.

A native of Afghanistan, Joel is one of over 600,000 individuals who have fled to neighboring Pakistan since the Taliban reclaimed control of Afghan government in 2021.

Back in his homeland, Joel's life was marked by persecution. First, as a member of the ethnic Hazara minority, which has for decades faced systemic oppression and discrimination in Afghanistan, and later, as a Christian.

In the months leading up to his departure, he was jailed and brutally tortured for his faith and ministry, leaving deep and lasting scars on his physical, mental and emotional well-being.

But Joel remained resilient, refusing to let the past get in the way of kingdom work. His heart broke for his spiritually needy brothers and sisters in the place he now calls home. He knew he had to do something.

"I am responsible," he told himself. "I have to teach them from the Word of God."

Just six months in, Joel began ministering to the local community. Today, his ministry spans across the city, where he disciples — in person and virtually — about 20 Afghan families, most of whom are ethnic Hazaras.

He leads worship and Bible studies, prays with and for them, and addresses any questions they might have about faith and the Word. He also occasionally assists with their practical needs, like taking them to the doctor.



PHOTO VIA U.S. ARMY • CC PDM 1.0 DEED

Learn more about this unreached people group: [twr.org/hazara-people](https://www.twr.org/hazara-people)

Additionally, Joel translates and produces several of TWR's programs that are broadcast over medium wave (or AM). Listeners of these programs frequently message or call in to our follow-up team to share their thoughts about what they've heard, seek advice and prayers, or even open up about their struggles and fears.

TWR comes alongside Joel and other such faithful servants by providing MP3 players and SD cards preloaded with biblically sound programming, which is then played at home churches and gatherings. Many of these resources are also distributed among Afghan believers in Pakistan and Afghanistan so they remain spiritually nourished even at home.

While Joel doesn't experience persecution the same way he did back in Afghanistan, life in Pakistan is far from easy.

Last fall, the Pakistani government made an announcement that sent chills down the spines of countless Afghan settlers. About 1.7 million undocumented foreigners in Pakistan, including Joel, received an ultimatum — leave or risk expulsion.

Unsure of his future, Joel decided to surrender it to God. In the meantime, he is staying put and continuing his ministry.

"If I do get deported, it will be God's plan," he shared. "We have no passport, no visa, unfortunately. But we submit our lives to God and keep praying. ... I believe God has a plan for me. I believe that one day I'll be able to go to another country."

*\*Not his real name*



PHOTO VIA IMB

# Drawing Somali people to Jesus

**By John Lundy**

*TWR Magazine associate editor*

**Y**ou know your radio station is popular when other businesses start to borrow its name.

That's what happened in the Kenyan city of Garissa, said Enos Changulo, who served as senior producer at the TWR Sifa (or "Praise") station there beginning in 2010.

"Some of them adopted our name," said Changulo, who now serves as Partnership and Resource Department manager at TWR Kenya in Nairobi. "They would call themselves Sifa Petrol Station. They would not call themselves Garissa Petrol Station."

This would be one thing if Garissa were in the heart of Kenya's Bible belt. In fact, its population is about 98% Somali, Changulo said. And only 0.03% of the Somali population worldwide are evangelical Christians, according to Joshua Project, which chronicles the world's people groups.

The world's 26 million Somali people are the first group we took a closer look at in January as part of TWR's Reach the Last campaign for 2024. We're exploring the barriers that make these groups difficult to reach as well as the ways God is using TWR's multimedia ministry to cross those barriers. For the Somalis, that includes Somalia as well as many of the 24 other countries where Somali people have settled.

On the radio, TWR broadcasts 3¾ hours of programming weekly in the Somali language, including a 30-minute *Women of Hope* program intended for Somalia itself. More than 8 million Somalis live

in Ethiopia, where Wakshuma Terefe, director of TWR partner Yemisrach Dimts Radio (The Voice of Good News) produces programs in their language.

In Garissa, TWR Sifa attracted opposition from a fundamentalist sect, but a compromise was forged after Changulo stood his ground. A 2015 terrorist attack at Garissa University that left 148 people dead caused TWR Kenya to adopt a new strategy there. But programs still are streamed to the transmitting site in Garissa, and an office is maintained there.

TWR Kenya also broadcasts, via its Ato Sifa FM station, to the massive Kakuma refugee camp, home to a large number of Somalis. In 2021, the coordinator for fellowships in the camp and in parts of southern Somalia reported that nearly 180 families would gather in the camp every evening to listen to *The Word Today* in Somali.

Moreover, TWR Women of Hope broadcasts its programming to the Somali-speaking regions of Ethiopia in addition to the program in Somalia, said Sphiwe Nxumalo-Ngwenya, Women of Hope director for Africa.

We can pray for the Somali people as does Ethan Larson,\* who ministers to Somali immigrants in a North American city. "I've just been praying for God to build his church among the Somalis," Larson said. "He's promised that he'll do it throughout the world."

*\*A pseudonym to protect the integrity of his ministry.*

Read more at [twr.org/somali-people](https://twr.org/somali-people)



## a new seat at the missions table

By Ryan Koluch

TWR journalism intern

Since its launch in fall 2023, the Spanish version of *Mission 66* has touched the hearts of countless listeners who have tuned in to Bonaire's airwaves. The utilization of both radio broadcasts and social media content has allowed *Mission 66* to expand its reach, opening the door for a new audience to hear the messages being broadcast.

Originally developed by Brazilian scholar Luiz Sayão, *Mission 66* gives an overview of each book of the Bible and is specifically geared toward reaching a secular, non-American audience. With the satisfaction of its listeners continuing to skyrocket, subsequent talks to launch the programs in different languages quickly developed. In late October, Sayão announced the successful launch of *Mission 66* in Spanish. With this news, a whole new audience was born.

Maralina Alfonso, TWR's marketing and communications director for the region, has seen the tremendous outpouring of support for *Mission 66* in Latin America firsthand. She believes these programs will serve as a gateway for people all over Latin America to encounter God.

"I believe that the Lord will use this content for many people, and I want to see in the future that millions, not hundreds,

but millions, in Latin America will be touched and find God through *Mission 66*," Alfonso said.

Echoing and expanding upon the program's original launch in Portuguese, positive feedback from listeners all over Latin America came in once the programs were broadcast in Spanish. For example, a Venezuelan listener seeking work abroad because of the long-lasting economic crisis in his country told RTM that his life has changed since tuning in to *Mission 66*.

The secret to all this success? Alfonso credits the unique structure of the programs, which allows listeners to think critically about the messages being broadcast.

"The way of presenting the content is not just reading the Bible," Alfonso said. "There is a dialogue and there are questions, and I think we learn more from questions than answers."

Annabel Torrealba, TWR's international ministry director for the region, sees *Mission 66* as an opportunity for listeners across Latin America to partake in a new adventure through God's Word.

"*Mission 66*, for me, is an adventure in every sense since we thought of the idea of adapting Luiz Sayão's studies for the Latin American people," Torrealba said. "We are focused on reaching a generation that has not heard or knows little of the Word of God."



Photo via TWR Ukraine

## Encounters spur hope as Ukraine war drags on

BY JADE ALGER, TWR EUROPE WRITER

In wartime, TWR Ukraine has quickly adapted its media content to address the current situation. The team invites opinion leaders, chaplains and ministers to share their perspectives. These insights from knowledgeable leaders who have stayed in Ukraine are an encouragement to listeners of the programs and podcasts.

*Point of Resistance* is a program dedicated to Kyselivka, an inconspicuous village on the outskirts of Kherson where more than 300 houses have been destroyed by shelling. The program depicts the resilience of ordinary Ukrainian children who live there.

*Living On* is a program in which guests discuss how God brought them through hardships. In one of the episodes, a woman named Fiva describes a period in her life when, simultaneously, her baby was on the verge of death due to illness and Fiva herself was involved in a serious car accident and couldn't walk. She didn't know how to move on, yet within her struggle and pain, God gave her a path forward.

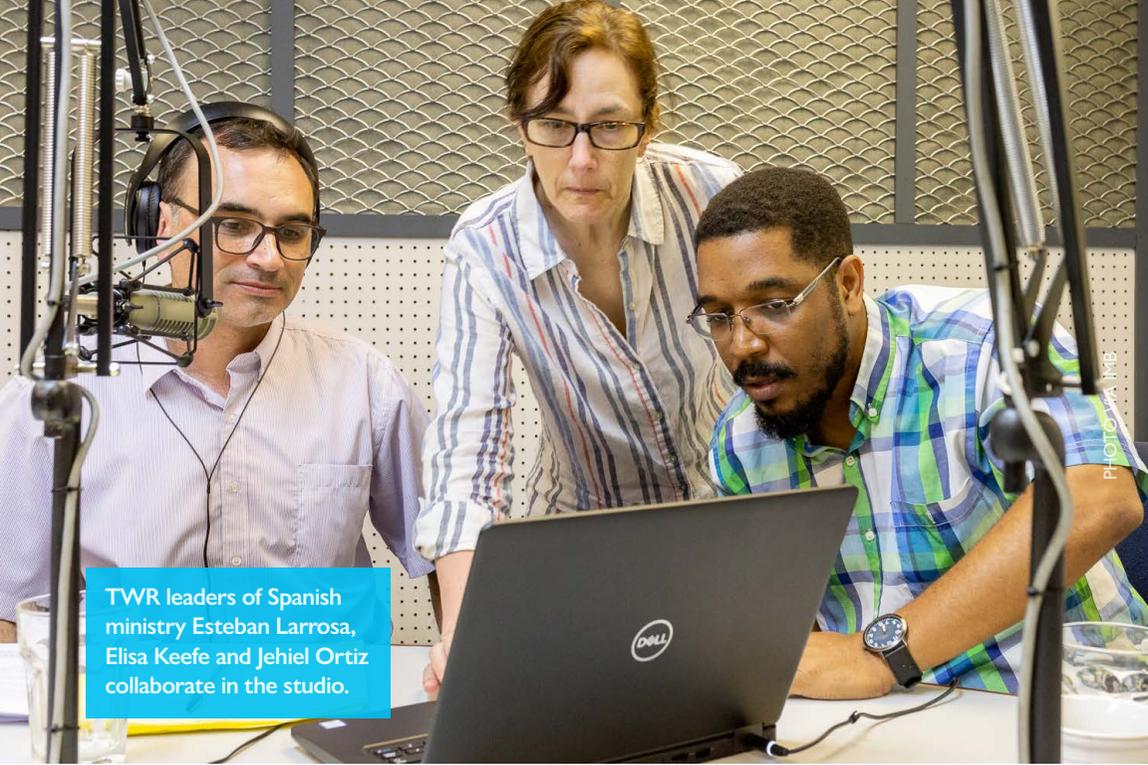
In the project *Yak vi tam?*, which translates to *How Are You?*, the Ukraine team interviews Christians in war-torn cities to find out how God has given them courage and hope. For the 10th and final episode, they took a risk by traveling farther east to the friendly cities of Kramatorsk and Druzhkivka. The strong military presence they experienced was a vivid reminder of the ongoing hostilities.

**A**s Alexander Chmut, the director of TWR Ukraine, and his wife, Natasha, entered a restaurant just 62 miles outside of Kyiv for a meal, they found it nearly empty, save for a small group of guys at one of the tables. One of the guys excitedly walked up to Chmut, having recognized him from the TWR team's YouTube channel, and they talked together for a while.

Later, when Chmut asked for the bill, the waiter said, "You're all set. These guys paid for everything."

This is one example in a string of unexpected blessings the team has witnessed lately. In another turn of events, Chmut was providing marriage counseling to a man named Oleksiy and his fiancée when Oleksiy was severely wounded on the front lines of the Russia-Ukraine war. Miraculously, the couple not only persevered through this dark chapter in their lives but also recently celebrated their wedding.

Reflecting on the large number of injured men in Ukraine, Chmut observed, "In the future, if God allows us to live, we will work with many severely wounded soldiers. ... This will also affect our choice of program topics."



PHOTOGRAPHY, INC.

TWR leaders of Spanish ministry Esteban Larrosa, Elisa Keefe and Jehiel Ortiz collaborate in the studio.

# ‘Sirviendo Juntos’

## TWR partners with Spanish-language pastors in the U.S.

**By John Lundy**  
*TWR Magazine associate editor*

**T**hey had put in a full day on their “other” jobs, and storms were brewing. Tornadoes had touched down in western North Carolina, and where they were, in the central part of the state, severe thunderstorm warnings would be issued. The same system would produce near record-sized hail in Virginia.

Nonetheless, a half-dozen bivocational Spanish-language pastors arrived at TWR’s U.S. offices in Cary, North Carolina, at 6 p.m. on Aug. 7, 2023, willing to deal with a long day and potential bad weather for the sake of the spiritual growth of their church members.

Eager to welcome them were the members of the U.S. Spanish Ministry team at TWR. They wanted them to know that for Spanish speakers, TWR is about radio – but it’s also

about much more. They wanted them to know that these resources are free.

If you’re involved with a Spanish-language church or ministry, they want you to know that as well.

“The Spanish churches need resources,” said Jehiel Ortiz, development director for the U.S. Spanish Ministry. “There are not abundant resources for Spanish speakers in their own language.”

That’s why Ortiz recycled – in his words – an earlier project in the department as “Sirviendo Juntos,” meaning “Serving Together.” The idea is to gather a group of Spanish-language pastors and ministry leaders so they can learn what’s available to them.

The pastors were treated to a meal and heard presentations from Ortiz; from Elisa Keefe, director of the U.S. Spanish



Jehiel Ortiz tells pastors about the abundant Spanish resources available through TWR.

Ministry team; and from Yicell de Ortiz, regional coordinator for Latin America for TWR Women of Hope.

They also heard from two special guests who were in town for meetings: Esteban Larrosa, TWR vice president for Latin America, Caribbean and Hispanic ministries; and Annabel Torrealba, international director for the region.

In addition, they had the opportunity to explore the resources available to them and their church members. These include notes and outlines in Spanish for each book of the Bible from *Thru the Bible*, ideal for small-group study; and topical studies, also in Spanish, from the late J. Vernon McGee, the creator of *Thru the Bible*.

“All of the resources that we provide are free,” said Jehiel Ortiz, who came to the work in the U.S. in 2022 after serving with RTM (Radio Trans Mundial, Spanish for Trans World Radio) in his native Dominican Republic for five years. “We decided several years ago we were going to give free resources, and God has provided.”

The pastors also were introduced to RTM360, the Spanish-language version of our TWR360 website, which offers Bible readings, Christian radio and music, blogs, the *JESUS* film, and a host of ministry and church programs in Spanish, English and more than 100 other languages.

From January through October 2023, the U.S. Spanish team had given away almost 8,000 resources in the mail and more than 44,000 resources had been downloaded from the website, Keefe said.

All of the pastors who attended were originally from Latin America. Ortiz said that is typical of Spanish-language churches in the U.S. Because RTM has such a strong presence throughout Latin America, the pastors were already

familiar with our radio ministry, he said. They trust TWR/RTM to provide sound doctrine. That’s significant in Latin America, Ortiz said, where many have embraced the so-called “prosperity gospel” or “liberation theology.”

Keefe told the story of a man who contacted TWR about the ministry he does along the U.S. border with Tijuana. “He wanted 30 copies of a booklet,” she said. “And can we do this? Yes, of course we can. So now we’re giving him the materials, and he’s using them to carry out the ministry that God gave to him.”

Because it’s an international organization, it can be forgotten that TWR has a vibrant ministry within the United States – to Spanish speakers, Keefe said.

It matters, because 1 in 5 people in the United States are Hispanic and because more than 42 million people in this country speak Spanish at home, according to Census Bureau data.

“The people that we are designed to reach are right here in the United States,” Keefe said. “They’re literally standing in front of you in the line at Walmart. ... Their kids are playing on the soccer team with your kids. They’re right here. And how good is God that he’s brought them here where we have the freedom, the resources and the infrastructure to reach them with the gospel and to get these resources to them.”

TWR is able to offer these resources at no charge because of the generous contributions from our donors. You can learn how to help online by going to [twr.org/give](https://twr.org/give), clicking on “Americas” and then clicking on “Spanish Ministry in the United States.”

If you want to learn more about this ministry, you can email Ortiz at [ortiz@twr.org](mailto:ortiz@twr.org), or you can call him at (919) 459-3828.



## TWR continues to expand the reach of *The Way of Righteousness*

**By John Lundy**

*TWR Magazine* associate editor

He had never met a Christian, but Ahmed\* was curious about what was in their Bible.

The lack of contact with Christians was not surprising given that more than 99% of the 36.7 million people in his homeland of Morocco are of the Sunni Muslim faith, according to the U.S. State Department.

Ahmed discovered an outlet for his curiosity one day when he came across the program



## ‘Finally I understood’



*The Way of Righteousness* on the radio. He also discovered a link to more episodes and contact information to a follow-up team.

“So here I am,” Ahmed wrote them. “I want to see if you are true believers because my religion never fulfilled my desire to connect to my creator.”

The program he found proved to be a perfect place to start.

Born in the West African nation of Senegal and distributed in close to 40 languages across Africa, the Middle East and Asia by TWR, *The Way of Righteousness* starts with the Old Testament prophets Muslims have heard about in their own religious teachings and shows how they point to Jesus. Developed in 100, 15-minute episodes by veteran missionary Paul Bramsen, it’s embraced by TWR’s leaders “because they had all seen what an effective ministry tool it was,” said Tim Klingbeil, chief development officer for TWR. “It so clearly presented the gospel message in a way that resonated with a Muslim audience.”



Photos via IMB

## YOU CAN HELP

Bring *The Way of Righteousness* to more listeners! Find out how at [twr.org/TWOR](https://www.twr.org/TWOR).

Bramsen was posted in 1981 as a missionary to the Wolof people of Senegal, where 94% of the population was Muslim, he said in a 2019 interview. Over the first six years, he didn't see a single person come to faith in Christ.

Then in 1992, Bramsen said, he heard the Lord speaking in his heart: "Go back to your house and start working on creating a chronological radio series that tells the stories and the message of the prophets."

That became *The Way of Righteousness*.

The approach is effective, Bramsen said, because Muslims know of the prophets through their holy book, the Quran, and are curious to learn more about them. As they hear the lessons, they see the connection to Jesus.

TWR saw that Bramsen was on to something.

"I'd be sitting in meetings," Klingbeil said. "Ralf [Stores, director of Global Media Services] and I started noticing that this was a program that kept coming up in different parts of the world and had amazing results."

In 2014, Stores said, TWR forged a partnership with ROCK International, which Bramsen serves as president. Five years later, TWR began raising funds to make *The Way of Righteousness* available in an increasing number of languages and places, mostly through radio but also on social media and via portable players.

By the end of 2023, TWR had funded development of the program in 39 new languages, 34 via U.S. donors and five from national partners, Klingbeil said. That brings to 66 the number of languages in which *The Way of Righteousness* is either available or in development.

Wherever it's heard it has an impact.

"I would like to share with you that I felt like the prodigal son, and your program helped me come through," an Egyptian listener to the Arabic translation wrote in a June 2022 email.

An Indonesian listener said that after listening to *The Way of Righteousness*, "finally I understood that Lord Jesus is a God worthy of worship."

Six people accepted Christ through *The Way of Righteousness* in the Kinyarwanda language of Rwanda in February and March of 2022.

"I am not a Christian, but I have the desire to be transformed, to become a Christian, and to be holy," one person wrote.

In his most recent correspondence, Ahmed also was not yet a believer, but he seemed to be closer than ever.

"Jesus Christ did a lot for the world, and I feel ashamed that I didn't know it earlier," he wrote. "I have never felt this connected to God before, and I believe Jesus is helping me feel close to God."

TWR is nowhere near the end of the line when it comes to funding production of this remarkable program, Klingbeil said. He has a priority list of new languages waiting in the wings as well as some slated for rebroadcasts.

\* *Not his real name.*

INTRODUCING

# Reach the Last

the TWR board game

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As of Jan. 1, 2024, both single-life and two-life standard annuity payout rates will be higher by approximately 0.4% from the 2023 rates – that's more good news.

Unsure of the details? Which option is best for you? TWR's director of stewardship, Tim McElhaney, will gladly guide you and your IRA manager through the process. Contact Tim at 330.647.1789 or [tmcelhan@twr.org](mailto:tmcelhan@twr.org).