# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreward</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries Listed Alphabetically</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Seventh-day Adventist Church &amp; Religious Freedom</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank You</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Information</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This report has come a long ways from our initial endeavor to document the state of religious freedom in the world with a focus on the Seventh-day Adventist experience. In an increasingly interrelated global world, a systemic approach to religious freedom in the context of human rights is warranted and requires a broader, multidisciplinary approach.

For this report, Dr Diop has chosen a multifaceted approach. A section entitled “perspectives on current issues” provides succinct information that sheds light on major human rights and freedom of religion or belief issues from economic, political, social, cultural, and religious perspectives. Violations of human rights always occur in contexts where all these perspectives are woven together. In other words, each country provides a unique context where several factors are intertwined. Disentangling these factors helps us to better understand the real challenges a given country faces.

More than 70% of the world population lives under some form of restriction to religious freedom. Where there is no separation of religion and state, freedoms are restricted. Though we defend religious freedom for people of all beliefs, approximately 75% of the people persecuted for their faith are Christian.

The World Report consistently zooms in on the Seventh-day Adventist experience and notes government restrictions, the hostility of the religious groups of the majority population, and restriction from secular states.

To encourage government and institutions to embrace and promote freedom of religion or belief, the Adventist Church supports the International Religious Liberty Association’s (IRLA) congresses, symposia and festivals around the world. We hope this world will become a better place for millions who deserve to live the full scope of their human dignity.

Dr John Graz, General Editor
All people strive to obtain freedom, justice, and peace. These rights form the essential core of meaningful human existence. When these rights are denied, people are reduced to disposable commodities to be used and abused. What it means to be human becomes compromised and the entire human race is diminished.

More than 60 years ago, the United Nations ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The signatories of this historic document pledged to uphold human dignity, to respect the inviolable freedom of conscience, and to maintain the right to choose, change, and promote one’s inherited or adopted religion or worldview. Article 18 reads as follows:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

Despite heightened awareness of the global responsibility to protect the human rights of every person, our world today is still marred by multifaceted violations of these rights.

These violations take various forms: deprivation of political rights and legal protections, judicial abuses, racial and ethnic stigmatization, gender inequality, exploitation of children, denial of access to common resources, censorship and intimidation intended to stifle freedom of speech, torture, and even murder. In some countries these actions are state sponsored or driven by popular hostility. Countries that adopt a state religion tend to restrict the freedom of religious minorities in their midst and it is reported that in 75% of the world’s countries minority groups experience some sort of discrimination. Oppressive and totalitarian regimes deprive millions of people of their human rights, including the
right to freely practice their chosen religion. In some cases, religious differences result in open warfare.

The fact that Seventh-day Adventists celebrate the Seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) as a day of worship and rest makes them vulnerable to discrimination in this area. For example, Adventists are unable to graduate from certain schools because they will not participate in academic activities on the Sabbath. In some cases, these young people find it necessary to change careers in order to have more employment opportunities and live decent lives.

Seventy-five percent of those persecuted because of their beliefs and practices, an estimated 200 million people, are Christians. While this report focuses on the experiences of Seventh-day Adventists, advocacy for the religious freedom of all people is a moral responsibility. For this reason, we summarize the human rights record of each country and identify government restrictions on religious liberty and social hostility directed toward minorities because of their religious beliefs and practices. We hope that you will find this information useful.

Ganoune Diop, Ph.D.
Executive Editor
Director of UN Relations
Countries Listed Alphabetically

Afghanistan ................. 12  
Albania .................... 13  
Algeria ..................... 15  
American Samoa ........... 16  
Andorra ..................... 17  
Angola ...................... 18  
Anguilla .................... 20  
Antigua and Barbuda ....... 20  
Argentina ................... 21  
Armenia ..................... 23  
Aruba ....................... 24  
Australia ................... 25  
Austria ...................... 27  
Azerbaijan .................. 29  
Bahamas .................... 31  
Bangladesh .................. 32  
Barbados .................... 33  
Belarus ...................... 34  
Belgium ..................... 35  
Belize ....................... 36  
Benin ....................... 37  
Bermuda .................... 39  
Bhutan ...................... 40  
Bolivia ...................... 41  
Bosnia and Herzegovina .... 42  
Botswana ................... 43  
Brazil ....................... 45  
British Virgin Islands ..... 46  
Brunei Darussalam ......... 47  
Bulgaria .................... 49  
Burkina Faso ............... 50  
Burma (Myanmar) ........... 52  
Burundi ..................... 53  
Cambodia ................... 55  
Cameroon ................... 56  
Canada ...................... 57  
Cape Verde .................. 59  
Cayman Islands ............ 60  
Central African Republic ... 61  
Chad ....................... 62  
Chile ....................... 64  
China ....................... 65  
Colombia ................... 68  
Comoros ..................... 70  
Congo, Democratic Republic of the ....... 71  
Congo, Republic of the .... 73  
Cook Islands ............... 74  
Costa Rica .................. 75  
Cote d’Ivoire .............. 76
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falkland Islands</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Guiana</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guadeloupe</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea, Democratic Peoples Republic of</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea, Republic of (South Korea)</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martinique</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronesia, Federated States of</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaco</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montserrat</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands Antilles</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitcairn Island</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports:</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Kitts and Nevis.</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Lucia</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Pierre and Miquelon</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Marino</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Tome and Principe</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Virgin Islands</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallis and Futuna</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AFGHANISTAN

Population: 30,419,928
Seventh-day Adventists: unknown
Religious Groups: Sunni Muslim 80%, Shi’a Muslim 19%, other 1%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Decades of war have left the Afghan economy in shambles and international aid represents 98% of the GDP. Analysts speak of the need for an “international financial perfusion,” but ongoing insecurity makes Westerners leery of investing in the country. In 2010, Kabul Bank was embroiled in a major scandal when two of its administrators faced accusations that they had defrauded the institution of $1 billion and were subsequently arrested and detained. A severe drought has affected more than three million people in the north and west of the country, yet the harvest of opium continues unabated. A potential financial boon may be found in Afghanistan’s considerable natural resources (copper, iron, cobalt, chromite, and lithium) which have an estimated value of one to three trillion dollars. The treatment of women, though much better than during Taliban rule, is far from satisfactory. The rights to food, to water, and to life are fundamentally jeopardized by armed conflicts.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution declares Islam to be the religion of the state. “We the people of Afghanistan: Believe firmly in Almighty God, relying on His divine will and adhering to the Holy religion of Islam… observing the United Nations Charter as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” It also states “no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam.” However, it contains provision for followers of other religions “to exercise their faith and perform their religious rites within the limits of the provisions of the law.”
**State Attitudes and Actions:** The state does not in reality allow for other religious practices. All citizens are considered Muslim by default. Legally, non-Muslims are not permitted to marry; however, the Supreme Court has ruled that they may as long as they have not declared themselves to be such. Though there are no laws against proselytizing, the practice is viewed as being contrary to Islam.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** The minority Sikh, Hindu, and Christian communities experience social pressure regarding the practice of their religion. Hindus and Sikhs have found it difficult to cremate dead loved ones; their children also face discrimination at school.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are no Seventh-day Adventist churches.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are serious problems for non-Muslim religious minorities.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Proselytizing is frowned upon and it is illegal to attempt to convert a Muslim.

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**ALBANIA**

**Population:** 3,204,284  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 352  
**Religious Groups:** Muslim 70% (Sunni and Bektashi—a form of Shi’a Sufism), Albanian Orthodox 20%, Catholic 10%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** The country’s debt is equal to 60% of its GDP. Political rivalries interfere with efforts to achieve economic and social stability. Human rights concerns include domestic violence, human trafficking, poor prison conditions, and allegations of torture and mistreatment while in police custody.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Part Two, Chapter II, and Article 24, “(1) Freedom of conscience and of religion is guaranteed. (2)
Everyone is free to choose or to change his religion or beliefs, as well as to express them individually or collectively, in public or private life, through cult, education, practices or the performance of rituals. (3) No one may be compelled or prohibited to take part or not in a religious community or in religious practices or to make his beliefs or faith public.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally respects religious freedom in practice, though the predominant religious communities (Sunni Muslim, Bektashi, Orthodox, and Catholic) enjoy a greater degree of official recognition (e.g., national holidays) and social status based on their historical presence in the country. Compensation was paid to the Orthodox Church for land seized by the Communist government. However, many property claims remain unresolved.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** The government seeks to educate the population on issues of tolerance and diversity. For the most part, Albanians are tolerant of various religious communities. There are no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are three Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
ALGERIA

Population: 35,468,208
Seventh-day Adventists: 40
Religious Groups: Sunni Muslim 99%, Christian and Jewish 1%

Perspectives on Current Issues: An atmosphere of violence, riots and insurrection, combined with the effects of the 1990 civil war, continue to affect the country. In spite of its natural resources, the World Bank ranks Algeria 148th of 183 countries in reference to doing business. It ranks 112th of 183 countries according to the NGO Transparency International’s index of perceived corruption. Human rights concerns include police brutality, arbitrary detentions, death while in custody, and discrimination against women. The privilege or impunity of state officials is considered a social and political plague by several human rights organizations.

Constitutional Provision: Article 4 of the constitution states: “Islam is the religion of the State. The Republic guarantees each person the respect of his opinions and beliefs, and the free exercise of worship.”

State Attitudes and Actions: In February 2008, the government began enforcing Ordinance 06-03, which regulates non-Muslim religious practice. This resulted in the closure of approximately 27 churches and legal action against members of some Christian groups. Ordinance 06-03 restricts public assembly for the purpose of worship and calls for the creation of a national commission to regulate the registration process. The Catholic Church is the only officially recognized non-Muslim religious group in the country. The Anglican, Seventh-day Adventist, and other Protestant churches have pending registration requests with the government and report no government interference in holding services.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Foreigners of different faiths are generally treated with respect, as long as they do not proselytize. Radical Islamists, who seek to rid the country of those who do not share their extremist interpretation of Islam, commit violent acts and pose a significant security threat.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There is one Seventh-day Adventist church. The church lost all of its institutions after the 1962 revolution.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: As a religious minority in a Muslim nation, Adventists who wish to keep Sabbath find it a continual hindrance in obtaining work and attending school.

Freedom to Evangelize: Proselytizing is illegal. Adventists who hold private worship services are threatened and harassed.

AMERICAN SAMOA

Population: 68,420
Seventh-day Adventists: 1,800
Religious Groups: Christian Congregationalist 50%, Catholic 20%, Protestant and other 30%

Constitutional Provision: The United States Constitution governs religious liberties in American Samoa. The First Amendment states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Under the United States Constitution, American Samoa respects the rights of individuals to worship according to the dictates of conscience.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of religious hostility or bias in American Samoa.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are ten Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.
Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is recognized as a legitimate Christian denomination.

Sabbath keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

ANDORRA

Population: 84,864
Seventh-day Adventists: 10
Religious Groups: Catholic

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Title II, Chapter 1, Article 6, “All persons are equal before the law. No one may be discriminated against on grounds of birth, race, sex, origin, religion, opinions or any other personal or social condition.” Title II, Chapter 3, Article 11, states additional provisions, which safeguard religious freedom.

State Attitudes and Actions: The state generally supports religious freedom. The Catholic Church provides teachers for religion classes, and the government pays their salaries. The government was willing to offer Arabic classes, but the Muslim community was not able to find an Imam to teach.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are few reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Attitudes among religious groups appear to be amicable and tolerant.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
ANGOLA

Population: 19,628,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 395,570
Religious Groups: Catholic 64%, Protestant 27%, African Apostolic Church 3%, Jehovah’s Witness 2%

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 8: “The Republic of Angola shall be a secular State, and there shall be separation between the State and Churches . . . . Religions shall be respected and the State shall protect Churches and places and objects of worship, provided they abide by the laws of the State.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government requires religious groups to register with the Ministries of Justice and Culture for legal status and has thereby significantly limited the number registered. Groups must provide general background information and have at least 100,000 adult adherents to qualify for registration. The government recognizes 85 denominations. More than 800 other religious organizations, many of which are Congolese- or Brazilian-based Christian Evangelical groups, have registration applications pending. They do not meet the membership requirement of at least 100,000 members and are therefore not eligible to receive legal status, but the government does not bar their activity. The Muslim community in particular is affected by this numerical limitation, as many are believed to be illegal immigrants and do not count towards the legal minimum. The government banned 17 religious groups from practicing harmful religious rituals in private residences.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Members of the clergy regularly use their pulpits to criticize government policies, although church leaders report self-censorship regarding particularly sensitive issues such as human rights, poverty, governance, and political intolerance. There are isolated reports of societal abuse or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Public attitudes toward Islam are generally negative. Cultural differences between Angolan and Muslim West African immigrants are cited as a basis for negative views toward Islam, as is the perceived link between Islam and illegal immigration.
Government agencies, church groups, and civil society organizations continue campaigns against traditional religions that involve shamans, employ animal sacrifices, or are identified as practicing witchcraft. Police rescued 40 children held in a house by two religious sects accused of witchcraft.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 969 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates two schools, one hospital, three healthcare facilities, one publishing house, and one Bible correspondence school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is officially recognized by the government.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** It is reported that there are some instances of employment problems related to employees wishing not to work on Saturday.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**Efforts to Promote Religious Freedom:** In June 2008, an estimated 45,000 people attended the largest Festival of Religious Freedom ever organized in the world in Luanda, Angola. This followed a Congress on Religious Freedom that had 600 participants and was organized by the Angola Religious Freedom Association with the support of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Angola.
ANGUILLA

Population: 15,465
Seventh-day Adventists: 400
Religious Groups: Christian 90%, Protestant 45%, Anglican 30%, Methodist 23.9%, Catholic 5.50%

Constitutional Provision: Anguilla is an overseas territory of the United Kingdom and, consistent with United Kingdom policy, affords full religious freedom.

State Attitudes and Actions: All citizens of Anguilla enjoy full religious freedom.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Generally speaking, harmony exists among the various religious groups in Anguilla.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are three Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Population: 88,550
Seventh-day Adventists: 8,159
Religions: Christian 93% (Anglican 34%, Protestant 34%, Catholic 9%)

Constitutional Provision: Chapter II, Article 3 of the constitution states: “Whereas every person in Antigua and Barbuda is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, the right, regardless of race, place of origin, political opinions or affiliations, color, creed or sex, but subject
to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely … b. freedom of conscience, of expression (including freedom of the press) and of peaceful assembly and association….”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government has been consistent with regard to allowing religious freedom. However, Rastafarians have complained about being unable to use marijuana for religious purposes.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are no reports of strife among religious organizations.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 26 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is able to evangelize freely.

**ARGENTINA**

**Population:** 40,488,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 108,714  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 76%, Protestant 10.5%, Agnostic or Atheist 11%, Jewish 1.5%, other, 1%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Argentina has recently enjoyed greater stability and recovery after the political and military upheavals of the 1970s and 1980s. The economy is improving considerably. However, the gap between rich and poor has widened in recent decades.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Part 1, Sections 2, 19, and 20: (2) “The Federal Government supports the Catholic Apostolic Religion.” (19) “The private actions of men which in no way offend public order
or morality, nor injure a third party, are only reserved to God and are exempted from the authority of judges. No inhabitant of the Nation shall be obliged to perform what the law does not demand nor deprived of what the law does not prohibit.” (20) “Foreigners enjoy within the territory of the Nation all civil rights of citizens; they may exercise their industry, trade and profession; own real property, buy and sell it; navigate the rivers and coast; practice freely their religion.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally allows and protects the free exercise of religion. However, the Catholic Church enjoys some privileges not afforded other religious communions. All non-Catholic religious bodies must register as civil, not religious, organizations with the Secretariat of Worship. Religious groups may operate privately in homes without registration, but in order to operate publicly they must register. Registration also allows a religious group to enjoy tax-exempt status. In February 2009, Richard Williamson, a British Catholic bishop, was ordered to leave the country or be expelled for denying the full extent of the Holocaust.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Most faiths have an amicable relationship with each other. However, there have been some reports of Anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, according to the Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations, there has been a marked decrease from the previous reporting period.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 479 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, 19 high schools, four radio stations, two sanitariums, and one hospital. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There have been some issues with employers. However, work has been done on the local level to allow for Sabbath exemptions. Students have been successful in winning exemption from testing on Sabbath.
Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

ARMENIA

Population: 3,123,000  
Seventh-day Adventists: 884  
Religious Groups: Armenian Apostolic 94.7%, other Christian 4%, Yezidi (monotheist with elements of nature worship) 1.3%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The geographical location of Armenia has made its political life difficult. Turks, Russians, and Persians have all left their mark on its national identity and challenged the country’s autonomy. The horrific genocide of 1915–1917 and the dispute with Azerbaijan over the ethnic Armenian enclave Nagorno-Karabakh are examples of international conflicts which have had a deep impact. Intimidation, harassment, and restriction of freedom of expression by political opposition movements, journalists, and media outlets are employed to stifle criticism of the government.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter 2, Article 26, “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change the religion or belief and freedom to either alone or in community with others manifest the religion or belief, through preaching, church ceremonies and other religious rites. The exercise of this right may be restricted only by law in the interests of the public security, health, morality or the protection of rights and freedoms of others.”

State Attitudes and Actions: There are challenges to the practice of religious freedom in Armenia. On March 19, 2009, controversial draft changes to the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations and the Criminal Code were introduced in the National Assembly. The draft amendments are being reviewed because of concerns over their infringement on some religious rights. At the end of the reporting period there was no information on how
the government plans to proceed with these drafts, nor has the government commented on the joint review feedback.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are reports of societal abuses based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. In general, attitudes toward minority groups are negative. Most media outlets continue to label religious groups other than the Armenian Church as “sects” in their broadcasting and some have transmitted negative reports about them.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 18 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The anti-proselytizing law in Armenia is vague and selectively enforced. In some cases, Adventists are free to evangelize, but in some locations that freedom is greatly restricted.

**ARUBA**

**Population:** 108,000

**Seventh-day Adventists:** 691

**Religious Groups:** Catholic 82%, Protestant 8%, other 10% (includes Hindu, Muslim, Confucian, Jewish)

**Constitutional Provision:** Aruba is governed by the constitution of the Netherlands, which states in Chapter 1, Article 6: “(1) Everyone shall have the right to profess freely his religion or belief, either individually or in community with others, without prejudice to his responsibility under the law. (2) Rules concerning the exercise of this right other than in buildings and enclosed places may be laid down by Act of Parliament for the protection of health, in the interest of traffic and to combat or prevent disorders.”
State Attitudes and Actions: Aruba allows for the free exercise of religion. The Catholic Church receives preferential treatment, but other religions are not restricted from practicing.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of strife among the various religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are seven Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

AUSTRALIA

Population: 22,674,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 56,156
Religious Groups: Catholic 26%, Anglican 19%, other Christian 19%, Buddhist 2.1%, Muslim 1.7%, other 1.1%, unspecified 12.3%, none 18.7%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Due to its rich natural resources and a strong mining industry, Australia has not been significantly affected by the global economic crisis of recent years. The country’s public services are among the best in the world. However, human rights advocates have criticized the treatment of indigenous peoples, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution provides, in Chapter V, Article 116: “The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.”
State Attitudes and Actions: Australia generally provides religious freedom for its citizens, and Australia has specific laws, such as the Racial Discrimination Act, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act, and the Workplace Relations Act, to protect individuals from religious discrimination in general and at the workplace in particular. Seven of the eight states have explicit provisions to protect against religious discrimination. South Australia is the only state, which lacks explicit protection. All religions generally have the same rights to status, land, and building houses of worship. There is no registration requirement, but if they wish to obtain tax-exempt status religious groups must register with the Australia Tax Office.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most faiths have an amicable relationship with each other. There have been some reports of abuse aimed at Muslims and Jews. Muslim women, particularly those who wear the hijab, have been the victims of racial slurs. There have also been reports of graffiti painted on mosques. The Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council reported a significant number of incidents of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, religious coalitions, such as the Ambrose Centre for Religious Liberty and the Affinity Intercultural Foundation, have been working to promote greater religious cooperation. The Ambrose Centre has been keeping an eye on the country’s anti-vilification laws since they may be used against religious leaders who are critical of other religions.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 424 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, one junior college, 23 schools, one hospital, 16 nursing homes, nine bookstores, and one health food company. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Problems occasionally occur for Adventists observing the Sabbath. Sometimes an employer adjusts the work schedule, requiring labor on the Sabbath. Students are sometimes required to take exams on the Sabbath. In most cases, a local pastor or church official has been able to intercede. Two Seventh-day Adventist doctors were required to write their exams on the Sabbath in order for them to gain opportunity to
train as surgeons. Several official attempts were made to get an exemption, but they were all rejected. One doctor has withdrawn from the program and the other, at the time of this report, had his matter before the courts. Additionally, a Seventh-day Adventist was supposed to write a language exam as part of her application for permanent residence in Australia. The exam, which is administered by a private organization, was scheduled on a Saturday. The Australian Union Conference was able to get an exemption for her after it made a formal submission to the government’s Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission.

Freedom to Evangelize: Seventh-day Adventists have typically enjoyed freedom to evangelize. Since the passage of the Racial and Religious Toleration Act of 2001, Adventists and others could be in violation of the law through literature distribution and public evangelism, especially since Adventist literature often challenges widely accepted beliefs.

Visits: The annual meeting of an international group of experts in religious freedom was held at the Law school of the University of Sydney in August 2011.

AUSTRIA

Population: 8,418,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 3,890
Religious Groups: Catholic 68%, Muslim 6.1%, Lutheran 3.9%, other 4%, none 18%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Austria has long enjoyed economic prosperity, but now faces the same challenges which have befallen the rest of the euro zone. Even though overall unemployment is still low compared to other European countries, a modest 5.4% in 2011, youth unemployment is on the rise. Human rights advocates have criticized Austria for its treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers. Other allegations of mistreatment concern detainees held in police custody.
Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter 1, Article 7, “(1) All nationals (Austrian citizens) are equal before the law. Privileges based upon birth, sex, estate, class or religions are excluded.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice. However, religious minority groups complain about second-class status and the government classifies some of these groups as “sects.” The government provides financial support to private schools run by any of the 14 officially recognized religious societies.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are some reports of societal abuse or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Muslims complain about incidents of societal discrimination and verbal harassment.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 49 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a seminary, a high school, a mobile homecare service, a nursing home, and a publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is recognized as a legitimate religious community.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Adventists have often lost their jobs due to Sabbath observance. In some cases, arrangements have been made to satisfy both employee and employer.

Freedom to Evangelize: Adventists are generally free to worship without hindrance, but sometimes members are not able to rent large halls to hold evangelistic meetings.
AZERBAIJAN

Population: 9,150,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 715
Religious Groups: Muslim 93.4% (mostly Shi’a), Russian Orthodox 2.5%, Armenian Orthodox 2.3%, other 1.8%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The economy is largely dependent on the country’s petroleum and natural gas resources. Public debt is 15% of the GDP and, according to analysts, macroeconomic prospects are good. However, a 2011 report by the NGO Transparency International ranks Azerbaijan 143rd out of 183 countries assessed—on par with Belarus and Russia. Human rights defenders critique the government, which they see as repressive. In October, seven people received sentences of between one and three years in prison for their participation in pro-democracy demonstrations. There are reports of widespread restrictions of freedom of religion, of expression, of assembly, and of the press. Journalists are repeatedly harassed and intimidated. There are allegations that opponents of the regime are tortured while in police custody.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution was changed by national referendum in March 2009. Two changes put new limitations on the spread of religion. Chapter 1, Section II, Article 18 of the constitution reads: “Religion shall be separated from the State in the Azerbaijan Republic. All religions shall be equal by law.” Article 18 Part 2 reads: “Spreading of and propagandizing religion (religious movements), humiliating people’s dignity, and contradicting the principles of humanism are prohibited.” Article 48 reads: “Everyone has the right to define his/her attitude to religion, to profess, individually or together with others, any religion or to profess no religion, to express and spread one’s beliefs concerning religion. Everyone is free to carry out religious rituals however this should not violate public order and contradict public morals. Religious beliefs and convictions do not excuse infringements of the law.” A new section has been added to Article 48. It reads: “No one shall be forced to express (to demonstrate) his or her religious faith and belief, to execute religious rituals and participate in religious ceremonies.”
**State Attitudes and Actions:** Though the constitution provides religious freedom, in practice this right has often been infringed upon. Traditional religious groups—Muslims, Russian and Armenian Orthodox adherents—and other religious organizations have faced harassment.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Since the major religions of Azerbaijan are intimately linked with cultural heritage, changing one’s religion is not favored. Non-traditional religious groups are generally viewed with a measure of suspicion. Muslim citizens who convert to other religions often become victims of religious prejudice and social ostracism. Groups, especially Evangelical Christians, involved in proselytizing often face hostility. Foreign Islamic missionary activity is also discouraged.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are six Seventh-day Adventist churches.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination and is registered with the state.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** The religious climate in Azerbaijan contributes to Seventh-day Adventist employees experiencing difficulties in the workplace. Most businesses operate seven days a week, making it difficult for Adventists to observe the Sabbath.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Adventists are allowed to have houses of worship, but they frequently have trouble when they seek to rent a public hall to hold evangelistic meetings. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is only allowed to evangelize in localities where it is officially registered and possesses its own house of worship. Restrictions are placed upon the amount and type of Adventist literature that can be imported, produced, or distributed. All literature must be reviewed by a government agency.
BAHAMAS

Population: 342,877
Seventh-day Adventists: 17,576
Religious Groups: Baptist 35.4%, Anglican 15.1%, Catholic 13.5%, Pentecostal 8.1%, Church of God 4.8%, Methodist 4.2%, other Christian 15.2%, none or unspecified 2.9%, other 0.8% (2000 census)

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter III, Article 22: “(1) Except with his consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, and for the purpose of this Article, the said freedom includes freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government of the Bahamas generally respects the religious freedom of its citizens. However, the practice of Obeah, a form of Voodoo, is illegal.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Among the various religious groups in the Bahamas there is generally great harmony.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 53 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
BANGLADESH

Population: 150,685,000  
Seventh-day Adventists: 33,837  
 Religious Groups: Muslim 90%, Hindu 9%, other 1% (2001 est)

Perspectives on Current Issues: The country has benefited from a growth of 6.3% in 2011. Exports have reached 47%. Exports of textiles, which alone represent 80% of total exports, have contributed to this growth. The agricultural sector, which sustains half of the population, has also experienced a 5% growth. However, one third of the population lives below the poverty line. According to the Asian Development Bank, up to half of the budget is devoted to the eradication of poverty. A main human rights issue is the widespread practice of arbitrary detention. Freedoms of religion, of assembly, of speech, and of association are restricted. Violence against women is also of great concern.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 2A: “The State religion. The State religion of the Republic is Islam, but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in the Republic.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Bangladesh is an Islamic State. Although the government lends public support to religious freedom, minority religions have faced attacks and the state has not been able to protect them. However, there is evidence that the situation of religious minorities is improving.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Ahmadiyya Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, and Hindus all experience discrimination at the hands of the majority Islamic population. The slowness by government authorities, including the police force, to defend minority religions has further complicated the situation. Conversion from Islam is socially unacceptable.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 120 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one seminary and college, four schools, a dental clinic, and one publishing house.
Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a recognized religious organization.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Adventists who observe the Sabbath do experience problems at work and school.

Freedom to Evangelize: Evangelism is restricted officially by law and informally by widespread religious zealotry.

BARBADOS

Population: 256,552
Seventh-day Adventists: 18,500
Religious Groups: Protestant 41%, Anglican 32%, Catholic 4%

Constitutional Provision: Chapter 3, Article 19.1-19.5 of the constitution states: “Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience and for the purpose of this section the said freedom includes freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The attitude of the government is consistent with the constitutional provision for religious freedom. However, Rastafarians complain of being unable to use marijuana in the course of their religious practice.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Religious groups generally have amicable relationships with each other. There are no reports of violence or strife among religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 58 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school, one clinic, and a nursing home. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is allowed to evangelize freely.

**BELARUS**

**Population:** 9,472,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 5,161  
**Religious Groups:** Eastern Orthodox 82.5%, Catholic 12%, Protestant 2%, other (including Autocephalous Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Krishna) 3.5%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Belarus is the only country on European soil to maintain the use of capital punishment. The government utilizes intimidation, harassment, persecution, imprisonment, and other forms of repression to control public opinion and election results.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Section I, Article 16, “(1) All religions and faiths shall be equal before the law. The establishment of any privileges or restrictions with regard to a particular religion or faith in relation to others shall not be permitted. (2) The activities of denominational organizations, their bodies, and representatives, that are directed against the sovereignty of the Republic of Belarus, its Constitutional system and civic harmony, or involve a violation of civil rights and liberties, shall be prohibited.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Though the state provides for religious freedom in its constitution, it seldom affords it to non-traditional Belarusian religious organizations.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Prejudice against non-traditional religions is endemic in Belarus. Actions taken by the state and the media often reinforce such bigotry and make it difficult for these religions to function.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 76 Seventh-day Adventist churches.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Seventh-day Adventists are a religious minority and suffer discrimination. Sabbath-keeping is a continual hindrance for them in obtaining work or attending school.

Freedom to Evangelize: Seventh-day Adventists are viewed as a sect, making evangelism and normal operations very difficult. Proselytizing by non-traditional religious organizations is illegal.

BELGIUM

Population: 11,000,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 1,900
Religious Groups: Catholic 75%, other 25% (including Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim)

Perspectives on Current Issues: The euro zone crisis has not spared Belgium and the country’s debt is nearly 100% of its GDP. The country has been repeatedly criticized for its treatment of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers. However, in 2002, the Belgian government extended a formal apology to the Congo for abuses which occurred during the colonial period.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Title II, Article 19, “Freedom of worship, public practice of the latter, as well as freedom to demonstrate one’s opinions on all matters, are guaranteed, except for the repression of offenses committed when using this freedom.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice; however, conditions are not optimal for groups regarded as sects or cults. Government officials have the authority to monitor religious groups.
Private Attitudes and Actions: There are some reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Jewish and Muslim groups have reported incidents of discrimination, as have religious groups which are not accorded official recognition by the government.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 27 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely. The church has cultivated good relations with other churches.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

BELIZE

Population: 318,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 36,831
Religious Groups: Catholic 50%, Protestant 34% (Pentecostal 7.4%, Mennonite 4.1%, Methodist 3.5%, Anglican 3%, Jehovah’s Witness 1.5%)

Constitutional Provision: The constitution in Part II, Article 3 protects: “(a) life, liberty, security of the person, and the protection of the law; (b) freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association.” Article 11 states: “(1) Except with his own consent, a person shall not be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, including freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government is constitutionally bound to refrain from involving itself in religious matters. Although there is a statute
which provides for students from grades K-6 to attend one class of religious instruction per week, no student is forced to attend.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There is considerable harmony among the various religious groups. The involvement of religious groups in addressing societal ills is also very prominent.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 83 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates three high schools and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

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**BENIN**

**Population:** 9,109,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 5,323  
**Religious Groups:** indigenous beliefs (animist) 35%, Christian 35%, Muslim 20%, other 10%

**Constitutional Provision:** Benin is one of the few countries in Africa that claims total religious freedom. All religions are free to practice and propagate their faith. The constitution states in Article 23: “Every person has the right to freedom of thought, of conscience, of religion, of creed, of opinion and of expression with respect for the public order established by law and regulations . . . . The institutions and the religious or philosophical communities shall have the right to develop without hindrances. They shall not be subject to the guardianship of the State. They shall regulate and administer their affairs in an autonomous manner.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Religious groups must register with the Ministry of the Interior. The Constitutional Court determines the legal guidelines that govern religious practice. In recent years the court determined that it is illegal
to block the access of any group to its religious services and that criticism of religious belief is a protected free speech right. In January 2008, the Constitutional Court ruled that the destruction of an Evangelical church by members of a local tradition called Oro and scornful statements made about the Oro by the church’s pastor violated the constitutional principles of interfaith dialogue, respect, and tolerance. Government officials accord respect to prominent leaders of all religious groups by attending their induction ceremonies, funerals, and other religious celebrations. The President regularly receives leaders of all religious groups, and police forces are assigned to provide security to any religious event upon request. In accordance with Article 2 of the constitution, which provides for a secular state, public schools are not authorized to provide religious instruction. Religious groups are permitted to establish private schools.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** The diversity of religious communities in Benin has helped foster understanding and a generally positive relationship between the various groups. An example is seen in what is called “Ecumenical Day.” This event has been held on the first Wednesday of May and traditionally includes a large celebration of inter-religious cooperation in the historic town of Ouidah. Individual religious leaders make an effort to bridge the divide between Christians and Muslims and preach a message of tolerance. There are occasional conflicts between Voodoo practitioners and Christians over Voodoo initiation practices, which require the intervention of local security forces. In November 5, 2009, the Catholic Church convened an international workshop in Ghana to promote religious tolerance in Africa, which was well attended by delegates from sub-Saharan Africa, including Benin.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 16 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a radio-TV production center and a Bible correspondence school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.
Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

BERMUDA

Population: 66,000  
Seventh-day Adventists: 3,944  
Religious Groups: Anglican 18%, Catholic 15%, African Methodist Episcopal 11%, other Protestant 36%

Constitutional Provision: Chapter 1, Article 8 of the Bermuda Constitution Order of 1968 states: “(1) Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, and for the purposes of this section the said freedom includes freedom of thought and religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in the community with others, and both in public or in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice, and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Bermuda is an overseas territory of the United Kingdom which allows the free expression of religion and does not seek to hinder it in any way.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of interfaith violence or strife.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 11 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one K-12 school and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.
BHUTAN

Population: 725,940
Seventh-day Adventists: Unknown
Religious Groups: Lamaistic Buddhist 75%, Indian and Nepalese influenced Hindu 25%

Constitutional Provision: Article 3, Sections 1 and 2 of the constitution reads: “1. Buddhism is the spiritual heritage of Bhutan, which promotes the principles and values of peace, non-violence, compassion and tolerance. 2. The Druk Gyalpo is the protector of all religions.” Article 7, Section 4 states: “A Bhutanese citizen shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. No person shall be compelled to belong to another faith by means of coercion or inducement.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The National Security Act forbids “words either spoken or written, or by other means whatsoever, that promote or attempt to promote, on grounds of religion, race, language, caste, or community, or on any other ground whatsoever, feelings of enmity or hatred between different religious, racial or language groups or castes and communities.” This act helped to make the practice of non-traditional religions more difficult. The Christian population is miniscule and it is difficult for them to share their faith. There is only one known Christian Church in Bhutan. Most Christians must practice their religion privately. While the government strictly regulates non-Buddhist religious minorities, it grants liberal subsidies to Buddhist organizations, including money for education and stipends for clergy salaries.

Private Attitudes and Actions: The state is the major source of religious persecution. Individuals generally practice a higher level of tolerance toward each other.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience: The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not officially operate in Bhutan.
**BOLIVIA**

**Population:** 10,088,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 76,099  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 49.6%, Protestant 27%, other 14%, none 9.4% (2000 data)

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Bolivia faces several challenges. One of every 16 children dies before the age of five. Inflation reached 7% in 2011. Indigenous populations experience widespread poverty. Protestors against road projects and for the preservation of indigenous territories express their conflict with the government. Police violence is one of the issues that causes resignations of high officials. Bolivia is the second largest producer of gas on the continent, but it ranks 153 out of 183 in the index of doing business. About 900,000 Bolivians receive an allocation for elderly. In spite of these impressive challenges, Bolivia exports reached eight billion dollars in 2011.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states “Article 4: The State respects and guarantees freedom of religion and spiritual beliefs, according to persons’ worldviews…. Article 14, Section II: The State prohibits and punishes all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex, color, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, origin, culture, nationality, citizenship, language, religion, ideology, political or philosophical affiliation, marital status, economic or social, occupation, education level, disability, pregnancy, or others that have the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, of equal rights of every person.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally follows the constitutional provision for religious freedom. In the new constitution, which was promulgated on February 7, 2009, the state operates independent from religion. However, existing agreements with the Catholic Church at times imping upon a full compliance with the constitution. Additionally, in order to obtain legal status, non-Catholic religious groups must be registered. Registered groups receive tax-exempt status and must submit a yearly report to the Director of Religion. Not all public schools provide religious education and the ones doing
so only provide Catholic religious instruction. Attendance at religious instruction is not compulsory. Non-Catholic religious instruction is not an option. There is a level of tension in the relationship between the Catholic Church and President Evo Morales. Amongst other things, President Morales has identified it as being his “enemy.” The church, for its part, in its report to the Vatican on October 23, 2008, identified the state as a place where religious persecution occurs.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most faith communities have amicable relationships with each other.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 278 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, two high schools, and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Population: 3,843,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 605
Religious Groups: Muslim 40%, Orthodox 31%, Catholic 15%, Protestant 4%, other 10%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Recovery from the Balkan wars of the 1990s is ongoing and refugees have been slow to return. However, the International Criminal Tribunal has succeeded in bringing to trial numerous people accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Police brutality is allegedly a current problem.
Constitutional Provision: Article II, Number 3, of the constitution states: “All persons within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall enjoy the human rights and fundamental freedoms referred to in paragraph 2 above.” These include “(g) Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice. Local authorities are known to restrict the religious freedom of minority groups. Some cases of vandalism and violence have gone unpunished.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Societal abuses and discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice persist. Discrimination against religious minorities occurs in nearly all parts of the country. However, the number of incidents targeting religious symbols, clerics, and property in the three ethnic majority areas has decreased.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 23 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Sabbath-keeping is a continual hindrance for Adventists in obtaining work or attending school.

Freedom to Evangelize: Though evangelism is permitted by the constitution, local politicians and influential clergy of other faiths often obstruct the Adventist Church’s attempts to evangelize.

BOTSWANA

Population: 2,033,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 31,781
Religious Groups: Independent 32% (includes Zion Christian Church, Spiritual Healing Church, and St. Engenas Zion Christian Church), Protestant
11% (includes Seventh-day Adventist, Assemblies of God, and Evangelical Lutheran), Catholic 4%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Botswana is considered to have the most stable and sustained economic growth in Africa. It is also the most stable multiparty democracy in Africa. The country claims that it has adopted total religious freedom in theory and practice.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Chapter II, Section 11: “Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, and for the purposes of this section the said freedom includes freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** There is no state religion and all organizations, including religious groups, must register with the government. Unregistered groups are liable to penalties. Except for the case of the Unification Church, there is no indication that any religious organization has ever been denied registration. Public schools include religion as part of the curriculum, emphasizing Christianity, but also including discussion of other religious groups present in the country.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious and there are no reports of significant tensions. Representatives of the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Baha’i communities came together in April 2009 to form and register an official interfaith council.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 96 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college of nursing, one hospital, and two clinics. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** The University of Botswana leaves it to the lecturers to arrange testing times for students and sometimes
they insist on Saturday exams. This is also true concerning Mission Secondary Schools, which sometimes require Adventist teachers to supervise and students to study on Saturday. This has led to court cases, and so far Adventists have always won. To accommodate Seventh-day Adventists, elections held on Sabbath were once extended by two hours to allow Seventh-day Adventists to vote after sundown.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**BRAZIL**

**Population:** 195,723,694  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 1,182,725  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 73.6%, Protestant 16%, indigenous beliefs 5%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Brazil’s considerable natural resources appear to provide the foundation for a promising future. While aspiring to prominent international standing, millions of its people live in abject poverty. The indigenous population reportedly suffers from neglect and discrimination.

**Constitutional Provision:** Title 2, Chapter 1, Article 5 (VI & VIII) of the constitution states: “(VI) freedom of conscience and of belief is inviolable, the free exercise of religious cults being ensured and, under the terms of the law, the protection of places of worship and their rites being guaranteed….  
(VIII) no one shall be deprived of any rights by reason of religious belief or philosophical or political conviction, unless he invokes it to exempt himself from a legal obligation required of all and refuses to perform an alternative obligation established by law.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally allows for freedom of religion. Religious groups are not required to register and no state or favored religion exists. Religious instruction is a requirement at public schools, but students are free to opt out. A new article, No. 20 of Law CAO No. 7437, was added to establish guidelines with regard to dealing with religious intolerance
and racism. However, the government places restrictions on non-indigenous persons, inclusive of missionaries, on visiting indigenous reserves. Nevertheless, if invited by the indigenous group, missionaries may visit the reserves.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** For the most part varying faith communities have amicable relationships. However, incidents connected to human rights issues have been reported. Members of African-based religions, such as Candomble and Umbanda, have complained about discrimination against them. There have also been sporadic reports of vandalism of churches and Jewish places of worship. Islamic women have complained about being harassed for wearing their religious head covering.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 6,335 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, one college, 48 academies, eight secondary school, 31 orphanages, 15 clinics, 15 radio stations, six hospitals, and one nursing home. In August 2009, the church launched its first college in Northern Brazil. It began providing instruction in February 2010. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Though some Seventh-day Adventists have had problems with Sabbath observance, there are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS**

**Population:** 24,491  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 1,500  
**Religious Groups:** Protestant 51%, Anglican 13%, Catholic 3%

**Constitutional Provision:** Religious freedom extends to all the territories under the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom, including the British Virgin Islands.
State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally allows for and protects the free exercise of religion.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of strife or violence among varying communities of faith.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are six Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Population: 400,000
Seventh-day Adventists: unknown
Religious Groups: Muslim 67%, Buddhist 13%, Christian 10%, other 10% (includes indigenous beliefs)

Perspectives on Current Issues: In Brunei, life expectancy is among the highest in Asia—79 years, which is just below Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. This country’s GDP remains one of the most enviable in Asia. Citizens are entitled to free education and free health care, most pay no income tax, and they benefit from heavily subsidized housing, fuel, and staple foods. However, 20% of the population still lives below the poverty line.

Constitutional Provision: “The religion of Brunei Darussalam shall be the Muslim religion according to the Shafi’i sect of that religion: Provided that all other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony by the person professing them in any part of Brunei Darussalam.”
State Attitudes and Actions: Though the constitution provides freedom for individuals to believe as they choose, in practice Brunei restricts the rights of non-Muslim adherents to practice their faith. The government placed further restrictions upon non-Muslim believers, prohibiting them from receiving religious instruction in privately run religious schools. There has also been added social, and at times official, pressure placed upon non-Muslims to conform to Islamic practices. All religious organizations that are not Shafi’i are required to register and recognition may be refused for any reason. Participating in a non-registered religious group is an offense and persons who encourage or invite others to unregistered groups can also face arrest and imprisonment. Zoning laws forbid house churches.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Generally, peace exists among members of various faith communities. Though the freedoms of non-Muslims are restricted, Muslims still treat non-believers with a measure of respect. Most citizens of Brunei do not know much about non-Muslim religions because they are forbidden from learning about other faiths.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are no Seventh-day Adventist churches.

Government Recognition: The government refuses to recognize new Christian denominations or to allow the expansion of existing denominations.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: The few Adventists in Brunei, all expatriates, have not reported problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: It is illegal to evangelize in Brunei, so the only way to share the faith is in small house churches where the Bible is studied. Government policies place very strict constraints on the population being exposed to religions other than Islam, and it is illegal to import religious literature.
BULGARIA

Population: 7,543,325
Seventh-day Adventists: 7,507
Religious Groups: Bulgarian Orthodox 76%, Muslim 10%, Protestant 0.9%, Catholic 0.7%, other

Perspectives on Current Issues: Bulgaria is affected by the economic woes plaguing the other EU members; however, public accounts show that its situation is not quite as dire. In fact, in 2011, public debt was estimated to be 17.5% of the GDP. Bulgaria has been criticized for its treatment of the Roma and Macedonian minority communities. It is reported that asylum-seekers have experienced long-term detention in poor conditions.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter One, Article 13, “(1) The practicing of any religion shall be unrestricted. (2) Religious institutions shall be separate from the state. (3) Eastern Orthodox Christianity shall be considered the traditional religion in the Republic of Bulgaria. (4) Religious institutions and communities, and religious beliefs shall not be used to political ends.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The constitutional provisions apply only to state registered religious organizations. The government clearly favors the predominant faiths, which are the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and Islam, and allows them more latitude than other organizations. Registration has proved to be very difficult for non-traditional religions. Religious freedom has improved for some religious minorities, but there is still some discrimination.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are ongoing reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Discrimination, harassment, and general public intolerance, particularly in the media, of some religious groups remain an intermittent problem. A number of religious groups broadcast radio programs: the Orthodox Radio Sion and the Christian Radio Svetlina air via Internet; Seventh-day Adventists broadcast a daily one-hour
program in Bulgarian on their world radio Voice of Hope; the Evangelical Trans-World Radio network also broadcasts a daily program in Bulgarian.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 124 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** Though the government recognizes the Seventh-day Adventist Church, members have been harassed and church property has been vandalized.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Employees and students encounter problems in keeping the Sabbath at work and at school.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Adventists are free to worship as they please, but bigotry and overzealous government officials have hindered Adventist evangelism in particular locales.

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**BURKINA FASO**

**Population:** 16,468,714  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 3,770  
**Religious Groups:** Muslim 52%, Catholic 20%, Protestant 9%

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 7: “The freedom of belief, non-belief, conscience, religious opinion, philosophy, religious exercise, assembly, practice of custom, as well as the freedom of procession and demonstration are guaranteed by the present Constitution subject to respect of the law, public order, morality, and the human person.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The country is a secular state. Islam, Christianity, and traditional indigenous religious beliefs are practiced freely without government interference. The government requires all organizations, religious or otherwise, to register with the Ministry of Territorial Administration. Registration confers legal status, but no specific controls or benefits. According to Article 45 of
the Freedom of Association Code, failure to register may result in a fine. The government gives all religious groups equal access to registration and routinely approves their applications. The government taxes religious groups only if they engage in commercial activities, such as farming and dairy production.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious, and there are no reports of significant tension. Some Muslims consider the 1996 law against female genital mutilation as discriminating against their religious practices and continue performing the procedure. At times community members force old women, falsely accused of being witches, to flee their villages. The Catholic Church-funded Delwende Center, which houses and feeds women accused of witchcraft, reported several cases. The Ministry of Social Action & National Solidarity, along with various other nongovernmental and religious organizations, maintains similar shelters in Ouagadougou.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 12 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates an ADRA horticultural center, a radio-TV production center, a Bible correspondence school, a dental clinic, and a dispensary. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
BURMA (MYANMAR)

Population: 54,000,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 29,817
Religious Groups: Buddhist 89%, Christian 4% (Baptist 3%, Catholic 1%), Muslim 4%, animist 1%, other 2%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The dissolution of the military junta and recent dialogues with dissidents and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, liberated after many years of house arrest, seem to suggest the possibility of a more open society in Myanmar. There are signs of a desire to break with a past marked by a disastrous human rights record: persecution, killing of ethnic minorities, forced labor, arbitrary detentions of political prisoners, disappearances, appalling prison conditions, and numerous deaths while in custody.

Constitutional Provision: The new constitution, approved by a referendum in May 2008, states in Chapter 1, Section 34: “Every citizen is equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess and practice religion subject to public order, morality or health and to the other provisions of this Constitution.” (The international community has seriously questioned the process whereby the new constitution was approved.)

State Attitudes and Actions: The government is intolerant towards non-Buddhist religions. In order to control the exercise of religion, the government requires everyone to carry ID cards, which indicate their religious preference. The military regime in Burma regulates and restricts the expression of religion and free speech. Even though the new constitution is supposed to guarantee freedom of religion, there are sections that are ambiguous and the authorities are not afraid of violating religious freedom. The government gives priority to Theravada Buddhism over all other religions, and persons wanting to advance in the military or public service must be Buddhist. However, Buddhist monks have been at the forefront in protesting against the government’s abuse of religious freedom. The government also restricts the importation of religious literature, and local printing of religious literature is subject to censorship—including translations of the Bible and Qur’an into indigenous languages. The government
does not allow Christian and Muslim believers to gather in large assemblies in order to celebrate religious occasions; there is also a limit to the number of Muslims who can gather in one place at any given time. The government does not allow Muslim employees to wear beards and it has dismissed some for doing so. The government has outlawed Muslims and Christians from having worship services in residential flats.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** For the most part, individual religious groups have an amicable relationship with each other. The only exception is in the state of Karen where there has been an ongoing conflict between a predominantly pro-government Buddhist faction and a predominantly Christian anti-government faction.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 197 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one seminary, eight schools, and one publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Keeping the Sabbath is sometimes difficult for those living in Burma.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Evangelism is tightly controlled and as a result it is important for members know the constitution and the law. The government prohibits Christian clergy from proselytizing in certain areas.

**BURUNDI**

**Population:** 10,216,000

**Seventh-day Adventists:** 129,468

**Religious Groups:** Catholic 61%, Protestant 10% (includes Seventh-day Adventist, Baptist, Evangelical Episcopal, and Methodist), Anglican 8%, Muslim 5%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** This country has a long history of human rights violations. The struggle to gain or maintain power has characterized relations between the two main tribes, the Hutu majority and the Tutsi minority.
For many years, the Tutsis controlled the army, commerce, and education. With the election of a Hutu president in 2010 and the establishment of an army which is more representative of the population, the country seems to be enjoying increased stability.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 27: “Every person has the right to freedom of thought, of conscience, of religion, of worship, while respecting public order and the law.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Religious groups are required to register with the Ministry of the Interior in accordance with the 1992 law that covers all non-profit organizations. Each association must provide the following: the denomination or affiliation of the institution, a copy of its bylaws, the address of its headquarters in the country, an address abroad if the local institution is a subsidiary, and information about the association’s governing body and legal representative. It usually takes from two to four weeks for the Ministry of the Interior to process a registration request. During the reporting period, no religious institution had its request for registration refused. The government does not exempt religious groups from taxes, but does waive duties for imported articles used in religious activities and for social development purposes.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** On March 16, 2009, it was reported that at least 10 albino people had been killed in Burundi in recent months. Witchdoctors in the region told clients that potions made with albino body parts will bring them luck in love, life, and business.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 287 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates two high schools, four health clinics, and two dispensaries. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
CAMBODIA

Population: 14,702,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 5,571
Religious Groups: Theravada Buddhists 93%, Muslims 5%, Christians 2%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The economy of Cambodia has maintained steady growth. In 2011, the export of cloth to the United States, for example, rose 23% from 2010. Rice exports have provided a significant boost to the economy. Paradoxically, Cambodia is one the countries which is most dependent on foreign aid, receiving an estimated one billion dollars annually—the equivalent of the national budget. Various human rights organizations have reported forced evictions, land disputes, and land-grabs that place an estimated 150,000 people at risk. Many cases of discrimination and harassment of refugees and asylum-seekers were reported in 2011.

Constitutional Provision: Article 43 of the constitution states: “Khmer citizens of either sex shall have the right to freedom of belief. Freedom of religious belief and worship shall be guaranteed by the State on the condition that such freedom does not affect other religious beliefs or violate public order and security.” The constitution affirms, “Buddhism shall be the religion of the State.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Cambodia generally allows for the free exercise of religion, even though the state supports Buddhism. All religions are required to register, but there is no penalty for non-compliance. The government frowns upon any abuse of religious freedom, regardless of the source from which such alleged abuse emanates. It requires that religious houses of worship be at least two kilometers from each other and that religious groups refrain from being critical of each other.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There is general harmony among the various religious groups. Some Christians and Muslims complained of a few minor problems involving Buddhists, but these incidents were personal in nature and likely do not reflect a trend.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are six Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

CAMEROON

Population: 20,129,878
Seventh-day Adventists: 108,202
Religious Groups: Catholic 21%, Muslim 20%, Protestant 19% (Evangelical, Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran, and Apostolic), indigenous beliefs 40%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The major criticism directed against government authorities concerns freedom of expression. Also, poor prison conditions and abuses during detention have been reported.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in the preamble: “Freedom of religion and worship shall be guaranteed.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The “Law on Religious Congregations” governs relations between the government and religious groups. The Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MINATD) must approve and register religious groups in order for them to function legally. It is illegal for a religious group to operate without official recognition. The law prescribes no specific penalties for violations, however, and there are numerous unregistered small religious groups that operate freely. There are no reports that the government has refused to register any group. The practice of witchcraft is a criminal offense under the national penal code, punishable by a two- to ten-year prison term. People are generally prosecuted for witchcraft only in conjunction with some other offense such as murder. There are no reports of convictions of witchcraft under this law. The government distinguishes between witchcraft
and traditional indigenous religious practices. Witchcraft is defined by the law as the attempt to do harm by spiritual means.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious, but there are reports of tensions between groups in some regions. Established churches have criticized unregistered sects, but have not obstructed them from practicing their faith. In the rural areas of the northern provinces, hostility persists between Muslims, Christians, and indigenous groups. In an effort to foster peaceful coexistence, the Catholic Church organized a meeting between Pope Benedict XVI and the Muslims during the Pope’s visit to the country in March 2009.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 846 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates four high schools, three hospitals, one dental clinic, three dispensaries, one publishing house, and two radio-TV production centers. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**CANADA**

**Population:** 34,474,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 62,817  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 43.6%, Protestant 29.2%, other Christian 4.3%, Muslim 2%, Jewish 1.1%, Buddhist 1%, Hindu 1%, other 1.3%, none 16.5%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** In many ways, Canada is a model country. However, Amnesty International has criticized its discrimination against indigenous peoples and urged Canada to move toward more equitable treatment of these groups.
Constitutional Provision: Canada has no official constitution. However, through legal precedent based upon British, French, and its own legislation, Canada developed protections for individual rights and freedoms. Schedule B of the 1982 Constitutional Act under the Canadian Charter for Rights and Freedoms, Part I, subsection 2, which is basically a compendium of Canadian law, states: “2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: (a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and (d) freedom of association.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Canada, for the most part, equally enforces the 1982 “Charter on Rights and Freedoms,” providing religious freedom for most of its citizens. There are laws against religious discrimination. Still there have been criticisms from some civil organizations, the media, and even parliamentarians against the application of hate speech laws. In their assessment, both the federal and provincial governments have at times encroached upon free speech and religious rights on the grounds that hate speech laws take precedence. Preachers have been censured for expressing their opinions about homosexual relationships. The current and former bishops of the Bountiful, British Columbia, Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints were charged with practicing polygamy. In June 2009, the Canadian Supreme Court ruled that Manitoba child-protection officials acted constitutionally when they ordered a teenage minor and member of the Jehovah’s Witnesses to submit to blood transfusions that were deemed medically necessary. In October 2009, the Supreme Court heard an appeal from the province of Alberta to uphold its 2001 decision that makes it mandatory to have a driver’s license and, at the same time, abolishes its exemption for individuals who, for religious reasons, do not wish to be photographed. The Hutterite community sees this rule as a violation of its religious freedom.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most faith communities have amicable relationships with each other. However, there have been numerous reports of anti-Semitism and some incidents of vandalism at mosques.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 356 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, eight high schools, 38 elementary (primary) schools, one healthcare corporation, one hospital, nine nursing homes, one media center, one radio station, three publishing houses, and four bookstores. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

CAPE VERDE

Population: 496,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 6,677
Religious Groups: Catholic (syncretized with African influences) 85%, Protestant 10%, independent, Muslim, and Atheist 5%

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 27: “Freedom of thought and expression; association; religion; worship … shall be guaranteed.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Cape Verde is secular state with freedom of religion. The Penal Code, which came into force in 2004, states that violations of religious freedom are crimes punishable by a penalty of three months to three years imprisonment. All religious groups are required to register with the Ministry of Justice in accordance with the law of associations, but failure to register does not result in restriction of belief or practice. The government gives privileged status to the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church has free television broadcast time for religious services.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious and there are no reports of significant tensions.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 32 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a radio-TV production center and a Bible correspondence school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

CAYMAN ISLANDS

Population: 51,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 4,688
Religious Groups: Protestant 45%, Catholic 7%, indigenous beliefs 13%

Constitutional Provision: Religious freedom extends to all territories under the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom, including the Cayman Islands.

State Attitudes and Actions: The state respects and promotes religious freedom in both the public and private sectors.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of conflict or strife among the various religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 15 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Population: 5,057,208
Seventh-day Adventists: 10,363
Religious Groups: Indigenous beliefs 35%, Protestant 25%, Catholic 25%, Muslim 15%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Security is probably the most significant human rights issue the Central African Republic now faces. The exodus of tens of thousands of people to neighboring countries has created a humanitarian nightmare. Life expectancy is 44 years. Violence against women includes not only domestic violence, but also assault by armed gangs. Widespread reports of rape are of deep concern for human rights advocates.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 8: “The freedom of conscience, of assembly and the free exercise of worship are guaranteed to all within the conditions fixed by law. Any form of religious fundamentalism and intolerance is forbidden.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The constitution prohibits what the government considers to be religious fundamentalism or intolerance and establishes fixed legal conditions based on group registration with the Ministry of the Interior. This provision is perceived by many as targeting Muslims, but no further laws have been enacted to enforce the provision. Witchcraft is a criminal offense punished most often by one to five years in prison and is often tied to interpersonal disputes. Most of the accused are released due to lack of evidence. Religious groups determined to be subversive are subject to sanctions by the Ministry of the Interior. When sanctions are imposed, the Ministry can decline to register a group, suspend its operations, or ban its operations. The government continues to ban the Unification Church, which it claims trains younger members to serve in paramilitaries. The government continues to maintain legal requirements that suspended the operation of some groups. The government also continues its 2007 ban on the Eglise Jehova Sabaot, primarily due to allegations of its pastor’s involvement in various criminal operations. Although officially closed, its congregants continue to meet at private residences and are
building a new and larger church. The government has taken some positive steps toward religious freedom, including the organization of interfaith services, in an attempt to promote peace and dialogue.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Private entities continue to abuse and discriminate against persons accused of witchcraft. It is believed that some of the cases are largely due to interpersonal disputes and not to specific religious practices.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 51 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

CHAD

Population: 10,975,648
Seventh-day Adventists: 3,910
Religious Groups: Muslim 53%, Catholic 20%, Protestant 14%, animist 7%, other, unknown, or atheist 6%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Abduction of children, child trafficking, and child soldiers as part of various militia groups are sinister examples of human rights violations occurring in this country. Another challenge is the presence of more than 400,000 refugees from Darfur and the Central African Republic.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 27: “The freedoms of thought and expression, communication, conscience, religion, press, association, meeting, circulation, demonstrations and processions are guaranteed to all.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government requires religious groups to register with the Ministry of the Interior’s Department of Religious Affairs. Registra-
tion is reported to take place without discrimination. Foreign missionaries are also required to register and receive authorization. The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution; however, it has limited this right for certain groups. Non-Muslims report that the government continues to show favoritism toward the Islamic majority. For example, a committee of government officials helped arrange and sponsor the Hajj for any citizen wanting to make the trip. Al Faid al-Djaria, a Sufi group that adheres to a mystical form of Islam, continues to be banned because government officials have deemed many of their practices un-Islamic.

Private Attitudes and Actions: On June 29, 2008, during a confrontation in Kuono between security forces and militant supporters of Sheikh Ahmet Ismael Bichara, an Islamic spiritual leader, approximately 72 people were killed, including an estimated 68 supporters of Bichara. The government continues to detain Sheikh Ahmet Ismael Bichara following this confrontation. The government regards the detention as justified under its prohibition of activity that “does not create conditions of cohabitation among the populations.” There is occasional tension between Christians and Muslims as well as between fundamentalist and moderate Muslims. Prominent societal leaders took positive steps to promote religious freedom during the reporting period. On April 4, 2009, a building that was used as a church was vandalized and burned down in Biltine. There were no police investigation or reported suspects, and the motive remains unclear. Despite the tension, religious leaders continue to meet regularly with the goal of easing tensions and working towards a greater peace. During the March 2009 celebration of International Women’s Week, women representing many religious groups called for more tolerance and peaceful cohabitation between Islam and Christianity.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 43 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one hospital. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.
Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

CHILE

Population: 17,271,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 118,425
Religious Groups: Catholic 70%, Evangelical 15.1%, Jehovah’s Witness 1.1%, other Christian 1%, other 4.6%, none 8.3%

Constitutional Provision: Chapter III Article 19 (6) x of the constitution states: “The Constitution guarantees to all persons: (6) Freedom of conscience, manifestation of all creeds and the free exercise of all cults which are not opposed to morals, good customs, or public order. Religious communities may erect and maintain churches and their facilities in accordance with the conditions of safety and hygiene as established by the laws and ordinances. With respect to assets, the churches and religious communities and institutions representing any cult shall enjoy the rights granted and acknowledged by the laws currently in force. Churches and their facilities assigned exclusively for religious activities shall be exempted from all taxes.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Religious groups are required to register and once registered the state cannot dissolve them by decree. Although there is no state religion, the Catholic Church is afforded special privileges. By law, other religious groups have the same right to have chaplains at public hospitals, in prisons, and in the military. Religious instruction at schools is almost exclusively Catholic, but students have the right to opt out. The Ministry of Education has approved curriculums for instruction in 14 other religions.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Despite some reports of anti-Semitism, most religious groups have amicable relationships with one another. In 2008, the government declared October 31 a national holiday to celebrate the country’s Protestant community.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 616 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, 22 high schools, four radio stations, and one clinic. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely once they are officially registered.

Government Recognition: The government officially recognizes the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees. However, Sabbath employment difficulties do exist and are often worked out on an individual basis.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

CHINA

Population: 1,376,719,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 404,191
Religious Groups: Buddhist 11-16%, Christian 3%-4%, Muslim 1%-2%, Taoist 1-2% (All of these figures are estimates since, in addition to the groups which are formally acknowledged by the Patriotic Religious Association, there are numerous unrecognized groups. The nation is officially atheist.)

Perspectives on Current Issues: China is the world’s second largest economy. It is also the world’s largest holder of foreign exchange reserves. This makes China a key player in the global finance arena. The country also possesses considerable natural resources. However, China is not immune to hazards which may negatively impact its future economic performance: massive urbanization and overcrowding, environmental disasters, pollution, ethnic and political unrest, and corruption are just a few examples. The country’s human rights record is extremely troubling and has attracted wide-ranging criticism. Concerns
include the denial of autonomy to Tibet, restrictions on freedom of expression, discrimination against minorities and women, forced abortions, arbitrary detentions, torture, and extensive use of the death penalty. China has an estimated 83 million disabled citizens. Each year, 300,000 people commit suicide.

**Constitutional Provision:** Article 36 of the constitution states “1) Citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. (2) No state organ, public organization, or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. (3) The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state. (4) Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Part 3 of Article 36 of the constitution provides legal ground for the government to regulate religious activities. However, the state gives itself wide latitude in interpreting the phrase “normal religious activities.” Consequently, religious groups that are not registered are not allowed the same protection as registered ones. Unfortunately, the state is not always eager to register new congregations and does not seem to have much interest in registering new religions. Only Buddhist, Taoist, Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant religious bodies are recognized. Falun Gong is still deemed illegal and followers of Tibetan Buddhism are frequently the subjects of discrimination. The president of the Chinese House Church Alliance, Pastor Zhang Mingxuan, commonly known as Pastor “Bike,” has often been arrested and released. A number of other Christian House Church Alliance leaders and pastors have also been detained. Some have been released, but some are still imprisoned. In recent years, the government made an unprecedented decision to meet with some house church leaders and allow greater latitude to some unregistered religious groups which are seen as non-threatening. More and more house churches are operating openly.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** The state promotes atheism. While recognizing the existence of religions, it is also the major propagator of religious discrimi-
nation. There are no major reports of interfaith conflicts; however, Tibetan Buddhists continue to be discriminated against.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are more than 1,044 Seventh-day Adventist congregations. The Church does not operate any institutions except for some small health education centers and food factories run by local churches or individual church members.

**Government Recognition:** Legally, Seventh-day Adventists do not have their own identity and organization, but are part of the China Christian Council for Protestants (CCC). But most Adventist congregations are allowed to organize their own church boards to run their church activities and manage their finances. The main Protestant churches in Beijing and Shanghai are used by Adventists every Saturday. Adventist churches in many other cities have their own church buildings which are used exclusively by Adventists. Adventist church organizations exist at the local church level, and local churches have different degrees of *de facto* autonomy in conducting their church affairs.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Sabbath-keeping is a problem for many Seventh-day Adventists. Even though China officially adopted a five-day workweek more than a decade ago, many schools and employers have not followed the law and are not willing to let Adventists have the Sabbath off. As a result, many have experienced hardship for being faithful to their beliefs. The situation is expected to improve gradually as most businesses now have both Saturdays and Sundays off.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Evangelism may be conducted only in registered religious places. Many Adventists do personal evangelism. Some policies and practices, such as the three-self principles and post-denominationalism, while promoting noble ideals such as social harmony and freedom from foreign domination, can impose restrictions on freedom of religion in general and freedom to evangelize in particular. The interpretations and implementations of policies, however, vary from place to place. Churches in different cities, therefore, enjoy different levels of religious freedom and freedom to evangelize.
Visits: A delegation from the CCC attended the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s quinquennial session in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2010, and the SDA world church president made official visits to China in 2009 and 2012.

COLOMBIA

Population: 46,294,841
Seventh-day Adventists: 291,936
Religious Groups: Catholic 90%, other 10%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Forty years of conflict between militia groups and the government have contributed to rampant poverty and resulted in the displacement of many people.

Constitutional Provision: Title 2, Chapter 1, Articles 18 and 19 of the constitution state: “(18) Freedom of conscience is guaranteed. No one will be importuned on account of his/her convictions or beliefs or compelled to reveal them or obliged to act against his/her conscience. (19) Freedom of religion is guaranteed. Every individual has the right to freely profess his/her religion and to disseminate it individually or collectively. All religious faiths are equally free before the law.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Colombia allows for religious freedom in practice. Most religions enjoy protections and liberties provided by the government. The Colombian constitution does not provide for an official church or religion, but ambiguously states it “is not atheist or agnostic, nor indifferent to Colombians’ religious sentiment.” Some observers think the constitution was written this way as a means of providing the Catholic Church with privileges over other religious bodies. Recognition for religious groups has two separate aspects: first they must receive recognition as a legal entity and then they may get public recognition as a religious body. Some non-Catholic groups have found this to be objectionable, since the process can be lengthy and at times groups do not receive recognition for seemingly trivial reasons. Consequently, some groups opt out of seeking recognition and choose instead to operate as non-
government organizations. According to the Colombia Evangelical Council, all non-Catholic religious groups and missionaries are required to pay a 17% tax on all financial support coming from outside of Colombia.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Colombia has been long plagued by terrorists/guerillas responsible for numerous kidnappings, extortion, and killings, including the murder of religious leaders. In September 2009, a pastor was killed at his home and at least 35 other pastors have suffered a similar fate within the last three years. During that period more than 200 churches were forcibly closed. Catholics and Protestants alike have been routinely killed for preaching messages that are critical of the terrorist organizations. Attacks on religious leaders in rural areas often go unreported. These attacks have generally been more for political or financial rather than religious reasons. There are also reports of some indigenous leaders not tolerating non-syncretistic worship practices.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 1,257 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, 11 schools, and three clinics. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees. Since legislation was enacted in 1997 to protect religious minorities and their distinctive practices, documented cases of discrimination have been rare. Yet some employers privately seek to coerce Adventist employees into working on the Sabbath.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely. The church’s message can regularly be found on cable TV and radio.

**Visits:** Dr John Graz and Pastor Roberto Herrera participated in a Festival of Religious Freedom on September 26, 2009, which was attended by 15,000 people in the stadium in Bogota. A Religious Liberty Congress was held the following day at which President Uribe spoke.
COMOROS

Population: 691,351
Seventh-day Adventists: none
Religious Groups: Sunni Muslim 99%. Foreigners living on the islands number several hundred and include Hindus, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Catholics, and Protestants.

Perspectives on Current Issues: One of Africa’s poorest countries, Comoros suffers from enduring poverty and relies heavily on foreign aid. Moreover, political instability is evidenced by the 20 coups which have occurred since independence was declared in 1975. Persecution of Christians by the Muslim majority is of great concern to the human rights community. Child labor is a well-documented problem in Comoros. There are restrictions to freedom of speech and of the press and, until recently, journalists were subject to harassment. Fortunately, human rights abuses have diminished under the current administration.

Constitutional Provision: The preamble to the constitution states: “The Comorian people … proclaim and guarantee the equality of all citizens concerning rights and duties without regard to … religion, creed or ideological conviction….”

State Attitudes and Actions: The constitution provides for freedom of religion, but the Penal Code prohibits proselytizing for religions other than Islam. The government continues to restrict this right by banning non-Muslims from proselytizing and prohibiting distribution of religious literature, clothing, and religious symbols. A constitutional referendum passed on May 17, 2009 states that “Islam is the State religion.” The law also prohibits citizens from converting from Islam. The study of Islam is not compulsory in public schools, but tenets of Islam are sometimes taught together with the Arabic language at the middle school level.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There is discrimination against non-Muslims, particularly Christians. All citizens face societal pressure to practice elements of Islam, especially during the month of Ramadan. Most non-Muslims do not
openly practice their faith for fear of discrimination. Citizens who convert to Christianity are treated more cruelly than foreigners who practice their faith. Discrimination most often takes place at the local level behind closed doors, and there is concern that Islamic fundamentalism is on the rise. Young people returning from Islamic theological studies abroad seek to impose stricter adherence to Islamic religious law.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience: There is no reported Seventh-day Adventist presence in the islands of Comoros.

Congo, Democratic Republic of the

Population: 73,599,190
Seventh-day Adventists: 539,228
Religious Groups: Catholic 50%, Protestant 20%, Kimbanguist 10%, Muslim 10%, other (includes syncretic sects and indigenous beliefs) 10%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The Democratic Republic of Congo has been deeply affected by armed conflict, civil war, and crippling poverty. There are an estimated 1.5 million internally displaced people and more than 300,000 live as refugees in neighboring countries.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 22: “Every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Every person has the right to express their religion or convictions … subject to the respect of the law.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. Religious groups are required to register, but this is a simple process and generally not subject to abuse. In practice, unregistered groups operate freely. Benefits granted to religious organizations include exemption from taxation. Public schools allow religious instruction and religious groups are allowed to work in many public schools. Parents are free to send their children to any school of their choice. The government supports interfaith understanding and
maintains dialogues with the five major religious groups—Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Islamic, and Kimbanguist. In the eastern regions of the country, armed groups continue to pose a threat to religious and non-religious groups, but it is not evident that religion is a motivating factor in any of the attacks. Although the government is supposedly committed to due process of judicial investigation, there was no investigation into the police crackdown on Bundu Dia Kongo (BDK), a political-religious group based in the province of Bas Congo. In February and March 2008, police reportedly killed at least 100 BDK adherents and razed BDK houses and temples.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious. However, there are reports of individuals who are tortured, killed, or driven from their homes because of suspected witchcraft activities. Some revival churches or small Protestant congregations exploit fear of witchcraft by encouraging families to drive accused witches from their homes or by performing painful exorcisms.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Churches and Institutions: There are 1,691 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, three literature ministry seminaries, two high schools, one hospital, 32 clinics and dispensaries, and a radio-TV production center. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
Congo, Republic of the

Population: 4,144,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 692
Religious Groups: Traditional beliefs 48%, Catholic 35%, other Christian 15%, Muslim 2%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Despite a Marxist past characterized by indoctrination against religion, all restrictions to freedom of religion were officially removed in 1992. The pigmy populations experience discrimination and there are reports of arbitrary detentions and poor prison conditions.

Constitutional Provision: The 2002 constitution states in Article 26: “Freedom of belief and conscience and the freedom of either a religious or philosophical profession are inviolable. . . . The free exercise of religious sects shall be guaranteed within the limits compatible with public order and good mores. . . . No one shall be relieved from fulfilling a civic duty because of religious opinion.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution. There is no state religion. All organizations, religious or secular, must register and be approved by the government. Though the process is time-consuming, there are no reports of discrimination.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious. Religious tolerance is greater in urban areas than in rural areas. In some forest communities where there are pigmy populations, there is some discrimination against them in education and employment as well as intolerance for their cultural practices, including at times their animist religious practices. A joint ecumenical council, which met in January 2009, represented all organized religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 15 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.


Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

COOK ISLANDS

Population: 10,777
Seventh-day Adventists: 853
Religious Groups: Protestant (Cook Islands Christian Church 55.9%, Seventh-day Adventist 7.9%, other Protestant 5.8%) Catholic 16.8%, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 3.8%, unspecified 2.6%, none 3% (data from 2001 census)

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 64, Section (d): “It is hereby recognized and declared that in the Cook Islands there exist, and shall continue to exist, without discrimination by reason of race, national origin, color, religion, opinion, belief, or sex, the following fundamental human rights and freedoms … Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Generally the state protects the religious freedom of its citizens.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most religious organizations have amicable relationships and no hostilities have been reported. There was some animosity aimed at Seventh-day Adventists over the issue of flights on Sundays. The Cook Islands Christian Church saw those flights as a desecration of Sunday sanctity and believed that Adventists were somewhat to blame. The tension has now abated considerably.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 14 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

COSTA RICA

Population: 4,658,887
Seventh-day Adventists: 60,338
Religious Groups: Catholic 76.3%, Evangelical 13.7%, Jehovah’s Witness 1.3%, other Protestant 0.7%, other 4.8%, none 3.2%

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Title VI, Article 75: “The Catholic and Apostolic Religion is the religion of the State, which contributes to its maintenance, without preventing the free exercise in the Republic of other forms of worship that are not opposed to universal morality or good customs.” However, the regulation of faith is also found in another place. Title IV, Article 28 states: “... clergymen or secular individuals cannot make political propaganda in any way invoking religious motives or making use of religious beliefs.” Costa Rica enforces a day of rest without explicitly stating which day. This is found in Title V, Article 59 “All workers shall be entitled to one day of rest after six consecutive days of work and to annual paid vacations.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The state constitutionally and in practice promotes the interests of the Catholic Church. This preferential treatment generally involves, but is not limited to, the granting of land, permitting only Catholic clergy to perform matrimonial rites—non-Catholics must be married by the state—and providing Catholic education in public schools. There are no registration requirements for religious groups. However, according to the Law of Associations, in order to have judicial status a group must first have at least 10 members. Religious groups are accorded the same recognition as any other group. Some Protestant religious groups have found this to be objectionable. The Evangelical Alliance Federation has claimed that the Ministry of Health,
in contravention of an Executive Decree of 2007 which granted a grace period, has closed churches for noise pollution and lack of municipal permission.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are a few reports of discrimination, including some reports of anti-Semitism. Non-Catholic clergy experience difficulty with visiting hospitals and prisons.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 163 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, two high schools, and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Adventists experience regular problems in the schools, including requirements to finish projects late Friday night or attend meetings or classes on Saturday. Some Adventists experience workplace problems on a frequent basis.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

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**COTE D’IVOIRE**

**Population:** 22,621,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 12,522  
**Religious Groups:** Muslim 42%, Christian 34%; indigenous beliefs 24%. The majority of foreigners (migratory workers) are Muslim (70%) and Christian (20%).

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** The country is divided between the Muslim North and a multi-faith, but predominantly Christian, South. Political and armed conflict have deeply scarred this country and UN peacekeepers are present in order to prevent further escalation of the clashes between pro- and anti-government forces. Life expectancy is 47 years. Both government and militia forces are accused of human rights violations. Violence against women is widespread.
Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 9: “Freedom of thought and expression, notably freedom of conscience, religious or philosophical opinion, shall be guaranteed to all, subject to respect for the law, the rights of others, national security and public order.” Article 10: “Everyone shall have the right to express and disseminate freely his or her ideas. All propaganda aimed at or having the effect of making one social group superior to another or encouraging racial or religious hatred is forbidden.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government of Cote d’Ivoire generally respects the religious liberty of its citizens. The law requires religious groups to register with the government, and the government oversees all instruction in religious schools. Problems resulting from ethnic discrimination have been the cause of some religious discrimination. Since a failed coup attempt in 2002, the country has had a de facto division between the north and south, and attempts at reconciliation have not been successful. While this division is along ethnic lines, the close link between religion and ethnicity has ultimately meant discrimination for some. Although there is no state religion, the government informally favors Christianity for historical reasons. In the past, the government has favored the Catholic Church and as a result has given it a stronger voice in the government. Past actions led many Muslims to feel disenfranchised from the political system.

Private Attitudes and Actions: The relationships between religious groups have been strained since the 2002 attempted coup. Prior to that there were many instances of long-standing cooperation between religious groups. Since then, religious leaders have met to discuss tensions, though these meetings have decreased in recent years due to lack of funding. There still remains tension with traditional indigenous religions, as both Christians and Muslims have been the cause of discrimination. Leaders of traditional religions have been largely neglected at the interfaith meetings. On January 21, 2009, the United States Embassy hosted a program focusing on religious tolerance and Muslim communities in the United States. The program included more than 600 participants, including Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim religious leaders, and was featured on national television.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 60 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a secondary school, a radio-TV production center, and a Bible correspondence school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is officially recognized by the government.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

CROATIA

Population: 4,424,162
Seventh-day Adventists: 2,852
Religious Groups: Catholic 87.8%, Orthodox 4.4%, Slavic Muslim 1.28%, other 6.52%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Out of a population of 4.4 million, only 1.4 million Croatians are actively employed. There are 1.1 million people who are retired and receiving government pensions, thus created an enormous economic burden. The country maintains discriminatory policies against the Roma community and the Croatian Serbs, yet Croatians accused of war crimes have not been brought to justice.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 40: “Freedom of conscience and religion and free public profession of religion and other convictions shall be guaranteed.” Article 41: “(1) All religious communities shall be equal before the law and shall be separate from the state. (2) Religious communities shall be free, in conformity with law, publicly to perform religious services, open schools, teaching establishments or other institutions, social and
charitable institutions and to manage them, and shall in their activity enjoy the protection and assistance of the state.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Croatia generally allows for the free practice of religion and does not interfere with religious organizations. The only religious organization that receives preferential treatment is the Catholic Church. On March 31, 2009, Parliament passed amendments to the Law on Foreigners listing clergy among the favored category, granting them the right of temporary residence and more favorable conditions for renewing permits.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** In Croatia, much religious strife hinges upon social and cultural lines. The growth of the Serbian Orthodox Church at times alienates Catholic Croats, resulting in violence and vandalism. These disputes are largely seen as cultural rather than religious and most religions have an attitude of tolerance toward one another. Restitution of property nationalized or confiscated by the Yugoslav Communist regime remains incomplete.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 84 Seventh-day Adventist churches in Croatia. The church also operates one college, one high school, one publishing house, one Bible correspondence school, and one media center. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
CUBA

Population: 11,257,979
Seventh-day Adventists: 31,915
Religious Groups: Catholic 85%, Protestant (including Jehovah’s Witness), Jewish, and Santeria are also represented (no percentages available)

Perspectives on Current Issues: The citizens of Cuba experience many restrictions to their human rights, which has long been of great concern to advocates. The plight of political prisoners is particularly dire and has generated condemnation from around the world.

Constitutional Provision: Chapter I, Article 8, of the constitution states: “The state recognizes, respects and guarantees freedom of religion. In the Republic of Cuba, religious institutions are separate from the state. The different beliefs and religions enjoy the same consideration.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Based upon the 1992 constitution, Cuba is a secular state, which maintains separation of church and state. In what seems to be a move toward promoting greater human rights, in 2008 the state, with a certain degree of reservation, signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. These treaties guarantee freedom of conscience and thought. Religious bodies are required to register in order to be recognized and they must also obtain government approval to construct new places of worship. House churches are allowed but they are subject to numerous government regulations. As a result, most of them are not registered and are consequently illegal. Registered groups are allowed to import literature, but it is subject to the supervision of the Communist party. The government continues to exert its control over religion, as well as other aspects of life. Religious groups are subject to infiltration, harassment, monitoring, threats and, when it comes to unregistered groups, fines. Religious education is not permitted in public schools, and private primary and secondary schools are not allowed to operate. Prison inmates are regularly denied their requests to receive religious assistance and each inmate is allowed a maximum of two to three visits per year.
Private Attitudes and Actions: Private groups generally have amicable relationships with one another.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 297 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a small junior college.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is allowed to operate in Cuba. However, there are reports of discrimination against members of the church.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Adventists regularly face harassment for Sabbath observance. Adventist children do not participate in school activities on Saturdays, but there is evidence of the state allowing greater latitude to Adventists who need Saturdays off. Employment is always an issue because of the depressed economy and Sabbath observance can cause additional hardships.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

CYPRUS

Population: 814,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 77
Religious Groups: Greek Orthodox 78%, Muslim 18%, other 4% (includes Maronite and Armenian Apostolic)

Constitutional Provision: The draft constitution in Appendix D, Part II, the Fundamental Rights and Liberties section, Article 18, states: “1. Every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice. There are few reports of societal abuses or discrimination
based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, and prominent societal leaders took positive steps to promote religious freedom.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relations between the Church of Cyprus and other religious communities are cordial. Missionaries have the legal right to proselytize. In May 2009, Future Worlds Center reported complaints by Muslim construction workers who were not allowed to stop work for prayers.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There is one Seventh-day Adventist church in Cyprus. It is generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The church is not recognized as a religious entity and has had difficulty obtaining permission to build a new sanctuary. There are no reports of persecution.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Adventists are a religious minority in a nation dominated by Greek Orthodox and Muslim traditions, so the Sabbath is a continual hindrance in obtaining work or attending school.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Adventist evangelism is opposed by traditional religious communities and a suspicious government, which frowns on proselytizing.

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

**Population:** 10,525,090  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 9,687  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 26.8%, Protestant 2.1%, other 3.3%, unspecified 8.8%, unaffiliated 59% (2001 census)

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** The Czech Republic has an unfortunate history of discrimination against the Roma people, including the alleged forced sterilization of Roma women.
Constitutional Provision: Article 10 of the constitution essentially commits the nation to international accords on human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are superior to their laws.

State Attitudes and Actions: The 2002 Law on Religious Freedom and the Position of Churches and Religious Associations created a two-tiered system of registration for religious organizations. To register at the first (lower) tier, a religious group must have at least 300 adult members permanently residing in the country. First-tier registration confers limited tax benefits; in addition, it imposes annual reporting requirements as well as a 10-year waiting period before an organization may apply for full second-tier registration. To register at the second tier, which entitles an organization to a share of state funding, a religious group must have membership, with the requisite signatures, equal to at least 0.1 percent of the country’s population. Many smaller and less established religions are unable to obtain the signatures necessary for second-tier registration. The state generally promotes and protects the free exercise of religion.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are some reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice reflecting residual anti-Semitism. However, prominent societal leaders have taken positive steps to promote religious freedom.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 186 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are few problems with Adventists in the workplace, but students are often required to take tests on Saturday.

Freedom to Evangelize: Due to the two-tiered system of religious freedom in the Czech Republic and the success of Adventist evangelism, the Seventh-day Adventist Church enjoys full rights of religious freedom. In addition to freedom
to evangelize, the church is given special rights to teach religion in the state schools, engage in chaplaincy ministry in the armed forces and prisons, receive state subsidies, conduct marriage ceremonies, found schools, and maintain confessional secrecy.

DENMARK

Population: 5,681,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 2,509
Religious Groups: Evangelical Lutheran 80.7%, Muslim 4%, other (includes Catholic, other Protestant, Jewish, Buddhist, and Hindu)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Denmark ranks 5th of 183 countries in reference to doing business. It ranks 8th in the ability of its economy to compete. The major criticism leveled against Denmark is that asylum-seekers are held in poor conditions for long periods of time.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution, in Part I, Section 4, provides for the establishment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which is supported by the state. Part VII, Sections 67 to 70, states: “(67) The citizens shall be entitled to form congregations for the worship of God in a manner consistent with their convictions, provided that nothing at variance with good morals or public order shall be taught or done. (68) No one shall be liable to make personal contributions to any denomination other than the one to which he adheres. (69) Rules for religious bodies dissenting from the Established Church shall be laid down by Statute. (70) No person shall for reasons of his creed or descent be deprived of access to complete enjoyment of his civic and political rights, nor shall he for such reasons evade compliance with any common civic duty.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Though the state supports the Evangelical Lutheran Church, it allows for the free exercise of non-Lutheran faiths.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are some reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, such as occasional reports of anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic insults, harassment, and vandalism,
which reflect increasing tensions between young Muslims and other young Danes. The country, nevertheless, has a long history of welcoming religious minorities and affording them equal treatment.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 45 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a junior college, a publishing house, a radio-TV center, and two retirement homes. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the state church and enjoys some privileges not available to other faiths. The government gives official status to religions in two ways: by royal decree and under the 1969 Marriage Act. As of April 2005, 12 religious organizations were recognized by royal decree, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Djibouti

Population: 879,053
Seventh-day Adventists: unknown
Religious Groups: Sunni Muslim 97%, others less than 1% (includes Catholic, Protestant, Baha’i)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Djibouti is the third smallest country in Africa. It experiences the hottest average temperature on Earth, making water a particularly precious commodity. The unemployment rate is estimated to be 50-80% and poverty is accompanied by a plethora of human rights concerns. There is a significant American and French military presence in this strategic location. Human trafficking, prostitution, and drug abuse are reported.
Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 11: “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, worship and opinion in conformity with the order established by law and the regulations.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Proselytizing is discouraged. Islam is the state religion, but the government does not sanction those who do not practice Islam or who follow other faiths. The Family Court enforces elements of civil and Shari’a law known as the Family Code and rules on matters related to the family such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. These courts are only for Muslims; non-Muslims are directed to civil courts. Foreign missionaries engage in humanitarian work related to education and health services. They are generally allowed to do charitable work and sell religious books without interference.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Representatives of the Catholic, Protestant, and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches note an increase in hostility towards non-Muslims in recent years. There are reports of school children throwing rocks at churches. Moderate Muslims attribute this rising tension to media coverage and the increase in the number of students returning from fundamentalist Islamic schools in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Church leaders differentiate between the government’s generally tolerant attitude and a growing public animosity towards Christians.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates a health center. Adventists run both an eye clinic and a dental-care clinic.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: Seventh-day Adventists are not allowed to evangelize freely.
DOMINICA

Population: 66,515  
Seventh-day Adventists: 6,600  
Religious Groups: Catholic 60%, Protestant 23%

Constitutional Provision: Chapter 1, Article 9 of the Dominican constitution states: “(1) Except with his own consent, a person shall not be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, including freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Even though the government maintains a close relationship with Christian churches, it allows for free exercise of religious beliefs. The salaries of teachers at Christian schools are subsidized by the government. Rastafarians complain about being unable to use marijuana within the context of their religious practices.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Although Rastafarians complain about discrimination regarding schooling and hiring practices, there has been harmony between members of different faiths.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 22 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a recognized denomination.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Population: 10,010,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 282,641
Religious Groups: Catholic 69%, Protestant 20%, other 1%, none 10%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Police brutality in the Dominican Republic is of great concern to human rights organizations. According to the Office of the Prosecutor General, 154 people were killed by the police between January and July 2011, compared to 125 over the same period in 2010. Discrimination against Haitians and Dominico-Haitians and violence against women are significant problems. Human trafficking is also an issue.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Title II, Section 1, Article 8: “It is recognized as the main purpose of the state, the effective protection of the rights of individuals, and the maintenance of those rights … [including] freedom of conscience and worship, with subjection to public ordinances and respect for good customs.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Although the constitution denies the existence of a state religion, the Dominican Republic signed a concordat with the Vatican in 1954, making Catholicism the official religion and enabling the Catholic Church to receive special privileges not granted to other religious groups. The government legally recognizes Catholic Church law, subsidizes church expenses, recognizes Catholic clergy as the only authorities to perform matrimonial rites, funds the renovation of its church buildings, and renders it free from all taxes and duties. All religious organizations are required to register with the government. Non-Catholic faiths may request tax-free status from the Office of the Presidency, though the process is time-consuming.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Amicable relationships exist among different religious groups, with no reports of violence or strife.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 681 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, 13 schools, one children’s home, and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: It has become increasingly difficult for Adventists to find employment in the Dominican Republic. Often employers will not even consider hiring a Seventh-day Adventist if the employment application indicates church affiliation.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Visits: Dr John Graz, Pastor Roberto Herrera, and local leaders of the Adventist Church met with members of the Religious Law Commission and presented lectures, seminars, and radio and TV interviews on April 10-15, 2008. Dr Graz participated in the First Inter-American Religious Liberty Congress in Santo Domingo on April 29-30, 2010 and the First Inter-American Festival on May 2 which was attended by 13,000 people. The International Religious Liberty Association World Congress convened in Punta Cana in April 2012.

ECUADOR

Population: 14,666,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 43,726
Religious Groups: Catholic 85%, other 15%

Constitutional Provision: Title II, Chapter VI, Article 66 (8) of the constitution states: “The right to practice, keep, change, profess in public or private one’s religion or beliefs and to disseminate them individually or collectively, with the constraints imposed by respect for the rights of others. The State shall protect voluntary religious practice, as well the expression of those who profess no religion whatsoever, and shall favor an environment of plurality and tolerance.”
State Attitudes and Actions: The state provides for and protects religious freedom. Registration creates a legal identity, which is advantageous when conducting business, owning property, and building schools. To register or have nonprofit status, religious organizations must possess a charter, which includes all names used by the group, and provide signatures of at least 15 members. Also, they must file a petition with the government using a licensed attorney and pay a $100 registration fee.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most religious groups have amicable relationships. However, there have been some reports of violence and even murder. There was one reported incident of prejudice and animosity directed at medicine men in the rural villages.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 194 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a technical institute, three schools, two radio stations, and two clinics. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a recognized denomination.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Seventh-day Adventists have been experiencing increasing problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for students and employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
EGYPT

Population: 82,600,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 753
Religious Groups: Muslim (mostly Sunni) 90%, Coptic 9%, other Christian 1%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The economic situation of Egypt has been steadily deteriorating. Officially, the unemployment rate reached 11.9% in 2011. More than half of the population lives below poverty level, earning barely $2 a day. Present conditions have affected the political landscape of Egypt, as evidenced in part by the rise of the Islamists who won 60% of the votes during the legislative elections and whose revolutionary rhetoric resonates with the masses. The so-called Arab Spring has turned into a nightmare for many religious minorities. Discrimination against Coptic Christians is a well-known phenomenon. Targeted by extremists who, according to human rights defenders, are involved in religious cleansing, many Christians in particular have left the country for safe havens overseas. Activists criticize the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces for its use of repressive means to maintain order in the post-revolutionary era. An estimated 18,000 people have been detained with no legal redress. Allegations of torture are widespread. Violence against women has reached epidemic proportions. Asylum seekers and migrants—an estimated three million people, mainly from Sudan and sub-Saharan Africa—face an uncertain future in Egypt.

Constitutional Provision: Article 46 of the constitution says: “The State shall guarantee the freedom of belief and the freedom of practicing religious rights.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government restricts the practice of religious rights. Islam is the official state religion and Shari’a is the principal source of legislation. Respect for religious freedom by the government declined during the reporting period, as evidenced by failure to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of sectarian violence. Government authorities detained and harassed some converts from Islam to Christianity and pressured them to revert to Islam.
Private Attitudes and Actions: Violent sectarian attacks on Copts and Baha’is increased during the reporting period.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 16 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school, two educational facilities, one evangelistic center, and one food factory.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is recognized in Egypt.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Sabbath-keeping presents a challenge for Adventists seeking employment.

Freedom to Evangelize: Evangelism is prohibited.

EL SALVADOR

Population: 6,227,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 206,970
Religious Groups: Catholic 52.6%, Protestant 27.9%, none 16%, other 4% (includes Muslim)

Perspectives on Current Issues: A massive rural exodus has presented El Salvador with enormous challenges. A predominantly agrarian population has shifted so that now more than 60% of the people live in urban centers where increasing poverty and rising crime affect many. Emigration to the United States is part the ethos and it is estimated that 3.3 million Salvadorians live outside their country.

Constitutional Provision: Title II, Articles 25 and 26 of the constitution states: “(25) The free exercise of every religion is guaranteed, without any limit except [that it infringes] upon the moral and the public order…. The legal entity of the Catholic Church is recognized. Other churches are able to obtain, according to the law, the recognition of their entity.”
State Attitudes and Actions: El Salvador allows for the free exercise of religion and protects the rights of individual conscience. The Catholic Church is specifically recognized in the constitution. All recognized religious groups may receive tax-exempt status and donations made to religious organizations are tax-deductible. Criminal penalties, from six months to two years, are imposed upon those who publicly offend or insult the religious beliefs of others, or who damage or destroy religious objects. Severe cases or repeat offenders may be given a six- to eight-year prison sentence.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There is generally an amicable relationship among various religious groups with no strife or violence reported.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 644 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one training school, one high school, and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a recognized denomination.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Population: 720,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 2,525
Religious Groups: Catholic 80%, indigenous beliefs 3%, Protestant 3% (includes Assemblies of God, Crusade Churches, and Seventh-day Adventist)

Perspectives on Current Issues: There are reports of restrictions of freedom of expression and arbitrary detentions and torture.
**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Part 1, item 13f: “Every citizen shall enjoy the following rights and freedoms: freedom of religion and worship.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution. However, religious leaders avoid criticism of the government and government officials reportedly monitor some religious services. Any group wishing to hold events outside of its house of worship must secure government permission. In practice, however, this restriction does not seem to interfere with holding other services. A 1992 presidential decree that regulates religious freedom states an official preference for the Catholic Church and the Reform Church of Equatorial Guinea. The decree’s effect is seen throughout the country in areas such as Catholic masses that are part of all major holidays and ceremonies. Catholic and Reform Church officials are exempt from airport entry and exit taxes. The decree mandates registration of religious groups, and the approval process may take several years. There doesn’t seem to be discrimination in this process, except that the application is not required for Catholic and Reform Churches. It is also reported that Catholic missionaries receive their residence permits shortly after their arrival, while others receive permits after a two- to twelve-month delay. There is no reported workplace discrimination against particular faith groups. Some non-Catholic pastors who work for the government as civil servants report that supervisors require them to participate in religious activities, including Catholic masses, at government functions. While the law states that each person is free to study his or her religion, in practice it is generally not possible for non-Catholics to study their own faith in schools where Catholicism is taught. Some Protestant denominations have schools which are all allowed to operate freely.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious and there are no reports of significant tensions.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 19 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely. While there were no specific reports of
incidents involving Seventh-day Adventists, it is clear that the tension other Protestant churches feel is also felt in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

ERITREA

Population: 5,939,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 526
Religious Groups: Christian (mostly Orthodox) 50%, Muslim 48%, indigenous beliefs 2%

Perspectives on Current Issues: This country in the Horn of Africa has a lengthy history of war, drought, and land destruction. Ongoing violence, a toxic civil and political atmosphere, and restrictions of freedoms prompted the UN and foreign NGOs to withdraw.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 19, Section 1: “Every person shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and belief.”

State Attitudes and Actions: On May 28, 2002, the Eritrean government closed all houses of worship in the country except those belonging to the four main religious groups—Eritrean Orthodox Church, the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church of Eritrea, Islam, and the Catholic Church—until they registered and received approval by the state. More than 2,000 Eritrean citizens, mostly Christian, are currently jailed for their religious beliefs. It is reported that in the past the government built a camp in the desert town of Meiter, specifically for religious detainees. The prison is isolated and does not allow visitors. The prison reportedly houses 150 to 200 prisoners, all held either for belonging to an unapproved religious group or for not belonging to a specific religious group. There are numerous reports of government officials breaking into the
homes of Evangelicals and confiscating valuables. In May 2009, the government transferred dozens of prisoners, including Jehovah’s Witnesses and members of Evangelical religious groups, from police stations in Asmara to the Meiter detention center. In January 2009, two religious detainees reportedly died at Meiter from a combination of physical abuse and denial of medical treatment. On January 11, 2009, police arrested 15 members of the Kalet Hiwot Church in the city of Keren. In November 2008, 34 members of the same group were arrested. In January 2009, the government reportedly carried out countrywide arrests of influential Muslims. Also early in 2009, the government began confiscating vehicles marked with license plates designated for religious groups. According to Open Doors USA, a US-based Christian organization, in December 2008 authorities arrested at least 49 leaders of unregistered churches in Asmara. The government has singled out Jehovah’s Witnesses for harsher treatment than that received by followers of other faiths since they are not willing to comply with compulsory military service requirements. On June 28, 2009, police arrested 22 Jehovah’s Witnesses as they met for worship in Asmara. Most of the arrested were wives or daughters of previously arrested men, leaving entire households imprisoned in some instances. The government has not registered any religious groups since the last report. In 2002, the Meherte Yesus Evangelical Presbyterian Church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Faith Mission Church, and the Baha’i fully complied with registration requirements; however, to date they have not been registered.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Citizens are generally tolerant towards those who are members of the four officially recognized religious groups. Mosques and Christian churches coexist relatively peacefully throughout the country. However, there is clear social prejudice against unregistered religious groups and private citizens have reportedly cooperated with government authorities in harassing members of those faiths. Jehovah’s Witnesses are generally disliked and face strong discrimination due to their refusal to vote in national elections and participate in military service.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are three Seventh-day Adventist churches, but the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not officially recognized and is not allowed to operate legally. In the past, authorities have shut down at least one Seventh-day Adventist church in Asmara.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: No reports are available regarding Sabbath keeping for students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: Seventh-day Adventists are not allowed to evangelize.

ESTONIA

Population: 1,339,646
Seventh-day Adventists: 1,630
Religious Groups: Evangelical Lutheran 13.6%, Orthodox 12.8%, other Christian (including Methodist, Catholic, Pentecostal) 1.4%, unaffiliated 34.1%, other/unspecified 32%, none 6.1% (2000 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: A former Soviet Republic, Estonia has one of the healthiest public finance systems in Europe. However, the unemployment rate is about 12%. One of the major human rights issues is the lack of adequate opportunities for linguistic minorities, which represent 30% of the population. The Council of Europe has expressed deep concerns regarding inhumane prison conditions.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Articles 40, “Everyone has freedom of conscience, religion and thought. Everyone may freely belong to churches and religious societies. There is no state church. Everyone has the freedom to exercise his or her religion, both alone and in community with others, in public or in private, unless this is detrimental to public order, health or morals.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The state generally allows free exercise of religion. There are some requirements for becoming a registered religious organization;
however, these are minimal standards that most organizations can attain with little difficulty. Since the fall of Communism, most Estonians are secular in their beliefs and, though they associate with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, many are nominal in their adherence. The state freely allows missionaries to enter the country and work among the people, and there are few reported problems.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

*Institutional Freedom:* There are 20 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

*Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:* There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

*Freedom to Evangelize:* The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**ETHIOPIA**

*Population:* 88,024,000  
*Seventh-day Adventists:* 186,174  
*Religious Groups:* Christian 61% (Orthodox 40%, Protestant 18%), Muslim 34%, traditional 4%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Ethiopia is Africa’s oldest independent nation. Unfortunately, it has experienced continuous political and economic strife, famine, drought, and armed conflict with Eritrea over disputed borders. Ongoing dependence on foreign food aid places Ethiopia in a precarious economic situation. Each year thousands die of malnutrition. Ethiopia has the world’s fifth-highest number of people with HIV/AIDS. About one million have already died of the disease. There are more than one million orphans.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 27: “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom,
either individually or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** When Communism ended in 1991, Christians were officially freed from religious persecution. However, local authorities occasionally infringe on the rights enshrined in the constitution. Some Protestant and Muslim groups complain that local officials discriminate against them when they seek land for churches, mosques, or cemeteries. In the northern town of Axum, a holy city for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, authorities continue to deny the repeated requests of Muslim leaders for an allocation of land for the construction of a mosque, even though the constitution provides for freedom to establish institutions of religious education. Religious groups are required to register with the Ministry of Justice every three years. The Ethiopian Human Rights Council noted that this requirement indicates a lack of progress by the government to treat newer religions—specifically Protestant denominations—on the same basis as others. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which comprises over 45 percent of the country’s population, has never registered and has not faced any problems. Protests from other religious groups over exceptions like this have not resulted in equal treatment. The government provides free land for religious schools and hospitals, but regardless of length of operation, these institutions are subject to government closure and land forfeiture at any time. The constitutional provision on separation of church and state is interpreted to mean that religious instruction is not allowed in schools, public or private. Accordingly, any school operated by a religious group is not allowed to teach religion as a course of study. The government continues to support the Interfaith Peace-Building Initiative, an NGO dedicated to promoting interfaith cooperation with the aim of ending religiously motivated violence. On February 16-17 and April 23-24, 2009, the Ministry of Federal Affairs held forums in each regional state, which included representatives from local government, security bureaus, and police commissioners, to build inter-religious understanding and to help resolve sectarian conflicts.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Tensions between Muslim and Christian communities continue to lead to violence in some areas.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 863 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, two high schools, one hospital, 15 clinics and dispensaries, one mobile clinic, one publishing house, and a Bible correspondence school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has not been able to regain two hospitals which were among other property confiscated by the government under the Derg regime.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

FALKLAND ISLANDS

Population: 3,038
Seventh-day Adventists: Unknown
Religious Groups: Christian 67.2% (Anglican 26%, Catholic 18%, United Free Church, Evangelist Church, Jehovah’s Witness, Lutheran), none 31.5%, other 1.3% (2006 census)

Constitutional Provision: The Falkland Islands, being an overseas territory of the United Kingdom, follows United Kingdom law and allows religious freedom.

State Attitudes and Actions: Inhabitants of the Falkland Islands enjoy the free exercise of religion. There are no reports of discrimination.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of strife among the different religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not have an organized presence in the Falkland Islands.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reported problems regarding Sabbath-keeping.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

FIJI

Population: 852,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 26,456
Religious Groups: Christian 52%, Hindu 30%, Muslim 7%, other or unspecified 9.6%, none 0.3%

Perspectives on Current Issues: One-third of the population lives in poverty and rising inflation has led to worsening living conditions. Decline in the production of sugar cane and dependence on imported food and oil are also factors. In addition to these economic misfortunes, Fiji has been expelled from the Commonwealth because of allegations of arrests, detentions, abuse and torture of political opponents, the expulsion of diplomats, and other offenses.

Constitutional Provision: Chapter 2 (6)(c) of the 1997 constitution states: “The people of Fiji Islands recognize that, within the framework of this Constitution and the other laws of the State, the conduct of the Government is based on the following principles … all persons have the right to practice their religion freely and to retain their language, culture, and traditions…” In Chapter 4, Article 35 (4) it mentions, referring to freedom of religion, that the rights of the individual maybe curbed for matters of protection, rights of others, public safety, order, morality, health, or to prevent a public nuisance. The President of Fiji, however, ostensibly abrogated this constitution, in 2009. The government says it is planning the writing of a new constitution to be read in 2013.

State Attitudes and Actions: Generally, Fiji allows for the free exercise of religion, but there has been a general trend towards state interference in religious activities. The Police Commissioner has embarked on a nationwide crusade requiring all members of the Police Service and their families to attend Chris-
Christian church services. In July 2009, nine leaders of the Methodist Church, the most dominant church in the country, were arrested for allegedly defying the Public Emergency Regulation. Prior to their arrest, they were debarred from planning their annual conference. The Methodist Church has previously been very influential in government matters. However, since the takeover by a military government in 2006, they have been crusading for a return to democracy. The present government has accused the Methodist Church of plotting to destabilize the nation.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are a few reports of abuse based on religion. In past years, few Hindu temples were desecrated and arsonists destroyed one. There is also intolerance directed towards some non-mainstream religious groups, especially in some of the outer islands, as the major religions tend to oppose them proselytizing and setting up places of worship. The government has been taking steps towards eliminating discrimination aimed at Indo-Fijians.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 151 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates two secondary schools and a college. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized religion.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
FINLAND

Population: 4,848,300  
Seventh-day Adventists: 4,598  
Religious Groups: Lutheran Church of Finland 82.5%, Orthodox Church 1.1%, other Christian 1.1%, other 0.1%, none 15.1%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Finland has been considerably impacted by the global economic crisis. The aging population and a large number of citizens retiring from employment present special challenges. Concerns have been raised about domestic violence, imprisonment of conscientious objectors, and discriminatory treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Section 11, Freedom of religion and conscience, “(1) Everyone has the freedom of religion and conscience. (2) Freedom of religion and conscience entails the right to profess and practice a religion, the right to express one’s convictions and the right to be a member of or decline to be a member of a religious community. No one is under the obligation, against his or her conscience, to participate in the practice of a religion.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Finland generally respects religious freedom in practice. Though the majority of citizens are Lutheran, non-Lutheran religious groups are allowed to operate freely. In 2008, registered religious communities other than the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church became eligible to apply for state funds. Legislation passed in late 2007 provides that communities with 200 or more members may receive a statutory subsidy from the annual government budget.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Non-traditional religious groups generally are not subject to discrimination, despite the intolerant attitudes of some members of society. Some citizens are not receptive to proselytizing by adherents of non-traditional religious groups, in part because they regard religion as a private matter.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 57 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, a nursing home, and a publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely. The church has cultivated good relations with other churches.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is allowed to evangelize freely.

FRANCE

Population: 64,876,618
Seventh-day Adventists: 12,120
Religious Groups: Catholic 83%-88%, Muslim 5%-10%, Protestant 2%, Jewish 1%, unaffiliated 4%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Due in part to a history of bloody religious conflicts, the French have adopted a generally secular attitude, believing this preferable to previous philosophies. However, religion has not disappeared from the public square. Minority immigrants, who are often slow to assimilate and frequently become part of the underclass in urban areas, have brought their Islamic faith with them, prompting fierce ideological clashes and occasional violence over such matters as the wearing of headscarves. Also, an official position of secularism does not equate to the absence of religion, as evidenced by the fact that there are more people earning a living in occult practices than there are registered doctors and ten times more than evangelical pastors and missionaries.
Constitutional Provision: The preamble of the constitution states in Article 1, “France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice, but there continue to be concerns about the treatment of some minority religious groups. Discrimination against Jehovah’s Witnesses, Scientologists, and other groups considered dangerous sects or cults remains a concern and may have contributed to acts of vandalism against these groups.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Although there have been anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic incidents, prominent social leaders have taken positive steps to promote religious freedom and maintain open lines of communication among different faith communities.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 110 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one school, one college, a nursing home, and five radio stations. These institutions generally operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination. The church is a member of the French Protestant Federation, which represents the majority of the Protestants before the government. Evangelicals are affected by the regulations on building new churches.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: The 2004 law banning the wearing of religious articles at school also applies to Sabbath observance for Seventh-day Adventists. This makes it difficult for students who are required to attend class or take exams on Saturday.

Freedom to Evangelize: While Seventh-day Adventists are free to hold public worship services and evangelize, conditions in France make evangelism difficult. One problem is the inability of the church to acquire new buildings in which to hold services. Some towns use the legal doctrine of preemption to prevent the acquisition of real property. This doctrine allows a local to forbid the ownership
of real property based on local government planning. In many cases, few plans exist and preemption is used as a ploy to forbid Adventists from purchasing property. Additionally, the laws regulating cults forbid Adventists from providing medical services that they would normally provide through the church.

FRENCH GUIANA

Population: 243,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 2,245
Religious Groups: Catholic 99%

Constitutional Provision: French Guiana follows the French constitution. Article 1 provides: “France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs. It shall be organized on a decentralized basis.”

State Attitudes and Actions: French Guiana, consistent with French policy, affords religious freedom to its citizens.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of strife among the various religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 11 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
FRENCH POLYNESIA

Population: 272,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 4,272
Religious Groups: Protestant 54%, Catholic 30%, other 10%, none 6%

Constitutional Provision: French Polynesia is governed by French law, which allows for free exercise of religion. The French constitution states: “France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs.” French Polynesia is given considerable autonomy, allowing for greater religious freedom than granted by laws in France.

State Attitudes and Actions: Although France has recently enacted some very anti-religious laws curbing the rights of smaller faith communities, citizens in French Polynesia generally enjoy the free exercise of religion.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most faiths have an amicable relationship with one another.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 37 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, one radio station, and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: Churches do not need to be recognized by the government to practice their faith.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Adventists have experienced some employment problems. Students attending public schools were required to take tests on Saturday and it was also common for high schools to have classes on Saturdays. However, the local church has been effective in resolving these problems by maintaining a congenial relationship with the government and other churches.
Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Visits: Dr John Graz visited French Polynesia in 2007 and met with religious leaders and the president.

GABON

Population: 1,534,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 3,603
Religious Groups: Catholic 41%, independent 18% (includes Eglise de Banzie, Bethany, and Nazareth), Protestant 16% (includes CMA, Pentecostal, and Seventh-day Adventist), Muslim 10%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Though Gabon is an oil-producing country, there are significant disparities of wealth between the rich and poor. Freedom of expression may be limited since television, radio, and newspapers are state-controlled.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 1: “The freedom of conscience, thought, opinion, expression … and the free practice of religion are guaranteed to all.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution. A 1970 decree banning Jehovah’s Witnesses remains in effect; however, the government does not enforce the ban and Jehovah’s Witnesses continue to assemble, practice, and proselytize. The Ministry of the Interior maintains an official registry of religious groups and it appears that it does not grant registration to all small, indigenous religions. The government promotes interfaith relations by facilitating meetings of leaders of major religious groups. Such meetings are rare, but informal discussions among religious leaders are routine.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious. Several mutilated corpses and body parts, suspected
to have been used in ritual killings by practitioners of traditional indigenous religions, were found during the reporting period. No information was made public on the investigation of these crimes.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 14 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**GAMBIA**

**Population:** 1,778,000

**Seventh-day Adventists:** 1,194

**Religious Groups:** Sunni Muslim 89%, Christian 4%, traditional indigenous beliefs less than 6%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** There are reports of restrictions to freedom of expression, intimidation, harassment, and the arbitrary detention of political opponents of the government.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution protects religious liberty in Chapter IV, Article 17.2 and guarantees “freedom to practice any religion and to manifest such practice” in Chapter IV, Article 25.

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. The government does not require registration of religious groups. Public and private schools provide biblical and Qur’an studies without government restriction or interference. Government meetings typically begin with two prayers—one Islamic and one Christian. In recent years, the President asked
the Supreme Islamic Council to put its house in order and regulate activities in the mosques. In these setting, the Supreme Islamic Council denounced extremist violence, which it linked to Shiite beliefs, as contrary to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. The council directed all print and electronic media, Islamic/Arabic schools, cultural institutions, and individuals to cease all programs and activities that propagate what it called radical Shiite beliefs.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious. An Inter-Faith Group for Dialogue and Peace, comprised of representatives of the Christian, Muslim, and Baha’i communities, continues to meet regularly to discuss matters of mutual concern such as religious freedom, tolerance, and the need for people of different religious groups to live together in harmony. Some groups such as Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, and Church of Christ the Redeemer are not part of the Inter-Faith Group.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are five Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

GEORGIA

Population: 4,329,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 423
Religious Groups: Orthodox Christian 83.9%, Muslim 9.9%, Armenian Apostolic 3.9%, Catholic 0.8%, other 0.8%, none 0.7% (2002 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Georgia has been criticized for its detention of political opponents and for inhumane conditions in its detention facilities.
Constitutional Provision: Chapter 1, Article 19, of the constitution states: “(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of speech, thought, conscience, religion and belief. (2) The persecution of a person on the account of his/her speech, thought, religion or belief as well as the compulsion to express his/her opinion about them shall be impermissible. (3) The restriction of the freedom enumerated in the present Article shall be impermissible unless their manifestation infringes upon the rights of others.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government’s respect for religious freedom continues to improve and religion may be freely practiced in most cases. Groups other than the Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC) complain that they do not have equal legal status, are not officially recognized as religions, and do not enjoy the same privileges as the GOC.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There appears to be a general tolerance toward minority religious groups traditional to the country, including Catholics, Armenian Apostolic Christians, Jews, and Muslims. However, some members of the GOC and the public remain apprehensive regarding nontraditional religious minorities, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses and Baptists. Some people view minority religious groups as a threat to the national church and the country’s cultural values. Attacks were reported against some minority groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are eight Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates as a non-profit organization.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are regular reports of problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students and employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is permitted to conduct public worship. The media has published unreliable information about the Adventist Church, thus causing people to sometimes be unfriendly towards the church and houses of prayer. Intolerance by some citizens has manifested
itself in graffiti and vandalism of church property. Officially, the church is allowed to evangelize. In practice, local authorities have often impeded church efforts.

GERMANY

Population: 81,702,329
Seventh-day Adventists: 35,119
Religious Groups: Catholic 34%, Protestant 34%, Muslim 3.7%, unaffiliated or other 28.3%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Germany is considered the economic engine of the euro zone. German industry is robust; however, the economic and financial woes of its neighbors may limit Germany's export market. The current government strongly supports a federal Europe and advocates for the establishment of a European organization mandated to oversee national budgets and penalize recalcitrant countries. The country has been accused of participating in extraordinary rendition.

Constitutional Provision: Basic Law, Part 1, Article 4, of the constitution states: “1. Freedom of faith and of conscience, and freedom of creed religious or ideological, are inviolable. 2. The undisturbed practice of religion is guaranteed. 3. No one may be compelled against his conscience to render war service as an armed combatant. Details will be regulated by a Federal law.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The law protects religious rights against abuse, either by governmental or private actors; however, discrimination against, and unequal treatment of, some minority religious groups remains a problem at the local level. The government has made positive efforts to improve the integration of Muslims and other minorities into society, investigate and prosecute criminal behavior by extremists directed at religious groups, and promote tolerance education. There continue to be concerns about societal and governmental (federal and state) treatment of certain religious minorities, notably Scientologists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Muslims.
Private Attitudes and Actions: Anti-Semitic offenses are not uncommon. The rise of a substantial Muslim minority has contributed to social conflict with religious, ethnic, and cultural overtones. Despite these reports of societal abuses and discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, and practice, most religious organizations have amicable relationships.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 566 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, one hospital, eight nursing homes, one media center, one institute for Bible study, and a health food factory. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Church members still have workplace problems concerning Sabbath observance. German law generally favors the right of the employer to manage his business over individual religious freedom. However, individual cases are judged differently each time.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is allowed to evangelize freely.

The church is an associate member of the Council of Christian Churches in Germany.

GHANA

Population: 24,966,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 374,642
Religious Groups: Christian 68.8% (Pentecostal/Charismatic 24.1%, Protestant 18.6%, Catholic 15.1%, other 11%), Muslim 15.9%, traditional 8.5%, other 0.7%, none 6.1% (2000 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Ghana sets a positive example in Africa with its establishment of a national human rights commission and a committee for national reconciliation. Violence against women and female genital mutilation are widely reported.
**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 21: “(1) All persons shall have the right to … (c) practice any religion and manifest such practice.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious liberty at all levels and in all affairs, public or private. Religious institutions must register with the Registrar General’s department to receive formal government recognition. The government often takes steps to promote inter-faith understanding. At government meetings and receptions, there is usually a multi-denominational invocation led by leaders from various religious groups. The President and Vice-President made public remarks about the importance of peaceful religious co-existence.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Public discussion continued over religious worship versus traditional indigenous practices and respect for the rights and customs of others in a diverse society. Some religious leaders actively advocate tolerance towards other religious groups and discourage religiously motivated violence, discrimination, and harassment. Others, particularly laypersons associated with Evangelical groups, continue to preach intolerance for other groups such as Muslims and traditional indigenous religious groups. Some Muslims continue to feel a sense of political and social exclusion as Christianity influences many aspects of society. Muslims cite token representation of Muslims in national leadership positions, the deferral to only Christian-oriented prayers in public settings, and the ubiquity of Christian slogans as contributing to this perception of marginalization and discrimination within the Muslim community.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 1,168 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates eight hospitals, nine health clinics, one university, four secondary schools, one radio-TV production center, and one teacher training college. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.
Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Government Recognition: Ghana’s President John Evans Atta Mills praised the Seventh-day Adventist Church for its contribution to education and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) at a prayer service he attended on January 31, 2009 held at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Accra. He stated, “We will provide more avenues of enabling churches and other non-governmental organizations to complement government efforts in meeting the needs of our people.”

GREECE

Population: 11,319,048
Seventh-day Adventists: 510
Religious Groups: Greek Orthodox 98%, Muslim 1.3%, other 0.7%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Recession and economic depression have affected Greece for the past few years. Successive austerity measures have generated social uprisings. Unemployment reached 17.5% in September 2011. The situation has deteriorated since. A newly formed government is seeking ways to solve the ongoing crisis. There are reports of discrimination against the Roma people, poor detention conditions, mistreatment of asylum-seekers and refugees, and human trafficking.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Part 2, Article 13, “1. Freedom of religious conscience is inviolable. The enjoyment of civil rights and liberties does not depend on the individual’s religious beliefs.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice; however, non-Orthodox groups sometimes face administrative obstacles or encounter legal restrictions on religious practices. The constitution and law prohibit proselytizing and stipulate that no rite of worship may disturb public order or offend moral principles.
Private Attitudes and Actions: There are some reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. The number of anti-Semitic incidents increased after Israeli military action in Gaza in December 2008. The Orthodox Church maintains an official web site listing 74 religious practices and groups that it considers sacrilegious, including the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Evangelical Christians, Scientologists, Mormons, and members of the Baha’i faith.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are nine Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is recognized as a religious organization, but this does not grant it freedom from taxation.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: As a religious minority in an intolerant society, those who choose to keep Sabbath are continually hindered in obtaining work or attending school.

Freedom to Evangelize: The law forbids proselytizing.

GRENADA

Population: 105,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 12,943
Religious Groups: Catholic 53%, Anglican 13.8%, other Protestant 33.2%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The effects of the devastating hurricanes of 2005-2006, which nearly obliterated the island’s infrastructure, are still being felt. The economy is fast growing, but poverty remains widespread. Nearly half of all households are female-headed. The political landscape has been rocky following independence in 1974. A constitutional monarchy has been in place since 1983.
**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 1 (1b): “Whereas every person in Grenada is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms, that is to say, the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, color, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely … freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government views itself as secular and does not interfere with religious worship. It respects freedom of religious practice.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There is an amicable relationship among the various religious groups. The Conference of Churches, Grenada, has contributed to an added sense of harmony among Christian denominations.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 46 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one school and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**GUADELOUPE**

**Population:** 444,000
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 12,124
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 91%, Protestant 5%, Hindu and native African 4%

**Constitutional Provision:** Guadeloupe follows the French constitution. Article 1 states: “France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic.
It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs. It shall be organized on a decentralized basis.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Guadeloupe is a French overseas territory and as such allows religious freedom to its citizens.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of animosity or violence among differing religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 59 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one radio station and one school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

GUATEMALA

Population: 14,740,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 232,493
Religious Groups: Catholic 50-60%, Protestant 40%, indigenous Mayan beliefs

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 36: “The exercise of all religions is free. Every person has the right to practice his/her religion or belief in both public and private, through education, as well as worship and observance without limit; other than respect for public order and dignity of the hierarchy of the faithful of other creeds.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government allows religious freedom, but extends special privileges to the Catholic Church. The government does not impose registration requirements for religious recognition, but, in order to
conduct business, organizations are to register as legal entities. There is no fee for registration. Jose Luis Miranda, who claims to be the Antichrist, was denied entry into the country, even though his church is registered and allowed to operate freely.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are no reports of violence or hostility between religious groups. Evangelical Protestants are divided regarding interaction with other religious communions.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 797 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a high school, two orphanages, and two radio stations. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Adventist job applicants commonly face discrimination because of their beliefs. Employers in Guatemala are allowed to inquire about an applicant’s religion and, upon discovering that an applicant is a Seventh-day Adventist, he or she is dismissed from consideration. The workweek is traditionally from Monday through the first half of Saturday.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church has had some problems with freedom to evangelize.

**GUINEA**

**Population:** 10,232,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 1,468  
**Religious Groups:** Muslim 88%, indigenous beliefs 7%, Christian 4%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** This country is rich in natural resources (bauxite, iron ore, diamonds, gold, salt, hydropower, uranium), but there is significant economic disparity between the elite and the masses. Moreover, the mining techniques used by the very poor result in frequent exposure to toxic substances, a particularly troubling problem for children. Political instability, social upheaval, and violence have plagued this nation since the end of Communism.
Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Articles 7 and 14: “(7) He shall be free to believe, to think and to profess his religious faith … . (14) The free exercise of religious sects shall be guaranteed.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Some maintain that the current government continues to favor Muslims over non-Muslims. For example, universities close on Friday so Muslim students can go to mosque, but they schedule classes on Sunday, preventing Christian students from attending church. In a change from previous years, the coalition government includes a Secretariat General of Religious Affairs, which aims to incorporate Muslim and Christian religious groups into national affairs. This change took place in March 2007, replacing the former government entity specific to Islamic affairs, the Secretariat General of the Islamic League. However, the military junta that took power during the December 2008 coup d’état and was not reinstated during the reporting period suspended the constitution. The government, represented by the military junta generally respects religious freedom in practice. On January 14, 2009, the junta appointed a new Secretary General who promotes religious tolerance. All religious groups newly operating in the country must register with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Political Affairs. Registration entitles religious organizations to value-added tax (VAT) exemptions on incoming shipments and some energy subsidies. Unregistered religious groups continue to operate; however, they are not entitled to VAT exemptions and other benefits available to registered groups. Unregistered religious groups are subject to expulsion, a penalty with limited opportunity for legal appeal. The government did not expel any religious group.

Private Attitudes and Actions: In some areas Islamic dominance results in strong social pressure that discourages conversion from Islam. This pressure sometimes makes it difficult to obtain land for religious use. There are no reports of recent violence between religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are two Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

GUINEA-BISSAU

Population: 1,610,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 2,325
Religious Groups: Muslim 52%, ethno-religionist 35%, Catholic 8%, Protestant 2%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Restrictions of freedom of expression and imprisonment of journalists tarnish the human rights record of this country. Also troubling is the phenomenon of child trafficking; this is a major issue, which reportedly is not addressed by the government. It is reported that prison conditions have considerably worsen.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution guarantees separation between the state and religious institutions, and in Section 1, Article 6, protects the right of religious institutions to operate freely under the law.

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution. There is no state religion, and members of the country’s major religious groups have representation in the national assembly. The legal status of the Ahmadiyya Muslim group remains uncertain after the government’s prohibition of the group in 2005. The Ahmadi continue to practice their faith despite their ambiguous legal standing.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups and society are generally harmonious, and there are no reports of significant tensions. The country’s low literacy rate leaves many citizens open to misinformation and coercion by local leaders and others.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are two Seventh-day Adventist churches, one radio-TV production center, and one Bible correspondence school. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

GUYANA

Population: 757,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 57,471
Religious Groups: Christian 50%, Hindu 35%, Muslim 10%, other 5%

Constitutional Provision: Chapter III, Article 40, (1) (a) and (b) of the constitution states: “Every person in Guyana is entitled to the basic right to a happy, creative and productive life, free from hunger, disease, ignorance and want. That right includes the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, color, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely (a) life, liberty, security of the person and the protection of the law. (b) freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government allows for and protects the religious freedom of all its citizens.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of animosity or violence among different religious groups.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 147 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one clinic and hospital and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is recognized by the state.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Visits: Dr John Graz visited government authorities and participated in a Festival of Religious Freedom in January 2009.

HAITI

Population: 10,124,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 370,985
Religious Groups: Catholic 54.7%, Protestant 42%, other 3%, none 1%. About half the population practices Voodoo along with another religion.

Perspectives on Current Issues: Haiti is still far from recovered from the catastrophic earthquake of January 2010. An estimated 316,000 people died, another 300,000 were injured, and 1,000,000 lost their homes. The country’s infrastructure experienced extensive damage: an estimated 250,000 residences and 30,000 commercial buildings collapsed or were severely damaged. The psychological effects of the trauma will continue for some time. In spite of considerable efforts by the international community, this already impoverished country continues to suffer. Societal collapse has led to increased crime; rape in particular is rampant. Lack of adequate waste disposal systems and limited supplies of potable water contribute to ongoing vulnerability to diseases such as cholera.
Constitutional Provision: The constitution in Section D, Articles 30 and 30.1 states: “(30) All religions and faiths shall be freely exercised. Everyone is entitled to profess his religion and faith, provided that the exercise of that right does not disturb law and order. (30.1) No one may be compelled to belong to a religious organization or to follow a religious teaching contrary to his convictions.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The state generally allows for religious freedom. The constitution stipulates that no one can be required to join an organization or receive religious instruction contrary to their convictions. Neither Catholic nor Protestant parochial schools are allowed to proselytize students attending their institutions. Historically, the Catholicism was the official state religion, but based upon the 1987 constitution this is no longer the case. Nevertheless, the Concordat between the Vatican and the state still exists. The Catholic Church holds an elevated place in the religious realm, though the government has been giving an increased role to Protestants in official state functions.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most private religious groups have amicable relationships, but Protestants and Voodoo practitioners are often in conflict. Protestants adamantly oppose any form of Voodoo. Some Christians have banded together to form Christian political parties to reform Haiti and strengthen the society.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 492 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, two academies, one hospital, and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
HONDURAS

Population: 7,755,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 247,236
Religious Groups: Catholic 63%, Protestant 23%, other 14%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Human rights defenders have complained about police intimidation and harassment. Poor treatment and abuse of detainees have been reported. Another major problem in this country is violence against women.

Constitutional Provision: Article 77 of the constitution states: “The free exercise of all the religions and cults is guaranteed without preeminence; as long as they do not contravene the laws and the public order. The ministers of the different religions are not allowed to exert public positions nor produce, in any form, political propaganda.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Hondurans are free to practice religion as they see fit and the government respects this right. According to the law, the Catholic Church is the only one recognized. All other religious groups are seen as “religious associations” and are afforded certain privileges such as tax-exempt status. Both the Catholic and Evangelical communities exert considerable influence on the government. The state generally allows foreign missionaries, but has a law that prohibits missionaries from entering the country to teach “witchcraft” or “satanic rituals.” Foreign missionaries can be deported for these offenses. In April 2009 the Ministry of Justice officially banned the Creciendo en Garcia, the group founded by the self-proclaimed Antichrist, Jose Luis Miranda, on the basis that it has been profiting from “bogus religious activities” and creating political disturbances. All foreigners associated with the group are also banned from the country.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Members from varying religious communities have amicable relationships with one another. There have been no reports of violence or strife.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 424 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one school, one hospital, one bookstore, and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

HONG KONG

Population: 7,687,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 4,800
Religious Groups: Indigenous beliefs 90%, Christian 10%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Political authorities in Hong Kong have succeeded in maintaining economic stability despite the economic crisis affecting Europe and other parts of the world. Unemployment is at a historic low of 3.1%. Of concern, though, are social inequality and air pollution.

Constitutional Provision: Hong Kong has different laws than Mainland China, and these laws allow it to provide religious freedom. Article 32, paragraphs 1 and 2, state: “Hong Kong residents shall have freedom of conscience … residents shall have freedom of religious belief and freedom to preach and to conduct and participate in religious activities in public.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Hong Kong allows freedom of conscience. The law mandates that the major faiths select representatives who in turn elect certain government officials. Religious organizations are able to receive special accommodation when purchasing land to construct places of worship. However, groups designated as “spiritual exercise” groups are not seen as religious and must register under the Societies Ordinance. They are not accorded the same
privileges as recognized religious groups. As such, the Falun Gong movement, even though it is deemed legal in Hong Kong, has experienced some difficulty.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most faiths have amicable relationships and there are no reports of societal religious abuses.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 20 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates two schools, one college, two hospitals, one publishing house, and one food factory. These institutions are allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: Denominations do not have to be recognized by the government to practice their faith in Hong Kong.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are some reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students and employees. The government has been enacting laws to allow for greater religious freedom.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

HUNGARY

Population: 9,972,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 4,630
Religious Groups: Catholic 51.9%, Calvinist 15.9%, Lutheran 3%, Greek Catholic 2.6%, Jewish 1%, other 3% (includes Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist, Pentecostal, Unitarian) (2001 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Hungary has been criticized for discrimination against the Roma people. The 2011 “de-registration” of all but 14 churches stirred the international community and even the following action to increase the number of approved religious groups to 32 has not calmed the polemic.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 60, “1. In the Republic of Hungary everyone has the right to freedom of thought, freedom
of conscience and freedom of religion. 2. This right shall include the free choice or acceptance of a religion or belief, and the freedom to publicly or privately express or decline to express, exercise and teach such religions and beliefs by way of religious actions, rites or in any other way, either individually or in a group. 3. The church and the State shall operate in separation in the Republic of Hungary. 4. A majority of two-thirds of the votes of the Members of Parliament present is required to pass the law on the freedom of belief and religion.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The state generally allows for the practice of religious freedom. All recognized religious organizations receive some subsidy from the government. Signed Concordats regulate the relationship between the Catholic Church and Hungary. Inequities still exist between traditional Hungarian religions and perceived upstarts. This is usually in the form of taxation. Yet, for the most part all religions are free to operate.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Most religious organizations have amicable relationships with each other. However, there are increased reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, suggesting an increase of anti-Semitic rhetoric in a climate of political friction and economic uncertainty. Extremist groups have grown in size and number, frequently staging anti-Roma and anti-Semitic public events. The far right-wing political party Jobbik grew in popularity, potentially bolstered by its close affiliation with the extremist group Magyar Garda and its openly anti-Semitic positions.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 105 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates two nursing homes, a publishing house, and a theological seminary. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been an officially recognized denomination. This position was reaffirmed on February 27, 2012, when the Seventh-day Adventist Church, along with 31 other denominations, was officially recognized by the Hungarian parliament.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

ICELAND

Population: 319,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 488
Religious Groups: Lutheran Church of Iceland (official) 80.7%, Roman Catholic 2.5%, Reykjavik Free Church 2.4%, Hafnarfjörour Free Church 1.6%, other religions 3.6%, unaffiliated 3%, other or unspecified 6.2% (2006 est)

Perspective on Issues: In recent years, Iceland has absorbed more immigrants than any other European country. Maintaining peaceful relations between the various cultural groups will inevitably become an ongoing challenge.

Constitutional Provision: Section VI, Articles 62-64, of the constitution state: “62. The Evangelical Lutheran Church shall be the State Church in Iceland and, as such, it shall be supported and protected by the State. This may be amended by law. 63. All persons have the right to form religious associations and to practice their religion in conformity with their individual convictions. Nothing may however be preached or practiced which is prejudicial to good morals or public order. 64. No one may lose any of his civil or national rights on account of his religion, nor may anyone refuse to perform any generally applicable civil duty on religious grounds. Everyone shall be free to remain outside religious associations. No one shall be obliged to pay any personal dues to any religious association of which he is not a member. A person who is not a member of any religious association shall pay to the University of Iceland the dues that he would have had to pay to such an association, if he had been a member.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice; however, the state financially supports and promotes Lutheranism as the country’s official religion. The Evangelical Lutheran
Church enjoys some advantages not available to other religious groups. The church provides social services regardless of creed.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There have been a few incidents of religious bias or discrimination. Because Iceland is a small country with closely-knit communities and Lutheranism is so closely associated with Icelandic culture, other religions are deemed strange and viewed with suspicion.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are six Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** As a religious minority in a culturally Lutheran society, Adventists frequently find Sabbath-keeping to be a point of friction in obtaining work or attending school.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

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**INDIA**

**Population:** 1,272,794,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 1,571,354  
**Religious Groups:** Hindu 80.5%, Muslim 13.4%, Christian 2.3%, Sikh 1.9%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.1% (2001 census)

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** The birthplace of the world’s two largest religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, and others such as Jainism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism, India is probably the most religiously diverse country in the world. This diversity is both a strength and a challenge. Inflation and a lack of foreign investors have put India in a precarious economic predicament and it
currently imports 80% of its energy supply. Though it is referred to as the largest
democracy in the world, corruption scandals have rocked the nation to the point
that some of its leaders talk about a “deficit of general governance.” Hundreds
of millions live in abject poverty and inequality remains ingrained in the very
hierarchical structure of Indian society. Discrimination against marginalized
communities of Dalit mars its human rights record. Violence against women
is widespread. Allegations of police brutality are all too common. The unstable
political situation in Kashmir and terrorist activities inside the country’s borders
have added challenges that India needs to resolve in order to move forward.

**Constitutional Provision:** The preamble of the constitution reads: “We, the
people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign
socialist secular democratic republic and to secure to all its citizens: justice,
social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and
worship; equality of status and of opportunity…” Article 25 (1) states: “Subject
to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all
persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to
profess, practice and propagate religion.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The national government generally respects
freedom of religion. However, at the local government level there are policies
and laws restricting religious freedom. Anti-conversion laws, passed in some
states, are an example of such restrictions. Local law enforcement officers have
at times been slow to act against perpetrators of religiously motivated violence.
“Hindutva,” the ideology that Hinduism is superior to all other religious and
cultural traditions, has been rejected by the national government. However, it
is still espoused by some local government bodies and, as a result, influences
the formation of laws.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** August to October 2008 saw the worst religious
persecution in India’s 60-year democratic history. Hindu extremists in the eastern
state of Orissa murdered at least 120 Christians, destroyed 250 churches, and
destroyed dozens of homes. More than 50,000 persons were displaced. Though
the violence has subsided, the situation is still difficult for Christians living in
the region. There have also been sporadic acts of violence against Christians
in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Kashmir among others.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 4,028 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, five colleges, 101 schools, 12 hospitals, three orphanages, one media center, and one publishing house.

**Government Recognition:** Adventists have been able to obtain minority status through a government agency, which protects the rights of religious minorities. According to internal sources, between 11 and 15 Seventh-day Adventists were killed in August 2008 in the state of Orissa. Hindu fanatics burned churches and houses of members. Thousands of Adventists had to flee to the forest to save their lives.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Adventists have problems maintaining employment in India because many businesses operate on a six-day workweek. Students often face a challenge in regard to Sabbath observance since exams on Saturdays are quite common. Often Adventists have been able to take the same exam at another time at a different school or university.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Seventh-day Adventists have been able to evangelize with a relative degree of freedom.

**INDONESIA**

**Population:** 239,870,940  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 217,489  
**Religious Groups:** Muslim 88%, Protestant 6%, Catholic 3%, Hindu 2%, Buddhist less than 1%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Indonesia is the fourth most populated country, the third-largest democracy, and the most populous Muslim nation in the world. Human rights organizations consider Indonesia’s record poor. The fight against Islamist terrorist organizations has led to an increase in the
number of political prisoners, arbitrary detentions, torture, and abuse of detainees. Gender-based discrimination, violence against women, and sex trafficking are widespread. Indonesia has the highest rate of maternal mortality in the world. Mass relocation programs implemented in response to overpopulation have led to greater abuses.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Chapter XI, Article 29: “(1) The State shall be based upon the belief in the One and Only God. (2) The State guarantees all persons the freedom of worship, each according to his/her own religion or belief.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Although the constitution guarantees religious freedom, the government does not do much to protect individuals who have been victims of religious discrimination and it has not used its power to reverse local laws that permit religious discrimination. The government itself has been a perpetrator of religious discrimination. All public servants must swear allegiance to the government and Pancasila ideology. Only six religions: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism have official status. The government issued a decree that resulted in the freezing of activities by the Ahmadiyya community and has also banned them from proselytizing. However, they are still free to worship within their community. The province of Aceh is the only one officially allowed to practice Shari’a law, but many local government bodies in other provinces practice it as well.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 1,486 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, two colleges, 18 academies, one publishing house, one radio station, one air base, three hospitals, and 19 clinics. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church falls into the Protestant category and is officially recognized.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Adventist students and employees generally have few problems with regard to Sabbath observance.
Freedom to Evangelize: There are serious limits to freedom to evangelize. Two Adventist churches were temporarily closed for holding evangelistic meetings in their buildings. Another church has been threatened with closure because it held evangelistic meetings in its building. Even family worship and mid-week prayer meetings at homes face opposition.

Visits: Dr John Graz, Lincoln Steed, and Dr Jonathan Catolico visited Indonesia on March 4-7, 2010. They met government officials and religious leaders, including leaders of the main Muslim organizations. On March 6, a Festival of Religious Freedom was held in the SDA headquarters auditorium.

IRAN

Population: 77,891,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 29
Religious Groups: Muslim 98% (Shi’a 89%, Sunni 9%), other 2% (includes Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, and Baha’i)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Iran holds one of the worst human rights records on the planet. International sanctions against the Iranian regime have affected the economy. Even though Iran is the second largest producer of oil, several western companies have withdrawn from the market and Russian and Chinese demands have not compensated for this loss. The current nuclear program, which Iran claims is for peaceful purposes, has drawn worldwide criticism and further sanctions. Economic problems and regional tensions, especially the threat of an Israeli military intervention to dismantle Iran’s nuclear program, are having a destabilizing effect on the Iranian leadership. Widespread human rights abuses are reported. Freedom of religion, especially freedom to change one’s religion, is officially denied to Iranians. Violations of women’s rights are widespread. Discrimination, persecution, torture, and forced disappearances of minorities, such as members of the Baha’i faith, are known to occur.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution provides no religious freedom. However, Chapter I, Articles 12 to 14, sets up the framework for the treatment
of religious minorities. “Article 12: The official religion of Iran is Islam and the Twelver Ja’fari school, and this principle will remain eternally immutable. Other Islamic schools are to be accorded full respect, and their followers are free to act in accordance with their own jurisprudence in performing their religious rites. These schools enjoy official status in matters pertaining to religious education, affairs of personal status (marriage, divorce, inheritance, and wills) and related litigation in courts of law. In regions of the country where Muslims following any one of these schools constitute the majority, local regulations, within the bounds of the jurisdiction of local councils, are to be in accordance with the respective school, without infringing upon the rights of the followers of other schools. Article 13: Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are the only recognized religious minorities, who, within the limits of the law, are free to perform their religious rites and ceremonies and to act according to their own canon in matters of personal affairs and religious education. Article 14: In accordance with the sacred verse, ‘God does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with those who have not fought against you because of your religion and who have not expelled you from your homes’ [60:8], the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and all Muslims are duty-bound to treat non-Muslims in conformity with ethical norms and the principles of Islamic justice and equity and to respect their human rights. This principle applies to all who refrain from engaging in conspiracy or activity against Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Respect for religious freedom in the country continues to deteriorate. Reports of government imprisonment, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination based on religious beliefs continue. Proselytizing of Muslims by non-Muslims is illegal.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Although the constitution gives Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians the status of “protected” religious minorities, in practice non-Shi’a Muslims face substantial societal discrimination and government actions continue to support elements of society that create a threatening atmosphere for some religious minorities. Members of the Baha’i faith face government-sanctioned discrimination in the workplace. Baha’i graveyards in Abadeh and
other cities have been desecrated, but the government did not seek to identify or punish the perpetrators.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There is one Seventh-day Adventist church. Institutions and buildings previously owned have been nationalized.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** As a religious minority in a Muslim nation, Adventists who wish to keep Sabbath find it a continual hindrance in obtaining work and attending school.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Non-Muslims are forbidden to evangelize Muslims. However, they are free to evangelize other non-Muslims. Pastors caught evangelizing Muslims have been hanged.

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**IRAQ**

**Population:** 32,700,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 173  
**Religious Groups:** Muslim 97% (Shi’a 60%-65%, Sunni 32%-37%), Christian or other 3%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** According to the NGO Transparency International, Iraq ranks 175th of 183 countries in terms of corruption. Lack of security is most likely the major challenge of the country, but there are others. Following the Iraq war and American occupation, ideological conflicts between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds continue to create social and religious tensions. An estimated two million refugees have fled from Iraq to neighboring countries and another 2.2 million people are internally displaced. The death penalty has been used widely. Violence against women is also common.

**Constitutional Provision:** The interim constitution sets up the parameters of religious freedom. Chapter 1, Article 7 states: “(A) Islam is the official religion of the State and is to be considered a source of legislation. No law that contradicts the universally agreed tenets of Islam, the principles of democracy,
or the rights cited in Chapter Two of this Law may be enacted during the transitional period. This Law respects the Islamic identity of the majority of the Iraqi people and guarantees the full religious rights of all individuals to freedom of religious belief and practice.” Chapter 2 Article 13: “(F) Each Iraqi has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religious belief and practice. Coercion in such matters shall be prohibited.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The constitution recognizes Islam as the official religion. Though the government generally protects the rights and freedoms stipulated in the constitution, violence conducted by terrorists, radical Islamic extremists, and criminal gangs restricts the free exercise of religion and poses a significant threat to the country’s vulnerable religious minorities. Sectarian violence, including attacks on religious leaders and religious places of worship, hampers the ability to practice religion freely. The Prime Minister, along with other high-ranking government officials and political party leaders, has made numerous public statements in support of the country’s religious minority communities.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Conservative and extremist Islamic elements continue to exert pressure on society to conform to their interpretations of Islam’s precepts. Although these efforts affect all citizens, non-Muslims are especially vulnerable to this pressure and violence because of their minority status and their lack of protection provided by a tribal structure. In general, minorities are underrepresented, especially at the provincial level, where they lack full representation in the provincial councils, limiting their access to government-provided security and economic development.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are three Seventh-day Adventist churches in Iraq. The church building in Baghdad has been damaged by car bombs several times. Because of sectarian violence and general threats to non-Muslims, a large number of Adventist church members have fled the country. The current circumstances make ministry exceedingly difficult.
IRELAND

Population: 6,397,070
Seventh-day Adventists: 625
Religious Groups: Catholic 86.8%, Church of Ireland 3%, Muslim 1% Presbyterian 0.5%, Methodist 0.25%, Jewish 0.1%, other 8.35%

Perspectives on Issues: In spite of economic challenges affecting other parts of Europe, Ireland’s unemployment rate and public debt have both declined. Ninety percent of population growth comes from immigration. The sex abuse scandal involving Catholic clergy has deeply affected citizens’ attitudes toward religion.

Constitutional Provision: Ireland, though a secular state, overtly mingles Christian beliefs into its laws. The preamble of the constitution gives praise to God for their national identity, affirms the trinity, and recognizes the Lordship of Jesus. Article 44 says: “(1) The State acknowledges that the homage of public worship is due to Almighty God. It shall hold His Name in reverence, and shall respect and honor religion. (2.1) Freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion are, subject to public order and morality, guaranteed to every citizen. (2.2) The State guarantees not to endow any religion. (2.3) The State shall not impose any disabilities or make any discrimination on the ground of religious profession, belief or status.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government allows for the free practice of any faith without restriction. Though the majority of Irish citizens are Catholics, the government does not favor Catholicism officially, except that major Catholic holidays are national holidays with the most significant being St. Patrick’s Day.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most faiths have amicable relationships. Interfaith dialogs have been supported and promoted by government officials and religious leaders. Catholics and Protestants, who were at one time violently opposed to each other, continue to some degree to work regularly together to discuss issues of tolerance and peace.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 10 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

ISRAEL

Population: 7,856,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 859
Religious Groups: Jewish 76.4%, Muslim 16%, unspecified 3.9%, Arab Christian 1.7%, Druze 1.6%, other Christian 0.4% (data from 2004)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Israel is an industrially advanced state. Its high-tech, bio-tech, and chemical industries give it an edge compared to its neighbors. However, 19% of Israel's population lives below the poverty line. The discovery of large gas and oil deposits under the Mediterranean may provide new opportunities for the state. It experiences a perennial lack of water, despite extensive desalination. On the political and military fronts, the threat of war with Iran and the ongoing danger posed by terrorist organizations present formidable challenges to this country. One of the major human rights issues Israel faces is in relation to the Palestinian people of Gaza and the West Bank.

Constitutional Provision: There is no provision in the constitution or Basic Law that grants religious freedom. The only provisions granting human rights are under the “Human Dignity and Liberty” section of Basic Law. The preface of that section states: “The purpose of this Basic Law is to protect human
dignity and liberty, in order to establish in a Basic Law the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Government allocations of state resources favor Orthodox (including Modern and National Religious streams of Orthodoxy) and ultra-Orthodox (sometimes referred to as “Haredi”) Jewish religious groups and institutions, discriminating against non-Jews and non-Orthodox streams of Judaism. The High Court ruled on May 18, 2009, that the government must cease discriminating against non-Orthodox conversion institutes. Proselytizing is legal in the country and missionaries of all religious groups are theoretically allowed to proselytize all citizens; however, the reality does not seem as encouraging as the recent tearing of the New Testament by a parliamentarian has shown.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Jewish–Arab tensions remain at approximately the same level as in recent years. However, tensions between some Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities and evangelical Christians and Messianic Jewish communities have grown significantly since 2007. Animosity between secular and religious Jews continues. Members of Orthodox Jewish groups treat non-Orthodox Jews with discrimination and intolerance.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 13 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a publishing house, two English language schools, a Bible correspondence school, a guest house, and a community service center. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a recognized denomination.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Sabbath-keeping is not a hindrance in a nation which respects the Sabbath hours.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Evangelism is strictly regulated.
ITALY

Population: 61,214,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 9,315
Religious Groups: Catholic 85%, other (includes Protestant, Jewish, Muslim) 15%

Perspectives on Current Issues: There is discrimination against the Roma community. Legislation prompted by the “war on terror” has raised tensions between Italian citizens and recent immigrants. Some people are reportedly detained without legal hearings and abuses and mistreatment by police are alleged to occur.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 7, “(1) The State and the Catholic Church shall be, each within its own order, independent and sovereign. (2) Their relations shall be regulated by the Lateran Pacts. Such amendments to these pacts as are accepted by both parties shall not require the procedure for Constitutional amendment.” Article 8 states: “(1) All religious denominations shall be equally free before the law. (2) Religious denominations other than Catholic shall have the right to organize themselves according to their own by-laws provided that they are not in conflict with the Italian legal system. (3) Their relations with the State shall be regulated by law on the basis of agreements with their respective representatives.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The Italian government has been tolerant of other faiths. However, due to its sovereign status and historical political authority, the Catholic Church enjoys some privileges not available to other religious groups.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are occasional reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. For example on January 23, 2009, in Rome, 22 shops owned by Jews were the target of vandalism by the fascist group Militia, which left behind a banner urging a boycott of Jewish shops. However, prominent social leaders have taken positive steps to promote religious freedom. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has
good relations with other religious groups and cooperates closely with other
Protestants.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 109 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The
church operates one college, nine radio stations, one nursing home, and a
publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath keeping for Students and Employees: Sabbath-observing employees
sometimes have difficulty being exempted from working on Saturday. Students
in particular have a hard time because certain required classes are only held
on Saturday.

JAMAICA

Population: 2,709,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 260,610
Religious Groups: Protestant 62.5%, none 20.9%, other or unspecified 14.2%,
Catholic 2.6% (2001 census)

Perspective on Current Issues: A reputation for violence and crime and
allegations of police brutality are the main concerns of human rights advocates.

Constitutional Provision: Chapter III, Article 21 of the constitution states:
“1) Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoy-
ment of his freedom of conscience, and for the purposes of this section the said
freedom includes freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his
religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and
both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief
in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The Jamaican government allows and protects
religious freedom. Registration is not mandatory for religious groups. However,
in order to receive tax-exempt status and privileges such as clergy visiting
prisons, a religious group must be registered. The Rastafarian community
complains about not being allowed to use marijuana within the context of its religious practices.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** No animosity or violence is reported among different religious groups.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 640 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, five schools, three clinics, three bookstores, and one hospital. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a recognized denomination. In February 2009, Dr Patrick Allen, a Seventh-day Adventist, was appointed to the post of Governor General.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**JAPAN**

**Population:** 128,100,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 15,307  
**Religious Groups:** Shinto and Buddhist 89%, Christian 2.3%, other 7.8%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** An earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011 took the lives of more than 20,000 people. In addition, the central Fukushima-Dalichi nuclear plant was heavily damaged, producing the worst disaster of its kind since the Chernobyl catastrophe in 1986. Full recovery will be an arduous and costly endeavor. Another challenge the government faces is the presence of an estimated one million illegal immigrants from Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and other countries.
**Constitutional Provision:** Article 20 states: “(1) Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all.” Article 28 continues: “Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The state allows religious freedom. However, since the subway gassing by the Aum Shinrikyo cult in 1995, the government has decided to monitor the financial and commercial assets of religious organizations. The government reserves the right to suspend a religious organization’s for-profit activities if they are in violation of government regulations.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** The two main religions in Japan are Buddhism and Shintoism, but they are not exclusive. Many people practice more than one religion. Most religions have a congenial relationship with each other.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 107 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, one high school, one publishing house, two bookstores, three food factories, three hospitals, three clinics, one dental clinic, and 24 nursing homes and retirement centers. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** No government recognition is necessary for a denomination to practice its faith, but it is necessary if the organization wants tax-exempt status. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a recognized denomination.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** The government has instituted new regulations governing schools. These regulations have restricted free choice for students.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
JORDAN

Population: 6,600,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 188
Religious Groups: Sunni Muslim 92%, Christian 6% (majority Greek Orthodox, but some Greek Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and Protestant denominations), other 2% (Shi’a Muslim and Druze)

Perspectives on Current Issues: In spite of the king’s efforts to contain the popular protest movement, the so-called “Arab Spring” has also affected Jordan and the number of tourists has diminished. Human rights defenders report that anti-terror legislation has been used to justify the arrest and detention of people who do not have the opportunity for a fair trial. Freedoms of expression, assembly, and association have been restricted. The country’s energy bill has increased as it is heavily dependent on Egyptian gas, which supplies 80% of the needs of the Hashemite kingdom, for the production of electricity. Jordan ranks 95th out of 187 countries according to the Index of the United Nations Human Development Program. The country houses 1.9 million Palestinian refugees and 500,000 refugees from Iraq. Discrimination against migrant workers has been reported. Violence against women is widespread and there are numerous reported cases of “honor killings.” Defamation laws make Christians and converts from Islam vulnerable to harassment and murder.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution, Articles 6 and 14, states: “Article 6: (i) Jordanians shall be equal before the law. There shall be no discrimination between them as regards to their rights and duties on grounds of race, language or religion. (ii) The Government shall ensure work and education within the limits of its possibilities, and it shall ensure a state of tranquility and equal opportunities to all Jordanians.” Article 14: “The State shall safeguard the free exercise of all forms of worship and religious rites in accordance with the customs observed in the Kingdom, unless such is inconsistent with public order or morality.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government has played a prominent role in promoting interfaith dialogue and harmony, including hosting a visit by
Pope Benedict XVI, which included a meeting with King Abdullah. However, it also harasses some citizens suspected of proselytizing Muslims and a few individuals who have converted to Christianity, whom it attempts to induce to revert to Islam. Converts from Islam risk the loss of civil rights. The Shari’a court, which has family law jurisdiction for Muslims, continued proceedings against a convert from Islam.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Some religious groups face societal discrimination. Some Muslims who convert to other religions report facing social ostracism, threats, and physical and verbal abuse from their families and Muslim religious leaders. Citizens report that interfaith romantic relationships have led to ostracism and, in some cases, feuds between members of the couple’s families. Anti-Semitism is present in the media and editorial cartoons, articles, and opinion pieces sometimes depict negative images of Jews.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: The Seventh-day Adventist Church has two churches. The church also operates one high school.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: As a religious minority in a Muslim nation, Adventists who wish to keep Sabbath find it a continual hindrance in obtaining work and attending school.

Freedom to Evangelize: Evangelism of Muslims is forbidden.

Visits: On January 29-February 4, 2010, Dr John Graz visited Jordan with a delegation led by Dr William Johnson. They met government officials and religious leaders. Plans have been made for additional meetings.
KAZAKHSTAN

Population: 16,553,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 3,217
Religious Groups: Muslim 65%, Russian Orthodox 32%, Protestant 2%, other 1%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Kazakhstan is called the engine of central Asia. It is an affluent country rich in natural gas and petroleum deposits. It ranks second only to Russia as an exporter of crude oil. Economic analysts predict that during 2011-2013, the trade surplus will be 6.5% of the GDP. The current regime maintains tight control on the judiciary and the electoral system has been criticized worldwide. The country’s human rights record is very poor. Freedom House, an observer group, rates this former Soviet state a 6 in Political Rights and a 5 in Civil Liberties (scale of 1-7; 1 is the highest), denoting it as “Not Free.” According to several human rights agencies, corruption is systemic.

Constitutional Provision: Article 22 of the constitution states: “(1) Everyone shall have the right to freedom of conscience. (2) The right to freedom of conscience must not specify or limit universal human and civil rights and responsibilities before the State.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The constitution allows for religious freedom, but local governments and communities sometimes work to inhibit the establishment and expansion of non-traditional (non-Russian Orthodox and Muslim) religious groups. Missionary activity is greatly restricted and missionaries may not distribute materials that are not first approved by officials. The state has a law which states that religious instruction may not harm a child’s all-around development. This law allows the state to monitor religious instruction and determine if it is harmful. It is government’s policy to root out extremism and this policy has sometimes been interpreted as allowing the government to crack down on non-violent religious minorities. All religious communities are under surveillance by the local police and the KNB secret police. In order to function as a religious community, groups must register with the government; failure to register can lead to punishment from the authorities. However, groups
that are disliked may find that their applications have been rejected. Attacks upon religious freedom are widespread and emanate from the President to local officials. Based upon its Administrative Code, which is currently being revised, there are punishments attached to the exercise of freedom of religion.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Differing faiths generally tolerate one another. However, the public is constantly warned that minority religious groups are violent and subversive. This has led to bigotry and misunderstanding of non-traditional religious minorities.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 51 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a media center.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** No information is available.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The majority religious groups have been able to impose restrictions on Adventists’ freedom to evangelize.

## KENYA

**Population:** 40,862,900  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 444,646  
**Religious Groups:** Protestant 33%, independent 24% (includes African Independent Pentecostal Church, New Apostolic Church, and Episcopal Church of Africa), Catholic 22%, Anglican 9%, Orthodox 1%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Political rivalry that turned into bloody tribal warfare has marred Kenya’s postcolonial success story. Tribal rivalries, armed conflicts, and open wars tend to unleash a plethora of human rights violations and abuses of all kinds.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 78, paragraph 1: “No person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience… That freedom includes freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change
his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious freedom and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. Religious groups are required to register with the government to receive tax and other financial benefits. Groups are required to prove that their beliefs are distinct from those of other religions in order to be able to register. The law forbids some indigenous religious practices such as witchcraft, though participation in these practices is generally only prosecuted in connection with some other offense, such as murder. The government of Eritrea maintains close financial ties with the Eritrean Orthodox Church in Kenya, which reported that planted agents stole church funds. On September 13, 2008, after a church official began to investigate the church’s finances, Eritrean government officials in Nairobi assaulted the official with knives at his residence and stole approximately $2,570 (180,000 Kenyan shillings). The police arrested no one, even though the official and several witnesses reported the event.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** During the reporting period there have been problems related to the practice of witchcraft or people being accused of practicing witchcraft. On June 22, 2009, a woman was sentenced to nine months imprisonment for the possession of charms in violation of the Witchcraft Act. Police arrested the woman on June 18 after she reportedly attended a burial and remained at the site, raising the suspicions of the relatives of the deceased. According to media reports, the police responded immediately to prevent the community from lynching her. There has been a frequent problem with locals harassing or even lynching persons thought to have used witchcraft, though government officials try to prevent this.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 3,065 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, eight high schools, a Bible correspondence
school, one hospital, 38 clinics and dispensaries, and one publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: The majority of Seventh-day Adventists are able to honor their religious convictions in the workplace and in school. However, it has been reported that some students have been refused privileges of Sabbath worship and that some employees have been denied the right to maintain their jobs while keeping Saturday as their day of worship.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Visits: Dr John Graz visited Nairobi, Kenya, November 1-12, 2007, while attending the Global Christian Forum meeting.

KIRIBATI

Population: 103,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 2,225
Religious Groups: Catholic 55%, Protestant 36%, Muslim, Baha’i 2%, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 3%

Constitutional Provision: The constitution provides religious freedom based upon British common law.

State Attitudes and Actions: Churches are allowed to operate without encumbrance and religions are allowed to proselytize freely.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There is generally great harmony among the various religious groups. With the exception of some non-mainstream religious groups facing opposition in establishing themselves on outlying islands, no serious problems of religious violence or discrimination have been reported.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 14 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school, one clinic, and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely. In some areas local leaders have been influenced by other religious groups to impede the efforts of Adventists to evangelize.

KOREA, DEMOCRATIC PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF

Population: 24,346,229
Seventh-day Adventists: 866
Religious Groups: Buddhist, Confucian, some Christian and syncretic Chondogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way) (These figures are estimates since North Korea does not allow an independent body to verify religious affiliation.)

Perspectives on Current Issues: North Korea has one the worst human rights records in the world. Dissidents report restrictions not only of religious freedom, but also freedom of expression, speech, assembly, and association. Arbitrary detentions, forced disappearances, and use of the death penalty continue. Forced labor is still regularly practiced, according to eyewitnesses.

Constitutional Provision: Article 68 of the constitution states: “Citizens have freedom of religious beliefs. This right is granted by approving the construction of religious buildings and the holding of religious ceremonies. No one may use religion as a pretext for drawing in foreign forces or for harming the State and social order.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Religious freedom does not exist in North Korea. The state tightly regulates religious activities. There is a strict ban on foreign
missionaries and all forms of proselytizing. The state does not allow its citizens to possess religious literature; individuals found in possession of such could face imprisonment or even execution. Individuals who are imprisoned because of their religious convictions have been reported to be the recipients of more severe treatment than political prisoners. There has been a marked increase in the number of Christians executed by the authorities. Although little information is available concerning religious affairs, evidence indicates that many of the religious institutions in North Korea are organs of the state and they are monitored closely for adherence. Because of government regulations, it is not possible for independent organizations to investigate reports of religious abuse. The government does allow some foreign faith-based humanitarian institutions to operate within the country. Those groups are not permitted to proselytize and their every action is closely monitored.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Little is known about the attitudes of individual religions toward one another since state control of religion is so strong.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 26 Seventh-day Adventist churches.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Adventist students and employees are not free to observe Sabbath because their religious freedom is severely restricted.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** There is no freedom to evangelize for any religious group, except perhaps for the cult of the supreme leader, which amounts to state-sponsored religion.
KOREA, REPUBLIC OF (SOUTH KOREA)

Population: 49,000,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 223,584
Religious Groups: Buddhist 22.8%, Protestant 18.3%, Catholic 10.9%, minority religions 48% (2005 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: South Korea enjoys a vibrant economy, ranking 13th in the world and 4th in Asia. However, ongoing tensions and threats from North Korea foster an atmosphere that is not conducive to freedom of religion and expression. Compulsory military service and imprisonment of conscientious objectors blemish its record and have attracted criticism from human rights organizations.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 19: “All citizens enjoy the freedom of conscience.” Article 20 continues: “(1) All citizens enjoy the freedom of religion. (2) No state religion may be recognized, and church and state are to be separated.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The Republic of Korea, known as South Korea, follows the constitutional provision of religious freedom for all. Korea has no state church and does not support a particular faith. In keeping with Article 9 of the constitution, “The State tries to sustain and develop the cultural heritage and to enhance national culture,” the Korean government has provided funds to restore ancient Buddhist temples. The government requires military service for all men living in Korea, and it does not allow for conscientious objector status or provide for alternative service for its citizens. In recent years, there were at least 465 Jehovah’s Witnesses serving prison sentences for refusing military service. One encouraging sign is the increase in sympathy that the courts have been extending towards individuals wishing to be conscientious objectors. However, the Ministry of National Defense has reversed its position regarding the introduction of an alternative form of service for conscientious objectors. It claims a lack of public support as the reason for that decision. Currently, the Conscription Law has been referred to the Constitutional Court in an effort
to determine its constitutionality. On two prior occasions the Constitutional Court ruled that it is indeed constitutional.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Communities of different faiths have congenial relationships with each other. Every year religious leaders assemble to share an open dialogue and promote tolerance.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 687 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, one college, seven high schools, six hospitals, one sanitarium, two food factories and one publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Employers generally desire a six-day workweek. This can pose a problem for Adventists, but some have been able to negotiate with their employers for a solution. Adventists have experienced problems in keeping the Sabbath during compulsory military service. This continues to be a struggle, but some progress has been made. Students are required to attend classes on Sabbath. There is currently a movement towards a five-day week, but it is not yet a reality.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**KOSOVO**

**Population:** 1,805,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** Unknown  
**Religious Groups:** Islam, Serbian Orthodox, Catholic (Exact statistics are not available.)

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** At 45%, unemployment is among the highest in Europe. In October 2011, the EU and the IMF suspended financial aid because of ballooning public expenses and the apparent mismanagement of funds.
Constitutional Provision: The constitutional framework for the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo of 2001 provides for religious freedom. On February 17, 2008, the Kosovo Assembly declared its independence from Serbia. This constitution protects religious liberty. It guarantees the right to freedom of expression, conscience, and religion.

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice. Societal violence has marginally decreased, but tensions between communities remain high.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Societal violence has decreased marginally, but tensions between communities remain high. Discrimination and violence generally appear to be ethnically motivated, but the close relationship between ethnicity and religion make it difficult to determine if events are motivated by ethnic or religious animosity. There are reports of assaults directed against the Serbian Orthodox community and property, including threats, thefts, and vandalism.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: The number of Seventh-day Adventist churches is unknown.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Unknown.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely, though Adventists experience the same difficulties with societal discrimination as do other Protestants and minority religious groups.
KUWAIT

Population: 2,736,732
Seventh-day Adventists: 167
Religious Groups: Muslim 85% (Sunni 70%, Shi’a 30%), other 15% (Christian, Hindu, Parsi)

Perspectives on Current Issues: While many countries painfully struggle to reverse the impact of the latest recession, Kuwait enjoys a fiscal surplus of 19.5 billion dollars. It ranks 63rd out 187 countries, according to the Index of Human Development. The Arab Spring prompted Kuwaitis to participate in demonstrations demanding a constitutional monarchy. As a result of these demonstrations, the prime minister was dismissed. One of the major human rights issues is the mistreatment of migrant workers, which includes discrimination and physical abuse. According to many reports, female workers are particularly vulnerable. Sexual assault and enslavement are regional problems. Lack of freedom of expression is also reported.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Part I, Articles 2 and 29: “Article 2: The religion of the State is Islam, and the Islamic Shari’a shall be a main source of legislation.” “Article 29 (1): All people are equal in human dignity and in public rights and duties before the law, without distinction to race, origin, language, or religion. (2) Personal liberty is guaranteed.”

State Attitudes and Actions: As an Islamic monarchy, the government highly regulates all religious activity. The government generally respects religious freedom in practice; however, religious minorities experience some discrimination as a result of governmental policies and non-Sunni Muslims continue to find it difficult or impossible to obtain legal permission to establish new places of worship.

Private Attitudes and Actions: In general, citizens are open and tolerant of other religious groups. However, there is a minority that opposes the presence of non-Muslim groups in the country and rejects the legitimacy of Muslims of sects other than their own.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There is one Seventh-day Adventist church.

Government Recognition: Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not an officially recognized religious group, Adventists have been able to hold meetings in private homes without harassment.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: No information available.

Freedom to Evangelize: Proselytizing is illegal for any non-Sunni religion.

KYRGYZSTAN

Population: 5,600,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 903
Religious Groups: Muslim 80%, Russian Orthodox 11%, other 9%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Kyrgyzstan is one of the poorest countries in the former Soviet Union. It ranks 126th according to the Human Development Index. From an economic perspective, there are encouraging signs. Rich from its gold mine, the economy grew at a rate of 7% in 2011. Political instability that many attribute to the temptation to autocracy and authoritarianism has plagued this country for the past few years. Restrictions of civil liberties, as responses of the leadership to social protests, have drawn international criticism. Ethnic conflicts and clashes have also weakened respect for human rights. The treatment of refugees from Uzbekistan, many of whom were forcibly returned, has also been of great concern. The country experienced revolutions in 2005 and 2010. The current political leaders are trying to move the country forward. They intend to integrate the customs union proposed by Russia that would include Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Constitutional Provision: Chapter II, Section 2, Article 16 of the constitution states: “(1) In the Kyrgyz Republic the basic human rights and freedoms shall be recognized and guaranteed in accordance with universally accepted norms and principles of international law, international treaties and agreements on
the issues of human rights which have been ratified by the Kyrgyz Republic.

(2) Every person in the Kyrgyz Republic shall enjoy the right: To life, physical and moral immunity; personal freedom and security; personal development; to freedom of conscience, spirit and worship.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Though the constitution provides for religious freedom, there are other laws and policies that limit that freedom. In January 2009, the “Law on Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations” was passed. This law has placed further restrictions on religious groups. Both Islamic and Christian groups are faced with restrictions from the state.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Religion is a regular source of tension in Kyrgyzstan. Society typically frowns upon conversion, especially from Islam. In one instance, a pastor was beaten and his Bible was burned because he was involved in converting Muslims to Christianity. The media has fanned the flames of bigotry by airing false reports or portraying certain religions as evil or satanic. This has caused mob violence and vandalism against religious minorities. Muslims who convert to other religions are met with harsh societal penalties. In some cases converts from Islam are refused burial services, which causes great stress to family members.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 14 Seventh-day Adventist churches.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Adventists, who are a religious minority in a Muslim and Russian Orthodox nation, experience continual difficulties in obtaining work or attending school due to their Sabbath observance.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Evangelism is exceptionally difficult. With the passage of the “Law on Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations,” converting from one religion to another has become illegal. Public distribution of religious literature is also illegal.
LAOS

Population: 6,259,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 1,917
Religious Groups: Buddhist 65%, Animist 32%, Christian 2%, other/ unspecified 0.8%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Sixty percent of the Laotian people are peasants, of which 40% live on less than $1.25 a day. The World Health Organization reports that over half of the children in rural areas suffer from malnutrition. Human rights agencies report that ethnic minorities face severe discrimination.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 9: “The state respects and protects all lawful activities of the Buddhists and of other religious followers [and] mobilizes and encourages the Buddhist monks and novices as well as the priests of other religions to participate in the activities which are beneficial to the country and people. All acts of creating division of religions and classes of people are prohibited.” Article 30 states: “Lao citizens have the right and freedom to believe or not to believe in religions.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Laos reserves the right to regulate religion and it does this regularly. It recognizes only a few non-Buddhist religious organizations and those which are not recognized by the government are subject to repressive measures. The government of Laos attempts to control religious practice and belief by restricting speech and travel and by using coercion, though there has been some movement toward greater religious freedom. According to Decree 92, the government is the final arbiter in religious matters. Unfortunately, local provincial and district leaders tend to disallow full religious freedom. Religious tolerance is more accepted in urban areas than in rural areas. Non-Buddhist and minority religions, especially Protestants, generally experience less religious freedom and fewer privileges than Buddhists, and the government provides financial and other support to Buddhism. Laos tries to promote a sense of religious harmony, so the state avoids things that can be seen as disrupting this harmony. Unfortunately, this attempt at harmony often results in official religious intolerance. Persons charged with religion-based offences are often
tried, convicted, and sentenced with little recourse. Though Protestant Christians may hold religious celebrations at their places of worship, provincial authorities usually do not allow individuals to hold religious celebrations at their homes. The government continues to severely restrict the activities of Catholics in the northern part of the country. There are numerous reports of Christians being arrested and imprisoned for religious reasons and there are also numerous reports of Christians being forced to renounce their faith.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** For the most part, religious organizations coexist amicably, fearing government control rather than each other. Buddhism, the majority religion, generally promotes harmony and tolerance. Some conflicts have arisen among certain faith communities, but most of them have other attendant circumstances. Some tension has resulted from Protestants refusing to participate in Animist or Buddhist religious ceremonies.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are three Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates no institutions. The church constructed a new building in the southern part of the country, but was barred from using the building because of the supposed lack of a building permit. There are also challenges faced by members in the northern part of the country. Church officials must request permission to visit members there and, when they get permission, a government official accompanies them.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is one of the very few recognized Protestant denominations in Laos.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Proselytizing is illegal, foreign missionaries are seldom permitted access to the nation, and the distribution of nongovernment approved religious literature is forbidden.
LATVIA

Population: 2,217,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 4,016
Religious Groups: Lutheran 19.6%, Orthodox 15.3%, other Christian 1%, other 0.4%, unspecified 63.7% (2006)

Perspectives on Current Issues: The major human rights issue concerns the more than 325,000 stateless persons, predominantly ethnic Russians, who, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, remained in Latvia but have been denied citizenship. Their status makes them particularly vulnerable to a number of abuses, including human trafficking.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states, in Chapter VIII, Article 99, “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The church shall be separate from the State.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally adheres to the constitution, which allows the free exercise of religion. At times, bureaucratic regulations levied upon minority religions have been an impediment to religious freedom. There is no state religion; however, the government distinguishes between traditional (Lutheran, Catholic, Orthodox, Old Believers, Baptists, and Jewish) and new religions. Parliament has adopted laws that regulate relations between the state and the Lutheran and Russian Orthodox Churches. Laws had already been established for Baptist, Old Believer, Orthodox, Jewish, Methodist, and Seventh-day Adventist organizations.

Private Attitudes and Actions: In general, amicable relationships exist among various religious groups, though traditional faiths tend to be somewhat suspicious of new faiths coming into Latvia. There were at least two reports of societal abuse or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. They involved attacks against religious groups via the Internet—one against Catholics and the other against Jews.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 52 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: Suspicious local leaders and intolerant members of the established faiths sometimes hinder evangelism and missionary laws restrict the ability of missionaries to enter the country and hold evangelistic meetings.

LEBANON

Population: 4,300,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 389
Religious Groups: Muslim 59.7% (Shi’a, Sunni, Druze, Isma’ilite, Alawite or Nusayri), Christian 39% (Maronite Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Melkite Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic, Armenian Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Catholic, Chaldean, Assyrian, Copt, Protestant), and other 1.3%

Perspectives on Current Issues: One of the most challenging situations in Lebanon is its public debt, which is equal to 126% of its GDP. The NGO Transparency International, which measures the level of corruption, ranks Lebanon 134th of 183 countries. The current situation in Syria is not conducive to economic development in Lebanon. Syria is both a market partner and a transit territory toward the Arab world. Israel’s conflict with Hezbollah has contributed to political instability in Lebanon and created a human rights quagmire. Allegations of torture are prevalent, according to human rights advocates. Moreover, there are reports of wide-ranging discrimination against women. The situation of Palestinian refugees has not yet found a satisfactory resolution.

Constitutional Provision: Part A, Article 9 of the constitution states: “There shall be absolute freedom of conscience. The state in rendering homage to the Most High shall respect all religions and creeds, and guarantees, under its
protection, the free exercise of all religious rites provided that public order is not disturbed. It also guarantees that the personal status and religious interests of the population, to whatever religious sect they belong, is respected.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Government policy contributes to the generally free practice of religion. The government has taken some steps to improve religious freedom, including the Ministry of Interior’s February 11, 2009 circular allowing citizens to remove the religious affiliations encoded on their national identity cards.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are periodic reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. There is tension among religious groups, which is attributable to competition for political power, and citizens continue to struggle along sectarian lines, a legacy of the 15-year civil war (1975-90). Despite these challenges, places of worship of every confession continue to exist side by side, extending a centuries-long national heritage as a place of refuge for those fleeing religious intolerance.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are five Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university and two high schools.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is among the 18 officially recognized religious groups in the country.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** As a religious minority in a Muslim nation, Adventists who wish to keep Sabbath find it a continual hindrance in obtaining work and attending school.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Evangelism aimed at Muslims is highly discouraged by government and society.

**LESOTHO**

**Population:** 2,194,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 7,105

Religious Groups: Catholic 48%, Protestant 18%, independent 13% (includes indigenous beliefs, Zion Christian Church, and African Methodist Episcopal), Anglican 5%

Constitutional Provision: The constitution regards freedom of expression and conscience as a fundamental human right in Chapter 2, Article 4 and further guarantees religious liberty and freedom of conscience in Articles 13 to 16.

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. There is no state religion and the government has no requirements for registration of religious groups.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious and there are no reports of significant tensions.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 37 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

LIBERIA

Population: 4,133,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 26,739
Religious Groups: Indigenous beliefs 42%, Christian 41%, Muslim 15%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Following two civil wars, for which the former president was tried by the International Criminal Court and found guilty of
aiding and abetting war crimes, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to help the country heal and move forward. Africa’s first female head of state, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, was honored as a co-winner of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize for her “non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work.” See http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2011/press.html.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 14: “All persons shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment thereof…. All persons who, in the practice of their religion, conduct themselves peaceably, not obstructing others and conforming to the standards set out herein, shall be entitled to the protection of the law. No religious denomination or sect shall have any exclusive privilege or preference over any other, but all shall be treated alike …. Consistent with the principle of separation of religion and State, the Republic shall establish no State religion.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** There were reports of ritualistic killings—the act of killing for body parts for use in traditional rituals—from all parts of the country. The government treats ritualistic killing cases as homicides and investigates and prosecutes them accordingly.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Some tensions persist between religious groups in spite of frequent interaction. There are reports of discrimination based on religious belief or practice. Tensions exist in some areas between Christians and Muslims.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 57 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
LIBYA

Population: 6,400,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 72
Religious Groups: Sunni Muslim 97%, other 3%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Civil war broke out in Libya in early 2011. In October, the Gaddafi regime was finally terminated when the dictator was captured and killed, leading the National Transitional Council to declare the liberation of the country and an official end to the conflict. The challenges of repairing the war-ravaged state are substantial. The new president has declared the instauration of Shari’a law, and the hope that the Arab Spring revolution will lead to an era of democracy may not come to fruition. Libya is rich in natural resources. Oil represents 90% of exports and 95% of budgetary revenues. At the same time, 75% of consumed products are imported. According to economists, diversification of the economy is essential for the future of the country. As in Tunisia, the wealth of the former ruling families is estimated to be billions of dollars—in the case of Libya specifically, 140 billion dollars. Rivalry and conflict among tribes and warlords may provide a breeding ground for human rights violations if national reconciliation does not take place promptly.

Constitutional Provision: Libya is in transition. However, it already appears that the affirmation of Islam as the state religion will occur. “Islam is the Religion of the State, and the principal source of legislation is Islamic Jurisprudence (Shari’a).” In the previous era, the 1968 constitution stated in Article 2: “Islam is the religion of the State and Arabic is its official Language. The State protects religious freedom in accordance with established customs.” However, the US State Department says that Libya currently possesses no constitution and religious freedom is derived from the “Great Green Charter on Human Rights of the Jamahiriya Era, dated December 6, 1988,” stating: “The members of Jamahiriya Society … proclaim that religion is absolute faith in the Divinity, and that it is a sacred spiritual value. Religion is personal to each one and common to all. It is a direct relationship with the Creator, without any intermediary. Jamahiriya
Society proscribes the monopoly of religion as well as its exploitation for purposes of subversion, fanaticism, sectarianism, partisan spirit, and fratricidal wars.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Under the former regime, religious practices that conflicted with the government’s interpretation of Shari’ a were prohibited. Only the future will tell if and how human rights are integrated within the principles of the new Libya.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are already reports of societal abuses and discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Prevention of the opening of a synagogue in Tripoli is but one example.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There is one Seventh-day Adventist Church.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Unknown.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Evangelism of Muslims is illegal.

**LIECHTENSTEIN**

**Population:** 33,717

**Seventh-day Adventists:** Unknown

**Religious Groups:** Catholic 80.4%, Protestant 7.1%, other 12.5% (2004 data)

**Constitutional Provision:** Chapter IV, Articles 37 and 39, of the constitution states: “Article 37. (1) Freedom of belief and conscience are guaranteed for all persons. (2) The Catholic Church is the State Church and as such enjoys the full protection of the State; other confessions shall be entitled to practice their creeds and to hold religious services to the extent consistent with morality and public order…. Article 39. The enjoyment of civil and political rights shall not be dependent on religious belief nor may the latter constitute a ground for any dereliction of civil obligations.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally respects religious freedom in practice. To receive a religious worker visa, an applicant must
demonstrate that the host organization in Liechtenstein is important for the entire country. An applicant must complete theological studies and be accredited by an acknowledged religious group.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are isolated reports of societal abuse or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. However, Catholics, Protestants, and members of other religious groups work well together on an ecumenical basis.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** Unknown.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Unknown.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Laws regarding foreign missionaries present challenges to Adventists seeking to evangelize in Liechtenstein.

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**LITHUANIA**

**Population:** 3,211,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 876  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 79%, Russian Orthodox 4.1%, Protestant 1.9% (including Lutheran and Evangelical Christian Baptist), other/unspecified 5.5%, none 9.5% (2001 census)

**Constitutional Provision:** Article 26 of the constitution states: “(1) Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion shall not be restricted. (2) Every person shall have the right to freely choose any religion or faith and, either individually or with others, in public or in private, to manifest his or her religion or faith in worship, observance, practice or teaching.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally respects religious freedom in practice. There are reports of acts of vandalism of Jewish and other cemeteries, anti-Semitic comments, particularly on the Internet, and intoller-
ance. The President and political leaders usually criticize such offenses and other anti-Semitic acts.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Incidents of anti-Semitism and vandalism were reported.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 17 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Freedom to evangelize exists, but it can be tenuous and it is dependent on local leaders and the degree of toleration by the predominant religious groups.

**LUXEMBOURG**

**Population:** 505,831  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 77  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 87%, other 13%, (includes Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim) (2000 data)

**Constitutional Provision:** Articles 19 and 22 of the constitution state: “Article 19. Freedom of religion and of public worship as well as freedom to express one’s religious opinions are guaranteed, subject to the repression of offenses committed in the exercise of such freedoms.” “Article 22. The State’s intervention in the appointment and installation of heads of religions, the mode of appointing and dismissing other ministers of religion, the right of any of them to correspond with their superiors and to publish their acts and decisions, as well as the Church’s relations with the State shall be made the subject of conventions to be submitted to the Chamber of Deputies for the provisions governing its intervention.”
State Attitudes and Actions: Religious freedom is generally promoted and protected by the state. Luxembourg subsidizes Catholic seminaries, but also supports nonsectarian schools. The government chose a dual-track approach on approval of a Muslim Convention law and its implementing statutes, incorporating statutes proposed by the Islamic Center Councils, and also a parliamentary bill on a Muslim Convention.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim groups coexist amicably. Differences among religious groups are not a significant source of tension in society.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There is one Seventh-day Adventist church. It is generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

MACEDONIA

Population: 2,059,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 559
Religious Groups: Eastern Orthodox 64.78%, Muslim 33.33%, Catholic 0.35%, other 1.54% (2002 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Human rights concerns include discrimination and mistreatment of the Roma people, harassment of ethnic Albanians, violence against women, and human trafficking. Allegations of torture have been reported.
**Constitutional Provision:** Part II, Article 16, of the constitution states: “The freedom of personal conviction, conscience, thought and public expression of thought is guaranteed. The freedom of speech, public address, public information and the establishment of institutions for public information is guaranteed. Free access to information and the freedom of reception and transmission of information are guaranteed.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally respects religious freedom in practice; however, the lack of effective implementation of the registration portion of the 2007 legal status law severely hinders new registrants’ ability to acquire legal standing. Recently, the court approved two new applicants—the Christian Church Word of Hope and the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement—and rejected or did not act on applications from 11 other religious communities. The problem of restitution of religious properties expropriated by the former Yugoslav government has not been fully resolved.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are few reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. In January 2009, construction was completed on a memorial home in honor of Mother Teresa in her birthplace, Skopje, funded by the Ministry of Culture. Representatives of many religious communities joined government officials and international community representatives for the opening ceremony held on January 30, 2009.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 17 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a publishing house and a Bible correspondence school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
MADAGASCAR

**Population:** 20,146,442  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 113,000  
**Religious Groups:** Protestant 32% (includes Lutheran, Seventh-day Adventist, and Jesus Saves Pentecostal Church), Catholic 23%, Muslim 8%, independent 6%, Anglican 2%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Madagascar, which is often referred to as the eighth continent, is characterized by poverty and the need for sustainable development. It was thought that years of Marxist hegemony would be succeeded by political and economic stability, but a fragmented and fragile political landscape still plagues this nation. Veneration of ancestral spirits and witchcraft intermingle with world religions, including Christianity.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 10: “Freedom of … religion shall be guaranteed to all.” The April 2007 constitutional referendum eliminated the explicit separation of church and state, but it did not diminish legal protection for freedom of religion.

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution. The law mandates that religious organizations register with the Ministry of Interior. By registering, religious organizations acquire the legal status necessary to receive direct bequests and other gifts. The state officially recognizes nine houses of worship and 109 religious organizations. Former President Ravalomanana’s position as a lay vice-president of the Reformed Protestant Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) generated allegations of favoritism and his occasional comments expressing a desire to transform the country into a Christian state generated controversy. With the March 2009 coup d’état, Protestants expressed concern about a backlash against the FJKM. In April 2009, leaders of the original New Protestant Church in Madagascar (FPVM) were permitted by the current regime to reopen the church which had closed in 2005. The government previously permitted the reorganization of the FPVM in 2007 under a new name and
with new leadership. The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God remained banned after overstepping the limits of its registration in 2005.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious. There are a few reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. On March 17, 2009, military members of what became the self-proclaimed transitional government beat, abused, and briefly detained FJKM President Pastor Lala Rasendrasaina. He was reportedly targeted due to his proximity to President Ravalomanana at the time of the coup, rather than for religious reasons. The new regime did not condemn the attack or prosecute possible suspects. Before the March 2009 coup, the United States government discussed religious freedom and civil society with the Malagasy government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights, but following the coup, United States interaction with the government was extremely limited. The US Ambassador publicly condemned the detention and abuse of Pastor Rasendrasaina in March 2009. Some Muslims also felt they received unequal treatment in schools, hospitals, private businesses, and the workplace.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 447 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, one college, two high schools, one hospital, five health clinics, two dental clinics, nine dispensaries, one nursing home, one publishing house, and four media centers. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
MALAWI

Population: 15,879,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 363,167
Religious Groups: Protestant 29% (includes Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Seventh-day Adventist, and Baptist Convention), Catholic 23%, Muslim 17%, independent 7%, Anglican 2%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Life expectancy is among the lowest in the world. One of the greatest challenges in Malawi is the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, the leading cause of death. An estimated one million children are orphans because of this disease.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter IV, Article 33: “Every person has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, belief and thought, and to academic freedom.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution. Religious groups must register with the government by submitting documentation to the Ministry of Justice detailing the structure and mission of the organization along with a nominal fee. Once approved, a religious group registers formally with the Registrar General’s office. The Ministry of Education requires that all schools observe the right of the student or his/her parents to choose religious instruction according to their beliefs. The President, Bingu wa Mutharika, is Catholic, and the Vice President is Muslim. Several cabinet members and parliamentarians are Muslim. President Mutharika regularly sends official regards to members of all faiths in the country on appropriate religious holidays.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of societal abuse or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice; however, there are occasional tensions between Christians and Muslims that appear to be fueled largely by politics—particularly the debate over the legality of the candidacy of the former president Bakili Muluzi, a Muslim, in the 2009 presidential election. Rastafarian leaders continue to take issue with an unofficial ban on
long hair in public schools. Although there is no law relating to hair length, some schools prohibit long hair as part of their dress code. Rastafarian leaders provided the Ministry of Justice with a list of schools that enforced the ban, but the Ministry took no action.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 1,310 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one seminary and training center, three high schools, three hospitals, two health clinics, 15 dispensaries, one publishing house, one radio station, and a Bible correspondence school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

MALAYSIA

Population: 28,900,000
Seven-day Adventists: 50,570
Religious Groups: Muslim 61.3%, Buddhist 19.8%, Christian 9.2%, Hindu 6.3%, other/none 3.4%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Malaysia has an export-based economy and produces rubber, palm oil, petroleum, and forest and agricultural products. In spite of the world economic and financial crises, this nation has been creative in boosting major sectors of its economy, including hi-tech manufacturing. Large-scale industrialization has also provided opportunities for a substantial segment of the population. This prosperity has attracted a significant number of migrants from poorer Asian countries. Ethnic Indians, migrant workers, asylum-seekers, and refugees are subject to discrimination and mass arrest. The adoption of the Internal Security Act has resulted in an increase in arbitrary
detentions and state censorship. There are reports of numerous deaths while in custody. Restrictions are imposed on various religious groups and, in all but one state, conversion from Islam is illegal.

**Constitutional Provision:** Article 3, paragraph 1, of the constitution states, “Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The state supports, promotes, and protects Islam. Therefore, Shari’a law operates alongside civil law and is supposed to address matters concerning religion and family. There is an increasing tendency for civil courts to give way to Shari’a courts in matters normally considered outside its purview. Non-Muslims are particularly uncomfortable with Shari’a courts adjudicating in disputes, especially family disputes, between Muslims and non-Muslims. Shari’a courts are also responsible for dealing with issues concerning Muslims converting to other religions and they are seldom sympathetic. Government funding is provided for Muslim as well as non-Muslim institutions with a clear bias towards Muslim institutions. Religious groups must register in order to be recognized by the government. Some groups, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons, have not been able to secure registration. These groups have registered under the Companies Act, which provides protections for religious freedom, in order to exist legally. The government has officially banned 56 so-called deviant Muslim groups on the grounds that they are a threat to national security and they could also serve to divide the Muslim community. Religious materials considered offensive or deviant are strictly outlawed and there is a list of words that can be used in Muslim publications alone. There were numerous cases of religious discrimination against non-Muslims.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** The main source of religious tension is conversion from Islam. Individuals who convert to other religions face serious social stigmatization. In an effort to counter such discrimination, many converts prefer to function as co-religionists.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 253 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates three schools, one hospital, and one publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Adventist students and employees experience some difficulties regarding Sabbath observance.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize as long as it does not involve itself in proselytizing Muslims and its activities are done within its own community.

MALDIVES

Population: 315,885
Seventh-day Adventists: none
Religious Groups: Sunni Muslim

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter 1, Article II: “The Maldives is a sovereign, independent, democratic Republic based on the principles of Islam…” Article X states: “(a) The religion of the State of the Maldives is Islam. Islam shall be… the basis of all the laws of the Maldives (b) No law contrary to any tenet of Islam shall be enacted in the Maldives.” Article XVII, which covers the rights and freedoms of citizens, does not have any provision for religious freedom. It states: “Everyone is entitled to the rights and freedoms included in this Chapter without discrimination of any kind, including race, national origin, color, sex, age, mental or physical disability, political or other opinion, property, birth or other status, or native island.” Both Shari’a and civil law are practiced with the former holding precedence over the latter.

State Attitudes and Actions: The state greatly restricts religious freedom. All citizens of the Maldives must be Muslim and the majority is Sunni Muslim. The constitution bars non-Muslims from obtaining citizenship. The government monitors Muslim activity closely, even reviewing the sermons and prayers of
clerics. All citizens are required to raise their children according to fundamental Islamic tenets. The government does not act in accordance with United Nations and International Labor Organization recommendations regarding religious freedom for migrant workers. Foreigners who want to practice their religions find it nearly impossible to do so due to the almost complete lack of privacy.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Migrant non-Muslim workers, most of which work in the construction and domestic industries, are often restricted by their employers from practicing their faith. It is almost impossible to hold public non-Muslim worship. Citizens desiring to convert from Islam face tremendous societal pressure and conversion will almost certainly result in punishment and loss of citizenship.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are no Seventh-day Adventist churches.

**Government Recognition:** Islam is the only recognized faith.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Societal and state restrictions make Sabbath accommodations for students and employees very difficult.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Proselytizing is illegal.

**MALI**

**Population:** 15,394,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 1,570  
**Religious Groups:** Muslim 87%, indigenous beliefs 10%, Christian 2%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Once a great medieval empire (1230-1400 CE) with prestigious centers of learning and commerce in Timbuktu and Gao, today Malian literacy is low and secondary school enrollment is less than 20%. Only 80% of children survive to the age of five. The economy is imperiled by the constant threat of desertification. Ongoing conflict between government forces and militias in the northern part of the country threaten political stability.
Freedom of expression has been jeopardized as evidenced by the prosecution of editors of newspapers critical of the government.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution, in Title 1, Article 2, prohibits any sort of religious discrimination. Article 4 states that: “Every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, worship, opinion, expression, and creation in respect to the law.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** All public associations, including religious groups, are required to register with the government, although registration confers no tax preference or other legal benefits. Foreign missionary groups are allowed to proselytize freely. Before any potentially controversial national issues are decided, the government meets with a Committee of Wise Men that includes Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant leaders. Under President Amadou Toure, the government of Mali had made it a point to maintain religious liberty in conjunction with maintaining the country’s ethnic harmony. To keep the different factions of the country together following several northern uprisings in the past 15 years, President Toure has gone to great measures to include all opposing ethnic and religious groups in his government. This has been viewed favorably in Africa and in the greater international community. The recent political upheavals threaten the stability of this country.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious and there are no reports of significant tensions. However, Mali exists in a region where Islamic heritage is extremely important and citizens take great pride in their Islamic past. For many Muslims it is difficult to convert out of Islam without incurring social condemnation and discrimination.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are three Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a radio-TV production center. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.
Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

MALTA

Population: 412,961
Seventh-day Adventists: 27
Religious Groups: Catholic 98%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The country’s economy is largely based on banking services and the mechanical and pharmaceutical industries. The collapse of the former Libyan government has affected Malta because Libyans had invested in 310 enterprises in the country. The Council of Europe has criticized Malta for its detention and mistreatment of asylum-seekers and migrants.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter I, Section 2, “(1) The religion of Malta is the Catholic Apostolic Religion. (2) The authorities of the Catholic Apostolic Church have the duty and the right to teach which principles are right and which are wrong. (3) Religious teaching of the Catholic Apostolic Faith shall be provided in all State schools as part of compulsory education.” Chapter IV, Section 32 continues: “Whereas every person in Malta is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, color, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely— …. b) freedom of conscience, of expression and of peaceful assembly and association.” Other Constitutional provisions allow students to object to, and opt-out of, the religion courses in state schools.

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution. The constitution establishes Catholicism as the state religion and states that the Catholic Church has “the duty and the right to teach which principles are right and wrong.” Other religious groups are not required to register, and all have similar legal rights. The
government and the Catholic Church participate in a foundation that finances Catholic schools and provides free tuition in those schools.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There is one Seventh-day Adventist church. It is generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**MARTINIQUE**

**Population:** 401,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 15,006  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 85%, Protestant 10.5%, Muslim 0.5%, Hindu 0.5%, other 3.5% (1997 data)

**Constitutional Provision:** Martinique follows the French constitution. Article 1 states: “France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs. It shall be organized on a decentralized basis.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Being a French overseas territory, Martinique allows for and protects the religious freedom of its citizens.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are no reports of animosity or violence among different religious groups.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 66 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school, one bookstore, and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are some reports of problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Visits: Dr John Graz gave several lectures on religious freedom in December 2008.

MAURITANIA

Population: 3,365,675
Seventh-day Adventists: None
Religious Groups: Nearly 100% Muslim

Perspectives on Current Issues: Mauritania is one of the world’s poorest countries and one-third of its children experience chronic malnutrition. Several military coups have taken place since independence was declared in 1960. Slavery is alleged to be an ongoing problem. Christian expatriates are subject to intimidation, harassment, persecution, and even murder.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 1: “(1) Mauritania is an indivisible, democratic, and social Islamic Republic.” Article 10 says: “The State shall guarantee to all its citizens public and individual freedoms … [including] the freedom of opinion and of thought.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Mauritania is an Islamic state and freedom of religion is severely limited. Islamic Law (Shari’a) has been the law of the land since 1983. In April 2007, a military junta that took power in August 2005 returned control of the country to a democratically elected president in free
and fair elections. The transitional and newly-elected governments made no significant changes to the constitution or the previous government’s policies on religious freedom. The new government continues to prohibit the distribution of non-Islamic religious materials and the proselytism of Muslims. Religious groups are not allowed to register. However, secular NGOs, including humanitarian and development groups affiliated with religious groups, must register with the Ministry of the Interior. A constitutional mandate requires small non-Muslim groups to meet in the few pre-existing Catholic or other Christian Churches. Besides these major restrictions, non-Muslim resident expatriates and a few non-Muslim citizens are generally allowed to practice freely.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Almost the entire nation practices Sunni Islam. In late December 2008, authorities arrested a Norwegian woman in Oudane for distributing Christian materials. She was released with a warning, but was expelled from the country on January 2, 2009, after she continued her activities in Atar. In March 2008, security forces briefly detained a man at a vehicle checkpoint between Nouakchott and Rosso for carrying large amounts of undeclared currency and Christian proselytizing material.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are no Seventh-day Adventist churches in Mauritania.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Unknown.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not allowed to evangelize.
MAURITIUS

Population: 1,286,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 4,633
Religious Groups: Hindu 49%, Catholic 22%, Muslim 17%, Protestant 8%, independent 2%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Mauritius has been a parliamentary democracy since 1969. It is a country with a Hindu majority in a multi-faith society.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter 2, Article 11: “Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience… . That freedom includes freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. Religious groups present on the island before independence, such as the Catholic Church, Church of England, Presbyterian Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Hindus, and Muslims are recognized in a parliamentary decree. Each of these groups receives an annual payment from the government based on the number of members. Newer religious organizations (which must have a minimum of seven members) are registered by the Registrar of Associations and are recognized as legal entities with tax-exempt privileges. The government is not known to have refused registration to any group. The Prime Minister’s office is the final authority on issuance of these required documents to missionaries. While there are no explicit limits on the ability of missionaries to operate, there are limits on the number of missionaries permitted to obtain the requisite visas and work permits.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Occasional tensions between the Hindu majority and Christian and Muslim minorities continue, but no violent confrontations have occurred recently. Due to the predominance of Hindu citizens in the upper
echelons of the civil service, some minorities, usually Creoles and Muslims, allege that they are prevented from reaching positions in the higher levels of government. Christian religious groups report a prevailing fear and increased hostility towards Christian proselytizing among the Hindu population due to a high rate of conversion in the Hindu community. Yet, on May 29, 2009, the Commissioner of Police denied devotees access to a Hindu temple illegally constructed on land belonging to in-laws of the Prime Minister and situated opposite the Prime Minister’s private residence. The police stated that it presented a “public safety issue” and declared the zone a protected area. The media reported later that residents had filed numerous complaints against the temple for noise pollution. The police arrested two radio reporters on June 9, 2009, for allegedly trespassing in the protected area. On June 12, 2009, the temple reopened to the public after the Prime Minister and the religious society managing the temple agreed that only small religious ceremonies would be held in the current temple until another temple is built to hold larger religious ceremonies.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 33 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one secondary school, one nursing home, and a media center. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is recognized by parliamentary decree.

Sabbath keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
MEXICO

Population: 113,724,226
Seventh-day Adventists: 689,816
Religious Groups: Catholic 76.5%, Protestant 6.3% (Pentecostal 1.4%, Jehovah’s Witness 1.1%, other 3.8%), other 0.3%, unspecified 13.8%, none 3.1% (2000 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Drug wars are a major challenge to human rights

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 24: “Everyone is free to embrace the religion of his choice and to practice all ceremonies, devotions, or observances of his respective faith, either in places of public worship or at home, provided they do not constitute an offense punishable by law.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Although the government favors the Catholic Church, it has generally respected freedom of conscience for individuals. Discrimination, including on the basis of religion, is deemed illegal. Religious groups are allowed to operate without being registered, but if they desire to attain legal status, they need to be registered. Religious groups are barred from holding political meetings and members of the clergy are not allowed to hold political office or be publicly involved in things of a political nature. Religious groups are not allowed to be the legal owners or administrators of radio or television stations, and government approval is needed in order for them to transmit any programs on radio or television.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Despite the federal government’s favorable treatment of non-Catholics, in the southern states of Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Hidalgo, Protestants have been subjected to harassment, persecution, imprisonment, destruction of their church buildings, expulsion from their villages, and death threats. The authorities have been accused of not doing enough to reverse the trend of persecution. The majority of Protestants are found in the southern states.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 2,970 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one hospital, three universities, 19 schools, two clinics, and one airbase. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Visits: Dr. John Graz participated in five religious liberty festivals in August 2008.

MICRONESIA, FEDERATED STATES OF

Population: 102,624
Seventh-day Adventists: 1,160
Religious Groups: Catholic 50%, Protestant 47%, other 3%

Constitutional Provision: Article IV, Section 2 of the constitution states “No law may be passed respecting an establishment of religion or impairing the free exercise of religion, except that assistance may be provided to parochial schools for non-religious purposes.”

State Attitudes and Actions: For the most part, the free exercise of religion is permitted.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Despite minor differences, most faiths have amicable relationships. However, some religious segregation does occur. For example, the island of Pohnpei is religiously divided, with Protestants living in the west and Catholics living in the east.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are six Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates three schools and one clinic. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

MOLDOVA

Population: 4,109,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 10,706
Religious Groups: Christian Orthodox 96%, other (includes Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, Seventh-day Adventist, Muslim, Jehovah’s Witness, Presbyterian, Baha’i, Jewish, Unification Church, Molokans, Messianic Lutheran, charismatic evangelical Christian groups)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Moldova is one of Europe’s poorest nations. It is reported that 25% of Moldovans seek work outside the country. Social problems include alcoholism, organized crime, and human trafficking. The involvement of religious institutions in political matters tends to impede religious freedom.

Constitutional Provision: Title II, Chapter I, Article 31 of the constitution states: “(1) The freedom of conscience is guaranteed, and its manifestations should be in a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect. (2) The freedom of religious worship is guaranteed and religious bodies are free to organize themselves according to their own statutes under the rule of law. (3) In their mutual relationships religious cults are forbidden to use, express or incite to hatred or enmity. (4) Religious cults are autonomous vis-à-vis the State and shall enjoy the latter’s support, including that aimed at providing religious assistance in the army, in hospitals, prisons, homes for the elderly and orphanages.”
State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice. The government registered one religious group (affiliated with a previously registered group), and continues to deny registration to certain groups attempting to gain legal status. In Transnistria, a separatist region not controlled by the government, authorities generally respect the rights of registered groups, but continue to deny registration to a number of minority religious groups and to harass their members. A new Contraventions Code stipulates fines for violating religious freedom.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Many societal abuses based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, have occurred, including in the separatist region of Transnistria.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 154 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

MONACO

Population: 35,407
Seventh-day Adventists: none
Religious Groups: Catholic 90%, other 10%

Constitutional Provision: Article 23 of the constitution states: “The freedom of worship, the public exercise thereof, and freedom to express [religious] opinions in all matters are guaranteed … . No one can be compelled to contribute to the acts and the ceremonies of worship nor observe the day of rest of it.”
State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution. However, there are some restrictions because Catholicism is the state religion. Catholic ritual plays a significant role in state festivities and in the life of the ruling family. Though there is no law against proselytizing, it is strongly discouraged and no missionaries currently operate in the principality. In the past, authorities have routinely denied registration to organizations they regard as religious sects.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious and there are no reports of significant tensions. There is an active ecumenical movement that seeks to promote understanding between faith communities.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There is no permanent Seventh-day Adventist presence in the country of Monaco.

MONGOLIA

Population: 2,814,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 1,678
Religious Groups: Lamaist Buddhism 90%, Muslim 5%, Christian 4%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The development of the mining sector has provided a considerable boost to the economy of this country. Yet, many continue to live in extreme poverty and there is a sizable population of street children in the capital. Other concerns include the trafficking of women and children.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 9: “(1) The State shall respect the Church and the Church shall honor the State. (2) State institutions may not engage in religious activities and the Church may not pursue political activities. (3) The relationship between the State and the Church is regulated by law.” Article 16 continues: “The citizens of Mongolia are enjoying the following rights and freedoms … (15) Freedom of conscience and religion.”
**State Attitudes and Actions:** Although the constitution provides for separation between church and state and allows for freedom of conscience, the Mongolian government favors Buddhism—which is seen as the “natural religion” of the country—and has enacted laws restricting missionaries and proselytizing. The government requires annual registration for religious organizations, especially those seeking to build structures. Authorities in Tuv Province, near Ulaanbaatar, have continued to deny Christian groups registration. Even registered churches have reported harassment and demands for bribes by local authorities.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Mongolians are generally tolerant of other belief systems. At the same time, there have been crimes committed against Christians, especially foreigners. Authorities consider those crimes xenophobic, rather than religious in nature. Christians consider them religiously motivated. Christians have been criticized for allegedly offering material rewards to individuals who convert to their religion. They have denied those accusations.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are four Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church must register with the government each year. New Adventist institutions experience problems with registration.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Some employees and students have had problems with Sabbath-keeping, but Adventist students and employees have generally been able to observe the Sabbath.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely. However, the government seldom allows individuals to enter the country for more than 90 days on a religious visa and this hampers the ability of foreign missionaries to enter the country.

**Visits:** Pastor Paul Kotanko, organized the first Symposium of Religious Freedom in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in May 2008 and the second symposium on September 9, 2009. Following the meeting, a group of religious leaders and
scholars set up the Mongolian Association of Religious Freedom. Dr John Graz, Dr Eugene Hsu, and Pastor Glenn Mitchell attended the symposium and met with religious leaders.

MONTENEGRO

Population: 631,490  
Seventh-day Adventists: 256  
Religious Groups: Orthodox 72.07%, Islam 15.97%, Muslim 3.14% (distinct from Islam; refers to those people who consider themselves to be ethnically and religiously “Muslim”), Catholic 3.44%, other 5%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Failure to bring war criminals to justice has marred the human rights record. As with many other countries in the region, discrimination against the Roma people and human trafficking have been difficult for the state to eradicate.

Constitutional Provision: Article 11 of the constitution states: “The Orthodox Church, Islamic religious community, the Catholic Church and other faiths shall be separate from the State. All the faiths shall be deemed to be equal and free in the performance of their religious rites and affairs. All the religious denominations will independently arrange their interior organization and religious affairs within the legal set-up. The State shall offer material assistance to religious denominations.”

State Attitudes and Actions: There is no state religion. Official funds are available to support religious communities and are allocated according to individual requests submitted by the communities, following approval of the Secretariat General of the government. Religious studies are not included in primary or secondary school curricula.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are some instances of societal abuse and discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice; however, religion and ethnicity are closely intertwined throughout the country and it is difficult to categorize such acts as either primarily religious or ethnic in
origin. The press has reported an increase in the number of church burglaries and cemetery vandalism, although no official statistics were given. Tensions are high between the two Orthodox Churches, the SPC and the CPC. They continue to struggle over property and standing, with both claiming to be the “true” Orthodox Church in the country.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are four Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

MONTserrat

Population: 5,140
Seventh-day Adventists: 1,165
Religious Groups: Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Pentecostal, other Christian denominations (no percentages available)

Constitutional Provision: Montserrat is an overseas territory of the United Kingdom and as such follows UK law.

State Attitudes and Actions: Freedom of religion is afforded to all citizens of Montserrat.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of animosity or violence among the different religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are two Seventh-day Adventist churches in Montserrat. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.
Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

MOROCCO

Population: 32,300,000  
Seventh-day Adventists: 14  
Religious Groups: Muslim 98.7%, Christian 1.1%, Jewish 0.2%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The Moroccan monarchy succeeded in quelling the national upheaval created by the Arab Spring. The country has seen the integration of Islamists into the mainstream political arena as evidenced by the election of the Secretary General of the Party for Justice and Development to the post of Prime Minister. Economic difficulties are increasing, causing enormous challenges for political leaders, and 15% of the population lives below the poverty line on less than two dollars a day. Arab monarchies have created a development fund, aware that social unrest and the Arab Spring revolutions are directly connected to the economic predicament of their subjects. Morocco is to receive five billion dollars from this fund. Freedom of expression, assembly, association, and the press are restricted. Violence against women is widespread. Migrants are routinely arrested and expelled.

Constitutional Provision: Article 6 of the constitution states: “Islam shall be the state religion. The state shall guarantee freedom of worship for all.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government continues to sporadically enforce existing legal restrictions on religious freedom.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are reports of societal abuses and discrimination toward those with different religious beliefs, including converts from Islam to other religions. Many citizens believe that the country is enriched by its centuries-old Jewish minority and Jews live in safety throughout the country.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are no Seventh-day Adventist churches.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: As a religious minority in a Muslim nation, Adventists who wish to keep Sabbath find it a continual hindrance in obtaining work and attending school.

Freedom to Evangelize: Evangelism is highly discouraged by society and the government.

**MOZAMBIQUE**

**Population:** 23,050,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 275,639  
**Religious Groups:** Christian 56.1%, Muslim 17.9%, no religion 18.7%, other 7.3% (2007 census)

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Thirty years of guerilla warfare have resulted in disastrous living conditions and life expectancy of 43 years is among the lowest in the world. Previous adherence to Marxist economic theories contributed to the current plight of this country. Since 1990, a multiparty democracy and a market economy have been in place, but it will still take a long time to achieve economic stability.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 78: “All citizens shall have the freedom to practice ... a religion.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. Religious groups are required to register with the government, and there are no reports that registration has been denied. The law on religious freedom requires religious institutions and missionary organizations to register with the Ministry of Justice, reveal their principal source of funding, and provide the names of at least 500 followers in good standing. The Christian Council reported that not all religious groups register, but unregistered groups worship unhindered by the government. There are 735 religious denominations and 151 religious organizations registered with the Department of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Justice. The constitution gives religious groups the
right to acquire and own assets and a more recent law permits them to own and operate schools, which are increasing in number. Religious instruction is the primary focus of the new primary and secondary schools, but universities associated with religious denominations do not offer religious studies. The Papal Nunciature reported that the government continues to occupy properties in Inhambane, Maputo, Niassa, and Zambezia provinces that were used for schools, seminaries, and residences, and that the Vatican has entered into negotiations with the government for their restitution. Because of the complexity of the issue and apparent contradictions within the law, the Catholic Church prefers to collaborate with the government to reach resolution, rather than rely on the court system.

Private Attitudes and Actions: While relations between blacks and established citizens of South Asian origin are generally good, cultural conflict between black communities and South Asian migrants has led to tensions. There is controversy over the official date of the Eid al-Fitr festival. Black Muslims choose the date based on when the full moon is sighted from anywhere within the geographical boundaries of the country, whereas Asian Muslims choose the date based on when it is sighted within a much wider area outside the country. Despite these differences, there are signs that tension is lessening as younger Muslims seem to recognize the need for dialogue to reconcile their differences.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 994 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a seminary, a publishing house, and a Bible correspondence school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely. The Seventh-day Adventist Church maintains a good relationship with the government.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is registered with the Department of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Justice.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.
Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**NAMIBIA**

**Population:** 2,324,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 17,507  
**Religious Groups:** Protestant 61% (includes Evangelical Lutheran, Dutch Reformed), Catholic 18%, independent 12% (includes Protestant Unity Church, Ovamboland Anglican Church, Back to God, and African Methodist Episcopal), Anglican 5%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** The International Criminal Court has threatened to prosecute the former president of the country for alleged crimes against humanity. Today, despite radical improvements, there are still reports of torture, violence against women and girls, and restrictions on freedom of expression.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution protects the freedom to “practice any religion and to manifest such practice” in Article 21, paragraph 1.

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. There is no state religion and no religion is formally recognized or subsidized. Since his election, the president of the country has conferred with leaders of several religious groups, including the predominantly Afrikaner Dutch Reformed Church. There are no registration requirements for religious organizations.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious and there are no reports of significant tensions.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 79 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a home for senior citizens. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

NAURU

Population: 9,322
Seventh-day Adventists: 20
Religious Groups: Protestant 65%, Catholic 32%, other 3%

Constitutional Provision: Part II, Article 11 of the constitution states: “(1) A person has the right to freedom of conscience, thought and religion, including freedom to change his religion or beliefs and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest and propagate his religion or beliefs in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The constitution provides for religious freedom, but that may be limited by any law that is necessary for “the interests of defense, public safety, public order, public morality or public health.” The government has a history of using that law as a means of restricting foreign-based churches from proselytizing, though that has not been a problem recently. Churches outside the mainstream, such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, and Seventh-day Adventists, are not allowed the same freedoms as the more established ones. All churches must register with the state. Registration allows each organization to engage in evangelism and the construction of churches and schools, and to officiate at marriages. At present, only the Catholic Church and two Protestant denominations are registered.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most members of differing religious organizations have amicable relationships. Due to a decline in the nation's economic state, some elements of both the Catholic and Protestant communities have tended to complain about those religious bodies they consider foreign. In other
words, scapegoating as to the causes of the economic difficulty has spilled over the religious landscape as well.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are no Seventh-day Adventist churches, though the church operates a bookstore. This institution operates under certain restrictions.

**Government Recognition:** The church is not an officially recognized denomination and therefore does not enjoy freedoms that recognized churches enjoy.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Unknown.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Seventh-day Adventists may not hold evangelistic meetings or engage in regular proselytizing activities.

**NEPAL**

**Population:** 30,486,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 8,447  
**Religious Groups:** Hindu 80.6%, Buddhist 10.7%, Muslim 4.2%, other 4.5% (2001 census)

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Political instability has long gripped this small nation which is heavily dependent on funds sent home by Nepalese working outside the country. In 2008, it reached 49% of the GDP. It is now around 20%. The agricultural sector has enjoyed growth of 4.1%. Human rights abusers of the earlier regime have not been brought to justice. There are allegations of police brutality. Violence against women and girls seems to be widespread and unabated. Human trafficking for sexual and labor purposes is widespread. A major challenge the government faces are thousands of internally displaced people and more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees.

**Constitutional Provision:** Article 23 of the interim constitution of 2007 states: “Every person shall have the right to profess, practice and preserve his/her own religion as handed down to him/her from ancient times having due
regards to the social and cultural traditional practices.” The Article goes on to state: “Provided that no person shall be entitled to convert another person from one religion to another, and shall not act or behave in a manner which may jeopardize the religion of others.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The interim constitution of 2007 declared Nepal to be a secular state. Proselytism is illegal and those guilty of it can face fines and imprisonment. However, it is legal for persons to change their religion apart from being proselytized. Even though there is no registration requirement for religious groups, Christians, Muslims, and Jews have encountered difficulties in registering their NGOs.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are reports of societal abuse and discrimination based on religious practice. Converts sometimes face violence and occasionally are ostracized from society.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 26 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one hospital. In 2009, the death of a patient at the Adventist hospital led to an attack on the hospital by a mob.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Employees and students are presented with significant difficulties regarding Sabbath observance.

Freedom to Evangelize: Evangelism is restricted by law.

NETHERLANDS

Population: 16,694,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 4,939
Religious Groups: Catholic 31%, Dutch Reformed 13%, Calvinist 7%, Muslim 5.5%, other 2.5%, none 41% (2002 data)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Reports from the UN have drawn attention to the failure to protect migrant women from discrimination. There are also
allegations of failure to adequately implement anti-discrimination and anti-racism policies for long-term citizens.

**Constitutional Provision:** Article 6 of the constitution states: “(1) Everyone shall have the right to profess freely his religion or belief, either individually or in community with others, without prejudice to his responsibility under the law. (2) Rules concerning the exercise of this right other than in buildings and enclosed places may be laid down by Acts of Parliament for the protection of health, in the interest of traffic and to combat or prevent disorders.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The constitution provides for freedom of religion and other laws and policies contribute to the generally free practice of religion. It is a crime to engage in public speech that incites religious, racial, or ethnic hatred and the government prosecuted several cases in recent years.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are some reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Jews and Muslims have faced instances of abuse. The government repeatedly condemns any form of anti-Semitism or anti-Islam activity, and it works with NGOs to combat such abuses.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 52 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a Bible correspondence school, two nursing homes, and a publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

Population: 223,652
Seventh-day Adventists: 8,489
Religious Groups: Catholic 72%, Pentecostal 4.9%, Protestant 3.5%, Methodist 2.9%, Jehovah’s Witness 1.7%, other Christian 7.3%, Jewish 1.3%, other or unspecified 1.2%, none 5.2% (2001 census)

Constitutional Provision: The Netherlands Antilles have full autonomy to run internal affairs but follow the Dutch constitution which provides religious freedom in Chapter 1, Articles 1 and 6: “(1) All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race or sex or any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted…. (6) Everyone shall have the right to profess freely his religion or belief, either individually or in community with others, without prejudice to his responsibility under the law.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Citizens enjoy the privileges of religious freedom within the jurisdiction of the Netherlands Antilles.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of animosity or violence among the different religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 30 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
NEW CALEDONIA

Population: 265,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 758
Religious Groups: Catholic 60%, Protestant 30%, other 10%

Constitutional Provision: French law governs New Caledonia. The Preamble to Article 1 states: “[France] shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs.”

State Attitudes and Actions: No problems with religious discrimination have been reported.

Private Attitudes and Actions: No incidents of religious strife have been reported.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are five Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are some reports of problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students and employees. High school and university students are required to attend classes on Sabbath even though officials from the church negotiated on their behalf. Some members could not obtain teacher certification due to the exam being held on Sabbath.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Visits: Dr John Graz visited New Caledonia in December 2007 and in 2011.
NEW ZEALAND

Population: 4,416,934
Seventh-day Adventists: 11,761
Religious Groups: Christian 55.6%, Hindu 1.5%, Buddhist 1.3%, Muslim 0.8%, other 0.6%, Spiritualism/New Age 0.5%, Jewish 0.2%, none 34.7%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Two earthquakes, one in September 2010 and a second in February 2011, left 180 people dead and destroyed the center of Christchurch, prompting an exodus to neighboring Australia. New Zealand is now ranked least corrupt among the 183 nations assessed by the NGO Transparency International.

Constitutional Provision: New Zealand’s laws mirror those of other British Commonwealths and generally protect freedom of conscience and the free exercise of religion.

State Attitudes and Actions: New Zealand allows for religious freedom and registration is not necessary in order to function as a religious group. The government treats all religions equally. Recently, there were 57 cases of discrimination on religious grounds reported to the Human Rights Commission.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Various faiths generally exist peacefully and there are no reports of serious religious tensions among them.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 78 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates four schools, a retirement center, and three bookstores. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The government does not require any denomination to register unless the denomination seeks tax exemption. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized Christian denomination.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.
NICARAGUA

**Population:** 5,870,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 116,363  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 70%, Protestant 28%, other 2%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** In spite of its rich natural resources, political turmoil and civil war have prevented Nicaragua from truly prospering. Natural disasters, such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and hurricanes, have caused tremendous devastation.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution, in Title VI, Article 120 and Title V, Chapter 1, Article 71 sets the parameters of religious freedom in Nicaragua. Article 120 guarantees freedom of conscience. This includes “the manifestation of every religious belief and every practice of faith, which are compatible with life or physical integrity of human beings. And these practices are not against moral convention or public order. Acts contrary to the moral public order, which are executed with occasion or under pretext of the exercise of faith, fall under legal sanction.” Otherwise, “it is prohibited to give laws that protect or restrict certain faiths.” Article 71 sets limits on the free exercise of religion: “Nobody can be troubled or persecuted by the manifestation of opinions or acts that do not infringe upon the law… . Political propaganda by clergymen … or ministers of any faith will not be tolerated in any form” even if they are “invoking religious reasons or using themselves the religious beliefs of the town or the temple” to do so. Moreover “acts of faith or religious propaganda, used to … [criticize] the laws of the State, the Government or its officials will not be tolerated by the Government from the individual.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The state provides religious freedom for its citizens and religious groups generally enjoy fair treatment under the law. The Catholic Church, by virtue of its historical connection to Nicaragua, enjoys a “first amongst equals” status. Many of the official state holidays are connected to specific Catholic holidays and political leaders often meet and consult with Catholic clergy. The Catholic Church has significant influence and is the most politically active religious body. Although favoritism towards
the Catholic Church exists, most faiths are free to practice their religion. The government has been providing increasing support to Evangelical Christian groups linked to the Sandinista National Liberation Front, a political party. It has become increasingly intolerant of religious bodies that make comments that are of a sociopolitical nature—especially if those comments are critical of the government. The Catholic Church was critical of irregularities attendant to the municipal elections of November 2008. In response to those criticisms, the government has made attempts to discredit the church’s hierarchy. Using government-affiliated media as a medium, there have been consistent attempts to discredit the Catholic Church. On April 6, 2009 Attorney General Estrada claimed there was an assassination attempt made against him and he accused the bishops of the Catholic Church of being responsible. However, police and media reports indicate that there was no such attempt.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are not many problems among the various religious groups, although there was at least one incident of anti-Semitism. Relations have traditionally been more amicable on the Atlantic coast than on the Pacific coast or the central regions of the country.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 212 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one school and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Seventh-day Adventists regularly experience problems at school. These include demands to finish projects late Friday night or attend meetings or classes on Saturday. They also frequently experience workplace problems.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
NIGER

Population: 16,069,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 181
Religious Groups: Muslim 87%, other 10% (includes indigenous beliefs and Christian)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Niger is one of the world’s poorest countries, situated at the bottom of the Human Development Index. Droughts and locust invasions continually threaten its already precarious economy. Armed conflicts between government forces and Touareg militias have led to various abuses. Civilian collateral deaths, arbitrary detentions, torture, and extra-judicial killings are frequently reported. Restriction of freedom of expression is also of concern to human rights activists.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 23: “Each person has the right to freedom of thought, of opinion, of expression, of conscience, of religion and of worship. The State guarantees the free exercise of worship and expression of beliefs.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government monitors religious expression it considers to be a potential threat to public order and national unity. No religious groups are subsidized, but Muslim and Christian groups are given airtime on government-controlled television stations. Islamic programming is given priority. Religious groups are required to register with the Interior Ministry. On August 16, 2006, the Minister of the Interior wrote a controversial letter to all Islamic groups ordering them to prevent “provocative sermons likely to create disagreements among believers but also to disturb public order.” The letter required Islamic groups to report to authorities when such sermons were given and stated that groups that allowed provocative sermons would be subject to sanctions. On March 17, 2009, the Minister of Religious Affairs issued a statement on national radio and television banning “parallel preaching”—preaching in mosques occurring at the same time as authorized Imams’ sermons—and preaching in markets or other “inappropriate locations.” Although citing the value of religious freedom, the Minister also banned radio
and television broadcasts of religious sermons or discussions likely to generate contention, threaten public order, or undermine the cohesion of the country’s Muslim community. However, the practice of parallel preaching continues, and there are no reports that the government has attempted to enforce the Minister’s proclamations. On March 11, 2009, the Niger Islamic Council stated its intent to regulate religious sermons by requiring that any preaching sessions receive prior approval.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** On March 3, 2009, in Niamey, two Muslim sects—Ahli Sunna and Kala Kato—engaged in a heated confrontation over interpretation of Islamic doctrine. The police dispersed the crowd and briefly detained several protagonists. On February 24, 2009, the Catholic Church in Niamey conducted an evaluation of its training that promoted interfaith sensitivity and dialogue. Evaluators recommended continued dissemination of positive values shared by Christians and Muslims and called on religious leaders to continue educating people to avoid behavior and language likely to sow discord.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There is one Seventh-day Adventist church. It is generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
NIGERIA

**Population:** 162,265,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 288,322  
**Religious Groups:** Muslim 50%, Christian 40%, indigenous beliefs 10%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** The most populous African nation is currently in the midst of crises that challenge its unity. Extremists fuel clashes between religious groups. The fragile balance of ethnic cohabitation is once again threatened as it was during the Biafra War. The lingering memory of at least two million victims killed between 1967 and 1970 in the southeastern region of the country is vivified by the hundreds of deaths associated with religious-ethnic cleansing which have taken place in recent months. Human rights abuses include all imaginable violations. According to Amnesty International, the following have been documented: “politically motivated and extrajudicial killings by security forces, including summary executions; torture, rape, and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners, detainees, and criminal suspects; harsh and life-threatening prison and detention center conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention; prolonged pretrial detention; denial of fair public trial; executive influence on the judiciary and judicial corruption; infringement on citizens’ privacy rights; restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion, and movement; official corruption and impunity; violence and discrimination against women; the killing of children suspected of witchcraft; female genital mutilation (FGM); child abuse and child sexual exploitation; societal violence; ethnic, regional, and religious discrimination and violence; vigilante killings; trafficking in persons for the purpose of prostitution and forced labor; discrimination against persons with disabilities; discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; child labor; forced and bonded labor; and abductions by militant groups.”

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 38: “Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community...
with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution, but in some instances infringes on religious freedom to address security and public safety concerns. The republic is composed of 36 states, and all are given significant autonomy in their decision making. The northern region and much of the middle section of the country are overwhelmingly Muslim. Since 2000, elements of the Shari’a Islamic law have been reintroduced and enforced in the 12 northern states, creating what some Christians call a de facto state religion. In April 2009, the director-general of the Kano Hisbah Board threatened to enter a predominantly non-Muslim area of Kano city to confiscate alcohol and crack down on prostitution if hoteliers did not comply with an agreement to clean up “beer spots and brothels.” Kano state maintains steep fines and prison sentences for the public consumption and distribution of alcohol, in compliance with its Shari’a statutes. In January 2009, the Kano Hisbah Board reportedly ordered the Association of Divorcees, Widows, and Orphans to refrain from staging a rally in Kano city, calling the rally un-Islamic.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Tensions persist between Christians and Muslims in some areas. Regional, tribal-ethnic, and occupational differences often divide people along religious lines and lead to cases of tension and violence. As a result, ethnic and economic competition fueled religious conflicts between different groups. On March 28, 2009, the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital fired a nurse for wearing an elbow-length hijab. The hospital, owned by the federal government, issued a statement that it terminated the nurse’s employment for violating the hospital’s dress code (which allows for a shorter, shoulder-length hijab) and not for religious reasons.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 899 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, four hospitals, 18 clinics and dispensaries, seven
secondary schools, and two literature ministry seminaries. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**Visits:** Dr John Graz visited Babcock University February 3-9, 2008 and lectured on religious freedom. The Third IRLA All-Africa Congress of Religious Freedom took place in 2011 at Babcock University. It was followed by a Festival of Religious Freedom in Lagos.

**NIUE**

**Population:** 1,500 (estimate)

**Seventh-day Adventists:** 14

**Religious Groups:** Ekalesia Niue 61.1% (Niuean Church, a Protestant church closely related to the London Missionary Society), Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 8.8%, Catholic 7.2%, Jehovah’s Witness 2.4%, other 9.8%, unspecified 8.7%, none 1.9% (2001 census)

**Constitutional Provision:** Niue follows New Zealand law, which is based upon British Common Law that establishes religious freedom. Although Niue has political independence and its own constitution, its laws and government are greatly influenced by New Zealand.

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The state allows freedom of conscience concerning religious beliefs.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are no reports of strife between various faiths. The community is generally conservative and it is expected that citizens and visitors be respectful of Sunday observances.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**
Institutional Freedom: There is one Seventh-day Adventist church. It is generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

NORWAY

Population: 4,952,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 4,568
Religious Groups: Church of Norway (Lutheran) 78%, other Christian 3.5%, Muslim 2%, Catholic 1.3%, Pentecostal 0.8%, other/none/unknown 14.4%, small Jewish community

Perspectives on Current Issues: The country suffered a national trauma when, on July 22, 2011, Anders Brievik, a Norwegian citizen, detonated a car bomb in Oslo, killing eight and injuring more than 200. He then proceeded to the island of Utoya where he shot and killed an additional 69 people who were attending a youth camp. Brievik claims that he acted to defend the country from multiculturalism and immigration, but Norwegians have decried the slaughter and vowed to maintain an open and democratic society.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Part A, Article 2: “All inhabitants of the Realm shall have the right to free exercise of their religion. The Evangelical-Lutheran religion shall remain the official religion of the State. The inhabitants professing it are bound to bring up their children in the same.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. In 2008, there was a public discussion about introducing greater separation in the state-church relationship. After an intense political and media debate in January 2009, the government withdrew from consideration
a proposed modification of the penal law that would have criminalized “proven attacks on religion or philosophy.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 62 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church also operates a junior college, a health and rehabilitation center, a nursing home, a publishing house, a Bible correspondence school, and two Radio-TV production centers. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

OMAN

Population: 3,000,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 38
Religious Groups: Ibadhi Muslim 75%, other (Sunni Muslim, Shi’a Muslim, Hindu) 25%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Oman, like other countries in the Gulf region, benefits from its petroleum assets. However, the government is responding to social pressure by developing strategies to diversify the economy. Currently, 25% of the population is composed of expatriates, but there is a new policy that will gradually reassign their jobs to citizens through a process called “Omanization.” People of other faiths do not enjoy the same rights and privileges as those who adhere to the state religion.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution, Article 17 states: “All citizens are equal before the Law, and they are equal in public rights and duties. There shall be no discrimination between them on the grounds of gender, origin, color, language, religion, sect, domicile or social status.”
State Attitudes and Actions: Oman regulates the practice of religion of both Muslims and non-Muslims. The government recently lifted the previously imposed limitations on the number of religious workers in the country and shortened the process for granting permission to religious leaders to enter the country from two months to one week.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of societal abuses based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Discrimination is largely absent. Anti-Semitism is present in the private media, with anti-Semitic editorial cartoons depicting stereotypical and negative images of Jews and Jewish symbols. There have been some interfaith dialogues to foster religious tolerance.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There is one Seventh-day Adventist church.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Unknown.

Freedom to Evangelize: Evangelism is allowed but it is restricted.

PAKISTAN

Population: 176,940,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 13,740
Religious Groups: Muslim 97% (Sunni 77%, Shi’a 20%), other 3% (Christian and Hindu)

Perspectives on Current Issues: The economic situation in Pakistan is negatively influenced by ethnic and religious violence. Poverty affects 41% of the population and the Index of Human Development ranks the country 145th out of 187 countries assessed. Inflation has arisen to 18%. Public debt is equivalent to approximately 66.4% of the GDP. The political strain between Washington and Islamabad makes it more difficult for the latter to obtain loans from international monetary institutions. The country faces major security challenges. The tribal structure of Pakistani society makes it difficult to maintain an independent judicial system. For example, tribal councils have sometimes
excused so-called “honor killings.” Violence against women and girls is widespread. Freedom of expression is restricted, as is freedom of religion. Human rights defenders have deplored the practice of forced disappearances. Reports indicate that discrimination against religious minorities is part of daily life.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Part I, Article 2: “Islam shall be the State religion of Pakistan.” Part II, Chapter 1, Article 20 adds: “Subject to law, public order and morality: (a) every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion; and (b) every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Freedom of religion is constitutionally subject to legal restrictions “in the interest of the glory of Islam.” The state and local bodies have not done enough to ensure the protection of religious minorities. Extrajudicial execution of members of minority religions while in police custody is also a reality. However, the government appears to be moving in the direction of greater tolerance of religious minorities as evidenced by the appointment of a Catholic to the office of Minority Affairs Minister. August 11 has been designated by the government as Minorities Day. With the exception of Ahmadiyya Muslims, missionaries are allowed to enter the country; however, they must declare their religion upon entrance. The Ahmadiyya Muslim community is not allowed to preach or teach inside Pakistan. Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy law is broad and as a result tends to make it easy for private individuals to bring charges of blasphemy against Christians in particular.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There has recently been an increase in violence directed toward Christians. Members of Ahmadiyya, a banned form of Islam, have faced difficulties similar to those experienced by Christians.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 122 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a college, school, hospital, dental clinic, and publishing house.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Sabbath observance is always difficult for students and employees in an Islamic state.

Freedom to Evangelize: Evangelism is allowed, but societal pressure makes it dangerous.

PALAU

Population: 20,472
Seventh-day Adventists: 876
Religious Groups: Catholic 65%, Protestant 18%, Modekngei (indigenous to Palau) 9%, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 0.4%, other 0.4%, Jehovah’s Witness 0.1%, unspecified/none 7% (2000 census)

Constitutional Provision: Article IV, Section 1 of the constitution states: “The Government shall take no action to deny or impair the freedom of conscience or of philosophical or religious belief of any person nor take any action to compel, prohibit or hinder the exercise of religion. The Government shall not recognize or establish a national religion, but may provide assistance to private or parochial schools on a fair and equitable basis for nonreligious purposes.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government of Palau allows the free exercise of religion. Though many state and national events begin with prayer, there is no distinct bias toward any particular religious body.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports regarding interfaith tension or strife in Palau. Most faiths have congenial relationships.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are two Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized Christian denomination.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

PANAMA

Population: 3,571,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 97,984
Religious Groups: Catholic 85%, Protestant 15%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Decades of political and civil unrest left their mark, though in recent years the national government has introduced social and economic reforms, laying the groundwork for a brighter future. Women's rights are an area of concern.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Title III, Articles 35 and 36: “(35) One is free to profess any religion, as well as exercise any faith, without limitation other than [it] respects the Christian moral and public order. The Catholic religion is the recognized religion of most of the Panamanians. (36) Religious associations having legal standing and order must administer to their goods within the limits indicated by the Law, just like other legal entities.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Although Catholicism is not considered the state religion, it is the majority religion and enjoys certain privileges that other religions do not. The Catholic faith is the only religion taught in public schools. However, attendance is not compulsory for students who do not wish to participate. Other religions enjoy a considerable degree of freedom. An immigration law was put into effect which allows foreign religious workers to be granted six-year visas as temporary religious workers.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most faiths have amicable relationships with each other with no reports of strife or violence.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:
Institutional Freedom: There are 247 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school, one institute, two radio stations, and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is officially recognized by the state.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Employees and students face occasional hurdles to Sabbath-keeping. Classes are held late on Friday and some projects require work on Saturday. Some employees face discrimination because of their Sabbath-keeping.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Population: 6,888,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 249,973
Religious Groups: Roman Catholic 27%, Protestant 69.4% (Evangelical Lutheran 19.5%, United Church 11.5%, Seventh-day Adventist 10%, Pentecostal 8.6%, Evangelical Alliance 5.2%, Anglican 3.2%, Baptist 2.5%, other Protestant 8.9%), Baha’i 0.3%, indigenous beliefs and other 3.3% (2000 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Rich in natural resources, the formal economy of Papua New Guinea is closely tied to the global demand for various commodities. Civil instability and poor public health are long-running challenges.

Constitutional Provision: Constitutional Provision 45, Section One, states: “Every person has the right to freedom of conscience, thought and religion and the practice of his religion and beliefs, including freedom to manifest and propagate his religion and beliefs in such a way as not to interfere with the freedom of others, except to the extent that the exercise of that right is regulated or restricted by a law that complies with Section 38 (general qualifications on qualified rights).”
State Attitudes and Actions: Even though the predominance of Christianity is recognized in the preamble of the constitution, there is no state religion and the state has consistently recognized the right of conscience. The state subsidizes schools and healthcare institutions that were in existence before independence and, as such, they form part of the infrastructure of the state. In public schools, the state generally requires at least one hour of religious instruction per week. For the most part the state allows for proselytizing and the practice of religion.

Private Attitudes and Actions: For the most part, religious faiths have amicable relationships with one another.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 900 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, three schools, 39 clinics, four bookstores, and an airbase. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees. Some Sabbath work exemptions are obtained through employers, sometimes intervention by local clergy is necessary, and some cases are litigated in court.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

PARAGUAY

Population: 6,586,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 12,578
Religious Groups: Catholic 89.6%, Protestant 6.2%, other Christian 1.2%, other or unspecified 1.9%, none 1.1% (2002 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Of concern is the ongoing discrimination against indigenous groups who are the targets of forced evictions and police brutality.
**Constitutional Provision:** Title II, Chapter II, Article 24 of the constitution states: “(1) Freedom of religion, worship, and ideology is recognized without any restrictions other than those established in this Constitution and the law. The State has no official religion. (2) Relations between the State and the Catholic Church are based on independence, cooperation, and autonomy. (3) The independence and autonomy of all churches and religious denominations, without restrictions other than those imposed by this Constitution and the law, are hereby guaranteed. (4) No one may be disturbed, questioned, or forced to give testimony by reason of his beliefs or ideology.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The state allows for the free exercise of religion, but clearly favors Catholicism over other faiths. Priests often celebrate mass to commence public events, Catholics seem to have a monopoly on chaplaincy, and the Catholic Church is the only group recognized by the Paraguayan constitution. The current President, Fernando Lugo Mendez, is a former Catholic bishop whose resignation from his bishopric was formally affirmed by the Pope in August 2008. Despite the dominance by Catholics, other religions are free to practice and can receive tax-exempt status if they register as not-for-profit organizations. However, religious organizations do not have to register if they choose not to. A law enacted in 2008 allows doctors to administer blood transfusions in life threatening situations, even though the patient has not consented. Jehovah’s Witnesses have reacted with consternation to this law, seeing it as contrary to the free exercise of their religious beliefs, as well as the right to bodily self-determination.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Members of various religious communities have amicable relationships with one another. With the exception of a few incidents of anti-Semitism, there have been no reports of strife or violence.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 60 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates two high schools, two clinics, and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

PERU

Population: 29,400,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 411,675
Religious Groups: Catholic 81.3%, Protestant 12.5%, other 6.2%

Constitutional Provision: Title I, Chapter I, Article 2 of the constitution states: “For the freedom of conscience and religion, in the individual or associated form: There is no persecution for ideals or beliefs. There is no crime of opinion. The public exercise of every confession is free, as long as it does not offend or alter the moral and public order.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government allows the free exercise of religion and has laws against discrimination. However, the Catholic Church receives preferential treatment. All the earnings of priests and clergy are exempted from taxation, as is all property owned by the Catholic Church. In some cases, Catholic clergy regularly receive stipends from the government. Catholic clergy are the only ones permitted to serve as military chaplains. Catholicism is viewed as the religion of the military and police force. The government also requires Catholic religious instruction in public schools. Parents may have their children exempted from this instruction by writing a letter. Non-Catholic groups may receive some of the same state benefits as the Catholic Church, but they must be listed on a special registry. In order to be on the registry, a group must exist for at least seven years. Evangelicals have complained that this is discriminatory. In June 2009, thousands of Evangelicals marched to the Congress to bring attention to the draft law on Religious Freedom and Equality.

Private Attitudes and Actions: With the exception of a few reports by students with regard to exemptions from Catholic religious instruction, and some higher
education students not being able to get exemption from classes for religious reasons, most religious groups have an amicable relationship with each other.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 1,992 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, 11 high schools, three clinics, and 14 radio stations. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Visits: In June 2009, Dr John Graz, Dr Eugene Hsu, Pastor Roberto Herrera, Pastor Edson Rosa, and Daisy Orion participated in a week of promotion of religious freedom in Lima, Peru. An evening forum was attended by 400 people, including government ministers, the president of the Supreme Court, and religious leaders. On June 13, the First World Festival of Religious Freedom was attended by more than 40,000 people in Lima.

PHILIPPINES

Population: 95,739,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 734,929
Religions: Catholic 83%, Muslim 5%, other Christian 4%, Evangelical 2.8%, Iglesia ni Cristo 2.3%, Aglipayan 1.2%, other 1.8% (2000 census.)

Perspectives on Current Issues: One-third of Filipinos live in poverty. The country is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters, such Tropical Storm Washi, which killed more than 1,200 people and affected 340,000 people on the island of Mindanao. The typhoon also had a negative impact on the agricultural and fishing sectors.
Constitutional Provision: Article II, Section 6, and Article III, Section 5, of the constitution state: “(6) The separation of Church and State shall be inviolable.” “(5) No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The Philippines allows for religious freedom and the separation of church and state. The government offers tax-free status for all faiths that register, but does not compel any faith to do so. Religious instruction is permitted in public schools under the conditions that the government does not have to pay for it and parental consent is acquired. Public schools are also required to respect the religious rights of all students and the government allows for religious literature to be distributed in them. Some local Muslim leaders have complained of economic discrimination due to the fact that Muslim-dominated areas suffer greater economic hardships than other areas. There are also local Muslim leaders who are sympathetic to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and its attempts to establish an autonomous region.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most faiths have amicable relationships with each other. However, there have been numerous reports of Christian clergy being killed, allegedly by members of terrorist groups such as the Abu Sayyaf Group and the New People’s Army, which have both religious and political ideologies. Members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front were responsible for kidnapping Catholic priest Fr Michael Sinnott; kidnapping of religious leaders is not uncommon. Muslims have complained of discrimination at the hands of Christian employers who are reluctant to hire them because of their religion. In an attempt to counter this, some Muslims have adopted western names and style of dress. There is also tension with regard to Christians proselytizing in historically Muslim areas. There have been several reports of Muslims engaging in violent acts against Christians.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:
Institutional Freedom: There are 4,480 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, six colleges, 22 high schools, one publishing house, two clinics, and nine hospitals. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a recognized Christian denomination and enjoys tax-exempt status.

Sabbath keeping for Students and Employees: Sabbath-keeping can present difficulties for those seeking and maintaining employment. Students are protected by law from being required to take examinations on Sabbath.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely. In some cases, particular religious groups have sought to stifle evangelism in specific regions.

PITCAIRN ISLAND

Population: 48
Seventh-day Adventists: 22
Religious Groups: Seventh-day Adventist

Constitutional Provision: The citizens of the Pitcairn Islands are governed by British common law.

State Attitudes and Actions: The government allows for religious freedom, although it has not really been an issue since the only religion on the island is Seventh-day Adventism.

Private Attitudes and Actions: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only church on the island and it operates freely. There are no known religious conflicts between citizens or visitors of differing faiths.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There is one Seventh-day Adventist church. The church operates a bookstore. These institutions are allowed to operate freely.
Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only organized church on the island.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no problems reported for students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: On an island historically dominated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, freedom to evangelize is not an issue.

POLAND

Population: 38,200,000  
Seventh-day Adventists: 5,781  
Religious Groups: Catholic 88%, other (includes Eastern Orthodox, Uniate, Protestant, Jewish)

Perspectives on Current Issues: The UN has drawn attention to the Polish parliament’s rejection of a law on gender equality.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 25: “(1) Churches and other religious organizations shall have equal rights. (2) Public authorities in the Republic of Poland shall be impartial in matters of personal conviction, whether religious or philosophical, or in relation to outlooks on life, and shall ensure their freedom of expression within public life. (3) The relationship between the State and churches and other religious organizations shall be based on the principle of respect for their autonomy and the mutual independence of each in its own sphere, as well as on the principle of cooperation for the individual and the common good.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution. The law at all levels protects this right against abuse, either by the government or private actors. There are no government restrictions on establishing and maintaining places of worship.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are occasional reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice; however,
prominent leaders have taken positive steps to promote religious freedom and there is a generally amicable relationship among religious groups. Anti-Semitic sentiment persists among some elements of society and within marginal political parties; however, the government publicly denounces anti-Semitic acts. There are occasional desecrations of Jewish and Catholic cemeteries. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has good relations with all religious groups.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 118 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, a retirement center, a publishing house, a Bible correspondence school, and a radio-TV production center. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

PORTUGAL

Population: 10,653,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 9,426
Religious Groups: Catholic 92%, Protestant 4%, atheist 3%, other 1%

Constitutional Provision: The constitution guarantees religious freedom in Article 41: “Freedom of conscience, religion and worship is inviolable.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice. The constitution provides for freedom of religion and other laws and policies contribute to the generally free practice of religion. The law at all levels protects this right in full against abuse, either by the government or private actors. The government is secular. Other than the constitution, the two most important documents relating to religious freedom are the 2001 Religious Freedom Act and the 1940 Concordat with the Holy See.
Private Attitudes and Actions: In contrast to the previous report, there are no reports of societal abuse or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, and prominent societal leaders have taken positive steps to promote religious freedom.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 97 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school, three retirement centers, one publishing house, one Bible correspondence school, and one youth camp. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

PUERTO RICO

Population: 3,709,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 37,472
Religious Groups: Catholic 85%, Protestant and other 15%

Constitutional Provision: Puerto Rico follows the United States Constitution which states in Article 2, Section 3: “No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. There shall be complete separation of church and state.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Puerto Rico follows the tradition of the United States and as a result provides for and protects the free exercise of religion for its citizens.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Various religious groups live harmoniously with each other. There are no reports of strife or violence.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:
Institutional Freedom: There are 301 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, 12 high schools, three radio stations, one hospital, and two clinics. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Visits: Dr John Graz and Pastor Roberto Herrera visited Puerto Rico on April 17-20, 2008 to promote religious freedom at meetings and in a radio interview.

Dr Ganoune Diop and Pastor Roberto Herrera visited Puerto Rico on October 28-30, 2011 to promote religious freedom in San Juan.

QATAR

Population: 1,758,793
Seventh-day Adventists: 71
Religious Groups: Muslim 77.5%, Christian 8.5%, other 14% (2004 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Qatar has been recognized as the most dynamic economy in the world. Petroleum products represent 85% of exports. However, its liquefied natural gas has catapulted this small country’s economy into the global market in remarkable ways. As a result of this prosperity, Qataris are investing in various sectors around the world. Expatriates make up 65% of the population. According to human rights advocates, migrant workers face widespread discrimination and ill treatment. Detentions of political activists are reported. Violence against women is also said to be widespread.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution in Articles 1, 35, and 50 states: “Article 1. Qatar is an independent sovereign Arab State. Its religion is Islam and Shari’a law shall be a main source of its legislations. Its political system is democratic. The Arabic Language shall be its official language. The people of Qatar are a part of the Arab nation.” “Article 35. All persons are equal before
the law and there shall be no discrimination whatsoever on grounds of sex, race, language, or religion.” “Article 50. Freedom to practice religious rites shall be guaranteed to all persons in accordance with the law and the requirements of the maintenance of public order and morality.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Qatar is an Islamic state, which is governed by both secular and Shari’a law. The constitution provides for religious freedom and the government generally enforces it. However, it does prohibit proselytism. Public Christian worship and the observance of specific holidays are tolerated.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are no reports of societal abuses based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, and prominent government leaders take positive steps to promote religious freedom in the country.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There is one Seventh-day Adventist church.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Unknown.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Proselytizing is illegal.

**REUNION**

**Population:** 1,067,000

**Seventh-day Adventists:** 1,449

**Religious Groups:** Catholic 80%, Hindu 6%, Protestant 6%, Muslim 4%

**Constitutional Provision:** Reunion is a French territory and therefore falls under the French Constitution, which guarantees universal religious freedom.

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the French constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. The island prefect has considerable autonomy and religious liberty has been maintained, but there have been reports of discrimination toward non-Catholics by the large Catholic majority.
Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious. However, there are occasional tensions between the non-Catholic minority groups and the Catholic majority.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 18 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Adventist teachers and students have faced problems in public schools because of their Sabbath observance.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

ROMANIA

Population: 21,408,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 67,182
Religious Groups: Orthodox 86.8%, Catholic 5%, Protestant 5% (includes Reformed Protestant, Baptist, Pentecostal), Greek Catholic 1-3% (Uniate), Muslim 0.2%, Jewish less than 0.1%

Perspectives on Current Issues: In recent years, while an estimated 20% of Romanians have migrated to other European countries, many see the agricultural potential of the region and have been purchasing large tracts of land. According to human rights defenders, one of the current problems is discrimination, allegedly orchestrated by the Romanian Orthodox Church, which has hindered freedom of religion or belief from becoming a full-fledged reality. A 2006 law has made it difficult to register denominations or charities.

Constitutional Provision: Title II, Chapter II, Article 29 in the constitution states: “(1) Freedom of thought, opinion, and religious beliefs shall not be restricted in any form whatsoever. No one shall be compelled to embrace an opinion or religion contrary to his own convictions.”
State Attitudes and Actions: The government continues to differentiate between recognized and unrecognized religious groups and registration and recognition requirements continue to pose obstacles to minority faiths. Minority religious groups are not allowed free access to state-owned media.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. There were incidents in which the Romanian Orthodox Church showed hostility toward non-Orthodox churches and criticized proselytizing by Protestant and other religious groups. In January 2008, Orthodox Metropolitan Bartolomeu Anania of Cluj, Alba, Crisana, and Maramures went so far as to tell journalists that the most significant threat to the Orthodox Church is posed by “neo-Protestant sects” that buy believers. The Metropolitan also described their proselytizing as “spiritual corruption.” There have been approximately a dozen reported anti-Semitic incidents involving property destruction and vandalism ranging from painting swastikas on buildings, to desecrating graves and cemeteries, to vandalizing synagogues and Jewish-owned buildings, and—in one case—damaging a Torah scroll. Police sometimes identify perpetrators, but most of them are not prosecuted.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 1,093 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, one theological institute, three high schools, a media center, a radio station, a publishing house, a Bible correspondence school, and a humanitarian service for prisons. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is recognized as one of only 18 religious groups covered by the religion law that went into effect in January 2007.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are employers who do not hire Adventists who wish to observe the Sabbath, though this is not a widespread situation. The church continues to experience problems with universities refusing to change examination dates for Adventist students when tests are
scheduled on Saturdays; however, there has been some progress on this issue. Students were prevented from participating in the school Olympics because they were scheduled on Saturday. Since 2002, the School Inspectorate of Cluj County declined to include two of three requested classes on Adventist religion in the school curriculum, although there were sufficient students for the classes.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church reports occasional problems in obtaining approval to use public halls for religious activities due to pressure by Orthodox priests, especially in rural areas or small localities. In many instances, the Adventist Church has decided not to use public halls for such activities. However, local authorities do not always give in to pressure by the Orthodox Church and, in some cases, have acted in accordance with the law by granting approval for the events.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Population: 142,800,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 52,067
Religious Groups: Russian Orthodox 15-20%, Muslim 10-15%, other Christian 2%, other (includes Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist) (2006 data). Estimates are of practicing worshipers; Russia has large populations of non-practicing believers and non-believers, a legacy of over seven decades of Soviet rule.

Perspectives on Current Issues: The European Court has condemned the country for cases of forced disappearances, especially during military operations in Chechnya. Other human rights concerns include discrimination against minorities, violence against women, denial of freedoms, accusations that those who criticize the government lack patriotism, intimidation, harassment, police brutality, and torture of detainees. There are an estimated 800,000 orphans in Russia. It is reported that 825,000 persons are imprisoned.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution provides for religious freedom in Article 28: “Everyone shall be guaranteed the right to freedom of conscience,
to freedom of religious worship, including the right to profess, individually or jointly with others, any religion, or to profess no religion, to freely choose, possess and disseminate religious or other beliefs, and to act in conformity with them.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects the right of religious freedom in practice; however, in some cases the authorities have imposed restrictions on certain groups, most often through the registration process. The constitution provides for equality of all religions before the law and the separation of church and state; yet, the government does not always respect these provisions and sometimes selectively enforces such laws. Many religious groups have difficulty acquiring land or permits to build houses of worship. Four times a year, the government updates a list of banned extremist publications.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are reports of societal abuse and discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, including some physical attacks on individuals and communities because of the victims' religious affiliation. There are reported incidents of vandalism against Muslims and Jews, as well as other crimes of an anti-Semitic nature. Although there are several laws which address crimes motivated by ethnic or religious hatred, law enforcement agencies apply these laws inconsistently, infrequently, and sometimes arbitrarily.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 704 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, two English language schools, one publishing house, and one media center. The Association for Religious Freedom is very active in organizing symposiums.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: According to the Slavic Law Center, government officials in Elista, Republic of Kalmykia, threatened to take “extreme measures” against Seventh-day Adventists for not allowing their children to attend school on Saturdays.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
RWANDA

Population: 10,932,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 505,235
Religious Groups: Catholic 45%, Protestant 25% (includes Seventh-day Adventist, Pentecostal, and Baptist Union), Anglican 10%, Muslim 5%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 had devastating effects on the ethos of this fertile land, which is sometimes called the Switzerland of Africa because of the mountainous landscape and remarkable climate. In recent years, relations between ethnic groups have become more peaceful as an emphasis is placed on reconciliation. When the government was restructured, 50% of the seats in the parliament were designated for female members.

Constitutional Provision: Article 18 of the constitution states: “Freedom of religion and the public exercise thereof, liberty of conscience, as well as liberty of expressing one’s opinion about any subject, shall be guaranteed, except for the punishment of infractions committed during the exercise thereof.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution; however, there are reports of discrimination involving Jehovah’s Witnesses. Seventy-six Jehovah’s Witness children, many of whom were secondary school students, were expelled from school for failure to sing the national anthem. In January 2009, school officials began readmitting these expelled students, along with 42 of the 112 children previously expelled. Ninety-four children were back in school at the end of the reporting period. During the April 2009 memorial week commemorating the genocide, the government limited the conduct of certain celebratory religious activities, including baptisms.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are a variety of interfaith groups that contribute to understanding and tolerance, including the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Protestant Council of Rwanda. Additionally, the Interfaith Commission for Rwanda promotes unity and reconciliation through supporting
programs that reconcile genocide survivors, released genocide prisoners, and genocide detainees’ families.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 1,559 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates two high schools, one literature ministry seminary, one school of nursing, one hospital, six clinics and dispensaries, and a radio-TV production center. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to share its religious convictions freely.

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

Population: 52,402
Seventh-day Adventists: 2,087
Religious Groups: Anglican, other Protestant, Catholic (no percentages available)

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter II, Article 11: “(1) Except with his own consent, a person shall not be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, including freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government views itself as secular and as a result provides religious freedom and allows the free exercise thereof. However, the government requires all schools to hold daily Christian prayers and hymn singing.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Members of various religious communities have amicable relationships with one another. There are no reports of strife or
violence. Rastafarians complain of discrimination with regard to schools and hiring practices.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are nine Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a dental clinic. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

SAINT LUCIA

Population: 176,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 17,338
Religious Groups: Catholic 67.5%, Protestant 18.2% (Seventh-day Adventist 8.5%, Pentecostal 5.7%, Anglican 2%, Evangelical 2%), other Christian 5.1%, Rastafarian 2.1%, other 1.1%, unspecified 1.5%, none 4.5% (2001 census)

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter 1, Article 9: “(1) Except with his own consent, a person shall not be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, including freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The preamble of the Saint Lucia constitution affirms belief in a monotheistic God, most likely referring to the Christian God. Nevertheless, the state has provided for freedom of belief. The government has suspended registration of any new religions while it revises its registration policy. This has had a negative effect on Muslims, Mormons, and at least 10 other groups which remain unregistered. Registered groups are allowed duty-free
imports and the right to register births, deaths, and marriages. Non-registered groups are only free to assemble and worship.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Catholics have accused Protestants of unfair criticism during the course of their proselytizing. Rastafarians have complained about discrimination with regard to school and hiring practices, although they have acknowledged decreasing levels of discrimination against them.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 46 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**SAINT PIERRE AND MIQUELON**

**Population:** 7,036

**Seventh-day Adventists:** unknown

**Religious Groups:** Catholic 99%, other 1%

**Constitutional Provision:** Saint Pierre and Miquelon follow the French constitution. Article 1 states: “France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs. It shall be organized on a decentralized basis.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** There are no reports of government infringement upon the religious liberties of its citizens.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** No animosity or violence between different religious groups has been reported.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are no Seventh-day Adventist churches.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: There are no reported restrictions on evangelism.

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Population: 109,333
Seventh-day Adventists: 13,512
Religious Groups: Anglican 47%, Methodist 28%, Roman Catholic 13%, other Protestant denominations, Seventh-day Adventist, and Hindu.

Constitutional Provision: Chapter 1, Article 9:1 of the constitution states: “Except with his own consent, a person shall not be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, including freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The state generally follows the constitutional provision regarding religious freedom. Rastafarians complain about being unable to use marijuana within the context of their religious practices.

Private Attitudes and Actions: An amicable relationship exists among the various religious groups. Rastafarians complain about discrimination in hiring and schools.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 34 Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

SAMOA

Population: 183,081
Seventh-day Adventists: 5,780
Religious Groups: Congregationalist 33.6%, Catholic 19.4%, Methodist 14.3%, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 13.2%, Assembly of God 6.9%, other Christian 5%, other 1.9%, Worship Centre 1.3%, unspecified 0.1% (2006 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: The tsunami of 2009 devastated the island and the need for reconstruction slowed the economy considerably. Samoan expatriates, about 150,000 people, secure one third of the country’s GDP.

Constitutional Provision: Part II, Section 11, Paragraphs 1 and 2, of the constitution state: “(1) Every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and, in public or private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance. (2) Nothing in clause 1 shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law in so far as that existing law or the law so made imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred under the provisions of that clause in the interests of national security or of public order, health or morals, or for protecting the rights and freedom of others, including their rights and freedom to observe and practice their religion without the unsolicited interference of members of other religions.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The preamble of the constitution affirms that Samoa is “an Independent State based on Christian principles and Samoan custom and tradition.” While the government clearly favors Christianity (i.e.
offering Christian prayers before public events and assemblies), it also protects the rights of minority faiths and allows for the free practice of religion. Public schools do not include religion in their curricula, but church-operated schools do.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Most faiths have amicable relationships with each other. There is some social pressure, especially in the smaller villages, for individuals to become involved in Christian religious activities.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 25 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

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**SAN MARINO**

**Population:** 31,534  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** Unknown  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 95%; other 5% (includes Jehovah’s Witness, Baha’i, Muslim, Jewish, Waldensian)

**Constitutional Provision:** San Marino does not have a codified constitution, but the foundations of its constitutional tradition can be traced back more than a thousand years. The legal tradition provides for religious freedom.

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the legal tradition and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. The Catholic Church receives direct benefits from the state from income taxes, but individuals may choose to allocate 0.3% of their income tax payments to other charities, including three religious groups—the
Waldensian Church, Baha’i Community and Jehovah’s Witnesses. There are no private parochial schools. Public schools provide Catholic instruction, but students may freely choose not to participate.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Catholicism is not a state religion, but it is dominant in society since most citizens were born and raised under Catholic principles that form part of their culture. The country’s dominant Catholic heritage may inform individual choices on lifestyle matters such as marriage or divorce, although there is no government persuasion involved.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience: There is no reported Seventh-day Adventist presence in San Marino.

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

Population: 180,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 3,811
Religious Groups: Catholic 70.3%, Evangelical 3.4%, New Apostolic 2%, Seventh-day Adventist 1.8%, other 3.1%, none 19.4% (2001 census)

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 27: “The freedom of conscience and religion is inviolable.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. There is no state religion. Religious organizations must register with the government. To register, a group must first send a letter requesting authorization from the Ministry of Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. Once the group has obtained authorization, it must submit its official name and charter to the national registrar’s office to ensure no other organization has the same name.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious, and no significant tensions are reported.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

**Institutional Freedom:** There are nine Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**SAUDI ARABIA**

**Population:** 27,900,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** Unknown  
**Religious Groups:** Muslim more than 99%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Untouched by the revolutions sweeping through many Arab countries, Saudi Arabia has actually benefited from troubles elsewhere. The decrease of oil production in other regions has prompted Saudi leaders to increase their oil production, resulting in higher revenues and leading to economic growth of about 6%. To reduce the likelihood of poverty-fueled popular protests spreading to the kingdom, Saudi authorities have multiplied public expenses to provide additional employment opportunities for citizens. It is reported that the Ministry of Interior has designed a project that will involve the hiring of 50,000 new state employees. The country is known for its poor human rights record. Discrimination against women is endemic. Freedom of expression and of assembly are tightly controlled. Detentions are occasions for numerous abuses, and cruel and degrading punishments, such as flogging and the severing of limbs, are utilized. Religious freedom is non-existent.

**Constitutional Provision:** The country is a monarchy with a legal system based on its interpretation of Shari’a law. Article 1 of the constitution states that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab Islamic state. Article
8 underscores that the government in Saudi Arabia is in accordance with the Islamic Shari’a. It is required that all citizens be Muslims.

**State Attitudes and Actions:** As a matter of policy, the government guarantees and protects the right to private worship for all, including non-Muslims who gather in homes for religious services. This right has not always been respected in practice and is not defined in the law. Government policies continue to place severe restrictions on religious freedom and the government continues to enforce its official interpretation of Sunni Islam. Muslims who do not adhere to this interpretation face significant political, economic, legal, social, and religious discrimination. This also includes limited employment and educational opportunities, under-representation in official institutions, and restrictions on the practice of their faith and on the building of places of worship and community centers. The king launched an Inter-Faith Dialogue Initiative (IDI) to bring leaders and followers of various faiths together for discourse and to intensify a national dialogue to promote tolerance and moderation.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** The majority of citizens support an Islamic state, even though there are differences of opinion on how it should be governed. Discrimination based on religion is a factor in the mistreatment of foreign workers by citizen employers and coworkers. There are reports that some employers withhold pay or residency card renewal based on religious factors.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are no Seventh-day Adventist churches or institutions in Saudi Arabia, but there are several thousand Adventist foreign workers in the country.

**Government Recognition:** Only Sunni-Islam is recognized in Saudi Arabia.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Unknown.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** It is illegal to publicly practice any faith other than Sunni-Islam. Conversion from Islam to another faith may result in death.
SENEGAL

Population: 12,860,717
Seventh-day Adventists: 440
Religious Groups: Muslim 94%, Christian 5% (mostly Catholic), indigenous beliefs 1%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Life expectancy is 55 years. Senegal is characterized by a multiparty democracy, but recent developments have tarnished its reputation for peaceful transfer of political power. Under former president Leopold Sedar Senghor, the country enjoyed the peaceful transfer of political power. There are tensions in part of the country. Separatist groups in the southern region of Casamance have been in conflict with the central government for decades. Even though a cease-fire has been agreed upon, recent resumption of violence threatens the fragile peace. Poverty and high unemployment destabilize the social fabric of the country and the disparity between the rich and the poor is significant. Young people often face the choice of joining one of the three main religious groups which make up the Islamic Sufi brotherhood—the Mouride, the Tidiani, and the Qadiryi, wealthy, well-organized fraternities with enormous political influence—or migrating to other countries. Another factor threatening inter-religious peaceful cohabitation is the presence of aggressive Islamist groups funded by Saudi Arabia and, until recently, by Libya. A country previously known for its tolerant status may now have to be more intentional to preserve this status. Human rights violations, such as detention, imprisonment, and torture while in custody, have been reported.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution guarantees universal religious freedom in Articles 8, 9, and 10. Article 8 states “The Republic of Senegal guarantees to all citizens their individual fundamental freedoms… These freedoms and rights are: civil and political liberties, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression … religious freedoms.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. There is no state religion as the nation is specifically defined by the
Religious organizations are required to register with the government, but there are no reports of discrimination. Missionaries must obtain residence visas from the Ministry of the Interior. Private schools are allowed to freely provide religious instruction and the government allows religious teaching in public schools. Islamic schools run by the government are growing in popularity with over 20,000 students. Religious groups are free to speak about social and political issues, most recently focusing on political violence and the HIV/AIDS crisis.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious and there are no significant tensions. The nation has a long history of friendly and peaceful coexistence between the Muslim majority, Christians, traditional indigenous religions, and other minority groups. Christian and Muslim leaders continue to dialogue publicly. This idyllic picture has been marred by recent attacks on churches that some attribute to the growing influence of radical Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are three Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one dispensary and one radio/TV production center. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
SERBIA

Population: 7,300,000  
Seventh-day Adventists: 6,645  
Religious Groups: Serbian Orthodox 85%, Catholic 5.5%, Muslim 3.2%, Protestant 1.1%, unspecified 2.6%, other/unknown or atheist 2.6% (2002 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Domestic Violence, discrimination against minority communities, and human trafficking are widely condemned by the UN and international human rights advocates. Though significant progress has been made, the issue of bringing perpetrators of war crimes to justice has not been completely resolved.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution guarantees freedom of religion in Article 43: “Freedom of thought, conscience, beliefs and religion shall be guaranteed, as well as the right to stand by one’s belief or religion or change them by choice. No person shall have the obligation to declare his religious or other beliefs. Everyone shall have the freedom to manifest their religion or religious beliefs in worship, observance, practice and teaching, individually or in community with others, and to manifest religious beliefs in private or public.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The constitution provides for freedom of religion; however, the law places limits on religious practice by discriminating among religious groups and denies some groups legal status. There is no state religion, but the majority Serbian Orthodox Church and other traditional religious communities receive preferential consideration. The government continues to subsidize salaries for Serbian Orthodox clergy working in other countries. The government’s respect for religious freedom remains problematic because of the religion law and the Religion Ministry’s arbitrary implementation of the law. Police investigations of acts of hate speech and vandalism tend to be slow and inconclusive. There continue to be isolated reports that officials have made public, negative statements regarding minority religious groups.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are few reports of societal abuse or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. However, leaders
of minority religious communities continue to report acts of vandalism, hate speech, physical attacks, and negative media reports. Because ethnicity and religion are often inextricably linked, in some cases it is difficult to identify discriminatory acts as primarily religious or primarily ethnic in origin. There are some isolated incidents of anti-Semitism.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 171 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a theological seminary, four Bible correspondence schools, one retirement center, one publishing house, and two radio-TV production centers. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** On January 29, 2007, the government signed a document officially accepting the registration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Serbia. This followed a difficult registration process which occurred as a result of the 2006 law on religion.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**SEYCHELLES**

**Population:** 86,525

**Seventh-day Adventists:** 539

**Religious Groups:** Catholic 85%, Anglican 6.32%, other Christian groups. Jehovah’s Witness, Hindu, Muslim, and Baha’i are present in small numbers.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 21: “Every person has a right to freedom of conscience and for the purpose of this article this right includes freedom of thought and religion, freedom to change religion or belief and freedom either alone or in community with others and both in public and
in private, to manifest and propagate the religion or belief in worship, teaching practice and observance.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. There is no state religion. The main religious groups have acts of incorporation, and other groups that are not corporate entities are also required to register with the government in order to qualify for tax-exempt status. The government remains uninvolved with religious matters, but it provides program time to different religious organizations on the national radio broadcasting service. On alternating Sunday mornings, the national radio service airs Catholic Mass and Anglican services, which last from one hour and 15 minutes to one hour and 30 minutes. Muslim and Hindu groups are allowed 15-minute broadcasts every Friday afternoon, and the Baha’i and Seventh-day Adventists are allowed 15-minute broadcasts every Saturday afternoon.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious, and there are no significant tensions.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are five Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
SIERRA LEONE

Population: 5,364,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 19,549
Religious Groups: Muslim 60%, indigenous beliefs 30%, Christian 10%

Perspectives on Current Issues: After years of armed conflict, a truth and reconciliation commission has been established. In spite of the fact that Sierra Leone is rich in natural resources, such as diamonds, gold, and titanium, the poverty rate is high and healthcare services are inadequate. Life expectancy is only 42 years. A very high percentage of girls are victims of female genital mutilation and this widespread practice tarnishes the human rights record of this country.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 24: “(1)…no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of … religion, freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom either alone or in community with others and both in public and in private to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. There is no state religion. Religious groups are not required to register with the government. Religious instruction is permitted in all schools and students can choose whether to attend religious classes.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious and there are no significant tensions. The Inter-Religious Council is composed of Christian and Muslim leaders and plays an important role by promoting the peace process in the country. On April 29, 2009, persons who claimed to be acting on the orders of an unidentified Imam burned a church in the village of Rogbon in Kambia Province, reportedly in response to the razing of the abandoned mosque that had previously occupied the site. No one was injured. A government task force, which included government ministers, religious leaders, and observers from the diplomatic community, visited the
church site, heard testimony from villagers, and interviewed stakeholders. A separate criminal investigation is currently ongoing.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 52 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school and two hospitals. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

**SINGAPORE**

**Population:** 5,167,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 2,781  
**Religious Groups:** Buddhist 42.5%, Christian 15%, Muslim 15%, Taoist 8.5%, Catholic 4.8%, Hindu 4%, other 0.7%, none 15% (2000 census)

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** It is reported that numerous people suspected of involvement in terrorist activities have been detained without trial or access to lawyers. Several organizations accused of “defamation” against the state have been banned.

**Constitutional Provision:** Part IV, Article 15, of the constitution states: “(1) Every person has the right to profess and practice his religion and to propagate it. (2) No person shall be compelled to pay any tax the proceeds of which are specially allocated in whole or in part for the purposes of a religion other than his own. (3) Every religious group has the right (a) to manage its own religious affairs; (b) to establish and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes; and (c) to acquire and own property and hold and administer it in accordance with law. (4) This article does not authorize any act contrary to any general law relating to public order, public health or morality.”
**State Attitudes and Actions:** The constitution allows religious freedom, but this right has at times been curtailed by other laws. All religious bodies are required to register with the government. In August 2009, the Prime Minister, during his National Day speech, asserted that attempts by some religions to convert people are a threat to the state’s stability. Earlier in the year, a Christian couple was sentenced to eight weeks imprisonment for distributing religious literature that was deemed offensive to Islam. There is a belief that proselytizing is not good for the nation. Since the passage of the Religious Harmony Act of 1990 and its revision in 2001, the government has sought to crack down on what it deems to be insensitive proselytizing and the mixing of religion and politics. The Religious Harmony Act restricts any political religious movement or attempts by other faiths to disrupt social harmony. Penalties are usually in fines, but may include imprisonment and revocation of registration.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Most faiths have an amicable relationship with one another and there are no reports of violence or discrimination.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are seven Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one school and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is recognized as an official religious organization.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees. Most Adventists who work in the public sector have no problems because the government operates on a five-day workweek.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely. However, since the Religious Harmony Act of 1990 and its revision in 2001, certain limitations have been placed on evangelism.

**Visits:** Dr John Graz and Lincoln Steed visited Singapore on February 26-27, 2010.
SLOVENIA

Population: 2,100,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 550
Religious Groups: Catholic 57.8%, unspecified 15.7%, atheist 10.1%, Orthodox Christian 2.3%, Muslim 2.4%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The Roma people experience discrimination and the “stateless” residents of the country are particularly vulnerable to a variety of abuses.

Constitutional Provision: Article 41 of the constitution states: “(1) Religious and other beliefs may be freely professed in private and public life. (2) No one shall be obliged to declare his religious or other beliefs. (3) Parents have the right to provide their children with a religious and moral upbringing in accordance with their beliefs.”

State Attitudes and Actions: On March 3, 2007, the Religious Freedom Act took effect, replacing the 1976 law on religious communities. The law outlines the government’s respect for religious freedom, including the legal status and rights of all religious communities. There are no requirements for registration for religious groups and faith communities are free to practice their religion whether or not they register. They must register if they wish to be legal entities and be eligible for rebates on value-added taxes. Currently, there are 43 officially registered religious groups.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are isolated reports of minor societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Inter-faith relations are generally amicable, although there is little warmth between the Catholic Church and foreign missionary groups that it views as aggressive proselytizers.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:
Institutional Freedom: There are 13 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a publishing house and a Bible correspondence school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is registered with the government.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Population: 545,000  
Seventh-day Adventists: 41,831  
Religious Groups: Anglican 35%, Catholic 19%, South Seas Evangelical 17%, Methodist 11%, other Christian 15%, other 3%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The majority of the population secures its livelihood from subsistence agriculture and fishing. Timber accounts for 70% of the country’s exports, but the supply is dwindling. Gold mining has resumed and has become a source of employment. The effects of the 1998-2003 civil war still linger and reconciliation is an ongoing process.

Constitutional Provision: Chapter II, Articles 3 (b) and 11 (1), of the Constitution state, respectively: “Whereas every person in Solomon Islands is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, color, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely … (b) freedom of conscience of expression and of assembly and association… . 11. (1) Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, and for the purposes of this section the said freedom includes
freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government provides religious freedom as a general practice. The state, although not Christian, subsidizes Christian schools and hospitals for the public good. In order to receive government funds, church schools must adjust their curricula to meet government standards. In public schools, one hour each day is devoted to religious instruction, though attendance is not mandatory. Instruction in religions other than Christianity is permitted, although there were no reports of it taking place.

Private Attitudes and Actions: The Solomon Islands are dominated by five major Christian denominations. In the past there were instances of local village church leaders advocating Sunday-worship only for Christians. However, there has been a marked decrease of such incidents and a greater level of tolerance now prevails.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 184 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates two vocational schools, one high school, and 17 clinics. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely. In some areas Adventist efforts have been hindered due to religious prejudice.
SOMALIA

Population: 9,358,602
Seventh-day Adventists: Unknown
Religious Groups: Muslim 99%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Somalia is considered Africa’s most failed state. Rivalry between the superpowers during the Cold War resulted in the presence of innumerable weapons and fueled inter-tribal conflict. Significant political instability, the collapse of infrastructure, famine, malnutrition, and piracy are among the consequences of the country’s ongoing civil war. Radical Islam has found a refuge in Somalia and a massive exodus of people fleeing to neighboring countries presents a regional humanitarian disaster.

Constitutional Provision: The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Charter does not specifically protect religious practice, but Article 71 states that the 1960 Somalia Constitution still applies “in respect of all matters not covered and not inconsistent with this Charter.” The 1960 Somalia Constitution states in Article 29, “Every person has the right to freedom of conscience and to freely profess his own religion and to worship it subject to any limitations which may be prescribed by law for the purpose of safeguarding morals, public health, [and] order.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Though the Transitional Federal Government provides for religious freedom, it is limited in extent and practice. The TFG established Islam as the national religion and, in the northern region of Somaliland, Islam is also declared as the official religion. In the northern region of Puntland, security forces closely monitor religious activities and proselytism of non-Muslims is expressly prohibited. Elsewhere in the country, proselytism is disallowed by informal social consensus. Christian-based international relief organizations generally operate freely, although they are not allowed to proselytize. Moreover, there is report of significant interference from al-Shabaab considered a terrorist organization. Religious groups are required to obtain approved entry visas and are prohibited from practicing certain doctrines. Religious practices outside Islam by ethnic Somalis are not accepted by the
culture. The TFG does not enforce legal protection of religious freedom. This is partly because the central government exercises limited control over a small area, while the majority of the country is under the control of extremist militias.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** The country is almost entirely Muslim, but there are reports of tensions within the Muslim community as well as with other minority groups. Non-Sunni Muslims are viewed with suspicion by the Sunni majority. Non-Muslims who openly practice their religious beliefs face harassment and rejection. Conversion from Islam is not legally prohibited, but is seen as unacceptable by the society. Al-Shabaab administration officials use Shari’ a as a tool for authoritarian control. Violence is escalating against practicing and suspected Christians. On July 27, 2009, four Christians were kidnapped in the coastal town of Merca, 56 miles from the capital, Mogadishu. On August 4, an unidentified junior al-Shabaab militant notified the families of the victims that the four Christians had been beheaded for apostasy. On May 5, 2009, al-Shabaab destroyed 10 graves in Kansuma, Lower Juba. On April 16, 2009, al-Shabaab destroyed close to 100 ancient graves in Kismayo and, on the same day, al-Shabaab forces in Baidoa arrested 25 youth for walking in town during prayer times. On April 15, 2009, the al-Shabaab administration decreed that all businesses must close during times of prayer or owners would face five days of detention. The same decree required women to be fully veiled in public or risk 12 hours of detention. On March 19, 2009, al-Shabaab beheaded two clerics from ASWJ in Balad, Middle Shabelle. On August 18, 2009, al-Shabaab fighters in the Bulahawa area shot 41-year-old Ahmed Matan. They also hunted down Muslim converts to Christianity and, on August 24, one person died.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:** There are no reported Seventh-day Adventist members or churches in Somalia.
SOUTH AFRICA

Population: 50,492,408
Seventh-day Adventists: 122,231
Religious Groups: Christian 75% (Protestant 15.21%, Methodist 6.8%, Catholic 6%, Anglican 3%), Muslim 1.73%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Despite being the richest and most industrialized nation on the continent, South Africa faces enormous challenges, including poverty, a high crime rate, and a high HIV/AIDS rate. Violence against women and girls continues to mar the country’s human rights record. Also, prison conditions are notoriously inhumane.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter 2, Section 15: “Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. The government allows religious freedom for all faiths. Christianity is the majority religion in South Africa, but the law does not recognize a state religion. The government recognizes Christian holidays and provides for Christian teaching in public schools. Members of other religions may observe their own religious holidays and are exempted from participating in Christian teaching in the classroom.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious. Many ecumenical contacts take place among the denominations, the largest being the South African Council of Churches. The major traditional indigenous religions, along with most Afrikaans-language churches, have their own coordinating contacts. In January 2009, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fatima Hajaig, remarked at a public rally that the United States and other western countries were “in the hands of Jewish money.” The South African Jewish Board of Deputies lodged a formal complaint of anti-Semitic hate speech with the South African Human Rights Commission. Ms Hajaig...
apologized for any pain caused and repudiated racism, but did not retract her remarks. Press sources reported she was summoned by the President and urged to withdraw her comments.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 934 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, five high schools, 22 nursing homes, one publishing house, and a Bible correspondence school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely. The church’s religious liberty department is active in building bridges with the government, civil society, and other faith groups.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: It is reported that some church members were denied religious freedom either by government employment structures, government or private schools, or private companies. The church’s religious liberty department intervenes when such situations arise. In February 2006, two government employees in Cape Town requested that the church write letters to their employer asking that they be exempted from working on Sabbath. The requests were granted following the church’s intervention.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely although there are isolated cases of intimidation where other religious groups disrupt evangelistic meetings for fear of losing their members.

SPAIN

Population: 46,292,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 16,000
Religious Groups: Catholic approximately 75%, Protestant and Muslim also have a significant presence (Estimates vary widely because Spanish law prohibits the collection of census data based on religious belief.)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Human rights issues include political corruption, police responses and treatment of Islamist and Basque terrorists, arbitrary
detentions, torture, and poor treatment of asylum-seekers and migrants held in extra territorial detention centers.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution provides for religious freedom in Article 16: “(1) Freedom of ideology, religion, individuals and communities is guaranteed without any limitation in their demonstrations other than that which is necessary for the maintenance of public order protected by law. (2) No one may be obliged to make a declaration on his ideology, religion, or beliefs. (3) No religion shall have a state character. The public powers shall take into account the religious beliefs of Spanish society and maintain the appropriate relations of cooperation, with the Catholic Church and other denominations.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally respects religious freedom in practice. There continue to be concerns that Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Buddhists do not have cooperation agreements with the government, which would afford them the same benefits and privileges as other groups with “deeply rooted status.” Groups are required to register with the government, though in practice unregistered groups are allowed to operate freely, but without certain privileges. In general, the government places no legal restrictions on opening new places of worship; however, representatives of minority religious groups sometimes have difficulty opening places of worship, most frequently because of resistance from neighborhood groups.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious, although there are ongoing tensions surrounding the increase in the country’s immigrant population and the spread of Islam.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 108 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school, one seminary, a health-food factory, a retirement home, a publishing house, a radio station, and a Bible correspondence school. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely. Church officials have good relations with state authorities and are signatories to the agreement between the state and Protestant entities.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees. The 1992 government accord with the Federation of Protestant Entities also accommodates Seventh-day Adventists who celebrate Saturday as the Sabbath by giving them Friday afternoon off from work, with pay.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

SRI LANKA

Population: 20,900,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 3,837
Religious Groups: Buddhist 70%, Hindu 15%, Christian 8%, Muslim 7%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The civil war between government forces and the Tamil Tigers resulted in the loss of thousands of civilian lives and many forced disappearances. However, there are signs that Sri Lanka is now beginning to overcome its negative reputation among the international community and may be on a path to greater protection of human rights. The recovery of tourism, which has increased by 33%, is a clear sign of overall improvement. The country’s trade deficit has risen to 93%, which constitutes a challenge, but the influx of funds from Sri Lankans working outside the country has somewhat reduced the impact of this shortfall. Moreover, the prospect of foreign investment in infrastructure, especially by China, will most likely boost the economy in the near future.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter II, Article 9: “The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana, while assuring to all religions the rights granted by Articles 10 and 14 (1) (e).” Chapter III, Article 10 states: “Every person is entitled to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including the freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.” Chapter III, Article 14 (1) (e) continues:
“Every citizen is entitled to the freedom, either by himself or in association with others, and either in public or in private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching.”

State Attitudes and Actions: During the course of the 26-year civil war between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), all religious groups faced difficulties. The war, which ended in May 2009, claimed at least 100,000 lives. The constitution endorses religious freedom, while at the same time promoting Buddhism. Evangelical Christian groups encounter difficulties with registration. The government has committed to dealing with religiously motivated violence. However, Christians tend to believe that the authorities give tacit approval to some of the perpetrators of violence.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Buddhist fanaticism is the main source of religious violence. The All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (ACBC) has campaigned against what it calls “unethical conversions” of Christian groups converting Buddhists. The Jathika Hela Urumaya Party (JHU) introduced a bill before parliament in 2004 seeking the criminalization of “unethical conversions.” Portions of the bill are considered unconstitutional and it has not been passed. However, the JHU intends to reintroduce it in 2010. In recent years, there were numerous attacks upon Christian churches, pastors, and members.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 36 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates three schools, one hospital, and one publishing house.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Adventists experience continual difficulties in obtaining work or attending school due to their Sabbath observance.

Freedom to Evangelize: Evangelism is very difficult in the context of Buddhist fanaticism and strong anti-Christian sentiment.
SUDAN

Population: 34,206,710
Seventh-day Adventists: 1,948
Religious Groups: Muslim 61%, Christian 26%, indigenous beliefs 11%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Sudan is Africa’s largest country with the most diverse population. The humanitarian disaster this country continues to experience is bewildering. War, genocide, and famine have claimed more than two million lives and seven million people have been displaced. In spite of considerable natural resources, poverty is widespread. The International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague has accused the current Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir, of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. Though the ICC issued a warrant for his arrest in March 2009, he has not yet been detained.

Constitutional Provision: The 2005 Interim National Constitution (INC) provides for freedom of religion throughout the country. However, part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement resulted in regional distinctions in the INC and vast disparities in the treatment of religious minorities in the north and south. The INC declares Shari’a Islamic law for the north, while the constitution of Southern Sudan is established on the traditional laws, religious beliefs, and customary practices of the people.

State Attitudes and Actions: The government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) generally respects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution of Southern Sudan for the ten states of the south, whereas the Government of National Unity (GNU) continues to place severe restrictions on Christians in the north. It should be noted that the ongoing conflict in Darfur between government-supported Arab Muslim militias (janjaweed) and non-Arab Muslim rebels does not appear to be based primarily on religious differences, but on political, economic, and ethnic issues. Religious groups are required to register with the government according to the March 2006 Organization of Humanitarian and Voluntary Work Act. However, this requirement is not generally enforced, and some Christian groups that are registered still pay taxes. Many
Christian groups refuse to register for fear of government interference. Religious groups are required to obtain building permits from the government before constructing houses of worship. Sudan has historically discriminated against Christian groups requesting permits. Since July 2005, three new permits were issued to Christian groups in the northern state of Khartoum, the first since 1975. Christian leaders continue to believe that the government discriminates against them by denying their requests for building permits. Many southern Christians living in the north suffer from all types of discrimination—in school, in society, and on the job. This may have been one of the reasons for the mass exodus of returnees prior to the GOSS referendum.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Past and current government policies that favor certain religious groups to the detriment of others have undermined an atmosphere of religious tolerance by society at large. Tensions remain. Muslims who want to convert to Christianity face extreme social pressure to remain Muslim. Muslim converts to Christianity are generally regarded as social outcasts and sometimes are forced to leave the country. Social pressure remains for all women in the north to wear headscarves in public, though it has decreased somewhat from past years.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: The church operates one vocational training academy and a Bible correspondence school.

Sabbath keeping for Students and Employees: Converts to the Seventh-day Adventist Church experience the same discrimination and abuse faced by any Muslim converting to Christianity.

Freedom to Evangelize: The church faces tremendous challenges to evangelize due to the fate of the converts to Christianity.
SOUTH SUDAN

Population: 10,625,176
Seventh-day Adventists: Unknown
Religious Groups: Animist, Christian

Perspectives on Current Issues: The birth of a nation is a momentous event in its history. A constitution is framed, resources assessed, and policies carefully crafted. In such times, as the people of South Sudan chose of self-determination and self-governance, we hope that the leaders and lawmakers of the nation of South Sudan set a course that would contribute to promote freedom, justice and wellbeing for all its citizens and the foreigners that dwell in their midst. We also hope as this newly formed country join the fellowship of nations, that human rights as delineated by The United Nations be secured for all the inhabitants of your newly formed country. IRLA also hopes that peace will come the way of people who have know wars and unspeakable abuses during most of their lifetime. The challenges are daunting as the conflict north and south is not completely over.

Constitutional Provision: The Constitution was adopted by the South Sudan Legislative Assembly and came into force on July 9, 2011. It clearly states the separation of religion and state and guarantees that all religions shall be treated equally and specified that religion or religious beliefs shall not be used for divisive purposes.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Freedom to Evangelize: The church is allowed to evangelize freely in South Sudan.
SURINAME

Population: 529,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 4,423
Religious Groups: Hindu 27.4%, Protestant 25.2% (predominantly Moravian), Catholic 22.8%, Muslim 19.6%, indigenous beliefs 5%

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter V, Article 18: “Everyone has the right of freedom of religion and philosophy of life.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects and protects freedom of conscience for its citizens. The government does not have any requirements for recognition or registration of religious organizations. There are no restrictions on missionaries entering the country. Schools usually offer religious instruction for a variety of faiths, but no student is compelled to attend. Parents are not permitted to home school their children, but they may enroll them in private schools with religious affiliation.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Members of various religious groups have amicable relationships with one another. There have been no reports of strife or violence.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 15 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Visits: In January 2009, Dr John Graz participated in a training seminar organized by the Caribbean Religious Liberty Association.
SWAZILAND

Population: 1,203,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 5,745
Religious Groups: Protestant 20%, Catholic 5%, Muslim 1%, other 38% (includes Anglican, Baha’i, Methodist, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Jewish)

Perspectives on Current Issues: The greatest human rights concerns for this country are poverty and inadequate healthcare. Life expectancy is 41 years. It is reported that 25% of the population is HIV positive and one-third of the children are orphans. Violence against women is reportedly widespread.

Constitutional Provision: The 2006 constitution states in Article 23 that a person has the right to “freedom of thought, conscience or religion.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. There is no law requiring religious groups to register with the government, but new groups are expected to do so upon organizing. Government approval is required for construction of religious buildings in urban areas, but no groups have been restricted from building places of worship. Some non-Christian groups complain of minor delays in obtaining permits due to the slow bureaucratic process. Religious instruction that is primarily Christian is allowed in public schools. The only organized religious youth clubs officially permitted in schools are Christian, although this is not enforced in practice. Government owned television and radio stations do not allow non-Christian groups to broadcast messages. The monarchy supports many Christian events, and it is common practice for the royal family to attend various Christian programs.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious and there are no significant tensions. Five different religious groups peacefully coexist with adjoining properties in Mbabane.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:
Institutional Freedom: There are 20 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school and one clinic. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

SWEDEN

Population: 9,447,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 2,766
Religious Groups: Lutheran 87%, Muslim 5%, other 8% (Catholic, Pentecostal, Orthodox, Baptist, Jewish, Buddhist)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Sweden ranks third out of 142 countries, according to the 2011-2012 Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum, just behind Switzerland and Singapore. The UN has criticized Sweden’s refusal to accept Eritrean asylum-seekers.

Constitutional Provision: Article 1 of the constitution states: “Every citizen shall be guaranteed … freedom of worship: that is, the freedom to practice one’s religion alone or in the company of others.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice. Recognition or registration is not required to carry out religious activity.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are some reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Citizens are generally tolerant of diverse religious practices. However, anti-Semitism exists, and Muslims are subject to hate crimes and discrimination. Some resident Muslims maintain anti-Semitic views.
The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 37 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a junior college, a food factory, and a publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

SWITZERLAND

Population: 7,904,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 4,357
Religious Groups: Catholic 42%, Protestant 33%, Muslim 4.3%, other 5.4%, none 11%

Perspectives on Current Issues: More than 22% of the people living in Switzerland are foreign-born. The diversity of population has increased because of the international agencies located in Switzerland. However, the UN, whose human rights branch is located in Geneva, has criticized the country for failing to concretely combat racism and xenophobia.

Constitutional Provision: Article 15 of the constitution states: “(1) The freedom of faith and conscience is guaranteed. (2) Every person has the right to freely choose his or her religion or non-denominational belief and to profess them alone or in community with others. (3) Every person has the right to join or belong to a religious community and to receive religious education. (4) No person may be forced to join a religious community, to conduct a religious act or participate in religious education.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects religious freedom in practice.
Private Attitudes and Actions: There are isolated reports of societal abuse and discrimination, but whether these instances are based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, or rather on ethnicity and culture is difficult to determine. There are some incidents of vandalism against Jews and Muslims. On the night of January 11, 2009, unknown persons destroyed the front window of a Jewish study center in Geneva. From November 1-9, 2008, religious communities in approximately 40 cities across the country joined together to celebrate a Week of Religions under the motto “Getting to Know Each Other” as a way of fostering interfaith harmony.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 51 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one school, a retirement home, and a publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is registered and recognized by the Swiss government.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely, but church leaders report occasional problems with local authorities in finding places for public meetings.

SYRIA

Population: 20,446,609
Seventh-day Adventists: Unknown
Religious Groups: Sunni Muslim 74%, other Muslim 16% (Alawite, Druze), Christian 10%, Jewish (a few tiny communities)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Syria is currently drawing international attention for its egregious violations of various human rights. The government’s efforts to put down protests against injustices perpetrated by the regime have resulted in the detention of hundreds of political prisoners and the deaths of thousands of civilians. Allegations of torture are widespread and these claims
are being investigated and documented by human rights organizations. Despite the deployment of UN military observers tasked with monitoring the fragile ceasefire, the violence in Syria continues. Discrimination, persecution, and torture of the Kurdish minority pre-date the current clashes and contribute to the country’s overall poor human rights record. The economy is on the verge of collapse, according to the current president. The EU has imposed an embargo on the delivery of oil and a ban on the export of equipment destined for the gas industry. Income from tourism has dropped by 90%.

**Constitutional Provision:** Articles 3 and 35 of the constitution state: “Article 3. (1) The religion of the President of the Republic has to be Islam. (2) Islamic jurisprudence is a main source of legislation… . Article 35: (1) The freedom of faith is guaranteed. The state respects all religions. (2) The state guarantees the freedom to hold any religious rites, provided they do not disturb the public order.”

**State Attitudes and Actions: There is limited** religious freedom in Syria. Many Christian organizations exist in this quasi-Islamic state, but these groups generally have to operate discreetly. The government aggressively prosecutes persons for their alleged membership in the Muslim Brotherhood or Salafist movements and continues to outlaw the Jehovah’s Witnesses. The government monitors the activities of all groups, including religious groups, and discourages proselytizing, which it deems a threat to relations among religious groups.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are occasional reports of minor tensions between religious groups, mainly attributable to economic rivalries rather than religious affiliation. Social conventions and religious proscriptions make conversion relatively rare, especially Muslim-to-Christian conversion, which is technically illegal.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are no official Seventh-day Adventist churches in Syria.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Unknown.
Freedom to Evangelize: There are no laws against proselytizing, but it is frowned upon by society and the government will arrest anyone who disturbs society through evangelism.

TAIWAN

Population: 23,176,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 6,111
Religious Groups: Mixture of Buddhist and Taoist 80%, traditional Chinese religions 5%, Christian 4.5%

Perspectives on Current Issues: The status of Taiwan vis-à-vis China is still under debate, the question being whether Taiwan is a Chinese province or an independent state. Human rights advocates lament corruption among the island’s leaders and freedoms of assembly and political demonstration are not fully honored.

Constitutional Provision: Article 13 of the constitution states: “The people shall have freedom of religious belief.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The people of Taiwan are deeply religious. The government allows the free exercise of religion and there are no registration requirements. However, registered religious groups receive tax-exempt status, whereas unregistered ones do not. Religious instruction, either in public or private schools, cannot be compulsory. Elective courses in religion may be offered at a government-accredited high school if such courses do not promote one particular religious belief over another.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Members of most faiths exist peaceably with one another and have few problems. Many people are adherents of more than one religion. Large interfaith organizations promote tolerance and dialogue.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:
Institutional Freedom: There are 54 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, two schools, and one hospital. These institutions are allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is officially recognized and enjoys tax-exempt status.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Adventists encounter Sabbath problems at school since they are required to attend classes on Sabbath. Military service is a requirement and there are no provisions for Sabbath-keepers or non-combatants.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is allowed to evangelize freely.

TAJIKISTAN

Population: 7,500,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 695
Religious Groups: Sunni Muslim 85%, Shia Muslim 5%, other 10% (2003 est)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Tajikistan is considered one of the poorest countries in the former Soviet Union. Forty percent of the GDP comes from Tajiks who work in Russia. Its dependence on natural resources from neighboring countries makes it vulnerable and unstable. Russia has reached an agreement to extend its military presence (6,000 persons, the most outside Russia) until 2062, concerned, some analysts say, about the traffic of heroin and the expansion of the Islamists out of Afghanistan. The issue of violence against women clouds its human rights record.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Chapter II, Article 26: “Each person has the right independently to determine her or his religious preference, to practice any religion alone or in association with others or to practice no religion, and to participate in the performance of religious cults, rituals, and ceremonies.”
State Attitudes and Actions: The state promotes secularism and as a result there is tight control over religious matters. A law passed in 2009, the “Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations,” has expanded the controls exercised by the state over religious affairs. This law has made things especially difficult for the majority Muslim population. There are size limitations on mosques. Imams and Imam-Khatibs are appointed by state bodies, thus reducing their independence. Imams are also subject to state administered tests of their knowledge of Islamic principles. Those who are not successful in the tests are removed. Jehovah’s Witnesses and two Evangelical groups have been banned. Restrictions are placed upon the importation of religious literature.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of strife or violence among religious groups in Tajikistan. Some Islamic leaders view religious minority groups as a threat to national unity.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is recognized as a legitimate religious organization.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Adventists, a religious minority in a Muslim nation, experience difficulties in obtaining work or attending school due to their Sabbath observance.

Freedom to Evangelize: Government policies restrict freedom to evangelize.

TANZANIA

Population: 46,218,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 415,149
Religious Groups: Christian 54%, Muslim 31%, indigenous beliefs 13%. Zanzibar: Muslim 99%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Until recently, Tanzania was considered an “island of peace” in the midst of a troubled region and it shelters more than one million refugees. The growing number of people affected by the HIV/AIDS
virus is staggering: 1.7 million infected and one million children orphaned as a result of this tragedy. Radical Islamists are responsible for recent violence against Christians on the predominantly Muslim island of Zanzibar. The rights of women are widely violated, with domestic violence and female genital mutilation highly prevalent. There are also reports of restrictions of freedom of expression, especially in reference to the media.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 19: “Every person has the right to the freedom of thought or conscience, belief or faith, and choice in matters of religion, including the freedom to change his religion or faith.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. There is no state religion. Religious groups are required to register. State law governs all civil and criminal cases, but Muslims may opt to have Islamic law decide cases involving civil conflict. Some Muslims consider it inappropriate for Christian judges to administer Islamic law for civil cases. Muslims continue to feel Christians have great control in government. The perception by Christians is that three former presidents (two Christian and one Muslim) maintained a balance between Christians and Muslims in high-level posts, whereas the current president has appointed a disproportionate number of Muslims. All religious organizations are barred from involvement in politics. Some Christian pastors complain that it is difficult to get permits for outdoor rallies because most local government leaders in Dar es Salaam are Muslim. To promote religious tolerance, President Kikwete and other Muslim government leaders participate in various Christian events, including international events sponsored by NGOs. The President of Zanzibar also supports interfaith initiatives.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious in rural areas; however, tensions persist in urban centers because some Muslim and Christian groups believe the government favors the other faith community. There are a few reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Some tensions between Muslims and Christians persist. The ritual killing of albinos is an unfortunate
on-going problem in Tanzania. On March 14, 2009, Christian, Muslim, and Hindu leaders issued a joint statement supporting government efforts against the killings of persons with albinism for their body parts, promising to work together and with the government to end the practice.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 1,993 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, two high schools, a Bible correspondence school, one hospital, 36 clinics and dispensaries, and a publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

THAILAND

Population: 69,519,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 13,796
Religious Groups: Buddhist 94%, Muslim 5%, Christian and other 1% (2000 census)

Perspectives on Current Issues: The flooding of September 2011, the worst in half a century, impacted even the industrial heart of the kingdom. Two-thirds of the population lives in rural areas. Five million people live below the poverty line. Political instability has reportedly triggered arbitrary detentions and restrictions on freedom of expression, association, and assembly. Human trafficking and sex tourism are a scourge.

Constitutional Provision: Section 37 of the constitution states: “A person shall enjoy full liberty to profess a religion, a religious denomination or creed, and observe religious precepts or commandments or exercise a form of worship in accordance with his belief; provided that it is not contrary to his civic duties,
public order or good morals.” “In exercising the liberty referred to in paragraph one, a person shall be protected from any act of the State, which is derogatory to his rights or detrimental to his due benefits on the grounds of professing a religion, a religious denomination or creed or observing religious precepts or commandments or exercising a form of worship in accordance with his different belief from that of others.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The government generally respects the exercise of religious freedom. The constitution stipulates that the monarch should be Buddhist and Buddhism is constitutionally protected. Missionaries are free to enter the country and evangelize, but there is a limit to the number of missionaries permitted in the country at any given time. Despite this, there are missionaries, who are not recognized as such, operating freely in the country. The constitution restrictions religious speech that offends or insults Buddhism or any other recognized religion.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** For the most part, members of differing faiths live peacefully. In the deep southern region, Muslim-on-Muslim violence has been aggressive and frequent. There are also reports of violence involving Muslims and Buddhists. On June 8, 2009, a group of about six armed persons raided a mosque, killing 11 people, including the Imam, in the process. A series of reprisal attacks resulted from this incident and tensions still exist between Buddhists and Muslims in this region. These violent acts have made it difficult for individuals to experience full religious freedom. In response to numerous violent attacks, the government has deployed police and military officers to protect monks and Buddhist temples in the far south.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 45 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, three schools, three hospitals, a publishing house, and one food factory.

**Government Recognition:** The government recognizes the Adventist presence in Thailand.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely. However, in the southern regions of Thailand, which are dominated by Muslim separatists, evangelism can lead to persecution and death. The government offers little protection for Adventists trying to witness there.

TIMOR-LESTE

Population: 1,186,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 459
Religious Groups: Catholic 98%, Muslim 1%, Protestant 1% (2005 data)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Timor-Leste is one of the poorest nations in the world, ranking 147th of 187 countries, though petroleum resources present the potential for a better economic future. Political instability has slowed its recovery from the extensive destruction, which occurred during the years-long conflict with Indonesian forces and Timorese militia groups. Timor-Leste is celebrating its 10th year of independence.

Constitutional Provision: Section 45 of the constitution states: “(1) Every person is guaranteed the freedom of conscience, religion and worship and the religious denominations are separated from the State. (2) No one shall be persecuted or discriminated against on the basis of his or her religious convictions. (3) The right to be a conscientious objector shall be guaranteed in accordance with the law. (4) Freedom to teach any religion in the framework of the respective religious denomination is guaranteed.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The Timor-Leste government generally allows religious freedom. Though the state has no established church, the Catholic Church has a major influence on state affairs. Since 2007, an authority was set up for the purpose of registering religious organizations.
Private Attitudes and Actions: Within the capital, Dili, various religious groups generally maintain amicable relationships. Outside of the capital, the picture changes dramatically and there have been at least four reports of religious discrimination and violence against non-Catholics. All four incidents involved Catholics attempting to force Protestants out of the country. A few Adventist children have faced discrimination in the public schools for not attending classes on Saturday.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There is one Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Unknown.

Visits: Dr John Graz, Lincoln Steed, and Dr Jonathan Catolico visited Timor-Leste on February 28-March 3, 2010. They met the president and other government officials, religious leaders, and the European Union Ambassador. In 2011, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty staff from the Seventh-day Adventist world headquarters visited both the Timorese ambassador to the UN in New York and the Timorese ambassador to the United States in Washington DC.

TOGO

Population: 5,847,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 5,343
Religious Groups: Indigenous beliefs 51%, Christian 29%, Muslim 20%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Restrictions on freedom of expression, especially when in opposition to the present regime, have been reported. The illegal trade of child laborers is estimated at 300,000. A major case of arbitrary detention of a Seventh-day Adventist pastor is currently under way. After repeated appeals to liberate Pastor Monteiro due to lack of justification for his incarceration, the judicial system has not yet granted him freedom. There is suspicion of a plot to use the pastor as a scapegoat for criminal activities of officials working for the Togolese political and or judicial system.
**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Article 25: “Every person shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, worship, opinion and expression.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The constitution does not allow any political party to identify itself with a religion. Religious groups are generally free to operate if they refrain from political activities. No other laws specifically restrict religious freedom. Three main religious groups are recognized as state religions: Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam. Other groups are required to register as associations, and such recognition affords a group the same recognition as the official religions. Religion classes are not part of the curriculum at public schools. Private religious schools are common and do not receive funding from the government. Unlike previous reporting periods, the government did not reject the applications of any religious groups.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between religious groups are generally harmonious and there are no significant tensions. The Christian Council works to address issues common among Protestant denominations, including Seventh-day Adventists.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 40 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a radio-TV production center. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
TONGA

Population: 104,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 2,613
Religious Groups: Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga 37.3%, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 16.8%, Free Church of Tonga 15.6%, Catholic 11.3%, other Christian 14%, other faiths 4%, unspecified 1%

Perspectives on Current Issues: This geographically isolated nation fell victim to both tsunamis and a drought in 2009, disasters from which it is still recovering. The financial support of expatriates, especially those living in the United States, represents 30% of the GDP.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution, in Part I, paragraph 5, states: “All men are free to practice their religion and to worship God as they may deem fit in accordance with the dictates of their own consciences and to assemble for religious service in such places as they may appoint. But it shall not be lawful to use this freedom to commit evil and licentious acts or under the name of worship to do what is contrary to the law and peace of the land.” In paragraph 6, the constitution requires that the “The Sabbath Day shall be kept holy in Tonga and no person shall practice his trade or profession or conduct any commercial undertaking on the Sabbath Day except according to law; and any agreement made or witnessed on that day shall be null and void and of no legal effect.” The “Sabbath Day” is here understood to be Sunday.

State Attitudes and Actions: Tongans enjoy religious freedom for the most part. There is no state religion, neither is there any registration requirement. However, religious groups receive tax-exempt status when they register. The state-owned Tonga Broadcasting Commission strictly regulates the contents of religious broadcasts. No preaching on Radio Tonga or TV Tonga may be outside of the limits of mainstream Christianity.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of religious strife or tension among the various religious groups in Tonga.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:
Institutional Freedom: There are 12 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is recognized as a legitimate Christian denomination.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely. However, there are reports that in some smaller communities local leaders have tried to prevent Adventist evangelistic efforts. This is the exception and not the rule.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Population: 1,325,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 63,427
Religious Groups: Catholic 26%, Hindu 22.5%, Anglican 7.8%, Baptist 7.2%, Pentecostal 6.8%, Muslim 5.8%, other Christian 9.8%, other 10.8%, unspecified 1.4%, none 1.9% (2000 census)

Constitutional Provision: Chapter 1, Part I, Article 4 (h) of the constitution states: “It is hereby recognized and declared that in Trinidad and Tobago there have existed and shall continue to exist, without discrimination by reason of race, origin, color, religion or sex, the following fundamental human rights and freedoms, namely: (h) The freedom of conscience and religious belief and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally respects and protects freedom of conscience for its citizens. Religious organizations may operate as business entities without registering with the state; however, in order to receive tax-exempt status or to perform marriages, religious groups must register. The state subsidizes religiously affiliated schools and permits religious instruction
in public schools. Attendance at these classes is voluntary, and no religious group has a monopoly on religious instruction. Home schooling is not allowed, since the Education Act mandates formal schooling for all children. Like other secular nations, Trinidad and Tobago have a law that prohibits offending or insulting another person in relation to race, origin, or religion. This law also provides for prosecution of those desecrating a place of worship. The government limits the number of missionaries per religious group to 30 at any given time. The law which prohibits offending others could effectively cap evangelism by restricting religious free speech.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Members of various religious communities have amicable relationships with one another. However, in January 2009, a student at a Catholic school was suspended due to her Rastafarian hairstyle. Her attorney argued that the school was denying her constitutional right to education based upon her hairstyle. She was then allowed to reenter school on the provision that her hair is kept “neat and tidy.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 146 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one hospital, two clinics, one university, four schools, and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a recognized denomination.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
TUNISIA

Population: 10,549,100
Seventh-day Adventists: 28
Religious Groups: Muslim 98%, Christian 1%, Jewish and other 1%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Initiators of a popular movement that came to be known as the Arab Spring, Tunisians have indeed changed their political landscape. However, their economic situation has plunged to a worrisome level. Unemployment has risen to 18%. Since the revolution, tourism has decreased by 40%. Tunisia is the fifth largest purveyor of phosphate and derives a significant amount of funding from its sale, but production has been adversely affected by the recent social upheaval. The country’s pre-revolution human rights record was troubling: arbitrary detention of people suspected of terrorist ties and lack of freedom of expression, of press, and of religion.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 5: “The Tunisian Republic guarantees the inviolability of the human person and freedom of conscience, and protects the free exercise of beliefs, with the reservation that they do not disturb the public order.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government prohibits efforts to proselytize Muslims; it also restricts the wearing of “sectarian dress,” including the hijab (Islamic headscarf). Domestic and international human rights organizations report instances of police harassment of women wearing the hijab and men with traditional Islamic dress and beards. The government sponsored a number of conferences to promote religious tolerance. The world is watching the future of Tunisia with the ascendency of the Islamists.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most religious organizations have amicable relationships and tolerate one another. Although religious conversion is legal, there is great societal pressure against the conversion of Muslims to other religions. Muslims who convert face social ostracism. Some cartoons depict derogatory caricatures of Jews.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:
Institutional Freedom: There is one Seventh-day Adventist church.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Unknown.

Freedom to Evangelize: Evangelism of Muslims is illegal.

TURKEY

Population: 74,000,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 94
Religious Groups: Muslim 99.8% (mostly Sunni), other 0.2% (mostly Christian and Jewish)

Perspectives on Current Issues: Turkey’s human rights record is seen as a stumbling block to its acceptance into the EU. The ongoing conflict with the Kurdish community, reported restriction to freedom of expression, violence against women, and allegations of torture are all areas of concern. Military service is compulsory, with no exemptions for conscientious objectors.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Part II, Chapter 1, Article 24, “(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religious belief and conviction. (5) No one shall be allowed to exploit or abuse religion or religious feelings, or things held sacred by religion, in any manner whatsoever, for the purpose of personal or political influence, or for even partially basing the fundamental, social, economic, political, and legal order of the state on religious tenets.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The constitution provides a measure of religious freedom. The government, through its adoption of a secular state policy, has sought to respect this right. In maintaining this secular state ideology, the state continues to impose restrictions upon the religious expression of Muslim and non-Muslim groups.

Private Attitudes and Actions: There are reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Threats against non-Muslims have created an atmosphere of pressure and diminished freedom for some non-Muslim communities. Religious pluralism is widely viewed as
a threat to Islam and to national unity. Muslims, Christians, Jews, members of the Baha’i faith, and participants in other religious groups face societal suspicion and mistrust.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are two Seventh-day Adventist churches.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** As a religious minority in a Muslim nation, Adventists have found Sabbath-keeping a continual hindrance in obtaining work or attending school.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Adventists may only worship publicly in a few buildings; consequently, most worship is done in private homes for fear of reprisal. Only in private settings can evangelism be safely practiced. In some cases, those suspected of being Christian missionaries have been prosecuted and punished.

**TURKMENISTAN**

**Population:** 5,105,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 97  
**Religious Groups:** Muslim 89%, Russian Orthodox 9%, unknown 2%

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Exports of petroleum and natural gas have boosted the economy and brought about a growth of 9.9%. Intimidation of political opponents is said to occur. Restrictions of freedom of religion, of expression, and of assembly are documented. Reports of prisoners being deprived of their rights and the persecution and imprisonment of conscientious objectors have drawn international criticism.

**Constitutional Provision:** Section 1, Article 11 of the constitution states: “The Government guarantees freedom of religion and faith and the equality of religions and faiths before the law. Religious organizations are separate from the Government, and may not perform Governmental functions. The Governmental system of education is separate from religious organizations and is secular in nature. Everyone has the right independently to determine her
or his own religious preference, to practice any religion alone or in association with others, to practice no religion, to express and disseminate beliefs related to religious preference, and to participate in the performance of religious cults, rituals, and ceremonies.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Although there is no state religion, Sunni Islam receives special favors, including financial support to build mosques and payment of the salaries of clerics. The state approves the appointment of senior clerics. Minority religious groups experience some difficulty regarding registration, which is essential for them to operate legally. They also experience difficulty in procuring places of worship due to government restrictions. It is illegal to publish religious literature and import of such material is strictly controlled.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are no reports of religious strife between religious groups. Leaving the religious tradition, into which one was born, especially if Islamic, can result in ostracism. There is a general distrust of foreign religious influences.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There is one Seventh-day Adventist church.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** For Adventists, who are a religious minority in a predominately Muslim nation, Sabbath-keeping makes it difficult to find work or attend school.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Evangelism is greatly restricted by government policies.
TUVALU

Population: 11,000

Seventh-day Adventists: 139

Religious Groups: Church of Tuvalu (Congregationalist) 91%, Baha’i 3%, Jehovah’s Witness 2%, Catholic 1%, other 3%

Constitutional Provision: Chapter II, Article 23, of the constitution states:
(1) “Except with his consent no-one shall be hindered in the exercise of his freedom of belief. (2) Freedom of belief includes (a) freedom of thought, religion and belief; and (2) freedom to change religion or belief; and (c) freedom, either alone or with others, to show and to spread, both in public and in private, a religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Even though the Church of Tuvalu is the official state religion, the nation generally respects religious freedom. Churches of 50 members or more must register with the state. Failing to register could result in prosecution.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Although churches in Tuvalu have friendly relationships, there have been some acts of discrimination directed toward members of the Brethren Church. Other non-mainstream churches have also faced societal discrimination. There is a tendency to believe that new churches and minority faiths are a threat to the nation’s traditions and culture.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There is one Seventh-day Adventist church. It is generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
UGANDA

Population: 34,543,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 218,576
Religious Groups: Christian 85% (Catholic 39%, Anglican 36%, Protestant 7%), Muslim 11%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Women are subjected to high levels of violence. It is reported that sexual minorities are persecuted and homosexuality is officially a criminal offence. The country faces challenges to absorb an important influx of refugees from DRC.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution forbids the establishment of a state religion, and further protects religious belief and practice in Article 29, which states: “(1) Every person shall have the right to … (c) freedom to practice any religion and manifest such practice, which shall include the right to belong to and participate in the practices of any religious body or organization in a manner consistent with this Constitution.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution. However, local officials restrict nighttime public gatherings in order to prevent violence and noise, which indirectly hampers the worship services of some religious groups. The government continues to monitor the activities of groups it perceived as “cults,” including the Serulanda Spiritual Foundation in Rakai District, New Heaven Church in Gulu, Rwengwara Healing Church of All Nations in Kabarole, and the Enjiri groups in Mbale and Luwero Districts. The NGO Board denied registration to the Enjiri group in Luwero and continued to defer on the Isa Messial Congregations’ registrations. The government continues to decline registration to the church, citing national security concerns. (Lukoya is the father of Alice Lakwena, the former leader of the now-defunct Holy Spirit Movement, which had launched an armed rebellion against the government.) In May 2008 the Kamwenge Magistrates’ Court dismissed the case against 11 members of the Nyangakaibo religious group who were charged with holding an illegal assembly, after the prosecution failed to provide sufficient evidence.
In April 2009 authorities in Kabarole District closed down Believers of River Jordan Church over alleged “cult” practices.

Private Attitudes and Actions: On August 24, 2008, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) hosted Vatican Bishop Chidi Isizoh and a group of Christian youth from several African countries to encourage greater religious tolerance. The UMSC held discussions with the group under the theme “Youth Formation Interfaith in Africa.” The UMSC facilitated the establishment of human rights clubs in seven Muslim schools in the central region of the country.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 833 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, one high school, one hospital, 17 clinics and dispensaries, and a publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely. However, on June 6, 2009, police in Biharwe subcounty arrested four people, including an army officer, and charged them with trespassing in connection with the demolition of a Seventh-day Adventist church in the area.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: On August 1, 2006, the Supreme Court in Kampala rejected an appeal filed in March 2005 by members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that sought a ban on weekend classes (namely, those held on Saturday) at Makerere University. The seven-member panel stated that the current policy was “rational, fair and proportional.”

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

UKRAINE

Population: 45,730,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 61,215
Religious Groups: Ukrainian Orthodox (Kyiv Patriarchate) 19%, Orthodox (no particular jurisdiction) 16%, Ukrainian Orthodox (Moscow Patriarchate)
9%, Ukrainian Greek Catholic 6%, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox 1.7%, Protestant, Jewish, none 38% (2004 estimates.)

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Human rights advocates denounce the mistreatment of refugees and asylum-seekers. Racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination are reported. Frequent reports of domestic violence are a major source of concern.

**Constitutional Provision:** The constitution states in Chapter II, Article 24: “There shall be no privileges or restrictions based on race, color of skin, political, religious and other beliefs, sex, ethnic and social origin, property status, place of residence, linguistic or other characteristics.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The constitution and the national government of Ukraine provide for the practice of religious freedom. However, the religious zeal of local officials for either Ukrainian Orthodox (Kyiv Patriarchate) or Ukrainian Orthodox (Moscow Patriarchate) has caused some problems for smaller non-traditional religions. Missionaries may only enter if they are invited by an indigenous religious group and even then they may only practice religious rites and ordinances within the religious community that extended the invitation.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There were a number of acts of violence against persons and property based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. The government continues to promote interfaith understanding. In April 2009, the Ministry of Defense and major religious groups formed the Council for Pastoral Support.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 922 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, one media center, and one publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely. However, according to Ukrainian laws, religious organizations may not establish schools.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.
Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Many Adventists have tremendous difficulties with Sabbath keeping and employment.

Freedom to Evangelize: In certain regions—Ternopol, Lvov, Donetsk—local authorities prohibit public worship in rented premises and other public places. In the above regions, as well as in the Chernigov region, local authorities do not allow evangelistic meetings in public places.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Population: 8,100,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 309
Religious Groups: Muslim 96% (Shi’a 16%), other 4% (includes Christian, Hindu)

Perspectives on Current Issues: UAE seems to have overcome its 2009 challenges that necessitated an influx of 10 billion dollars by one of its members, Abu Dhabi. There was a fiscal surplus at the end of 2011. The country is now perceived as a pole of stability in a region shaken by popular revolutions. It has diversified its economy and is investing heavily in aeronautics with the goal of becoming one of the top five manufacturers of aircraft. Migrant workers face discrimination, exploitation, and persecution. Human trafficking and forced labor have been reported. Flogging is still utilized as a form of punishment. Freedom of expression is restricted.

Constitutional Provision: Article 32 of the constitution states: “Freedom to exercise religious worship shall be guaranteed in accordance with established customs, provided that it does not conflict with public policy or violate public morals.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government follows a policy of tolerance toward non-Muslim religious groups and adherents of most major religions worship without government interference, although there are limitations. Religious groups with dedicated religious buildings may worship and conduct business. However, the government controls virtually all Sunni mosques and
restricts freedom of assembly and association, including for religious purposes. Proselytizing and publicly distributing non-Islamic religious literature are prohibited.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are no reports of societal abuses based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, although societal pressures discourage conversion from Islam to other religions and there are instances of discriminatory caricatures in the media. Anti-Semitic or religiously intolerant editorials and editorial cartoons have appeared in the English and Arabic-language electronic and print media.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are three Seventh-day Adventist churches.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Unknown.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Evangelism aimed at Muslims is forbidden.

## UNITED KINGDOM

**Population:** 67,560,000

**Seventh-day Adventists:** 32,273

**Religious Groups:** Christian 71.6% (Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist), Muslim 2.7%, Hindu 1%, other 1.6%, unspecified or none 23.1% (2001 census)

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Christianity, once the state religion, is becoming increasingly marginalized in favor of a multicultural pluralism which is accepting of practices such as astrology, New Age, the occult, and old world spiritualisms (Druid/Wicca).

**Constitutional Provision:** Many civil liberties in England trace their conceptual roots back at least to the Magna Carta of 1215 and have grown through subsequent legislation and court rulings. Important documents relating to religious freedom include the “Declaration of Indulgence,” made by King James II in 1687, which suspended all penalties for not attending the established Church
of England or not receiving communion according to its rites; and the Act of Toleration of 1689, which granted Protestant dissenters the freedom to worship according to their convictions.

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The state allows for religious freedom and protects the free exercise thereof. Once a religious organization is registered by the state it may receive funds for buildings and subsidies for teachers. The government generally respects religious freedom in practice. There has been a slight improvement in respect for the religious freedom of adherents of non-Christian beliefs. Christians continue to complain about their inability to express their faith in the workplace and the public square.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are some reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, including reports of anti-Semitism and arson. For example, on January 4, 2009, a synagogue in northwest London was attacked in an act of attempted arson. On May 5, 2009, an Islamic Centre in Bedfordshire was gutted by fire and police suspect arson. On May 24, 2009, a Catholic man was beaten to death by a group of Protestants.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 258 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one college, two schools, one hospital, and a publishing house.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Population: 311,853,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 1,067,767
Religious Groups: Protestant 51.3%, Roman Catholic 23.9%, Mormon 1.7%, other Christian 1.6%, Jewish 1.7%, Buddhist 0.7%, Muslim 0.6%, other or unspecified 2.5%, unaffiliated 12.1%, none 4% (2007 est)

Constitutional Provision: The United States Constitution in the Bill of Rights in the First Amendment provides: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Historically, the United States has been unique in its stance on religious liberty and the rights of the individual, influencing other nations to adopt more tolerant practices. However, contemporary trends in law, government, and politics could prove ultimately detrimental to this tradition of freedom. Laws such as the Patriot Act, which expands the government’s authority to monitor its citizens without oversight, and the Military Commissions Act, which arbitrarily suspends habeas corpus, are potentially harmful to all freedoms, including religious freedom.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Most religious groups have amicable relationships with one another and there are few reports of strife or violence. Some Muslims complain that they experience discrimination.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 4,950 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates six universities, three colleges, 100 schools, 27 radio stations, one media center, 41 hospitals, six healthcare corporations, 14 nursing homes and 62 bookstores. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is officially recognized.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Although Adventists have thrived under the religious freedom of the United States, statistics indicate that
every day three Seventh-day Adventists lose their jobs because of their Sabbath convictions and others find it difficult to gain employment.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

### UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

**Population:** 109,775  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 7,758  
**Religious Groups:** Baptist 42%, Catholic 34%, Episcopalian 17%, other 7%

**Constitutional Provision:** The United States Constitution governs religious liberty in the United States Virgin Islands. The First Amendment states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** The state allows for the free exercise of religion for its citizens.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Various religious groups dwell harmoniously with each other. There are no reports of strife or violence.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 13 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates two high schools. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
URUGUAY

Population: 3,369,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 7,447
Religious Groups: Catholic 66%, Protestant 2%, Jewish 1%, non-professing or other 31%

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Section I, Chapter III, Article 5: “All the religious faiths are free in Uruguay. The State does not subsidize any religion. It recognizes Catholic Church’s control of all places of worship that have been totally or partially constructed with funds of the National State Treasury, except only the chapels destined to serve as asylums, hospitals, jails or other public establishments. It declares, also, exemption of all classes from taxes of their places of worship consecrated to the faith of varying religions.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Uruguay allows for the practice of religious freedom and strives to protect it. According to the constitution, every faith may obtain tax-exempt status for their place of worship. This has generally been an easy process with little or no discrimination. The state also allows religious affiliation to be placed on identification cards. This provision has benefitted the small Muslim community as it allows for the accommodation of their Friday worship observance.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Members of various religious communities have amicable relationships with one another. There are no reports of strife or violence.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 50 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.
Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

UZBEKISTAN

Population: 28,463,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 1,237
Religious Groups: Muslim 91% (mostly Sunni), Russian Orthodox 5%, other 4%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Rich in natural resources, countries of the European Union, the United States, and other nations are eager to do business with Uzbekistan. China is already investing billions of dollars and South Korea has signed an agreement to allow access to a deposit of natural gas and permit construction of a chemical plant. However, the country has drawn considerable criticism for its poor human rights record. The list of concerns is disturbing: prevalent violence against women, restriction of religious freedom, surveillance, intimidation of NGOs, reported corruption among police and state officials, and allegations of torture. Freedom of expression, association, and assembly are severely restricted.

Constitutional Provision: Part 2, Chapter 7, Article 31 of the constitution states: “Freedom of conscience is guaranteed to all. Everyone shall have the right to profess or not to profess any religion. Any compulsory imposition of religion shall be impermissible.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The reality of conditions in Uzbekistan is inconsistent with the constitutional provision. There is constant government infringement upon religious freedoms. The Religion Law of 1998 placed restrictions upon religious rights deemed to be in conflict with national security. Proselytism has been outlawed, religion cannot be taught in public schools, religious principles cannot be taught privately, and publishing and distributing religious material requires a license. All religious communions must go through a tedious registration process in order to function legally. Minority religious groups face even greater difficulties from authorities in certain parts of the
country. Christian communities are sometimes under covert surveillance. Even among the majority Islamic population, the activities of imams are restricted and certain Muslim groups are deemed illegal.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** There are relatively harmonious relations among the various religions, but proselytism is highly frowned upon.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 12 Seventh-day Adventist churches.

**Government Recognition:** Though the Seventh-day Adventist Church is an officially recognized denomination, church members are at times harassed and subjected to persecution. The amount of religious material that may be imported is restricted. Some churches have been closed and worship services interrupted by police videotaping the parishioners—as if the people there were doing something illegal.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** For Adventists, who are a religious minority in a predominately Muslim nation, Sabbath-keeping makes it difficult to find work or attend school.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** Evangelism is severely restricted by government policies.

**VANUATU**

**Population:** 252,000

**Seventh-day Adventists:** 17,935

**Religious Groups:** Protestant 55.6% (Presbyterian 31.4%, Anglican 13.4%, Seventh-day Adventist 10.8%), Roman Catholic 13.1%, other Christian 13.8%, indigenous beliefs 5.6% (including Jon Frum cargo cult), other 9.6%, none 1%, unspecified 1.3% (1999 census)

**Perspectives on Current Issues:** Tourism and agriculture are priorities in the government’s efforts to promote economic growth. Australia and New Zealand are the main suppliers of tourists and foreign aid.
Constitutional Provision: Chapter II, Part I, Section 5, subsections 1(f) and (g), of the constitution provide for the freedom of conscience, worship, and assembly, stating: “The Republic of Vanuatu recognizes, that, subject to any restrictions imposed by law on non-citizens, all persons are entitled to the following fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual without discrimination on the grounds of race, place of origin, religious or traditional beliefs, political opinions, language or sex but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and to the legitimate public interest in defense, safety, public order, welfare and health.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government has a close relationship with the Christian community. The government subsidizes church operated schools which existed before the nation became independent in 1980. Those benefits are not extended to non-Christian run schools. Public schools have time allotted for religious instruction, but attendance is not mandatory.

Private Attitudes and Actions: In most cases, people of differing faiths have amicable relationships. In small rural communities, new churches cannot be built without the approval of the village chief and the wider community. Establishing a new church without first getting approval is looked upon as an act of disrespect and individuals associated with it are viewed with suspicion.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 58 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one high school, six clinics, and one bookstore. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Government Recognition: The government of Vanuatu recognizes the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: Local leaders in some rural communities have attempted to stifle Adventist evangelistic efforts, but for the most part the Seventh-day Adventist Church is permitted to evangelize freely.
**VENEZUELA**

**Population:** 29,278,000  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 249,777  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 90%, Protestant 9%, other 1%

**Constitutional Provision:** Title III, Chapter III, Article 59 of the constitution states: “The State guarantees the freedom of cults and religions. All persons have the right to profess their religious faith … and express their beliefs in private or in public, by teaching and other practices, provided such beliefs are not contrary to morality, good customs and public order. The autonomy and independence of religious confessions and churches is likewise guaranteed, subject only to such limitations as may derive from this Constitution and the law. Father and Mother are entitled to have their sons and daughters receive religious education in accordance with their convictions. No one shall invoke religious beliefs or discipline as a means of evading compliance with law or preventing another person from exercising his or her rights.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** Venezuela adheres to a 1964 Concordat signed with the Vatican making the Catholic Church the preeminent faith, receiving larger subsides than any other faith. However, things have been changing and the relationship between the state and the Catholic Church has become somewhat tenuous. Public funds were dispersed through The Directorate of Justice and Religion to certain denominations practicing in its realm. In June 2008 the Reformist Catholic Church of Venezuela was established and the official Catholic Church has blamed the government for using this new group to divide it and promote President Chavez’s agenda. President Chavez has, on numerous occasions, publicly criticized Catholic bishops and the Papal Nuncio in particular. He has also claimed that the Catholic Church was partially to blame for the attempted coup of 2002. President Chavez has been critical of Cardinal Urosa’s disapproval of his attempt to do away with term limits; he has accused him of abusing his position, attempting to manipulate the public and behaving like a member of the opposition. Media affiliated with the government have engaged in anti-Semitic propaganda.
Private Attitudes and Actions: There have been many reports of anti-Semitism stemming from various sectors of society. Print and electronic media have both engaged in flagrant disparagement. It is also common for synagogues to be attacked and anti-Semitic graffiti has appeared on numerous buildings. Catholic Church buildings have been graffitied as well and the largest mosque in the country was twice attacked by thieves during this reporting period. Generally speaking, other religious bodies have not been subject to as many attacks and the relationship among the different religious groups has not been as tense.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are 860 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, five high schools, three clinics, two hospitals, and one radio station. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely. However, the government is trying to make all education public, and the state has forced private schools to increase the salary of teachers without raising tuition.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Adventists experience regular problems in school, whether it is being required to finish projects late Friday night or to attend meetings or classes on Saturday. Some Adventists experience workplace problems on a frequent basis.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

Visits: Dr John Graz participated in a religious freedom training seminar in Caracas, Venezuela in October 2009.
VIETNAM

Population: 87,850,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 10,497
Religious Groups: Buddhist 50%, Catholic 8-10%, Cao Dai 1.5-3%, Protestant 0.5-2%, Hoa Hao 1.5-4%, Muslim 0.1%, other/animist/none 31%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Vietnam is a major exporter of rice and seafood products and its economy has grown in recent years. It is one of the few Communist nations remaining in the 21st Century. Drug addiction, prostitution, and exploitation of children are widespread. There is a long history of religious persecution.

Constitutional Provision: Article 70 of the constitution states: “The citizen shall enjoy freedom of belief and of religion; he can follow any religion or follow none. All religions are equal before the law. The law protects the places of worship of all faiths and religions. No one can violate freedom of belief and of religion; nor can anyone misuse beliefs and religions to contravene the law and State policies.”

State Attitudes and Actions: There have been improvements with regard to religious freedom in Vietnam. These have been due to the central government’s implementation of the 2004 Ordinance of Religion and Belief. At the provincial and village levels, especially in the Northwest and Central Highlands, progress has been rather sluggish. The central government has recognized the reluctance of local authorities in those areas to improve their religious freedom track-record and has been nudging them toward implementing more freedoms. It has mandated that recognized Protestant groups be allowed to construct places of worship and that even unregistered house groups be allowed to operate freely. The Vietnamese government has a record of seizing properties belonging to religious groups. Economic expansionist policies have contributed to land becoming an even more highly valuable commodity. Consequently, there have been several instances of the government clashing with churches over the issue of land. There are a number of Christian believers imprisoned in Vietnam on
charges related to their faith. There are numerous other reports of religious
discrimination. However, there are also marked attempts at improvement.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Most religious groups tolerate one another. However, the activities of the Dega separatist group are a cause of tension and some other groups accuse them of using religion for the purpose of furthering their political quests. On July 20, 2009, thousands of Catholics in many cities throughout the country took to the streets in protest of police brutality. Buddhist monks have also found themselves the targets of attacks.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 12 Seventh-day Adventist churches.

**Government Recognition:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church received state recognition in 2006 and is finally able to function as a legitimate religious institution.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Adventist students experience some problems with Sabbath observance. Employees working in the public sector encounter problems with Sabbath observance.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** There are strict restrictions on evangelism. Foreign evangelists and missionaries are prohibited from proselytizing.

**WALLIS AND FUTUNA**

**Population:** 15,343  
**Seventh-day Adventists:** 6  
**Religious Groups:** Catholic 99%, other 1%

**Constitutional Provision:** French law, which provides religious freedom in the Preamble, governs Wallis and Futuna: “France shall be an indivisible, secular democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs.”

**State Attitudes and Actions:** There are no reports of discrimination.
Private Attitudes and Actions: There are no reports of hostility existing between religious groups in the almost exclusively Catholic islands.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are no Seventh-day Adventist institutions.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

YEMEN

Population: 24,052,514
Seventh-day Adventists: Unknown
Religious Groups: Muslim including Shaf’i (Sunni) and Zaydi (Shi’a), small numbers of Jewish, Christian, and Hindu

Perspectives on Current Issues: Political and social instability are increasing as al Qaida affiliate organizations fight to establish themselves in the country, clashing with government forces and perpetrating various terrorist acts. The popular uprising that shook Yemen changed the political landscape and led the former president to step down, but militants are attempting to disrupt the transition process and take advantage of the political turmoil. Inflation in 2011 was 20%, compared to 11% in 2010. Petroleum exports typically supply 70% of public revenues, but many foreign companies have suspended their operations. A poll found that 40% of those surveyed lack resources to sustain their families and 45% of the population lives below the poverty line. Unemployment is officially at 34% and two thirds of young people are unemployed. Corruption is seen as a major problem; according to the NGO Transparency International, Yemen ranks 164th of 183 countries. Allegations of torture and the ill treatment of political prisoners who are held for long periods of time have been reported. Flogging is still utilized as a form of punishment.
Constitutional Provision: The constitution states: “Article 2. Islam is the religion of the State, and Arabic is its official language…. Article 51. Residences, places of worship, and educational institutions have a sanctity which may not be violated through surveillance or search except in the cases stipulated by the law.”

State Attitudes and Actions: Government respect for religious freedom decreased during the reporting period, particularly with regard to the Baha’i and Jewish communities. Jewish residents of Amran Governorate experienced increased harassment and numerous threats from a small group of their Muslim neighbors. For the first time, out of concern for the community’s safety in the country, the United States government initiated a special process to refer Yemeni Jews for refugee resettlement in the United States. During the reporting period, the Yemeni government detained members of the Baha’i community because of their religious beliefs. These individuals faced deportation and there were reports of arrests of Christian converts. Some Zaydi Muslims report that they are targeted by government entities due to their religious affiliation.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Relations among religious groups are generally amicable; however, reports of societal abuses and discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice have increased, particularly in the Jewish community in Amran Governorate. The ongoing, unresolved conflict in Saada Governorate and increasing violence between government forces and al-Houthi rebels, who adhere to the Zaydi school of Shi’a Islam, led to elevated political, tribal, and religious tensions.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:

Institutional Freedom: There are no Seventh-day Adventists churches.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: Unknown.

Freedom to Evangelize: Evangelism is prohibited.
ZAMBIA

Population: 13,475,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 747,539
Religious Groups: Christian 86%, indigenous beliefs 11%, Muslim 1%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Life expectancy is 41 years and poverty is widespread. Discrimination and violence against women are prevalent.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 19: “No person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of ... thought and religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and ... to manifest and propagate his religion or belief.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution and seeks to maintain that freedom at all levels. Church leaders are free to vocally criticize the government, as is the case with the Oasis Forum, a group of several organizations including the Christian Council of Zambia. Religious groups are required to register through a cumbersome registration process. Unregistered groups are not allowed to operate. Religious instruction is required in public schools and is given in both the Catholic and Protestant traditions. Islamic education is not available in public schools, but is available in private institutions. Restrictions to freedom of expression, assembly, and association are reported.

Private Attitudes and Actions: Leaders of the various ecumenical movements, including the Christian Council of Zambia and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, hold regular meetings to promote interfaith understanding and dialogue. On April 13, 2009, the Catholic Church relieved a priest of his duties and his parish, reportedly in response to government pressure after the priest criticized the government harshly on his popular radio program. However, religious leaders are generally free to criticize the government, organize political activities, and mobilize public opinion.

The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:
Institutional Freedom: There are 2,023 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates a high school, three hospitals, seven clinics and dispensaries, and a publishing house. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely.

Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees: There are no reports of major problems regarding Sabbath-keeping for Adventist students or employees.

Freedom to Evangelize: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.

ZIMBABWE

Population: 12,084,000
Seventh-day Adventists: 679,849
Religious Groups: Syncretic (part Christian, part indigenous beliefs) 50%, Christian 25%, indigenous beliefs 24%, Muslim and other 1%

Perspectives on Current Issues: Life expectancy in this tragedy-stricken country is 43 years. In spite of rich agricultural and mineral resources, isolationism has resulted in economic and social meltdown, bringing the country to the brink of collapse. Food shortages and disease are widespread. Moreover, political interference in church affairs has been frequently reported. It is also reported that members of the opposition political party are intentionally subjected to assaults, abductions, and death threats. Occurrences of torture and extrajudicial killings are documented. The Zimbabwean government is accused of restricting the flow of humanitarian aid for political reasons, specifically to hinder the work of opponents to the current regime. Freedom of expression is also restricted.

Constitutional Provision: The constitution states in Article 19: “No person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience, that is to say, freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom to manifest and propagate his religion or belief.”

State Attitudes and Actions: The government generally protects religious freedom in accordance with the constitution. However, the government continues
to restrict religious freedom through laws regarding freedom of assembly, expression, and association. The Public Order and Security Act (POSA), though not specifically aimed at religious groups, continues to interfere with religious groups organizing prayer rallies. POSA exempts religious activities, but the government classifies any public gathering critical of the regime as political even if the event is religious in nature. Missionaries operate in the country, but are viewed with suspicion by the government if considered to be politically motivated. Missions have experienced delays in implementing humanitarian relief projects. There was a deterioration of the relationship between the government and the Anglican Church. The government arrested, harassed, and prevented church attendance by Anglican clergy and parishioners from the Church of the Province of Central Africa, the regional body of the Anglican Communion. Police continued to disrupt Anglican Church services and strike worshippers, primarily women, with batons. They arrested parishioners, interrogated priests and lay leaders, and locked the doors of churches to keep worshippers away. On May 21, 2009, after a disruption at an Anglican Church in Kuwadzana, police accused the priest of stoning a police officer. The priest’s trial for assaulting a police officer began on June 15. On March 29, 2009, approximately 25 riot police prevented parishioners from entering the St Francis Anglican Church in the Glen Norah suburb of Harare. When the crowd did not disperse, police beat some church members with batons; police also beat a local councilor who attempted to peacefully resolve the situation. When the priest refused to dismiss the 400-500 parishioners from the church lawn, he and three others were arrested for disturbing the peace. On March 16, 2009, the priest at St Andrew’s Anglican Church in the Glenview neighborhood of Harare led parishioners to the church to hold a service. When police refused to let the parishioners enter the church, the priest led a service under a tree outside the church. Police attempted to disperse the group by throwing an estimated 20 tear gas canisters. The priest and his followers refused to leave and spent nine hours sitting in the yard praying.

**Private Attitudes and Actions:** Relationships between mainstream Christian groups are generally harmonious, but tensions persist between these groups and practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. Indigenous religions’ acceptance
of polygamy and avoidance of modern medicine are some of the main reasons for the tension. In additional, ritual killings and mutilations continue to be a problem with certain groups and limited resources prevent authorities from conducting proper investigations. Leaders from a wide spectrum of churches and religious groups discuss these issues productively in meetings of the interfaith council and they cooperate on issues such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. There are at least five umbrella religious organizations that operate, including the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, the Heads of Denominations, Fambidzano, a group of indigenous churches, and the Islamic Council.

**The Seventh-day Adventist Experience:**

**Institutional Freedom:** There are 1,324 Seventh-day Adventist churches. The church operates one university, six high schools, ten clinics and dispensaries, and one Bible correspondence school. Independent organizations support the church’s work through orphanages and medical clinics. These institutions are generally allowed to operate freely, provided the government does not consider them a political threat. Church leaders met with government and community officials and held leadership seminars with the intent of making officials aware of the church’s position on religious freedom and other issues.

**Sabbath-keeping for Students and Employees:** Church members have reportedly been forced to work on Saturday at the risk of losing their employment. Students have reported conflicts with exams scheduled on Saturday. The church has attempted to solve these problems, but there is no report that these matters have been satisfactorily resolved.

**Freedom to Evangelize:** The Seventh-day Adventist Church is generally allowed to evangelize freely.
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Organized on May 20, 1863, in Battle Creek, Michigan, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has more than 17 million baptized members. It is estimated that the Adventist community numbers at least 30 million. The church has a presence in 204 of the nations and regions recognized by the United Nations. The Annual Statistical Report for 2010* reveals that the church employs 220,760 people worldwide. The Adventist Church operates 557 healthcare institutions, including 173 hospitals. They also operate 7,806 educational institutions, 111 of which are colleges or universities. Enrollment in these institutions totals more than 1.67 million.

Since its beginning, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has defended religious freedom for all. Under its patronage, several religious liberty associations have been established. The International Religious Liberty Association was founded in 1893 and became a non-sectarian association in 1946. Its current president is Dr Denton Lotz, General Secretary Emeritus of the Baptist World Alliance. Dr John Graz has served as Secretary General of the IRLA since 1995.

*Statistics which follow are as of December 2010.
Thank you

This report on religious freedom is the result of the cooperative efforts of a team of people located around the world. Special thanks go to the division and union directors of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department who submitted information for this report. The report would not have been possible without the first-hand accounts of the conditions in the countries where these directors work.

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