



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

RECORD

Spring 2003

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the cup of

DEATH

the gift of

LIFE

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In God's Image

And now that Jesus has suffered and was tempted, he can help anyone else who is tempted. — Hebrews 2.18 (CEV)

The drama of Easter begins with Christmas — with God becoming one of us. But nearly as incredible is the fact that God created us in his image. We have a family connection with Divinity; in our being, we are *children* of God.

Whatever depth of meaning lies within this mystery, and however great remains the distance between God and ourselves, there are ways in which we are “like” God; we are spirit as God is spirit. We are self-conscious beings; we share a moral and creative kinship.

The Gospel of John describes the *Word* as yet another link with Jesus, the Son, and God, the Father. Without language, without the Word, it's difficult to imagine moral choice. The Gospel of John places Christ, the Word, as the moral bridge to God.

When God became a man in Christ, he gave up glory and power, yet he retained those spiritual qualities we share with our Maker — human qualities of spirit and personhood and moral choice.

Jesus, even though tempted as we are tempted, lived up to the moral responsibility of his humanity. Scripture tells us that “the whole creation has been groaning in pains of childbirth” because of *human* willfulness. This is the alienation we experience — alienation from our Maker, each other and ourselves, due to our preoccupation with self — a failed love for God and others.

The Cross was a double bind for Jesus; his obedience and selflessness led him to experience the alienation and death that we cause through disobedience. By remaining obedient, for our sake, he experienced death, and suffered an undeserved alienation of unimaginable severity from his heavenly Father.

Theologian John R. Stott has written, “Alienation encapsulates the modern mood. [Many] do not feel at home in the materialism, emptiness and superficiality of the western world. On the contrary, they feel unfulfilled and disoriented, unable to find themselves, their identity or their freedom. To talk of reconciliation [with God] sounds like the good news it is.”

Easter — the Resurrection — signals the end of this alienation. Through the Cross, Christ restored family ties with our heavenly Father; he invites us, through death and rebirth, to reclaim our godly image and moral standing. “By our baptism ... we were buried with him and shared his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life.” — *Romans 6.4 (GNT)*

Thank God for Easter.



Eugene B. Habecker

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We encourage you to send your letters to: Editor, American Bible Society Record, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023-7505. Telephone: 212-408-8710. Note: For questions for the American Bible Society not related to the Record, please call 212-408-1200. www.americanbible.org

BIBLE IN THE NEWS

A Fighter and a Forgiver

■ At 91, Illa Hooper is full of fight — and forgiveness. “Miss Ikie,” as Ms. Hooper is known to her friends, weighs 135 pounds and stands only 5 feet 2. But she gave an unpleasant surprise to James Sharp, 21, who was burglarizing her residence one night in Stamps, Ark.

Awakened from sleep as Mr. Sharp entered her bedroom, Ms. Hooper grabbed her cane and hit him repeatedly. Then she called police. Mr. Sharp was later convicted and sentenced for the attempted burglary, *The Washington Post* reported.

When Mr. Sharp wrote Ms. Hooper from jail, asking for forgiveness, she wrote back to say she granted it. Ms. Hooper knows Mr. Sharp and his family through First Baptist Church, where she is a longtime worshipper.

“It’s sad and awful, but he’s gonna come around all right,” Ms. Hooper said. “I keep his letter in my Bible, and I do pray for him every day.”

Tablet Linked to Solomon Discovered

■ A 2,800-year-old stone tablet describing the renovation of Solomon’s Temple was recently discovered in Jerusalem, *The Associated Press* and *Religion News Service* reported.

The tablet, which is about the size of a legal pad, contains an ancient Hebrew inscription that strongly resembles descriptions of the Temple found in 2 Kings 12.1-6, according to Israel’s Geological Institute.

Shimon Ilani, who performed tests on the inscription for the Institute, said, “Our findings show that it is authentic.” According to the news services, “Mr. Ilani and his colleagues found microscopic flecks of gold that could have been burnt into the stone when a building containing both the tablet and gold objects was destroyed.”

“This could mean the tablet was actually part of Solomon’s Temple, which was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.,” said Amos Bean, director of the Institute.

Bringing the Bible to Work

■ Lunch at the Accu-Fab Inc. sheet-metal firm in Raleigh, N.C., recently included a reading and discussion of the Gospel of John.

Raleigh *News & Observer* reporter Yonat Shimron noted, “From the many bookmarks and highlighted passages in their individual Bibles, it was clear that the people in this group take their faith seriously.”

The News & Observer described the Bible study as part of a growing trend among area businesses that aims to bridge the “divide between worship and work.” Accu-Fab’s mission statement, which calls for sharing God’s message of salvation through Jesus Christ, reflects the Christian faith of Accu-Fab President, Gregory W. Page and his business partner, Dennis Zullig.

James E. Hagen, the company’s marketing director, said that he’s happy with his firm’s faith-friendly approach, which “allows me to integrate all the aspects of my life at work.”

Shaker Serves as Scripture Verse Reminder

■ In the Texas House of Representatives, Rep. Debbie Riddle, a freshman legislator from Houston, placed a salt shaker on her desk to emphasize Matthew 5.13. “The Bible says we are called to be salt and light,” Ms. Riddle told *The Houston Chronicle*. “If salt loses its saltiness, it’s worthless.”

Scripture at Root of Park Name

■ When officials in Boxford, Mass., wanted to find a Native American name for a conservation area, they settled on “Wunnegen,” which means “beautiful” in the Massachusetts language, *The Boston Globe* reported.

The term was found in an English-Indian dictionary, which was based on a Bible in the Massachusetts language (spoken by the Agawam tribe living in Boxford centuries before) translated by John Eliot, a Puritan minister and early colonist in the 17th century. It was the first full Bible printed in America.



Jacquelyn Sapiie
Library Services Supervisor
at Bible House

askjacquie

Readers are encouraged to submit their questions about the Bible to Jacquelyn Sapiie, Library Services Supervisor at Bible House in New York City. Questions can be forwarded to absrecord@americanbible.org, or Jacquelyn can be reached at 212-408-1203 or via regular mail at 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

Q What does the Bible say about ghosts? Are they demons or angels or neither?

A The word ghost in the Old Testament is translated from the Hebrew *repha'im*, meaning a disembodied spirit or disembodied personality of a dead person. In the Old Testament the dead inhabit *Sheol*, the underworld where departed spirits go [Job 26.5].

Culturally, people had a fear of ghosts during ancient times in the Middle East. They believed the dead could take vengeance on someone who had harmed them while they were living. But that belief is not reflected in the Old Testament, which teaches that the dead are limited to *Sheol*. Nevertheless, some of that cultural fear is evident in the gospel account from two of Jesus' followers, Matthew and Mark, who wrote about his disciples' reaction when they saw him walking on water. They thought he was a ghost and were afraid [Matthew 14.26, Mark. 6.49].

Demons and angels are also found in the Bible, but they are not the same as ghosts. Demon is the English transliteration of a Greek term *daimōn*, which originally referred to vaguely defined spirit beings, good or bad.

The Old Testament mentions demons directly in Deuteronomy 32.17 and Psalm 106.36,37. Other passages in the Old Testament suggest the belief in harmful spirits and the ancient Hebrews' view of the devil and the demons associated with him.

The New Testament provides more information about demons. They are clearly portrayed as evil spirits, hostile to God and humanity. Demons function as living beings with the ability to speak [Matthew 8.31] and to act [Luke 10.17]. They cause disease [Matthew 12.22] and madness [Luke 8.27-39]. Jesus saved many people from disease and demonic influence in his ministry. 1 Timothy 4.1 warns that demons will bring false teaching into Christianity.

The Bible indicates that evil spiritual beings do exist but does not focus on them. Instead, Scripture draws our attention to God. The Bible teaches us to love and serve him.

A description of angels appeared in the November/December 2002 issue of the Record.

Sources: *The Revell Bible Dictionary*, 1994. ■

TRUSTEES

Gaining Spirit Values

Monsignor Wallace A. Harris pinpoints a major issue he feels Americans urgently need to face: "We're mixing up our priorities. We're not putting God first," he says.

As one of the richest nations in the world, the United States certainly recognizes material value. Many Americans are wealthy in possessions, he explains, but "poor in spiritual values." The solution is "seeing the value of 'spirit' over the value of 'material.'"

The American Bible Society, he believes, plays an important role in helping people address this issue. Monsignor Harris' own experience with the Bible Society began in his seminary days in the 1960s, when he visited Bible House to buy study copies of the New Testament in Greek and Latin. Later, as priest and teacher, when he needed Bibles for the 700 students he oversaw in two schools, the Bible Society Scriptures proved an affordable resource.

A Board member for nearly three years, Monsignor Harris, who pastors the Church of Saint Charles Borromeo in New York's Harlem, sees that new modes of communication are needed to reach out to the 21st century generation. Calling the Bible the "communicated Word," he stresses that new media — going beyond the printed page — will be critical in connecting today's youth with God's Word, more so because young people are accustomed to receiving their information from sources other than books.

The Bible Society has made a good start — with the Internet ministry of *ForMinistry.com*, *Americanbible.org* and the online Bible Resource Center, and with various interactive CD Scripture resources, DVD-based Scripture programs and audio Scriptures. "We're on target with that," he says, "but we have to go full steam ahead" in developing more.

He points to young people and those in prison as important groups to reach. "We need to plant the seeds [of faith] there," he emphasizes, because at an early age, minds are more open to receive the truth.

Monsignor Harris adds to the Board's diversity in two ways: as an African American and as a Catholic clergyman, and has served parishes in New York City for more than 30 years. ■



Rev. W. A. Harris

—FRANCINE LANGE





He [Jesus] ... threw himself face downward on the ground, and prayed, "My father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me! Yet not what I want, but what you want."

—MATTHEW 26:39

the cup of DEATH *the gift of* LIFE

BY DAVID SINGER

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE nexus of our faith — the key to restored relationship with God. The story of God coming to earth as one of us to die, at first glance, seems outrageously far-fetched. Yet all of Scripture either seems to point toward Christ's crucifixion or deals with the new reality of renewed relationship brought about through this historical event. Although it is Christ's resurrection that concludes the "life and death" drama of Holy Week, in a sense, the resurrection serves as God's unambiguous confirmation that his forgiveness was accomplished — the spell of sin broken — and that Christ's victory over death has, indeed, been won.

A Severe Temptation?

A clue to this spiritual mystery — a poignant moment in Jesus' final hours — is depicted in the stained glass image on the facing page. The gospel writers Matthew, Mark and Luke each give us a glimpse into the soul of the Son of Man, caught in spiritual and emotional anguish as he contemplates the horror he is about to suffer. It is this moment, the night before his death, perhaps more than any other, that best captures the agony of the cross — an agony much greater than the physical aspects of the torture that Jesus suffered in crucifixion.

The gospel writers relate the episode — how Jesus had just celebrated the Passover feast with his 12 disciples. (In so doing, Jesus redefined the Passover celebration of Israel's deliverance from slavery into a sacrament of forgiveness offered for the sins of humankind — a sacrament of suffering and sacrifice that anticipated the pain that Jesus would experience in a matter of hours.)

Following the Passover meal, Jesus asked his disciples to accompany him into a grove of olive trees to pray. After entering the grove, called Gethsemane, he asked nine of the 12 to wait

and watch while he and his inner circle, James, John and Peter, went on a little farther. Now, in nighttime seclusion — in the intimacy of Jesus with his inner circle — Matthew describes a drama of intense pleading.

Only a few times in their portrayal of Jesus do the gospel writers tell us what Jesus felt, and then sparingly. They give some one-word descriptions: Jesus "wept" over Jerusalem, was troubled by the death of Lazarus and "loved" John. Yet, even in charged and seemingly dangerous events, such as Jesus driving moneychangers from the temple, we can only surmise what Jesus might have felt. The gospel writers give us no words. And while we might "feel" the harshness of such epithets as "brood of vipers" or "whitewashed sepulchers" that Jesus hurled at the religious leaders, or might imagine Jesus' sense of abandonment when Peter denied knowing him, again, no words are given to describe what feelings Jesus might have had.

In that sense, this account in Gethsemane is different; we have the gospel writers' descriptions and Jesus' own words about what he felt in anticipating the suffering obedience would bring — it warrants a closer look at what is behind the intensity of Jesus' feelings — the source of his sorrow.

Anticipating the Agony of Separation

Matthew writes, "Grief and anguish came over him and he said to them [Peter, James, and John], 'The sorrow of my heart is so great that it almost crushes me' . . . He went a little farther on, threw himself face downward on the ground and prayed, 'My father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me! Yet

not what I want, but what you want.' " (Matthew 26.38-39)

Nowhere else do we have access to a similar personal and dramatic dialogue with God, the Father. Not in jousting with the devil as that evil one attempted to divert Jesus in the desert, nor on the several occasions when crowds threatened to stone him, did Jesus give any sign of wanting to hold back. Yet, in this instance in Gethsemane, the gospel writers recount that Jesus pleaded with God three times "to take this cup of suffering" from him. Luke adds that, after Jesus' second appeal, "An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him (also shown in the rendering on page 6). In great anguish he prayed even more fervently; his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." (Luke 22.43-44)

Then, almost immediately afterward, the Son of God turned to face his approaching captors. As Peter attempts to ward off the temple guards, Jesus chastens, "Put your sword back in its place! Do you think that I will not drink the cup of suffering which my father has given me?" (John 18.11)

Jesus' reference to the cup, in his rebuff to Peter, has a determined tone — a firm resolve. His pleading with his heavenly Father is over — God has given his answer, the cup will not pass. As he had prayed each time, "Yet not what I want, but what you want."

Nevertheless, his time of anguished prayer in the garden gives us a most lucid account of what Jesus felt; what he felt — if it was, as some suggest, a second temptation — is portrayed as a temptation more urgent and intense than the first.

So what was this "cup of suffering" from which Jesus recoiled; the cup depicted in the stained-glass rendering? Was Jesus anticipating the lashing he would be subjected to, the nails and thorns of crucifixion, the spear in his side? Was the Son of God afraid to die? Given his earlier fearless confrontations with religious authority, this does not seem likely. Christ's march to the cross was unwavering.

During his hours of suffering on the cross, we are told tantalizingly little about what Jesus "felt." In this most dramatic "dying by crucifixion," we get a single insight into Jesus' emotional state; his cry of crucifixion anguish, "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?" would appear to be rooted in the same "cup of suffering" from which he sought release in the garden — the suffering described in Psalm 22.

According to Matthew and Mark, Jesus made reference to this "cup of suffering" earlier in his ministry, when James and John asked for special consideration in Christ's coming kingdom. Jesus responded, "You don't know what you are asking for. Can you drink the cup of suffering that I am about to drink? . . . You will indeed drink the cup I must drink and be baptized in the way I must be baptized." (Matthew 20.22; Mark 10.39)

By relating the "cup" to baptism, Jesus suggested that the suffering he anticipated was not physical, but spiritual — and, like baptism, a spiritual cleansing — the same, single cleansing agony Jesus expressed from the cross and which Matthew characterized as a cry.

Bearing the Sins of the World

And why indeed did God abandon his only Son? Several Old Testament references suggest to us the nature of this cup that Jesus was reluctant to take. One, Psalm 75.8 says, "The Lord holds a cup in his hand, filled with the strong wine of his anger." Was it God's holy anger directed toward the sin God's son carried with him to the cross? Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5.21 explains, "Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God."

In *The Cross of Christ*, Anglican pastor John Stott summarizes, ". . . the cup from which [Christ] drank . . . symbolized neither the physical pain of being flogged and crucified, nor the mental distress of being despised and rejected even by his own people, but rather the spiritual agony of bearing the sins of the world, in other words, of enduring the divine judgment which those sins deserved."

By quoting Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?" Jesus indicates that he knew the answer — his was a rhetorical lament because, although Psalm 22 begins with travail and descriptions of abandonment and physical pain, it ends in restoration and triumph, "For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. . . . All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations." (Psalm 22. 24, 27, 28 NIV)

Although Jesus understood the reason for his crucifixion — his suffering and its triumphal outcome — Gethsemane emphasizes that Christ's suffering and sacrifice for our sake was, nonetheless, intensely real. God so loved us that he sent his Son to take on our sin. And in doing so, Christ was forsaken by God — suffered God's wrath — and took our sin to death on the cross. Or as the apostle Paul puts it in Romans 4.25 (CEV), "God gave Jesus to die for our sins, and he raised him to life, so that we would be made acceptable to God." And again in Romans 5.18 (CEV), "Everyone was going to be punished because Adam sinned. But because of the good thing that Christ has done, God accepts us and gives us the gift of life."

God, through his Son, suffered death so that we might live. In the book of Hebrews (2.14b, 15) it says, "Jesus himself became like [us] and shared [our] human nature. He did this so that through his death he might destroy the Devil, who has the power over death, and in this way set free those who were slaves all their lives because of their fear of death." It is the gift of Good Friday and the confirmation of Easter. God, through Christ, suffered the pain — the spiritual pain of separation — for our sins. Such is God's love gift offered to us this and every Easter.

All Scripture references are taken from the Good News Translation unless indicated for the New International Version (NIV) or Contemporary English Version (CEV). ■

A sleeping

It has been said that, in the People's Republic of China, people are coming to faith in Christ so rapidly that three new churches are planted there every two days. Even so, followers of Jesus Christ account for only 7 percent of China's total population of 1.3 billion. Clearly, much still needs to be done to share the gospel with the inhabitants of the world's most populous country.

The American Bible Society has supported Christian work in China ever since the early 1800s (for example, in 1833 the Bible Society designated \$3,000 to print and distribute Chinese Scriptures).

During China's Cultural Revolution, Bibles were banned and any found were burned. So today, the rapidly growing church is eager to have God's Word and share it with an increasingly open population.

"Gospel Vans" to Remote Areas

To help meet this need, the Bible Society works closely with the China Christian Council, the national organization that

| By Francine Lange |



iant

begins to stir



This Miao minority woman lives in the Yunnan Province, also home to many of China's other minority groups in need of Scriptures in their native language.

Spiritual

represents Christian churches in China. Through the United Bible Societies (UBS) and funded by the American Bible Society the Council supplies 70 distribution centers in the country with Bibles, New Testaments and other Scripture-based materials. The Amity Printing Company in Nanjing prints these resources. (In 2002 alone, the Council distributed nearly 2 million Bibles and New Testaments in China.)

"Bible distribution certainly has helped the growth of the church to bring the gospel to many more people in China," said Bishop Shen Yifan, the late vice president of the Council, in an earlier interview.

Because most of the Scripture distribution centers reside in large cities, Christians in rural areas do not have easy access to Scriptures. Many pastors in these communities are subsistence farmers, and must work to make a living. Traveling for as long as several days to the centers to secure Bibles for their congregations causes a real hardship. And Scriptures shipped through the regular post, by train or on poor roads can arrive damaged.

Two years ago, the American Bible Society's *Opportunity 21* (0-21) Scripture sharing program used donor gifts to purchase the first 16 of 40 distribution vans (villagers call them "Gospel Wagons") to deliver Scripture materials to the more rural areas. In the Lahu Church in Dabali village, in the Yunnan Province of south China, church members celebrated the arrival of a distribution team and its vanload of Scriptures with a special worship service marking a formal presentation of the new Bibles. Church leaders have reported that the Bible has been a powerful encouragement for young people, turning many of them away from drinking, gambling and drugs.

Zhang Zapi, a church elder, says the Bibles are "bringing about reconciliation and harmony and building good values" among readers.

Another rural pastor at the Chuanxing Church in Suyang says that believers as well as curious non-believers who want to read the Bible to learn more about Western culture appreciate the deliveries, made possible by gifts from America and around the world.

Opening the Scriptures For All Peoples

China has 55 officially recognized ethnic minority groups, and 490 different ethno-linguistic groups, numbering some 100 million people, says Kua Wee Seng, UBS Asia Opportunity Program coordinator. "There are Christians among them," he adds, "such as the Lisu, Lahu and Miao, but only six of the groups have Scriptures officially published and printed in their own languages." The American Bible Society's 0-21 program has jointly funded a Bible exegesis and translation program with Trinity Theological College in Singapore. Two Chinese students were among the first group of graduates. "These are the first students from China to be trained to this level in biblical studies and translation," says Kua Wee Seng. He emphasizes: "China has a great need for qualified Bible translation advisors, especially those fluent in minority languages."

One graduate, Hu Hui Ping, says that, at first she found the daily, systematic reading of the Bible in old Chinese script difficult. She explains: "The Chinese letters are arranged vertically, and for a young person like myself who has been educated using the simplified script written horizontally, the Bible

awakening in China



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUNE HANSEN/UBS

Thanks to the Bible Society, this man from the Dai minority group has a Bible to read.

seemed so old-fashioned." But her discipline grew and she gained confidence. "I was slowly able to enter into the realm of the Bible and experience God's Word affecting my life," she explains. "Those daily devotions and Bible readings became my life's greatest enjoyment. This is the most fundamental training for every theological student."

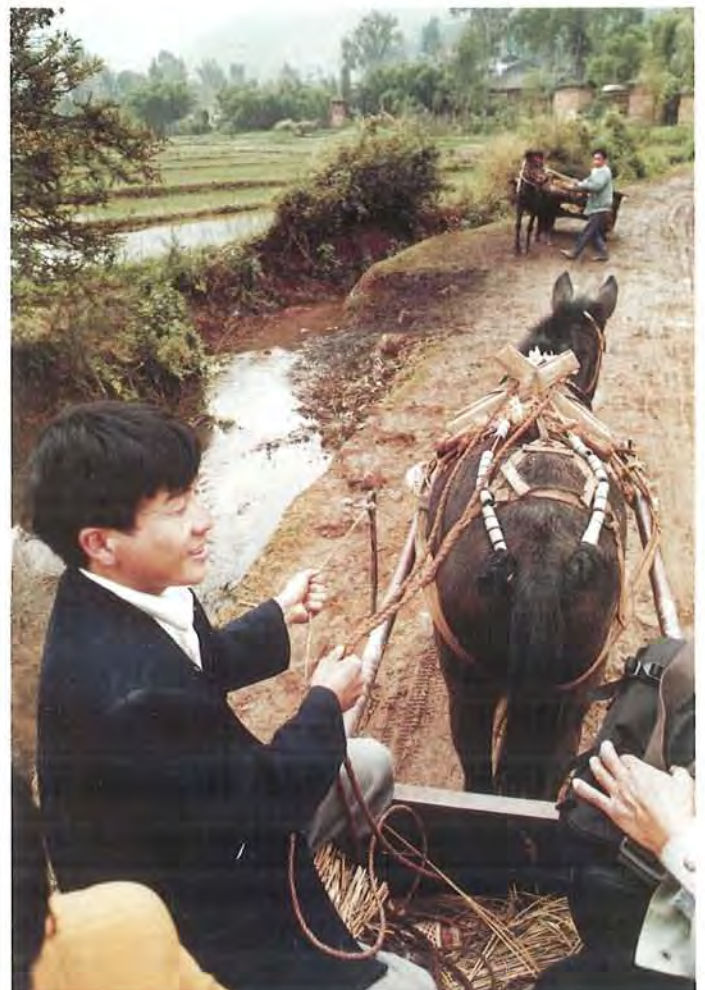
Graduate Shi Wen Hua, from the Anhui Province, is going on to further studies in England and hopes to return to China to help in the translation work. "Our brothers and sisters in the minority groups will eventually have the Bible translated into their own language," she says. "I am praying towards this end and I have committed myself to this purpose."

Conversation Starters

Bible translation work requires a long-term perspective. Results may not be seen for years or even decades, whereas almost immediate fruit can result from the translation of Scripture bookmarks or booklets with Scriptures selected to bring hope during difficult times — times of fear, illness or bereavement. Christian believers in China hand these out to friends and co-workers, using the items as conversation starters to point people to Christ. The selections can also "whet" the spiritual appetite of seekers to read and study the Bible.

Other Scripture media made available through the Bible

continued on page 20 >>



For residents in rural China, travel is difficult if not treacherous. These workers live in Lu Feng County in the Yunnan Province.

"If I sat and thought about it, I would just freak out. This is the most impossible thing that any person has tried to do in his life. ... And then I'd think, 'But it's not me who's doing it.' God can do all things."

something to strive for

BY THOMAS D. SULLIVAN

*High schoolers reach
south of the border*

STORIES OF TEENS WREAKING HAVOC IN THEIR COMMUNITIES, absorbed in their own pain, are discouragingly common these days. So it's refreshing to hear of a group of young people in a small high school who have taken on a Bible sharing project that will bring life to so many.

Haysi High School in Haysi, Va., has 317 students and a Bible club with a dream: to raise funds for sharing the Scriptures with 1 million people outside the United States. At \$4 a Bible, that's \$4 million. And while the Bible club members aren't sure of their own power to pull this off, they're utterly confident that this is the Lord's work.

The club got started in October 2001, and its faculty sponsor, business teacher Sandra Looney, remembers telling the students, "If we were going to do this Bible club, we were going to do something for God." She adds, "We should have a high goal. ... I wanted ours to be big enough to make an impact."

The goal, she told club members, would be to raise money to buy 1 million Bibles for people who had none. How did the students react? "They were all for it," Mrs. Looney says.

The club's 40 members aren't fazed by the scale of their task. Ms. Looney says the students understand that "this is something to strive for. ... It's something we know we can't do in a year." Jessica Adkins, a junior at Haysi, agrees. But she sees the task as an ongoing effort that will inspire and motivate Bible club members who come after her. "In years to come," she says with conviction, "that goal will be met."

Britney Wallace, a junior at Haysi and president of the Bible club, admits, "At first, I was a little overwhelmed," but as she considered what the small club could do, she looked to Scripture for encouragement. She found the Philippians 4.13 passage, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." She knew the club would receive heavenly help for this worthy cause. "I knew that, no matter what we do, we set our goals, and if we look to God, he's always going to direct us the way we need to go."

Ms. Wallace's trust in God is shared by her club mates and their adviser. Ms. Looney says: "If I sat and thought about it, I would just freak out. This is the most impossible thing that any person has tried to do in his life. ... And then I'd think, 'But it's not me who's doing it.' God can do all things."

To raise funds, the club has collected its \$4-per-member dues, sold candy to fellow students and local residents and served lunches at a school event. Students are also fortunate that Haysi (pronounced "HEY-Sye") is a small town with a big spirit. When the football team goes on the road, for example, Haysi supporters outnumber the home crowd. And when the Bible club looked for support from outside the school, it got it.

A number of firms have also pledged to match the funds that the club raises. In one example, Haysi Drug Center recently added to the club's contributions, putting together a total of \$2,500 for Scriptures. The club also received a check for \$4 from a 96-year-old woman, who read about their goal in a local newspaper.

The students decided to send Bibles to Mexico because Mexican Christians visited their school and spoke to the club.

LeRae Edwards, a junior in the club who went to Mexico on a mission trip last year, was moved by the material and spiritual deprivation of the people there. "Now I'm passionate about helping those countries and getting the word of Christ out to them," Ms. Edwards says.

Ms. Looney was already familiar with the American Bible Society and its global Scripture programs, so the club agreed to send the donations through the organization's *Opportunity 21* program. This major worldwide Scripture initiative — a joint effort of the Bible Society, the United Bible Societies and the Maclellan Foundation — will match the club's contributions dollar-for-dollar to double the impact.

To date, the Bible club has raised more than \$8,000 to buy Scriptures and has sent this small beginning to the American Bible Society. The students' generosity of spirit won the praise of American Bible Society President Eugene B. Habecker, who wrote in a letter to club members: "Your commitment to promoting and providing the Bible encourages those of us who serve at the American Bible Society. Your effective volunteer



Haysi Bible Club members live their faith at school.

activities reflect something of your heart for the Bible. My hope is that other student groups around our nation will join you in supporting strategic Bible projects worldwide."

Ms. Edwards treasures the 8 a.m. Monday meetings before classes begin. She says it's "unbelievably amazing" to worship with fellow students, knowing "there are other people in your school who are there going through the same things there and serving the same God you are."

The club has had an impact on the school. On May 2, 2002, the National Day of Prayer, the school allowed students to use the library as a prayer room. Students were welcome to read petitions, and when Ms. Looney visited the library, "there were students crying" because they were so moved by others' need for prayer. She adds, "Because of the Bible club, these kids are finding out the power of prayer." ■

To learn more about American Bible Society Scripture distribution programs — in the United States and around the globe — click on www.americanbible.org or call toll free 1-888-227-8262.

BY THOMAS D. SULLIVAN

SCRIPTURE STORIES *shine* THROUGH

In a stunning mosaic of stained glass, the young Joseph, spoken of in the Book of Genesis, sits in splendor. Colors, shapes and textures picture the major elements of Joseph's story: On his shoulders rests the coat of many colors. His left hand holds a shepherd's staff and he sits on a throne decorated in Egyptian style. The sun, moon and 11 stars surrounding his head reference Joseph's dream, and sheaves of wheat festooned along the top panel above him suggest his prophecy to Pharaoh of the impending famine.

This window, designed and created by Tiffany Studios in 1900, is part of a new exhibition at *The Gallery at the American Bible Society*, "Reflections on Glass: 20th Century Stained Glass in American Art and Architecture," on display through April 17.

As *The Gallery* Curator Tricia Pongracz, Ph.D., explains, the exhibit includes text panels that describe the various glass techniques used by Tiffany studios to create a rich and beautiful portrait. Dr. Pongracz points out that the panels also give the precise Scripture references to link the image back to its source in Genesis.

This window "tells the entire story of Joseph," Dr. Pongracz says, adding that it's important for *The Gallery* to provide visitors with clear references to Scripture — something many other galleries and museums may not offer.

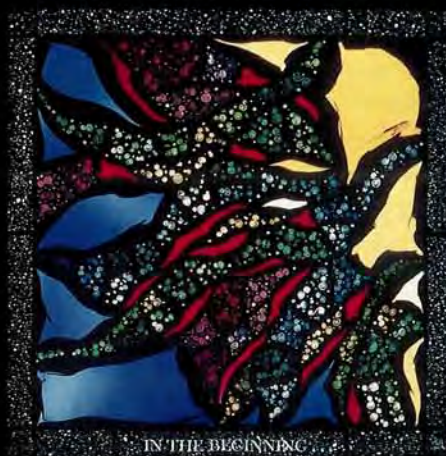
This approach to art springs from the mission of *The Gallery*, which is to examine the rich tradition of Judeo-Christian art inspired by the Scriptures and how that tradition continues today.

"Reflections on Glass" is especially fitting for *The Gallery*, since that art form incorporates luminescence into its symbolism. In a preface to the catalog for this exhibition, Dr. Eugene B. Habecker, president of the American Bible Society, wrote that light has long been recognized as a

metaphor for the divine. He wrote, "The Bible tells us, 'God is light, and there is no darkness at all in him (John 1.5).'"

"Reflections on Glass," curated by Dr. Virginia Raguin of the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass., has three elements — an overview of styles of 20th-century stained glass, views of six different contemporary glass artists and an introduction to the various techniques used in making different kinds of stained glass. "Reflections" is a sequel to a 1998 exhibit at *The Gallery*, "Glory in Glass," which explored 19th-century American stained glass and focused on windows that are still vital inspirational elements of their sites of worship.

The first section of the exhibit, the overview, shows how artists varied their approaches and techniques over the past century to design for worship and cultural spaces. Visitors will see windows portraying biblical themes and characters, such as "Angel," a winged messenger of God holding a crown and a palm branch, portrayed in a 1910 window by the Munich Studio of Chicago, Ill. Also featured are abstract, symbolic creations, such as Mary Clerkin Higgins' window, "In the Beginning" (pictured above) created specifically for this exhibition. In Ms. Clerkin Higgins' window, the dawn



IN THE BEGINNING, BY MARY CLERKIN HIGGINS, 2002.
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

UGH STAINED GLASS

of creation is revealed in a light that spawns small spiral forms, symbolizing the first created things.

The exhibit highlights shifting styles, as well as the history of developments in technology (for example, Germany became a leader in stained-glass techniques because of the country's need to replace huge numbers of windows destroyed during World War II).

The second section of "Reflections on Glass" highlights the work of six contemporary stained-glass artists: Douglas Hansen, Stephen Knapp, Linda Lichtman, Ellen Mandelbaum, Ellen Miret and David Wilson. The exhibit reveals how these artists have teamed with architects and patrons to create works that enhance buildings and their surroundings. Stained glass windows are an integral part of building design, and blueprints, drawings, models and photographs in the exhibit indicate how artists collaborate in the overall design of a structure — how, for example, Ms. Miret integrated traditional Christian imagery in a Mausoleum Chapel in Monsey, N.Y.

In separate windows, Ms. Miret uses a mixture of clear glass and colored panels to portray Christ's ascension, and angels blowing trumpets. These designs are firmly linked to the architectural form of the chapel, as well as its purpose as a memorial worship space.

The third section of the exhibition describes how stained glass is made using different chemical components, and videos show the various stages of crafting glass. On display are the chemicals used in coloring, and explanations of how different compounds produce glass that reflects light in different ways. Glass samples show the different effects achieved by etching or sandblasting glass.

The exhibit reflects a reputation of excellence already established by *The Gallery*, which has won widespread acclaim. *USA Today* recently listed *The Gallery* as one of "10 great places to explore religion in artistic detail." ■

To learn how you can support the work of The Gallery, contact Dr. Pongracz at 212-408-8755 or via e-mail at ppongracz@americanbible.org.

The SEED IS
The WORD
of GOD

THE SOWER, BY HENDRIK VAN DE BURGT, 1964. FABRICATED BY J & R LAMB STUDIOS. COLLECTION DONALD SAMICK. J & R LAMB STUDIOS. (DETAIL OPPOSITE PAGE)





Your April gift will help spread the Good News in India. Your May offering will help support Bible work in Argentina and Colombia. Your June offering will help support Bible work in Uganda. To find out more about joining the Bible-a-Month Club, fill out the reply form on page 17, or write:

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A Quest for Truth

As Meta Stanley looks back to a time when she questioned the reliability of God's Word, she credits an American Bible Society volunteer and the Scriptures for steering her back to her faith. So it is with a spirit of gratitude that she and her husband — and the adult Sunday school class they lead — support the American Bible Society's Scripture-sharing mission through the Bible-a-Month Club.

By her own admission, Mrs. Stanley had it all: a happy marriage to a hard-working man, six children and a comfortable home. A large church in Dayton, Ohio, was a central part of their religious and social activities. "My life was full," she says.

She'd grown up attending church twice a week, and recalls inviting Christ into her life when she was eight. "From that time on, I loved the church and the Bible," she says. "Though I understood little of it, I tried to be faithful by reading my Bible regularly."

Her confidence in the Word was tested in the 1960s, when a "God is Dead" theology began appearing in churches across the country. "I had always believed the Bible to be true, inspired by God," she says. "Now I began to wonder, to question, to doubt. I was asking myself, 'Maybe the Bible does have mistakes in it. Maybe it is not all true.'"

But at a Bible study workshop for churches in her area, Mrs. Stanley got new clarity. The workshop leader, Elizabeth "Libby" Currie from Springfield, Ohio, spoke with an unshakable conviction from the Scriptures. "When I heard her speak," says Mrs. Stanley, "I knew I had to talk with her." Mrs. Currie, a volunteer with the American Bible Society since 1966, had been one of the first to operate a Volunteer Scripture Center through which she made discounted Bible Society Scriptures available to people in her area. In addition, she tirelessly promoted the Bible Society's work and mission, inspiring



Meta Stanley



Children explore the Bible at a boarding school in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Through the Bible-a-Month Club Mrs. Stanley experiences the joy of seeing other lives change through the power of God's Word. For example, the Ukrainian Bible Society has been distributing the booklet, *Jesus and His Life*, for nearly two years. It continues to be extremely popular among secondary school students.

The number of copies distributed, in both Ukrainian and Russian, has topped 100,000. The booklet is part of a wider evangelism project in the Ukraine, focusing on distribution to schools in remote areas.

Many children have written enthusiastic let-

ters to the Bible Society, thanking them for *Jesus and His Life*. Victorija Jakimchuk, 15, wrote that she comes from a non-Christian family and, at first, was not interested in the booklet. However, "When I started to read this book I could not stop. When other members of my family saw changes in me, they started to read it. Now everybody from my family can say 'We believe in God and will love him always.'" Vasja Patriychuk, 13, wrote: "This book changed my life, and I decided to be like Jesus. I want to advise all children and adults to read this book. They will find out what Jesus did for them and maybe accept him into their heart as I have done."

hundreds to join the international Scripture distribution Bible-a-Month Club program. (In 1990, the Bible Society recognized her efforts, giving Mrs. Currie the Bible Society's first Volunteer Award of Merit.)

Mrs. Stanley shared her doubts with Mrs. Currie. "She assured me that the Bible is true," says Mrs. Stanley. Mrs. Currie followed up her assurances with a letter filled with Scripture references testifying to the truth of God's Word. "I read all of them," says Mrs. Stanley, adding, "Through her prayers and faithful encouragement, my life was changed."

To share her belief in God's Word, Mrs. Stanley wrote a drama in 1986, *Women of the Bible — Telling His Story*, which features 12 women from the Old and New Testaments who tell of the promised Messiah, his life, death and resurrection. Her group continues to perform for

churches and community centers in Florida, Georgia and Alabama. The drama has also been presented to churches in many other states.

Mrs. Stanley and her husband also teach a large adult Sunday school class at their church, Mandarin United Methodist in Jacksonville, Fla., where they now live. "We try to pass on to others the passion that Libby Currie, by the Holy Spirit, stirred in me." The class regularly supports the American Bible Society through the Bible-a-Month Club.

Today, Mrs. Stanley stands solidly on the Scriptures. "The written Word of God, the Bible, is the truth about the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ. It is in knowing him personally that salvation is found. Studying the Scripture should cause us to hunger for the reality of Christ in our lives." ■

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FOR THE RECORD

50 YEARS AGO

Section 220.5 — Bibles

The Rev. Milton Kerr of Lisle, N.Y., wrote the American Bible Society to request a Bible for his public library. That prompted the Rev. John W. Osberg at the Bible Society to ask how many other libraries lacked Bibles — and whether people read the Bibles held in public libraries.

The New York City Public Library listed the Bible as the book in highest demand from 1900 to 1953. In 1953, that library had 75 Bibles in circulation. The May 1953 *Record* reported that “they are in such constant use that they must be replaced several times a year.” A reference librarian told about a man who asked her, “What book would you read if you were told you were going blind in three days.” She hesitated, and he said, “Never mind, I’ll take the Bible.”

“That library in Lisle, New York,” the *Record* said, has a standard-size Bible, a large Bible and a Great Primer New Testament with Psalms.”

The *Record* urged readers to check their local public library’s “Section 220.5 — Bibles” to ensure that the Scriptures were available for all.

PLEASE PRAY

AUSTRIA — Praise God for the positive response from refugees and prisoners receiving free Bibles in their native languages. Pray that the 30,000 people who view a Bible exhibition touring the country every year will be moved to new faith.

CAMEROON — Give thanks for the new Bibles in the TUPURI and MASANA languages and pray that these new Scriptures will touch readers’ lives. Pray for the *Faith Comes By Hearing* (FCBH) audio Scripture program and for those who hear God’s Word through FCBH listening groups.

CHAD — Please pray for ongoing construction of the new Bible House in Chad and for the publication of the Bible in the MUSEY language and the Psalms in the SAR language,

that they will be read with life-transforming effectiveness.

SURINAME — Thank God for a successful launch of the Sranan New Testament and the audio New Testament in the Ndjuká (Aukan) language. Please also pray for the *Mi Bibli* project, which offers Scripture reading classes for ethnic groups in remote areas. Thank God for the growing number of churches in French Guiana supporting Bible work there.

ZIMBABWE — Thank God for the completion of the Bible translation project in the Shona common language. Please pray for successful introduction and distribution to Shona speakers. Also pray for cooperation among agencies in the country to produce Braille Bible materials in the Shona and Ndebele languages.

IN MEMORIAM

MEMORIALIZE A LOVED ONE BY HELPING TO PROVIDE BIBLES TO PEOPLE WHO DON’T YET HAVE ONE

Beno & Mary Ayers
Given by: Karl and Sandra Ayers

Susan Bauernfeind
Mrs. Lucinda Messerschmidt
Pastor Lowell Messerschmidt
Given by: Elizabeth C. Messerschmidt

My Parents, Mr. George and
Mrs. Jennie Burckhardt
Given by: Mrs. Irene B. Dugger

In Memory of my beloved brother,
Mr. Carl Elsaser
Given by his sister, Miss Edna Elsaser

My Mother, Almeda Ham
My Husband, George W. Kelley
Given by: Helen P. Kelley

My Sister, Debra Hartpence
Given by: Steven J. Parrish

Marion W. Knighton
Given by: Marion Cotter Kliniski

Woodrow B. Miller
Given by: Ruth Miller

Mrs. Judy Milton
Given by: Mr. and Mrs. John Kalina

Ruth Robinson
Jesse Leonard Simpson
Given by: Tirzah Bible Society

My Husband, Hans Schafft
Given by: Lillian R. Schafft

Mary Merrick Goodwin Storrs
Given by: Charles and Betty Storrs

Mr. Frank T. Tomlinson
Given by: Alice P. Driver

My Husband, Raymond H. Wright
Given by: Alberta B. Wright

Memorials of \$500 or more for one individual or family unit will be published in the American Bible Society Record.

For further details about the memorial program, please write to:

Donor Relations, American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York NY 10023-7505.

PRINTING THE BIBLE IN CHINA

30 Million and Counting BY PETER FEUERHERD

WHEN DONORS GIVE TO THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, MANY have a vision of paying for Bibles to be shipped from the United States to some remote location around the world, where people are hungry for the Word of God. Now, thanks to faithful American Bible Society contributors, Bibles printed within a given country offer a point of pride to native Christians who can have access to locally produced Scriptures. At the same time, local production reduces publication costs, mak-

ing the Scriptures more widely available.

The largest such Scripture printing enterprise in China is the Amity Printing Company in Nanjing, one of the country's major industrial cities, conveniently situated along the Yangtze River, and easily accessible by sea and air.

This initiative is a joint venture of the United Bible Societies (UBS) and Amity Printing, established by Chinese Christians to publish Bibles and to meet the needs of the growing Christian community in the world's most populous country.

Last year, the company celebrated the printing of its 30 millionth Bible (including Scriptures for the blind) since it began operations in 1987. The Bibles are a centerpiece of Christian outreach to China and are made possible by donations of paper to Amity Printing through UBS, a confederation of world Bible Societies that includes the American Bible Society. Because of this support, the cost of Chinese Bibles has been kept low, an important consideration, especially to people living in the impoverished Chinese countryside.

Amity Printing is a vivid example of how Christians can effectively spread the gospel. It was established through the

donation of \$4.9 million worth of modern printing equipment and \$900,000 of start-up capital, all contributed by Christian churches and individuals in the United States and around the world. Now that the presses have been rolling effectively for the past 15 years, the focus has shifted to better distribution in rural areas where the Scriptures remain scarce. (*Opportunity 21* — a joint program of the American Bible Society, the MacLellan Foundation and UBS — promotes Scripture engagement around the world, and is funding the purchase of vans to transport Scriptures throughout the Chinese countryside. See page 9.)

At Amity Printing, many staffers consider their work more meaningful than simply earning a living. Ma Wei, 26, a typesetter for the Braille Bible, is one such worker. He has been visually impaired since his early childhood, and struggled for many years to understand why this happened to him.

Ma Wei's spiritual "eyes" were opened when he heard the passage in John's Gospel about another blind man. He believes that God led him to Amity Printing, where he has worked since



About 90 percent of the paper used for printing Chinese Bibles at the Amity Printing Company now comes from paper production mills in China.

1996: "God guided me to the place where Scriptures for the blind are printed so that I could encounter his Word," he says. He adds that that encounter changed his life. "This has opened my heart to receive Christ Jesus as my Savior and become a child of God."

His work as a typesetter has greatly deepened his understanding of God's love and enriched his spiritual life, and he now declares, "Though my eyes cannot see, my heart is able to." ■

<< *China continued from page 11*

Society include videos, such as the *Jesus* film, which is packaged with Luke's Gospel and distributed by Catholic churches. "It is a breakthrough for the Catholic Church to obtain [official government] permission" to hand these out, says Kua Wee Seng. He adds that some 50,000 video packages will be given out through the O-21 program.

In a country with so many millions of people yet to learn the liberating words of Jesus, and with church growth far exceeding the short supply of Bibles, every effort can make a tremendous difference. We know that, with help from dedicated Bible Society supporters, the American Bible Society can help the Church in China fulfill the Lord's great commission. ■



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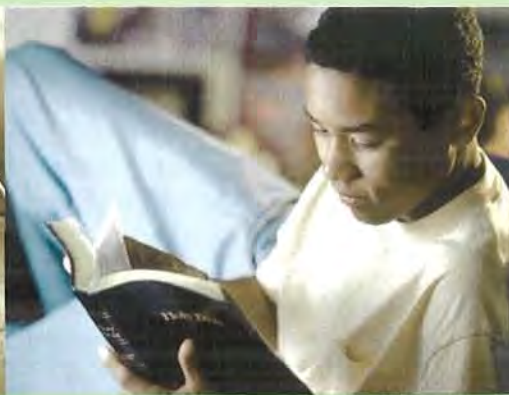
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AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY



GOD CARED *when he didn't*

BY FRANCINE LANGE

When Earl Garrett, Jr. talks about his plans to become a nurse and pastor and to work with the youth at his church, it's easy to recognize the nurturing and leadership qualities he carries. But Earl's life several years ago revealed a very different person: a pot-smoking teen with a serious drinking problem, a growing arrest record and an arrogance that masked despair and anger.

Earl's transformation took place through an encounter with the God of the Scriptures and a family that supported him during that dark period. "I had to be at my lowest point for God to get to me," says Earl, now 21.

Born and raised in Miami, Earl grew up in a Christian environment, but rejected the counsel of loving parents who warned him to steer clear of troublemaking friends. By his own account, Earl began smoking marijuana daily at age 14; by age 18 he was getting high 10 times a day.

He and his friends began breaking into cars, grabbing what they could. "With the money we made selling audio equipment and stolen stuff, we'd buy drugs, buy drinks, throw parties," he says.

His alcoholism affected his performance at a waitressing job. "I'd have to drink a shot just to stop the shakes so I could wait the tables like a normal person," Earl says. He got aggressive when he was drunk, and that led to several arrests for disorderly conduct and assault.

At home, clashes with his parents and pleadings from his older sister, Tia, to get help, didn't stop him. As Earl recalls those years, he also remembers deep yearnings: "I always had dreams of being something." Earl did finish high school and applied for college, but the dreams were just not happening.

An attempt at a modeling career led him into more trouble.

The thousands of dollars he made for a day's work became another funding source for his habits.

One Sunday, Earl attended a service at his church where guest speaker Sandy Fatow spoke about her life as a suicidal heroin addict, and how an encounter in a rehabilitation center turned her around. A woman there shared Christ's redeeming love with Ms. Fatow and now, some 26 years later, she's a pastor, prison minister and author.

Ms. Fatow's words resonated in his spirit, and the next morning he decided to enroll in the Sunrise Mission, a Christian rehabilitation center she had mentioned that treats young people with substance abuse and emotional problems.

After living there for several months, where he immersed himself in Scripture study, devotions and counseling, a new light shone in his eyes, recalls sister Tia. His conversation now centered on Scripture. "Everything I looked for out there I found in the Word," Earl says.

Now working with a youth group at church and attending nursing school, Earl hopes to pastor a church one day. Now, says Earl, "I wake up in the morning and I want to read the

"Everything I looked for out there



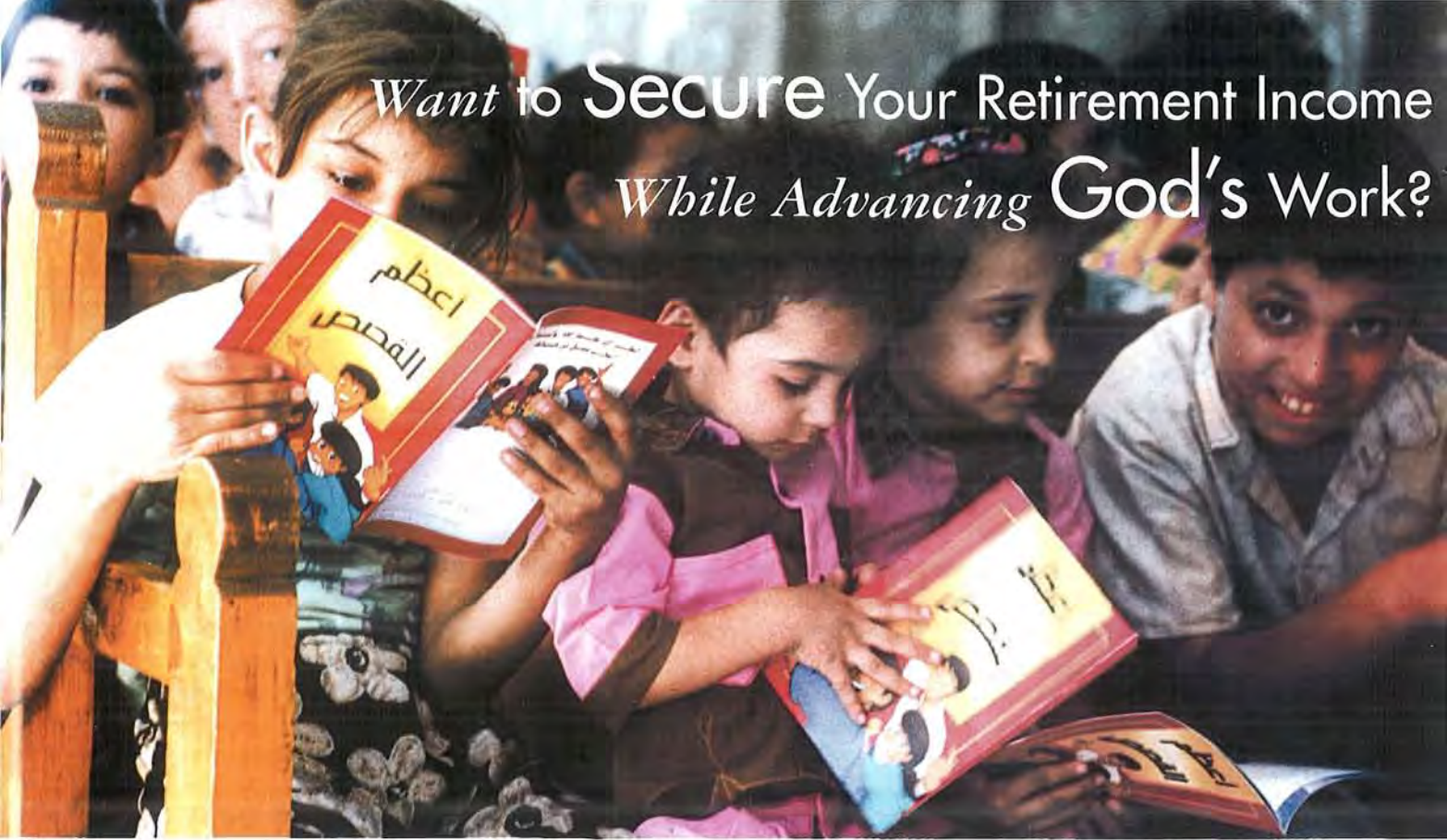
JOHN COTÉ

... I found in the Word."

Word. It's something I love to do now."

You can help us reach kids like Earl — kids in crisis — by becoming an American Bible Society Word Sponsor. Your contributions will help the Bible Society use Scripture to help kids become soul survivors. Call toll-free 1-866-WORD-ABS (967-3227) to learn more or click on the Word Sponsor Web site at www.americanbible.com. You may also mail your contribution (marking it as a Word Sponsor donation) in the envelope provided.

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A Small Church with a Big Presence

"I do this in order that they may be filled with courage and may be drawn together in love, and so have the full wealth of assurance which true understanding brings."

— Colossians 2.2a GNT

First Presbyterian Church (FPC) of Corona, Calif., a tiny church about 50 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles, doesn't allow size to limit its ministry. In the "real world," nearly 70 percent of the church's roughly 100 members faithfully attend weekly worship and midweek church functions. By all accounts, it's a thriving church family, committed to building authentic, intimate community.

But Roxanne Miller, First Presbyterian's volunteer Web editor, has a vision to reach beyond the brick-and-mortar boundaries of the church building — to reach out to seekers in the immediate area, across the nation and even around the world. Thanks to strong support from the American Bible Society's *ForMinistry.com*, this church's Web presence on the Internet has also become a shining example of effective ministry online. Dr. Miller is so excited by changing lives via the Net that she's become the local Web "e-vangelist," building the Presbytery's own site and equipping other Web editors to serve their churches. "I see myself as a person who seeks out every tool available on the Internet that [the church] can use to spread the Word of God," she says.

Shortly after joining First Presbyterian in 1999, Dr. Miller, a researcher and project director at the University of California at Riverside, was elected to

lay leadership and ordained as an elder. She pressed for a Web site, but was always told there was no money, and besides, "Who looks on the Web for a church?" But Dr. Miller knew better, based on her own cross-country move to Corona from Miami, Fla., earlier that year. Her husband had been transferred there six months before that, and while waiting to join him, she made finding a church home in her new town her top priority. She turned to the Internet, but in 1999 Corona churches weren't online. (She "discovered" First Presbyterian when the Millers bought their home in that neighborhood.)

Dr. Miller got her chance to demonstrate the value of a church Internet connection when First Presbyterian's pastor left in the fall of 2001. Hiring a new pastor for a Presbyterian church this size can take as long as two years. In December, she came across the Bible Society *ForMinistry* and had the First Presbyterian's Web site up and running at no cost within a few hours. She then acquired their custom domain name, www.fpc-corona.org, for a small fee, listed it in search engines throughout the Internet and started publicizing the site in newspapers, bulletins and church brochures. She posted all required information for pastoral applicants on the site.

Using the FPC Web site, the church's search committee was able to screen, interview and hire their new pastor, the Rev. Sayer Strauch, in 12 months. The site, Rev. Strauch writes, "helped me immensely to understand their community, their culture and where they were on their journey with the Lord. I was better able to see their strengths and weaknesses, how my gifts



Madonna and Child with Cherubim, Circle of Agostino di Antonio di Duccio, Nicolò Roccagliata, (1418-after 1481), Italian, late 15th century. From the collection of Michael Hall.

PHOTOGRAPH © 2001 AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Building a Church Via the Web

could match theirs and how my gifts would need to be tailored to lead FPC effectively."

Dr. Miller also reports great success with their prayer forum, receiving requests from all around the world each week. These are prayed for both individually, as a congregation and through Internet memberships with other intercessory groups. One miraculous example involves an FPC elder's 15-year-old niece, Danielle. In January the site received an urgent e-mail describing the girl's illness — she had contracted toxic shock syndrome: "Her organs are shutting down, there is definite kidney and liver damage, her lungs are bleeding and she is now on full life support systems to help her fight the infection. We're asking for your prayers and God's grace."

Dr. Miller forwarded the desperate e-mail to other churches and estimates that more than 200 churches including FPC got the e-mail. A month later, Danielle was recovering at home, off all medication and gaining back some of the 15 pounds she lost during the crisis. Follow-up e-mails include: "Not only is her healing a miracle, but also the doctors are still completely amazed at her recovery. There is no medical reason for it." And, "There is obviously power when we all come together in prayer and in the presence of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and humbly lay our burdens at his feet."

Dr. Miller has now embarked on her own personal ministry, which has grown out of her research into effective church Web sites. Fueled by a passion to convey the gospel — to provide daily resources to people and offer spiritual support using *ForMinistry's* tools and resources — she has created a Christian daily living section, with prayer and study resources that are updated daily, and an electronic prayer request system. And, with some additional help from *ForMinistry*, she was able to add a multimedia gospel presentation — an online movie people can view on their computers — developed by the Southern Baptists. Viewers can respond to Dr. Miller at First Presbyterian via e-mail after they watch the film. This inter-denominational

resource sharing highlights how "cross-pollination" can empower churches through the Internet.

As people have found First Presbyterian's site, Dr. Miller has been fielding questions from around the country about various features on their site. She stresses that she had no Web development experience prior to establishing the FPC site. From her "know-nothing" position nearly two years ago to becoming the Web editor of a growing Internet ministry — using *ForMinistry* tools and other Internet resources — Dr. Miller offers practical encouragement to other churches with a will and a dream to start their own site.



Web editor Roxanne Miller, with her 4-year-old son, Andrew, had no previous site development experience before establishing her church site. *ForMinistry* helped her get First Presbyterian's up and running within hours.

She says, "The Holy Spirit has led me to the conclusion that there are a lot of churches out there that need to hear our story of online ministry, and to learn how we've established our Web presence." In prayer, she senses the Lord calling her to a wider mission in support of others doing online church ministry. "Thanks to the American Bible Society, *ForMinistry.com* and FPC, I anticipate that soon after Easter we will be helping novice church Web editors, with the ultimate goal of glorifying God and spreading the gospel via the Internet."

Dr. Miller's story is only one of the many successes we have heard about since going live with *ForMinistry*. If your church is considering a leap of faith into cyberspace, why not follow her lead and tap into *ForMinistry's* resources to share God's love to a Net-connected generation. Click on www.ForMinistry.com to find out how

you can help strengthen your church's online connections.

If you want to make a secure e-donation to support the work and mission of ForMinistry, simply click on <https://secure.forministry.com/provision/>. ■

— CHRIS THYBERG

CThyberg@ForMinistry.com

Director, Ministry Development — *ForMinistry*
An Internet ministry of the American Bible Society "Equipping the Church Online For Ministry"®

update

N A T I O N A L

■ NEW YORK

What does the Old Testament have to say about the attributes of God? Who are the sisters of Jesus mentioned in Matthew 13:55-57? Why are there so many translations of the Scriptures?*

Answers to questions such as these are available on a new Web site sponsored by the American Bible Society at www.BibleResourceCenter.org.



BIBLE RESOURCE CENTER

▼ An online resource center from the American Bible Society for students of all ages.

The Web site consolidates previous education sites sponsored by the American Bible Society, and also links to ForMinistry.com, a site facilitating congregational ministry online,

and AmericanBible.org, the main site that describes programs and ministry the Bible Society offers.

BibleResourceCenter.org, notes Adina Hamik, director of Educational Learning for the American Bible Society, “answers what our users are asking for and puts it in one site.” It is home for 10,000 content items about the Bible organized around information sought by learners, teachers, researchers and biblical translators, all in a simple-to-use format.

Specialized articles on various Scriptural themes — such as the role of prophets, for example — explore the various ways the topic is covered in Scripture, including basic factual information, how the subject can be taught to

children in Sunday school classes and how the concept has been translated through the ages. Through curricula, maps, articles, games, multi-media presentations and more, BibleResourceCenter.org offers stimulating ways for people of all ages to enrich their engagement with the Bible.

*(Answers are available through BibleResourceCenter.org. Just click on the Translations icon and scroll down to the “mailbox” section.)

■ NEW YORK

In response to the outpouring of grief from the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster, the American Bible Society ran public service print and radio ads in tribute to the seven astronauts who lost their lives in the accident (see page 27). The ads mourned the loss but provided comfort from the Scriptures and offered a free Scripture booklet with verses from the Bible selected specifically for the brokenhearted. Some 7.5 million people saw or heard the messages and more than 600 people requested 6,200 Scripture booklets.

The print ads ran in *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *The Orlando Sentinel*, *The Washington Post* and in the domestic and international editions of *USA Today*.

Radio messages aired on stations in Dallas, Houston and Orlando, with narration from Bible Society President Eugene B. Habecker (in English) and Vice President Emilio A. Reyes, head of the Office of Latino Affairs (in Spanish).

One Bible Society supporter, the Rev. John Y. Elliott, a deacon at McLean Baptist Church, in McLean, Va., wrote: “Throughout my 56 years of ministry, I have held a sincere respect for the American Bible Society. By eagerly putting the Scriptures into the hands of as many people as possible, year after year, you have proclaimed the relevance of the Bible in everyday



THE LORD IS NEAR TO THE BROKENHEARTED

A MESSAGE OF COMFORT, A TRIBUTE TO COURAGE FROM THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, IN MISSION TO THIS WORLD SINCE 1816.

We at the American Bible Society mourn the loss of the seven astronauts aboard Space Shuttle Columbia and pray for their families, friends, NASA colleagues and for all people who, as members of the human family, share in grieving for these brave souls.

"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit." PSALM 34:18 (NRSV)

In confusing times such as these, we draw comfort and reassurance from God's Word. The Scriptures overflow with promises of God's love and how the majesty of our loving Creator is reflected in the pioneering spirit of those with the courage, confidence and creativity to reach for the stars.

"When I look at the sky, which you have made, at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places — what are human beings, that you think of them; mere mortals, that you care for them? Yet you made them inferior only to yourself; you crowned them with glory and honor." PSALM 8:3-5 (GNT)



Our pain of loss is sharp, but just as strong is our confidence that God's love never fails.

"But all who find safety in you will rejoice; they can always sing for joy. Protect those who love you; because of you they are truly happy." PSALM 5:11 (GNT)

Share the free Scripture booklet, *"The Lord Is Near to the Brokenhearted,"* with family and friends. Additional copies are downloadable from our Web site at www.americanbible.org or call 1-800-32 BIBLE.



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

life. I will post the ad on the bulletin board of our church."

■ NEW JERSEY

Early this year, the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens in Somerset, N.J., honored the American Bible Society with its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Vision Award. The church grants the award to those it believes pursue Dr. King's dream of justice and goodwill, and exemplify a full understanding of the gospel.

The Rev. DeForest B. Soaries Jr., senior pastor of the church, who presented the award, was New Jersey's secretary of state on Sept. 11, 2001. He recalled the urgent need for electrical power in lower Manhattan following the World Trade Center destruction, and the response by his state to supply it. The real power that was needed, he said, came from the American Bible Society — the power of God's love and care.

Rev. Soaries drew special attention to the vigorous outreach provided by the Bible Society's distribution of millions of copies of the *God Is Our Shelter and Strength* Scripture Portion in the days and weeks following the devastation. He said, "It is such vision-ary perspective in the

midst of difficult times that makes the American Bible Society the only appropriate recipient of the King Vision Award for such a time."

Bible Society President Eugene B. Habecker said, "The American Bible Society is dedicated to connecting people with the God of the Bible, and we are humbled and grateful to

receive this award. It is a recognition that honors all of the people at the Bible Society."

■ FLORIDA



OFFICE OF LATINO AFFAIRS

▲ In a continuing effort to promote unity among Hispanic clergy and ministry leaders in South Florida, the American Bible Society Office of Latino Affairs (OLA) is hosting its fourth annual Prayer Breakfast this May.

1-800-flowers.com SM

Share Easter blessings with gifts from 1-800-FLOWERS.COM® and help support the American Bible Society!

Ten percent* of the net proceeds from your purchase will be donated to the American Bible Society. Just use promotion code BIBLE when ordering by phone at 1-800-FLOWERS (1-800-356-9377) or online at www.1800flowers.com.

(*Items may vary and are subject to delivery rules and times. This offer is valid online and by phone. Offers cannot be combined, are not available on all products and are subject to restrictions and limitations. This offer is valid through December 31, 2003, and void where prohibited. 1-800-FLOWERS.COM® uses Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryption technology to secure its Web site.) ■



ROY LLOYD

INTERNATIONAL

■ COLOMBIA

The Colegio Filadelfia para Sordos (Filadelfia School for the Deaf) in Bogotá, Colombia, is successfully integrating Scripture materials obtained from the Colombian Bible Society into its curriculum. Pupils, teachers and parents are welcoming the addition of the Bible resources.



LARRY JERDEN/UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

▲ Students at the Filadelfia School for the Deaf signing outside the classroom.

"The Bible Society has provided us with a lot of good materials," said Patty Jones, the missionary founder and principal of the school, "but we are especially interested in those with illustrations. We use the Bible with pictures that look like comics because it is easy for the students to go from the illustrations to the text and so gain a better understanding of what they are reading."

In addition to Scripture booklets and Bibles, the school also uses the New Testament series *Let's Learn* and *Heroes of Faith*, which helps children learn Bible principles while they paint, according to assistant principal Solange Prieto. "The parents are very happy with the academic instruction, the spiritual formation and the biblical instruction," she said.

The 186 pupils attending the school range in age from 2 to 17 years. The school sprang from a vision to serve the deaf that Ms. Jones had while attending a missionary training school in Dallas, Texas. She started a pilot program with a small group of students in Colom-

bia to demonstrate that using sign language rather than lip-reading was more effective in teaching the deaf. The experiment proved successful, and today the school is the only institution for the deaf registered in Colombia to teach children.

The school also instructs students' parents (many with poor reading skills) in a special Saturday program using the Bible Society's illustrated Scriptures. Said Ms. Jones, "For two hours we give information and lectures about family life and Christian living; then we have an hour of sign language instruction."

■ BRAZIL

When Dr. Wanderley Afonso da Costa Jr. joined the 73rd police station in São Paulo, Brazil, as deputy police chief, he became aware of a strong Christian witness at the station. Police officers were sponsoring and conducting daily services and a weekly mass. Officers at the station seemed to draw a spirit of joy from the Scriptures they read.

Now, in response to that joyful ambiance, Dr. Afonso da Costa has become a man of faith himself and a driving force behind the station's outreach to the community. He hands out pocket-sized New Testaments — provided by the Bible Society of Brazil — along with rice and beans — purchased with his own money or with donations from friends and local businesses — to anyone who walks into the station when he's on duty. He introduced food-sharing when he discovered that combining the Word of God (spiritual food) with rice and beans (physical food) eased the way for him to show God's overarching love — sharing both physical comfort and spiritual hope from the Scriptures — with his needy neighbors.

"Through the teaching of Jesus, I try to convey the same joy to everyone I come into contact with," he explained. ■



BIBLE SOCIETY OF BRAZIL

◀ The police station in São Paulo, where Dr. Wanderley Afonso da Costa, Jr. serves as deputy police chief, reaches out to the needy in his community with worship services, free New Testaments and food. The sign at the station entrance reads, "In God We Trust."

quiet time

We hope you will use this guide in your daily study of the Bible, and that you will write to tell us what you think of this feature and how you use it.

MAY

*Believe the Good News and
Learn of God's Kindness and Mercy*

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

- 1 Psalm 85
- 2 Psalm 23
- 3 Psalm 32

SUNDAY

- 4 Isaiah 40.1-11
- 5 Isaiah 40.12-31
- 6 Isaiah 41.1-10
- 7 Isaiah 41.11-20
- 8 Isaiah 42.1-17
- 9 Isaiah 43.1-13
- 10 Isaiah 43.14-28

SUNDAY

- 11 Isaiah 44.1-8
- 12 Isaiah 44.21-28
- 13 Isaiah 48.1-11
- 14 Isaiah 48.12-22
- 15 Isaiah 49.8-18
- 16 Isaiah 49.19-26
- 17 Isaiah 51.1-16

SUNDAY

- 18 Jeremiah 3.1-14
- 19 Jeremiah 3.15-25
- 20 Lamentations 3.19-33
- 21 Ezekiel 33.10-20
- 22 Ezekiel 34.11-31
- 23 Hosea 14.1-9
- 24 Exodus 34.1-9

SUNDAY

- 25 Psalm 81
- 26 Psalm 91
- 27 Psalm 103
- 28 Matthew 18.21-35

ASCENSION DAY

(WESTERN CHURCHES)

- 29 Acts 1.1-11
- 30 Luke 15.11-32
- 31 1 Peter 2.1-10

JUNE

*Believe the Good News and
Experience New Life by the
Power of God's Spirit*

SUNDAY

- 1 Luke 11.1-13
- 2 John 14.15-31
- 3 John 15.18—16.4
- 4 John 16.5-15
- * 5 John 16.16-33
- 6 Ezekiel 37.1-14
- 7 Joel 2.28—3.8

PENTECOST SUNDAY (WESTERN CHURCHES)

- 8 Acts 2.1-13
- 9 Acts 2.14-36
- 10 Acts 2.37-47
- 11 Acts 3.1-10
- 12 Acts 3.11-26
- 13 Acts 4.1-22
- 14 Acts 4.23-37

SUNDAY

- * 15 Acts 10.1-16
- 16 Acts 10.17-33
- 17 Acts 10.34-48
- 18 Acts 11.1-18
- 19 Acts 11.19-30
- 20 Acts 16.1-15
- 21 Acts 16.16-40

SUNDAY

- 22 Romans 8.1-17
- 23 Romans 8.18-39
- 24 1 Corinthians 12.1-11
- 25 1 Corinthians 12.12-31
- 26 Galatians 5.16-26
- 27 Ephesians 4.1-16
- 28 Ephesians 4.17—5.2

SUNDAY

- 29 2 Timothy 1.1-8
- 30 Revelation 22.1-21

**Orthodox Christians will observe
Ascension Day on June 5, and
Pentecost Sunday on June 15, 2003.*

JULY

*Believe the Good News and
Encourage One Another in Faith*

- 1 2 Corinthians 1.1-11
- 2 2 Corinthians 1.12—2.4
- 3 2 Corinthians 2.5-17
- 4 2 Corinthians 3.1-18
- 5 2 Corinthians 4.1-15

SUNDAY

- 6 2 Corinthians 4.16—5.10
- 7 2 Corinthians 5.11-21
- 8 2 Corinthians 6.1-13
- 9 Philippians 2.1-11
- 10 Philippians 2.12-30
- 11 Philippians 3.1-11
- 12 Philippians 3.12—4.1

SUNDAY

- 13 Colossians 1.1-14
- 14 Colossians 1.15-23
- 15 Colossians 1.24—2.7
- 16 1 Thessalonians 1.1-10
- 17 1 Thessalonians 4.1-12
- 18 1 Thessalonians 4.13—5.11
- 19 1 Thessalonians 5.12-28

SUNDAY

- 20 Hebrews 10.1-18
- 21 Hebrews 10.19-39
- 22 Hebrews 11.1-7
- 23 Hebrews 11.8-22
- 24 Hebrews 11.23-40
- 25 Hebrews 12.1-13
- 26 Hebrews 12.14-29

SUNDAY

- 27 Hebrews 13.1-21
- 28 1 Peter 3.13-22
- 29 1 Peter 4.1-11
- 30 1 Peter 4.12-19
- 31 1 Peter 5.1-14

BIBLE REVIVAL IN ETHIOPIA

AT THE BIBLE SOCIETY IN Ethiopia, staffer Wengelawit Glmeskel takes her work home. That is, she leads a Bible study in her residence.

Ms. Glmeskel, whose first name means “evangel,” or “someone who brings good news,” finds deep satisfaction in leading the study, adding that it is improving her own life. “And I see the change in the lives of others, too,” she said. Ms. Glmeskel teaches a group of about 10 people in their 20s. Leading this group fulfills a longtime dream, she said. “I’ve wanted to lead a Bible study since I was a child.” When her church, a congregation of the Mekane Yesus Evangelical Church, asked for volunteers, she eagerly stepped forward.

Ms. Glmeskel’s group represents a growing trend in Ethiopia. Dr. Loren Bliese, a translation consultant for the United Bible Societies (UBS) based in Ethiopia, said, “Bible studies are very strong now in Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches,” the three predominant church groups in the country.

Such broad desire for the Scriptures and a yearning to understand them offer significant opportunities for the Bible Society in Ethiopia. According to Kebede Mamo, the former Bible Society general secretary, the 20 staff members also face some challenges in their great calling of translating, producing and distributing Scriptures.

One major challenge is financial support for Scripture work. The average annual per capita income of Ethiopia’s population — some 63 million — is about \$102. There are no printers in the country capable of printing a full Bible, so full Scriptures must be printed in South Korea or Hong Kong. When they are imported back into the country, the Bible Society incurs a book tax. The Scriptures cost nearly \$6 to produce, said Mr. Mamo, but “most Ethiopians cannot afford Bibles.” The Bible Society in Ethiopia subsidizes half that amount to make them more affordable.

Most distribution happens through local churches, he



LARRY JERDEN/UBS

▲ Seventy percent of the 63 million in Ethiopia are under 30, and many churches have vibrant youth programs. Tassew Negash, distribution director of the Bible Society of Ethiopia, gives illustrated Gospels to students in the Nativity Boys’ School in Addis Ababa.

explained. “More people are coming to churches, and with literacy increasing, more Bibles are needed,” he said, adding, “If churches can provide financial support, we can supply the Scriptures.”

The organization receives help from several sources, the UBS, national fund-raising efforts and gifts from churches and missions organizations around the world. But with so many Ethiopians still without Bibles, much more is needed.

Ethiopia also affords a great opportunity to reach young people: Seventy percent of the population is under the age of 30. Bible Society Youth Officer Alemayehu Bekele said that many churches in Ethiopia have vibrant youth programs so “the Bible Society just needs well-placed contact people to reach them for Bible distribution.”

Mr. Bekele has seen a strong desire for God’s Word among the young. He also sees a special urgency to reach this population group — more than 10 percent of the people between the ages of 15 to 49 in Ethiopia are HIV-positive. If they do not connect the young with the Bible quickly, he said, “We could ‘lose’ an entire generation.” ■

Double Your Impact in China!



The Christian church in China is one of the fastest growing in the world. Already, hundreds of thousands of Chinese people are coming to Christ each month. This presents us with a tremendous opportunity to help meet the growing need for Bibles in China.

Now American Bible Society partners can double their impact in China. Any gift you send between now and May 31 will double in value! Your gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the gifts of Bible Societies from other countries — up to \$500,000. With your help, we hope to have \$1,000,000 to help place God's Word into the hands of millions of China's spiritually hungry people.

Thank you for joining us in this critical mission — your gift will help change countless lives in China with God's Word.

If more than \$500,000 is raised, the excess amount will also be matched with gifts from other Bible Societies and used in other Asian countries where the need is great.

Yes, I want to help meet the Matching Challenge and give God's Word to millions of China's spiritually hungry people. ☐ Enclosed is my gift of: \$ _____

Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Please return this coupon and your check made payable to the American Bible Society. Contributions to the American Bible Society are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible as allowed by law.



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