AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

RECORD

April | May 2001

FOOD *for the* SOUL

HOW BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES ARE CHANGING LIVES ON NEW YORK'S BOWERY

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Embrace Life, Read Scripture

"If you want to have eternal life, you must obey his (God's) commandments." —MATTHEW 19.17 CEV

The director of the National Human Genome Research Institute has described the newly sequenced human genome as "a book of life." But as incredible as is the medical, life-saving hope generated by this mapping of the human genome, its prospects for a better life pale in comparison to the book of life referenced in the Scriptures.

Even as the wonder of the human genome is unraveled, its biological promises remain earthbound — what science describes as a struggle for survival that inevitably ends in death and decay — a life whose pain we try to soften with what Blaise Pascal termed "distractions." Yet this life of distraction is the best that most people can imagine.

So when Jesus says, "The water I give is like a flowing fountain that gives eternal life," people ought to sit up and take notice. The Bible points the way to abundant life now as well as to life in a different dimension altogether — life outside of time — life for eternity.

But in our culture of self-reliant independence and distrust of authority, many people, even those who claim to be followers of Christ, are more likely to strive for the good life by digesting the *Wall Street Journal* than to learn right living by studying the Scriptures. A recent national survey by Barna Research Group exposes a high level of Biblical illiteracy, even among teens that claim "to believe the Bible ... in all that it teaches."

Can it be that the Bible — God's manual for living now and forever after — is judged accurate but irrelevant to our daily struggles? Jesus tells us that only by letting go of life will we find life. In John 10.10 he assures us, "I came so that everyone would have life, and have it in its fullest."

Still, many of us behave like the phantom, shadow-like people C.S. Lewis describes in *The Great Divorce* — we desperately cling to life's miseries rather than learn to live according to the divine reality, and thereby savor the joy of new life in all its abundance.

Engaging with God's Word just a few minutes each day can help us to think outside the box — to rise above and beyond what might come to us naturally and gain a long-term view on life.

The Bible Society wants people to engage with the Word — to read it and respond to its life-giving message. We thank you for past support in this crucial effort and pray for your continued partnership with us in the future.

Eugene B. Habecker

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The mission of the American Bible Society is to provide the Holy Scriptures to every man, woman and child in a language and form each can readily understand, and at a price each can easily afford. This purpose, undertaken without doctrinal note or comment, and without profit, is a cause which all Christians and all churches are urged to support. The Society is a member of the United Bible Societies, a partnership of Bible societies throughout the world cooperating to make Scriptures available to people everywhere in their own language.

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ON THE COVER: In a city park Tom Ford cradles his ABS New Testament while eating lunch, both given by the Bowery Mission. (Photo by David Singer)

RECORD

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Top: Curator Patricia Pongracz encourages Michael during an ABS Gallery workshop. Middle: Michael Johnson, Guillermo "Willie" Torres, Luis Rodriguez at the Bowery Mission.

We encourage you to send your letters to: Editor, American Bible Society Record, *1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023-7505. Telephone: 212-408-8710. Reach ABS on the web at www.americanbible.org*

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY PROFILE

Teaching Biblical Art Appreciation

A Visual Generation Takes a Closer Look

The Gallery at the American Bible Society expanded its education program in November 2000, when I began hosting a group of students from Martin Luther King Jr. High School, a New York City public school. The weekly meetings, held at Bible House in Manhattan, combine biblical art appreciation and craft activities.

In November the students considered the meaning of Thanksgiving. We discussed the significance of sharing a festival meal of thanks with the Native Americans. This discussion culminated in the students decorating boxes for a Thanksgiving food drive.

Making Visual Culture: Christmas ornament workshop students with their teacher, Candace Hill.

Discussion of religion's role in the founding of the United States was a natural segue for the December Gallery tour. Viewing the diverse media displayed in *Exhibiting the Visual Culture of American Religions* the students engaged questions about the picturing of Christ, how various faiths present themselves visually, how this changes over time, and the importance of visual tradition for celebrating, preserving and recording sacred ritual.

In December students made their own visual culture by creating Christmas ornaments. This provided a forum for discussing the Christmas story and the traditions developed around its celebration. Students were introduced to the chronology of Christ's life, his teachings, and his miracles.

For February we focused on Christ's life and teachings by analyzing the current Gallery exhibition, *Printing the Word: The Art of Watanabe Sadao.* The 59 stencil prints in the display are divided into five thematic sections: The Old Testament, The Life of Christ, Teachings, Miracles, and The Passion of Christ. By studying these vibrant narratives the students are becoming well-versed in biblical imagery.

By Patricia Pongracz
Curator, The Gallery at the American Bible Society

Jacquelyn Sapiie
Associate Director of the ABS Library at Bible House

askjacquie

Readers are encouraged to submit their questions about the Bible to Jacquelyn Sapiie, associate director of the ABS library 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 Why did the Jews and the early Christians split?

(M.L., Kansas)

A Christianity originated as a Jewish sect in the first century.

When Jesus died, his followers believed that he had fulfilled the destiny of the line of David and called him "the Christ," meaning the anointed one.

The Jews who believed Jesus was the Messiah formed the nucleus from which the new religion emerged. Those Jews who did not believe this remained outside the group.

Judaism and Christianity parted because of several issues, but the principal cause was the Christian belief that Jesus was the Messiah. Christianity stopped being a Jewish sect when the early church, at Paul's encouragement, opened its membership to non-Jews without requiring them to accept the ritual prescriptions of the Torah, particularly circumcision, observance of the Sabbath and dietary restrictions.

In the first century the two groups followed parallel but different traditions. The Jews maintained their culture and the Christians relied on creed rather than culture. The heritage of the Old Testament was interpreted differently by both groups.

TRUSTEES

Seeing the Big Biblical Picture

"I often think of the heavens
your hands have made,
and of the moon and stars
you put in place.
Then I ask, 'Why do you care
about us humans?' "
(Psalm 8.3-4, Contemporary English Version*)*

Dr. Franklin Fry, it can be said, is a big-picture kind of guy.

The retired Lutheran pastor, who served churches in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey over a 44-year career, and served on scores of commissions and committees for his Evangelical Lutheran Church in America denomination, is not one to be bogged down in minutiae.

Dr. Franklin D. Fry

Take just one example. After serving seven months as an interim pastor for Luther Memorial Church in Madison, Wis., Dr. Fry sent the congregation an epistle published in the church bulletin.

"Luther Memorial must insist that God be taken seriously," Dr. Fry intoned. "No frivolous worship, no superficial reflection on the Christian faith, no facile presentation of the Christian life."

That seriousness of purpose Dr. Fry brought to his role on the board of trustees of the American Bible Society. Now a senior trustee, he's been on the board since 1972.

Landmark roles for ABS during his tenure on the board have included a Scripture outreach to the former Soviet Union; Opportunity 21 and its promise of outreach to the Islamic world, and development of new uses of technology to tell Bible stories, including interactive video.

He would like to have the board — and the entire Christian church — reflect on its role in the world. Adult faith, he says, is a constant challenge.

One of his favorite Scripture passages is from Psalm 8, in which he finds encouragement to explore the vast meaning of creation and "to be open to all that is new."

— *PETER FEUERHERD*

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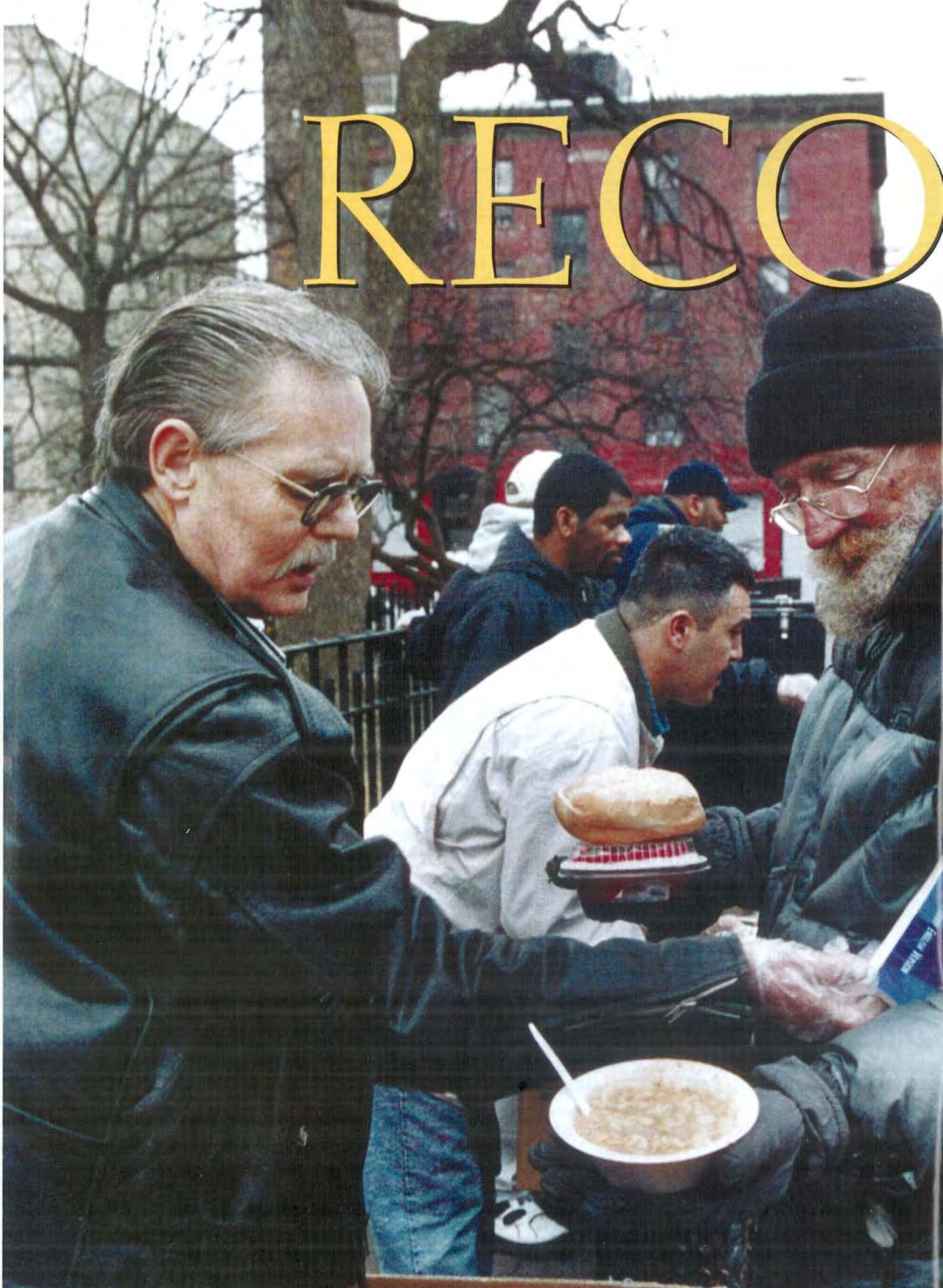


VERING

WITH THE HELP OF THE WORD

By Thomas D. Sullivan

ON WEDNESDAYS AROUND NOON, THE MEN AND WOMEN gather at the Bowery Mission in New York City for chapel. Some have just come off the streets. Some live at the Mission, men who have committed to join a life-changing program, guided by God's Word. All are equally welcome.

Wednesday's service is a special one — the men living at the Bowery Mission earn recognition for passing milestones in a four-part, nine-month personal program.

John Brudermann, left, hands ABS Bible to Tom Ford. (Photos by David Singer)

The high-ceilinged chapel at the Bowery Mission is quite handsome. On the walls above the altar, colorful scroll letters spell out a truth lived there: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all things shall be added."

A choir of eight men from the program sing vigorously and sway back and forth, clapping in uptempo rhythm as an organist plays soulful chords. "I will praise His holy name!" they sing. Many in the congregation match the choir's intensity, putting their hands together and raising their voices. The choir's leader, the solidly built Burnell Gatling, is a dynamo, working up a sweat, proclaiming praises to the Lord.

When the music subsides, Brian Johansson, a tall man with a close-trimmed beard, steps up to the microphone. Mr. Johansson, the mission's executive director, offers a thought based on Scripture. The week before, he had cited the fourth chapter of the Book of Nehemiah — how burnt stones came to serve the purposes of the Lord. Nehemiah used those scorched stones to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. "How many of us have been burnt?" Mr. Johansson asked. The lesson from Nehemiah's work is that God wants to make good use of all of us. "You are worth something to God," he says.

He speaks calmly and insistently. Last week, he asked how many of those gathered in the chapel have been stepped over when they were lying on the street — told to "get a job" by passersby. Mr. Johansson wants to help these men and women get a job. But he wants them to reclaim their dignity. "God loves you and you're worth something." That's what he's learned from God's Word, and that's what he wants to teach to everyone there.

This week, Mr. Johansson takes Psalm 40 as his text.

Men as well as women in the pews reach for Scriptures, supplied by the American Bible Society. Mr. Johansson reads:

> *I waited patiently for the Lord;*
> *And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry*
> *He brought me up also out of a horrible pit,*
> *out of the miry clay,*
> *and set my feet upon a rock,*
> *and established my goings.*
> (Psalm 40, 1-2, *King James Version*)

Most of those in that chapel know what life is like in a horrible pit. Mr. Johansson speaks about the traps people can fall into — "billboard pits" such as drug addiction and alcoholism, as well as other, less-obvious hazards — greed, loneliness, depression.

Then chaplain James Perez leads prayers and calls men forward who are passing milestones in the program. The men receive certificates as their brothers in the pews cheer, applaud and shout encouragement. Then the chaplains of the Bowery Mission pray over the men.

Brian Johansson, left, speaks with Michael Johnson outside the Bowery Mission.

In the crowded chapel, there are many who have cried out to the Lord — and not in vain.

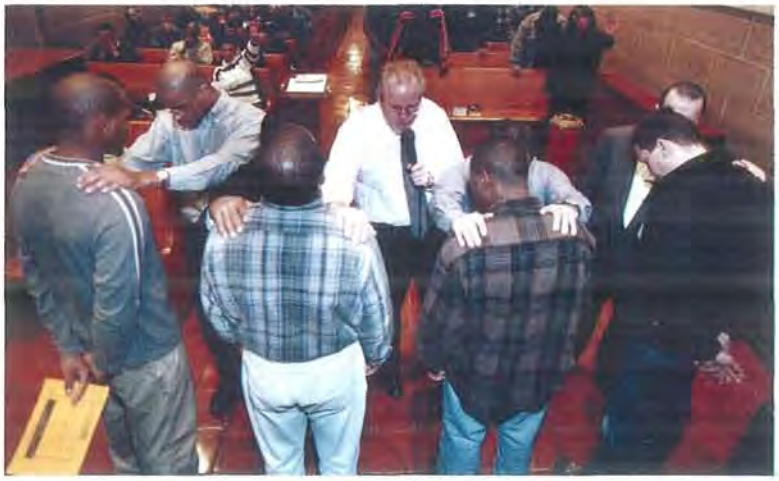
Guillermo "Willie" Torres had sunk into addiction and was homeless when he came to the Bowery Mission. One day, during a chapel service, he shouted out in his heart, begging for Jesus' help. "He heard my cry," says Mr. Torres, a goateed man whose eyes reveal his intensity. By following the steps marked out in Scripture, and the path of the Bowery program, he's changed. "After being a nobody, I'm somebody in Jesus Christ."

Now Willie has found peace through the Bowery Mission's program, which includes serious Bible study. He's been reconciled to his family. When he tells of how he spoke to his father for the first time in seven years, tears stream down his face.

As Mr. Johansson says, "Scripture is the foundation of what we do" at the Bowery Mission. "Change is going to start in the heart," he says of those who want to escape the trap of addiction. About 85 percent of the men in the Bowery program are attempting to recover from alcoholism or drug addiction, according to Mr. Johansson.

The Bowery Mission's program to help bring about a transformation of the heart is rooted in the Scriptures. Chis-

Laying on of hands at chapel service.



eled into a wall of the chapel is a citation of Matthew 25.35 *(When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.* [Contemporary English Version]*)*. It is the guiding principle of the mission's work.

All the men who join the mission's program receive Bibles, and the men find great solace in their struggles.

After the Wednesday chapel service, Michael Johnson is watching the entrance. The people in the program all have jobs at the mission. He's also marking passages in his Bible. He calls Scripture a "safety net," that "gives you a sense of hope."

Solomon Syee, who graduated from the mission's program five years ago, speaks after attending the Wednesday service. "God manifested himself to me" through the Bible study he did at the Bowery Mission. Mr. Syee found great wisdom in chapters four through six of the Book of Hosea, which describe Israel's unfaithfulness, the dreadful consequence of sin — and hope in God's mercy. His experience has taught him that "The Word of God works."

On a tough street in a hard city, the men at the Bowery Mission have found shelter in God's Word. They know it. They live it. Living the Scripture-marked path laid out at the Bowery Mission, Mr. Torres proclaims, "It gets better every day." ■

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE OF FAITH AND GOVERNMENT

Brian Johansson knows a lot about the difference between helping people with government-sponsored programs and privately-funded religious initiatives. He's done both. And he strongly believes both offer an opportunity to witness to the Gospel.

Until recently, he ran the Transition Center, a New York City program aimed at helping men overcome drug addiction and get jobs and apartments. The initiative was entirely funded by New York City, which recognized that program as the most effective of its kind in the city. The Bowery Mission runs the Transition Center, and its staff members are Christians. Scriptures are available at the center, for those who ask for them, paid for with private funds.

Now, Mr. Johansson is executive director at the Bowery Mission, which loudly proclaims its faith in Jesus Christ. (If you want to hear how loudly the people at the mission praise the Lord, drop in on their boisterous afternoon services.) "We have the privilege of laying [the Gospel] out there" for people, he says.

The Transition Center and the Bowery Mission use different methods. At the Transition Center, "Every staff member was a walking billboard" for the power of God in his life, Mr. Johansson says. The men in recovery at the Transition Center are "drawn to the difference in the lives of the staff."

Many are discussing whether faith-based charities should play a larger role in providing social services on behalf of government. Mr. Johansson thinks they can, if both government and religious groups understand how to work together. For one thing, "It works if it's not an adversarial relationship," he says.

Religious groups need to understand that government agencies will be looking for measurable ways of assessing how well services are provided. Those assessments will ensure that programs really are effective, Mr. Johansson says.

The core issue, for religious groups who want to work with government, is having "people who are willing to be flexible in their methods without compromising their integrity. That means strong leadership."

For his part, Mr. Johansson says, "I'm not interested in starting a social service agency. ... I'm interested in providing a vehicle for life transformation."

Mr. Johansson sees the coming years as a "window of opportunity" for a new relationship. He urges that religious non-profit groups investigate the possibility of working with government. "Look into it. Don't be afraid."

One question remains for those who proceed with or without government aid, he says: "Are we meeting the needs of the people who come to us for help?" ■

New *Jubilee Bible* Spotlig

EVERY SUNDAY, WORSHIPERS AT OUR LADY OF VICTORY CHURCH IN

BY PETER FEUERHERD

Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant can tell they are at a center of African-American Catholicism.

On the south side of the church in the New York borough stands a Marian shrine depicting an African Madonna; the proclamation of faith is sung to the tune of *We Shall Overcome*, and Father Martin Carter, pastor, urges all the parishioners to buy themselves a *Jubilee Good News Bible* published by the American Bible Society.

The *Jubilee Good News Bible* is a companion to the *African American Jubilee Bible*, an ABS publication including some 285 pages of supplementary material focused on the role of Africans and African Americans in Christian history. The *Jubilee Good News Bible* contains the seven books — referred to as Apocrypha or Deuterocanonicals — that are part of the Catholic Bible.

The *Jubilee Good News Bible*, offered to the public this year, not only features an approved Catholic version of the Bible but also adds articles aimed at the estimated 3 million African Americans who find their spiritual home in the Roman Catholic Church.

"It will be an enormous value," says Father Carter, a member of the Atonement Friars and pastor of Our Lady of Victory for the past seven years. "It contains information that black Catholics don't know about the Catholic Church."

In the *Jubilee Good News Bible* are articles explaining the development of early Christianity in North Africa; the stories of African popes, and a history of black Catholics in the United States.

Father Carter, a consultant to the *Jubilee Good News Bible*, says the African heritage that has contributed to Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular is important to communicate to both whites and blacks.

He emphasizes that Jesus, and other biblical figures, were Semitic people of Afro-Asian derivation. For centuries, even in some countries of Europe, Jesus' mother has been portrayed as a black woman. The story, in Matthew's Gospel, of Joseph fleeing Palestine with Mary and Jesus for exile in Egypt is an indication, notes Father Carter, that the Holy Family could fit easily into an African culture.

And, he notes, Africans make numerous appearances in the Scriptures, including figures such as Simon of Cyrene, who was pressed into service to carry Jesus' cross and apparently was a member of an early Christian community.

Besides explanations of the Scrip-

Father Martin Carter distributes Communion. (Photos courtesy of the Atonement Friars, Garrison, N.Y.)

hts Black Catholic Faith

Worshipers hold hands during the Lord's Prayer.

tures and their relevance to African Americans in general, the *Good News Jubilee Bible* also contains material of particular interest to black Catholics.

An article by Father James C. Okoye of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago describes the long history of black Catholics in America, beginning with Spanish explorers who brought slaves with them to settlements such as St. Augustine, Fla., in the 16th century. Black Catholics were also pivotal in the founding of cities such as Chicago, New Orleans and Los Angeles.

While in 1839 Pope Gregory XVI condemned slavery, the church had been tolerant of the institution. Some religious orders even owned slaves.

After the Civil War, religious communities for blacks founded parishes and schools in northern and southern cities. One such school, Xavier University in New Orleans, today produces more African American scientists than any other institution.

Despite being discriminated against and banned from many Catholic seminaries and segregated in parishes, black Catholics maintained their faith, even sponsoring giant conventions that attracted thousands in the late 19th century. These national conventions were instituted again in the last decade.

Authors featured in the *Good News Jubilee Bible* address wide serious social and religious concerns as well.

Father Bryan Massingale of St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, Wis., calls for a racial reconciliation in the United States "grounded in an honest engagement with our past, so that we can heal the present and create a new future."

Diana Hayes, professor of theology at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., notes that the history of the Catholic Church and African Americans "is one of highs and lows, successes and failure, prejudice and faith. It is God's message written in crooked lines."

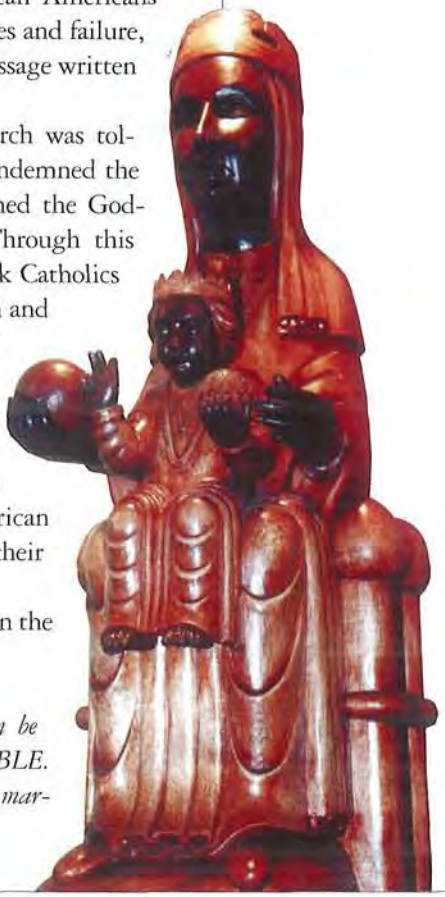
She notes that while the church was tolerant of slavery, "it eventually condemned the traffic in human lives and affirmed the God-given human dignity of all." Through this troubled history, she notes, "Black Catholics have been persistent in their faith and have witnessed the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives."

Father Carter notes that the *Good News Jubilee Bible* should prove to be a contributor to that history, offering African American Catholics an opportunity to see their story in its total fullness.

"I would like to see us unified in the Word," he says. ■

(The Good News Jubilee Bible can be obtained by calling 1-800-32-BIBLE. For more information, ask for the marketing department.)

Statue of Mary and Jesus, Our Lady of Victory Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.



Scrip Literacy

Polls indicate Scriptural knowledge is on the decline

BY PETER FEUERHERD

ALMOST EVERY AMERICAN HOUSEHOLD HAS AT LEAST ONE Bible. Yet, public opinion surveys show, for many, it is a kind of treasured heirloom hidden away in an attic gathering dust, much of its content an inscrutable mystery. Relatively few have a working knowledge of its contents.

It may be painful to acknowledge, but for many Americans the Sermon on the Mount was delivered by Dr. Billy Graham; Joan of Arc is the name of Noah's wife, and, despite all the controversy about its placement on public school walls, most can only name half of the Ten Commandments. Even 80 percent of born-again Christians believe that "God helps them that help themselves" is a biblical saying (it was actually coined by Ben Franklin).

"We revere the Bible, but we don't read it," notes George W. Gallup, a foremost pollster on American attitudes towards religion. "The churches of America face no greater challenge in this century than overcoming biblical illiteracy," says Mr. Gallup. Both Mr. Gallup's organization and Barna Research, an evangelical Christian firm, agree that many Americans are biblically illiterate.

For example:

- Less than half of Americans, about 40 percent, read the Bible every week, according to findings from both firms;
- About a third don't know that the Book of Isaiah is part of the Old Testament (Barna);
- About 40 percent erroneously believe that the entire Bible was written after Jesus' birth (Barna);
- According to Gallup, numbers of those who read the Bible at all have declined from 73 percent of the population in 1990 to just 59 percent today.

Amidst these bleak findings, there are bright spots. Accord-

tural

ing to Barna, 93 percent of American households have a Bible, including a large percentage of those who consider themselves atheists. Most own at least three.

Most readers of the Bible are doing it alone. Only 14 percent are part of a regular Bible study group. The favorite Scriptural books of American Bible readers are, in descending order: Psalms, Genesis, the Gospels of Matthew and John, and Revelation. According to Barna, the average Bible reader spends 52 minutes each week with the Scriptures.

Gallup indicates that white Americans are less likely than racial minorities to read the Bible. Bible reading is also more popular among Protestants and those over 65; Republicans and political conservatives, and less a habit among young adults between the ages of 18-29.

Why don't more Americans read the Bible? According to a survey by Tyndale House Publishers, 64 percent say they are too busy. Some 80 percent say it's confusing, even though a number of publishers, including the American Bible Society, have come out with easy-to-read versions.

Thomas May, president of the National Bible Association, a lay interfaith group devoted to promoting Bible reading, notes that the positive side of the Gallup survey indicates "that most Americans cling to the Bible as a symbol of their faith."

Yet, he adds, the fact that relatively few Americans read the Bible regularly shows that "faith in America is very broad but all too often, very shallow." Americans need to discover the Bible, says Mr. May, because the book "has had an impact on all of our culture and it is a source of comfort and moral stature." ■

BIBLICAL VALUES CAN BRING US TOGETHER

By Eugene Habecker

Many principles fundamental to our shared social consciousness as Americans are drawn from Scripture. Unfortunately, as biblical literacy declines, much of that social fabric – the fibers of shared biblical values – that binds us to one another is getting pretty threadbare. For example, without the backdrop of Scripture, some of the grand ideals of our *Declaration of Independence* are reduced to a popularized sentimentality – nostalgia at odds with a growing profusion of ad-driven, consumer-based materialistic values.

In the same way, our understanding of our humanness is drawn from Scripture. The Bible sets us apart from the rest of creation in important ways. For one, we draw life from the Creator and carry God's image. While there can be much discussion around what bearing the divine image might mean, most would agree it includes rationality – our ability to deliberate and choose. With this *freedom of choice* comes moral responsibility – a principle that undergirds our legal system. Morality assumes our volitional nature – our ability to rise above impulses and make responsible, even sacrificial choices. Such a noble sentiment contrasts sharply with the media messages of "me first" that bombard us every day.

Many millennia ago, long before ecological responsibility was a buzzword, Scripture sounded the charge of

continued on page 24 >>

Australian Olympian Discovers Biblical Faith

As captain of the Australian women's Olympic Volleyball team, it's not surprising that Sil Ruddle's favorite Scripture verse, 1 Timothy 4.8, refers to athletic prowess: *"Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is valuable in every way, because it promises life both for the present and for the future."*

Ms. Ruddle holds that verse dear. That's so, she says, "because it is so easy to get caught up in training and volleyball and trying to succeed in your sport. The verse is saying that there are two more important things in life — having a relationship with Jesus and trying to live a godly life which is pleasing to him."

At the age of 16, she committed herself to Christ through her study of the Bible. She sees the Scriptures as key to her relationship with God.

"I started checking out the Bible and the claims it made about Jesus and his death on the cross and what that means to us. I came to the conclusion that it was true and this was something that was really worth committing my life to."

During the 2000 Sydney Olympics, the Bible Society in Australia used the worldwide attention focused on the games to promote the Scriptures among athletes and visitors.

Ms. Ruddle's team was defeated by China in the final round of the preliminaries of the women's volleyball competition.

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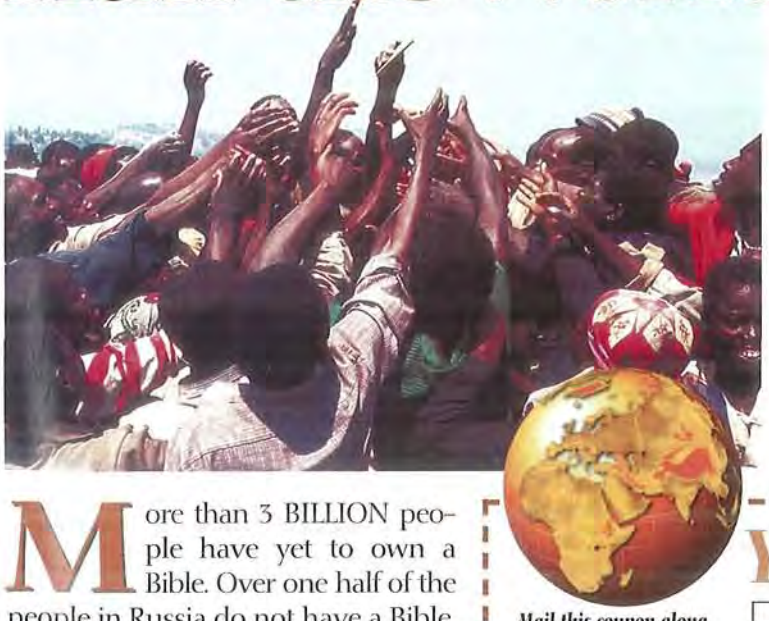

More than 3 BILLION people have yet to own a Bible. Over one half of the people in Russia do not have a Bible. The number of believers in China who have never had a Bible of their own is absolutely staggering — and growing every day. And the demand in Africa is *double what we have been able to meet.*

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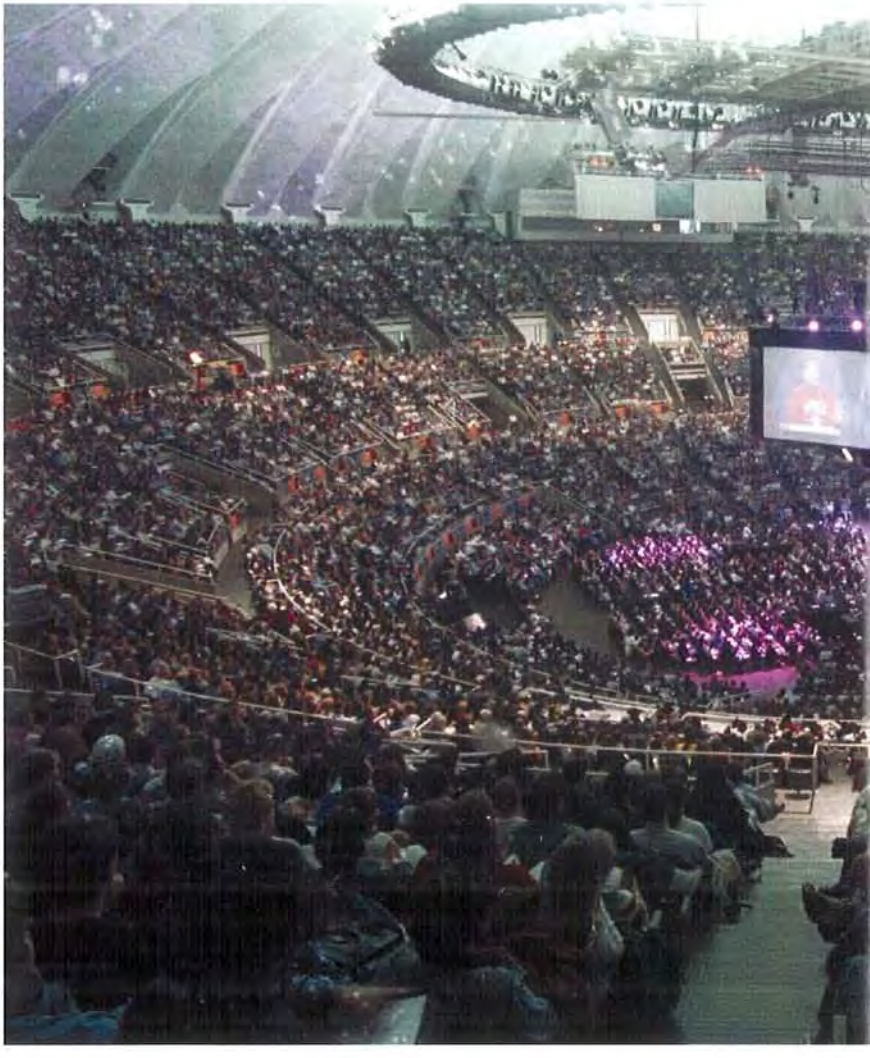

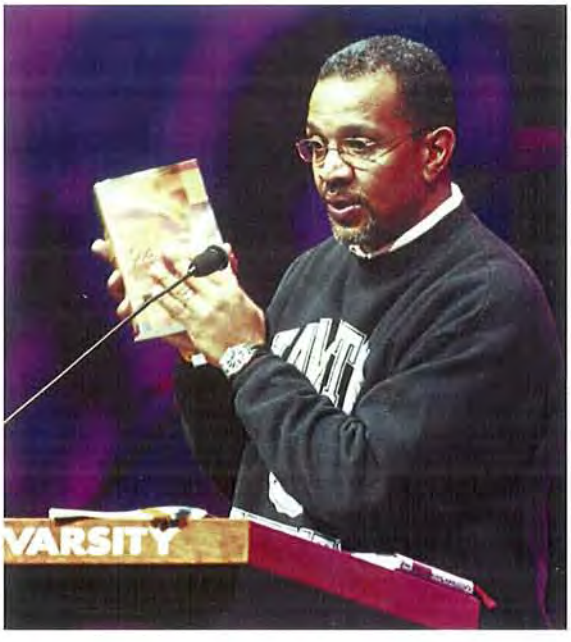

Urbana 2000

The American Bible Society Helps Engage the Hearts and Intellects of Tomorrow's Leaders

PHOTOS COURTESY OF IVCF

EVERY THREE YEARS 20,000 COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM across the country congregate at the University of Illinois, Urbana, for five days of spiritual challenge and enrichment. The four-day event, sponsored by Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, challenges students to commit themselves to be active ambassadors for Jesus Christ "because God first loved us."

Urbana 2000 focused on how we are to emulate for others the love God has shown for us. Practical application in cross-cultural issues such as simplified lifestyle and racial reconciliation and the potential impact these themes can have on missions was highlighted in a full array of seminars, workshops, and small-group Bible studies. Twice-a-day worship sessions in the 20,000-seat assembly hall were a high-energy extravaganza of music, lights, and video.

The Bible Society traditionally did its part by supplying Scriptures. For Urbana 2000 the Bible Society granted nearly half of the 22,650 special Urbana Bibles used for worship and Bible study at the conference.

The tri-annual mission's conference ended by ushering in the new millennium with a Eucharist celebration New Year's Eve. On New Year's Day students embarked for thousands of college campuses, carrying with them new understanding of incarnational love, renewed Christian commitment, and an Urbana 2000 insignia copy of God's Word. ■

FOR THE RECORD

50 YEARS AGO

Bible Outreach to Communist Prisoners

Chaplain Harold Voelkel stood in front of 5,000 Communist prisoners packed into a makeshift camp in Pusan, South Korea.

In Korean, he addressed a North Korean Communist officer.

"Do you get the spiritual lesson taught by the parable?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the officer. "The son in the parable stands for Jesus, God's Son, who came and died for us."

Chaplain Voelkel with 14 year old Korean prisoner of war.

The officer had learned the Gospel lesson of the farmer who turned his vineyard over to others and at harvest time sent messengers to get his share, only to have the messengers maltreated. When the owner sent his son, the tenants had him killed.

That officer provided evidence for the *American Bible Society Record*'s claim in the May 1951 issue. The *Record* editors at the time noted, at the height of a Cold War that had turned hot on the Korean Peninsula, that Christians had "a strategic opportunity" to share the Gospel.

100 YEARS AGO

Seeing Opportunity in a Ditch

The picture in the May 1901 *American Bible Society Record* didn't look very impressive. It depicted what looked like a sorry ditch containing a faint trickle of water. But the editors of the *Record*, reporting on Bible work in Latin America, envisioned something greater.

They said that the ditch would one day "bear the commerce of the world on its bosom and make a highway for wealth and travel to pass to and fro in the midst of the seas."

They were right; that ditch became the Panama Canal, then a part of Colombia.

And, they noted, "Just as it is with the canal, so it is with our own Bible work in Colombia; we, too, have been years and have only made a beginning."

A look into the ABS library

The First English Bible Printed in America

Dr. Liana Lupas with the Aitken Bible.

The English Bible first came to America from Europe, as a prized possession of the earliest British colonists. It was not printed in the United States until 1782, when Robert Aitken published in Philadelphia a modest *King James* Bible about 6 inches in height. The reasons for its comparatively late date are complex. The King James or Authorized Version was protected by the equivalent of a copyright. Only the King's Printer of the day and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were "privileged" to print it. At the same time, good quality Bibles manufactured in England were available to colonists at reasonable prices at least until the start of the Revolutionary War. The conflict disrupted normal trade with Europe, while also suppressing the need for a royal license to print the English Bible.

In 1782, Robert Aitken (1734-1802), a Scottish emigrant who had come to America in 1771, thought the opportunity and climate right to publish the first American edition of the *King James* Bible. At the time, Aitken was the official printer of the Continental Congress. His Bible was approved by the U.S. Congress as a "pious and laudable undertaking." This is the only instance when Congress recommended a Bible.

In his edition of the Bible, Aitken replaced the dedication to King James that had been prepared for the 1611 edition with the document issued by the Continental Congress. Despite the moral support of the Congress, Aitken's Bible did not sell well and left its printer on the verge of bankruptcy. Apparently the market could not absorb an edition that may have numbered 10,000 copies. About 75 copies of the Aitken Bible are known to have survived.

—Liana Lupas, Ph.D
American Bible Society Curator

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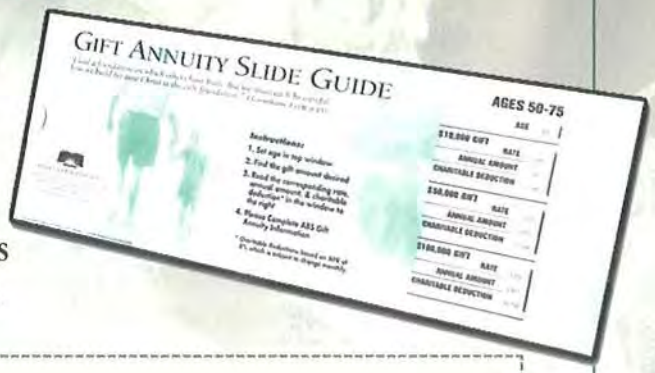

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HOW *you* CAN BENEFIT FROM GIVING TO ABS

BACK IN 1843, the American Bible Society (ABS) established its first gift annuity and a revolution in charitable giving was born.

The concept, borrowed by charitable groups all over, has been a bedrock of support for the American Bible Society while providing tax relief and a steady income for ABS benefactors.

A gift annuity is a financial agreement made by ABS and an individual or couple. It works this way: a person gives ABS a gift of cash or stocks. In return for the gift — used to promote its mission of Scripture distribution around the world — ABS provides its benefactors with an assured income starting immediately or at a later date, often creating significant tax savings in the process.

Ever since that first annuity was sold — decades before the income tax even became part of American life — ABS has never reneged on a promise to provide income to its annuitants, even through calamities such as wars and depressions.

The following example illustrates how an ABS annuity works:

Mr. and Mrs. Smith are 55 and 53. They are looking for a secure way to supplement their retirement income. Both will receive income from pension plans where they work, but would like to increase that amount. They have decided to establish an ABS deferred gift annuity with $10,000 in appreciated stocks. Because they are deferring their income 10 years until they retire when Mr. Smith is 65, the Smiths can expect a rate of return at 10.8 percent and an annual income of $1,080. They also receive an income tax charitable deduction of $4,107.60 that can be used in the year of the gift or carried over for up to five years.

Besides annuities, other ABS giving plans include:

- Gifts, of either cash or appreciated property that are tax-deductible. Donations of stock can sometimes offer double tax advantages, because the full value of the donated stocks are usually deductible and no capital gains tax is paid on their appreciation.
- Will bequests, deductible for federal estate tax purposes.
- Charitable remainder trusts, involving the transfer of property to a trust for the benefit of ABS. In return, the trust pays benefactors an income for up to 20 years or for life, again a process that can yield substantial tax advantages.
- Charitable lead trusts involve transfer of assets to a trust specifying the income be paid to a designated charity, such as ABS, for a term of years. Following that time, the assets pass to an individual beneficiary, such as a child or grandchild.
- Life estate arrangements allow benefactors to transfer title to a home, farm or ranch to ABS while reserving the right to live on the property and continue receiving all its income. In the year of the arrangement there is a major income-tax deduction. At death, the property becomes part of ABS, thereby avoiding the probate process.

This article can only provide a cursory glance at ABS gift planning programs. More information is available through ABS representatives around the country, who work personally with ABS benefactors to help plan their financial future. Brochures on writing wills and the various ABS giving plans are also available free of charge. ■

More information about planned giving programs sponsored by the American Bible Society can be obtained by calling the Planned Gift Programs Department at 1-800-820-6227.

SCRIPTURES IN TODAY'S HEADLINES

BIBLE IN THE NEWS

John the Baptist's cave believed found in Jordan

■ Agence France-Presse (AFP) reports that the remains of a fourth-century Byzantine church on the east bank of the Jordan River may have been the winter home of John the Baptist.

Mohammad Waheeb, profiled in the October/November 2000 issue of the *American Bible Society Record*, was hired by the Jordanian government to oversee digs on the east bank of the Jordan River, near the site where the Gospel of John indicates that Jesus was baptized and where his cousin John the Baptist preached.

Diggers may have also uncovered the skull of John, said Mr. Waheeb, who noted that a recently-discovered human skull dates to the first century.

Labor religious leaders rediscover Sabbath

■ *The Nation* magazine reports that a growing movement of labor and religious leaders are calling upon business to honor the needs of employees to enjoy the biblical fruits of Sabbath observance.

Rabbi Arthur Wasko, director of the Shalom Center in Philadelphia, argues that the promise that technology would give Americans more leisure time has been betrayed.

"Most Americans work longer hours, under more tension, than they did a generation ago," he writes.

As a result, the Shalom Center has gathered together scholars and labor leaders to promote the concept that Americans need more free time to pursue volunteer, family and spiritual interests.

Such a cause is rooted in the Scriptures, says Rabbi Wasko. "Among the religious traditions that take the Hebrew Scriptures seriously, there is a teaching: For the sake of remembering and taking to hear the grandeur of Creation and for the sake of freeing both ourselves from others' pharaonic power and others from our own oppression, we celebrate Shabbat [the Hebrew term for Sabbath]."

Fox TV blasted for 'Temptation' program

■ WorldNetDaily.com reports that the Family Research Council, along with other Christian groups, has blasted the Fox television program *Temptation Island* for promoting promiscuity.

The "reality" game show involves four unmarried couples, who live a week on tropical islands during which the male and female contestants "test" their fidelity to each other as they live among attractive singles.

One couple in the premiere episode was taken off the show after it was discovered that they had a child. Fox had emphasized that the program would not include married couples or couples with children.

"You're dealing with people's emotions and, in this case, even the well-being of their children," Heather Cirmo of the Family Research Council commented. "You're supposed to flee sexual temptation," she said. "The Bible is very clear about that: Stay away from it. Don't toy with it."

Gutenburg Bible headed for Internet

■ United Press International reports that the 15th-century Gutenberg Bible, the first major book to be printed in Europe, will soon be available on the Internet.

The British Library and Japan's Keio University have teamed up to put the Bibles on the Internet to give scholars access without damaging the originals.

Experts are worried about the future of the Gutenberg Bible. Out of 180 copies printed using Johnannes Gutenberg's movable type system, only significant parts of 43 remain. The British Library has one copy printed on paper and another on vellum. Putting the Bible online is expected to make it easier to compare the two and preserve them for future generations. ■

update

NATIONAL

KENTUCKY

Rodger Bingham, a teacher, farmer and real estate investor in Crittenden, Ky., owns perhaps the most-watched Bible in history.

As a member of the *Survivor* cast, the CBS program which featured 16 participants who attempted to live in the Australian outback combating the natural elements and efforts to whittle their number by expulsion by other members, Mr. Bingham brought along his American Bible Society *Good News Bible* as his one luxury item allowed for each cast member.

The top-rated network program included an incident where Mr. Bingham used some of the introductory pages — but not the actual biblical text — to assist in starting a much-needed fire. He described the Bible as a vital force in his life.

Mr. Bingham, a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University, teaches industrial arts at Grant County High School and is an elder at the Crittenden Christian Church.

Richard Dini of the Dini Partners Philanthropist Company, left, and Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza, right, of the Catholic Diocese of Galveston-Houston, met with American Bible Society president Eugene Habecker, center, during a recent Leadership Awards Luncheon sponsored by the Houston office of the American Bible Society. Bishop Fiorenza, also president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, was among 11 Texas luminaries from the fields of business, sports, religion and other endeavors honored at the luncheon.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The *Slammin' Jammin' Jubilee* event at the NBA All-Star weekend in the nation's capital drew an impressive crowd of children and teens to participate in basketball clinics with NBA, NFL and WNBA stars. They also heard the players talk about their faith and how their young friends need to be close to their church and the kind of moral life God intends for them. The American Bible Society served as a co-sponsor to the event, held at Howard University. Everyone attending received a New Testament from the American Bible Society.

Copies of the *Good News Bible African American Jubilee Edition* were presented to the athletes and prominent musicians. The organizers included Charlie Ward of the New York Knicks and his wife Tonja, who were there with the group they helped to found called Christian Athletes United for Spiritual Empowerment (CAUSE).

NEW YORK

Exhibits at *The Gallery at the American Bible Society* include:

Through May 19, the Christian art of Japanese artist Watanabe Sadao will be featured.

From June 15 to Sept. 15, *The Holy Land Through the Eyes of Explorers*, presents photographs from the Holy Land. The photos are drawn from the collection of the *Ecole Biblique* in Jerusalem.

The Gallery at the American Bible Society is located at 1865 Broadway in New York City. More information can be obtained by calling 212-408-1500.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Bible Society of South Africa has launched a new effort to translate the Bible into Northern Sotho, one of the country's 11 official languages.

The modern translation begins almost a century after the first Northern Sotho Bible was published in 1904, and nearly 50 years after a revised version was compiled. The new translation was made necessary by changes in the Northern Sotho language and progress in biblical science and linguistics.

Work on the new translation, facilitated by scholars from various Christian traditions, began in 1975. There are an estimated 3.7 million speakers of Northern Sotho.

ENGLAND

A proposal for a "Radio Bible," putting the Scriptures into the form of 365 15-minute radio programs, is being considered by a partnership of Christian agencies including the United Bible Societies (which includes the American Bible Society), the International Bible Society and Hosanna.

The proposal envisages some 175 programs from the Old Testament, 175 programs from the New Testament, and 15 special programs devoted to Christmas, Easter and Bible Sunday themes. The project is based in part on a successful pilot program that brought Scripture radio broadcasting to the Ashanti people of central Ghana. The pilot project demonstrated that Scripture reading on the radio can draw a large audience. In one area, 61 percent of the audience tuned in.

"Radio is a very good medium for Bible communication in a world where so many people are not reading," said Viggo Sogaard, UBS media consultant on the project.

BRAZIL

The Bible Society of Brazil (BSB) recently participated in an unusual distribution of the Scriptures.

It offered 114 grooms — all inmates at the Carandiru prison — a Bible as they began married life in a mass ceremony at the jail.

Carandiru, in Sao Paulo state, is the largest prison in Latin America. It has a particularly rough reputation. In 1992, a riot there ended with 111 inmates killed.

"The Bible is an inexhaustible source of spiritual support, wisdom and ethical principles," the Rev. Luiz Antonio Giraldi, BSB general secretary, told the couples during the ceremony.

One of 114 couples who recently married during a ceremony at the Carandiru House of Detention in Brazil. The Bible Society of Brazil presented each bridegroom with a Bible during the service.

BOTSWANA

Special Scripture Portions are helping the Bible Society of Botswana give hope to many young people living with AIDS. As many as a fifth of the people of Botswana are said to be infected with HIV.

Some 4,700 copies of *Living with Hope* have been distributed. The Portions have made an impact, according to the Rev. Evariste Munyabarame.

"When you go into hospitals, those once bright, fresh faces are like those of old men and women, yet they belong to young people who have been caught in the web of AIDS," he said.

continued from page 13 >>

environmental stewardship.

Scripture informs us that God relates to us as a parent, with all the dimensions that a parent-child relationship implies. As God's children, we are all of one family. From this springs the moral imperative for civil rights and principles such as the worth of individuals, social justice, and community.

understanding of ourselves, not as isolated atoms in danger of dropping into a personal abyss, but as souls created by God and destined for community with God, with other human beings, and with everything that is."

A recent essay in the *New York Times Magazine* titled *In Lieu of Manners* echoes Americans' growing need to re-engage with the Bible and its notions of mutual responsibility and community. Jeffrey Rosen, the author, writes, " ... our interactions are increasingly conducted in the shadow of legalese. We are becoming a nation of separate, resentful, legalized selves ... the explosion of legalisms ... have become a substitute for moral and political debate. ... As the nation becomes even more legalized, we will find ourselves less able to discuss with nuance and complexity the moral gray areas that exist in all our lives."

"One Nation Under God" seems to define our sense of identity as Americans less and less as our collective biblical literacy declines. God's Word is our guidebook to life – the route for everyone's journey home – a book that gives perspective on relationship with God and each other. It shows us the way toward restoration of all the brokenness in an around us. And that holds equally true for our national life. ■

"A Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to a person that isn't."

(sign outside a New Jersey church)

God's Word informs us about a spiritual reality that, without God's revelation, we can only suspect – a suspicion that, without a biblical anchor, descends into superstition. But our increasingly material-oriented, commercialized society seduces us to consider only what can be felt, heard, and seen – life as it can be bought – by passing the abundant spiritual reality that binds us to one another and to God, our Father.

Robert Bellah, sociology professor at the University of California, Berkeley, echoes this, writing, "The market as a metaphor of all aspects of life undermines both any sense of objective morality and any need to think of oneself as deeply involved with other people."

In the end, the Bible is God's invitation to the wedding feast – into a fellowship of believers. Dr. Bellah summarizes: "In the face of self-doubt and personal emptiness, [the Church] can offer an

IN MEMORIAM

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

My Father, Myrle Bly
Given by: Ronald P. Bly

Our neighbor,
Filomena D'Arbenzio
Given by: George & Delores Frenzel

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

Dr. E. L. Hammer
Given by: Mrs. Samuel W. Jennings

Mrs. Oswald C. J. Hoffmann
Given by Mrs. Ewald H. Mueller

Jeanne Marie Bernos Kent
Given by: Mrs. Beverly B. Hobbs & children

Barbara Kostrey
Given by: John Kostrey

My Uncle,
Robert Kreischer
Given by: Alice Louise Pollert

My Mother, Mrs. Jenny (Genny) Martin
Given by: Bob & Jen Hull

My Husband,
David E. McCracken
My Mother,
Mary Skeen Bodenheimer
Given by: Kathleen B. McCracken

My Beloved Husband,
Charles T. Rawls
Given by: Eleanor T. Rawls

Allan P. Matthew
Aylmer Robinson
Lester B. Robinson
Given by: Keith P. Robinson

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

My Husband,
Cecil A. Slaughter
Given by: Eleanor F. Slaughter

Steve & Judith Sluka
Given by: Milan Sluka

My Aunt, Doris Smith
Given by: Erlene Gardiner-Criss

Our neighbor,
Anna Squitieri
Given by: George & Delores Frenzel

Memorials of $500 or more for one individual or family unit will be published in the ABS Record.
For further details about the memorial program, please write to:
Donor Relations, American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York NY 10023-7505.

to the editor

We welcome letters from our readers. Letters should be less than 300 words and focused on articles that have appeared in the Record. *We reserve the right to edit them for clarity or space considerations. You can send your letters to:* **Editor,** American Bible Society Record, *1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023-7505. You can also reach us via e-mail at* ***pfeuerherd@americanbible.org***

Disappointed with article

As a supporter of ABS, I would like to express disappointment with your December/January cover story, *Why the Hebrew Bible Is Also for Christians*, not because of what it says but what it does not say. Its emphasis on themes showing continuity from the Old to the New Testament fail to emphasize the discontinuity between the "eye for an eye" law of Moses and its terrible violence, and the cross-resurrection indwelling of the Holy Spirit of Jesus and His fruit of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Against such there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature." (Galatians 5.22-24 *NIV*)

Jesus gives the key to using the Scriptures in two sentences: "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me and have life." (John 5.39-40).

The Old Testament is the seed of God's love planted in Israel. The New Testament is the fruit of the seed harvested on Pentecost. One is a continuation of the other, but, oh, the difference.

Howard Goeringer
Tallahassee, Fla.

Jesus in the movies

Re: Article by David Singer titled *Jesus on Screen* (October/November 2000 issue):

The part in Isaiah where it says, "He had no beauty in him, etc." refers, I am sure, to the Passion when Jesus was brutally beaten and tortured ... In reality I believe he was a very good looking person, as was his mother.

I did enjoy the article. Movies, however, do not portray the reality of what happened. Other movies from Hollywood show gore and blood, but I notice in movies about Jesus, they show hardly any blood and in reality there was.

Rosemary E. Miller
Havertown, Pa.

From all of us at ABS:

The February-March *Record* article *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Truth* by Barclay Newman troubled several of our readers. Some of you thought that the article strayed from the spirit of our mission to publish "materials that avoid endorsing or advocating any doctrinal positions." For decades we have endeavored to eschew issues, and the presentation of issues, over which churches differ in their interpreted positions. We know it is not our place to be interpreters of Scripture. That indeed is the church's role. This incident has served to remind us that we must be crystal clear in what we say and that sometimes we may miss the mark.

Our intention is to focus on the Word — so that the light of its message remains clear and able to penetrate spiritual darkness anywhere. We hold that God, through His Word, speaks directly and convincingly to the hearts and minds of his children — that the Word speaks for itself without elaboration.

We are always encouraged when people care enough about our work and mission to write us to express their concerns.

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

Growing in Faith
and Extending God's Promises

1 John 14.1-14
2 John 14.15-31
NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
3 Psalm 16
4 Genesis 6.1-8
5 Genesis 6.9-22
SUNDAY
6 Genesis 7.1-24
7 Genesis 8.1-19
8 Genesis 8.20—9.7
9 Genesis 9.8-17
10 Genesis 12.1-9
11 Genesis 15.1-21
12 Genesis 17.1-14
SUNDAY
13 Genesis 17.15-27
14 Genesis 18.1-15
15 Genesis 21.1-7
16 Genesis 21.8-21
17 Exodus 2.11-25
18 Exodus 3.1-12
19 Joshua 1.1-9
SUNDAY
20 Judges 13.1-25
21 Isaiah 54.1-17
22 Isaiah 55.1-13
23 Isaiah 56.1-8
ASCENSION DAY
24 Acts 1.1-11
25 Acts 1.12-26
26 Hebrews 4.14 – 5.10
SUNDAY
27 Hebrews 6.13-20
28 Galatians 3.1-18
29 Galatians 3.19 – 4.7
30 Galatians 4.8-20
31 Galatians 4.21 – 5.1

JUNE

Growing in Faith
and Living a New Life in the Spirit

1 Ezekiel 37.1-14
2 Joel 2.28—3.8
PENTECOST SUNDAY
3 Acts 2.1-13
4 Acts 2.14-36
5 Acts 2.37-47
6 Acts 3.1-10
7 Acts 3.11-26
8 Acts 4.1-22
9 Acts 4.23-37
SUNDAY
10 Romans 8.1-17
11 Romans 8.18-39
12 Romans 12.1-8
13 Romans 12.9-21
14 1 Corinthians 12.1-11
15 1 Corinthians 12.12-31
16 2 Corinthians 3.1-18
SUNDAY
17 Galatians 5.16-26
18 Galatians 6.1-18
19 Ephesians 4.1-16
20 Ephesians 4.17-32
21 Ephesians 5.1-20
22 Ephesians 5.21-33
23 Acts 13.1-12
SUNDAY
24 Acts 14.8-28
25 Acts 16.1-10
26 Acts 16.11-15
27 Acts 16.16-24
28 Acts 16.25-40
29 John 3.1-21
30 John 3.22-36

PLEASE PRAY

In April, the United Bible Societies ask for prayers for the work of Bible Societies in North Africa and in the Middle East, including:

EGYPT – Please give thanks for the Luxor and Mansoura Bible bookshops, which opened last year and increased Bible bookshops in the country to a total of seven.

ISRAEL – Pray for the success of Bible distribution efforts among Lebanese refugees.

GULF STATES – The Bible Societies there are thankful to God for the Arab Resource Center in Kuwait, which is improving the distribution of Arabic Christian materials among the country's different churches.

WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP – Prayers are needed for the success of the Nablus Bible Shop, serving the northern part of the Palestinian Territories; the launching of a fundraising program aimed at ensuring local participation in the Bible mission, and creativity in ministering to hundreds of young Palestinians.

JORDAN – Pray that the distribution of 40,000 Bibles across the country will make a spiritual impact on people's lives.

IRAQ – Ask that the Holy Spirit provide encouragement to Christians who are struggling there.

MAKING THE BIBLE HEARD ABOVE THE NOISE IN TODAY'S GHANA

ACCRA, GHANA — THIS CITY IS OVERFLOWing with vehicles and most of the drivers are in a hurry. A motorist can easily spend half an hour and measure progress in yards, not miles.

Under former president Jerry Rawlings — who just recently left power after recent elections — Ghana has experienced 20 years of relative political stability and economic growth. It has been cited as a model for developing countries by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

In this busy mix, the Bible Society of Ghana (BSG) has worked to promote the Scriptures.

Most Ghanaians revere the Bible and in the central and southern parts, Christianity is widespread. Animism is its nearest rival — many people have strong feelings about traditional ways.

In the past, animism and Christianity have come into conflict. Observers of the traditional animist celebration of Homowo, when people remember the dead, were at one time disturbed by the sounds of Christian revival meetings. After one church was stoned and a pastor badly beaten, church leaders agreed not to hold missions during this sacred time and to keep church instruments inside the churches.

Further north, Islam has a stronghold alongside animism. Everywhere one sees the incongruous shapes of new cement-built mosques rising from among the grass huts of the villages, paid for by money from Muslim countries such as Libya and Saudi Arabia.

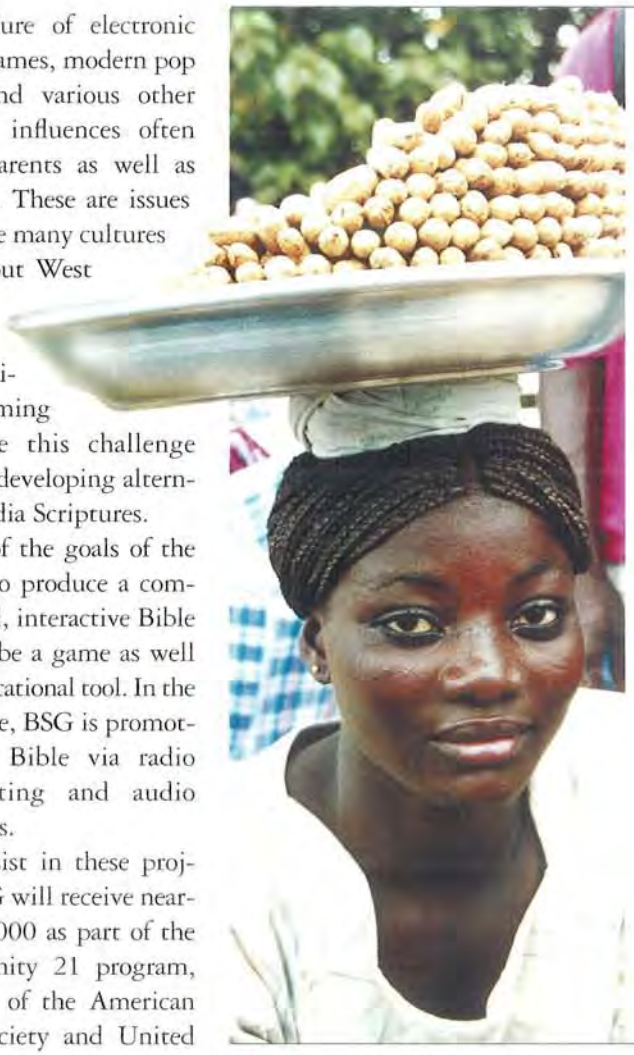
Many Ghanaians are concerned about their young. Many of the youth, especially those in cities, have little time for tradition, and the church is also perceived as belonging to the past. Young people are looking for something different but there are still spiritual questions that need resolving.

The lure of electronic media, games, modern pop music and various other Western influences often baffles parents as well as churches. These are issues that unite many cultures throughout West Africa. The Bible Society is aiming to tackle this challenge through developing alternative media Scriptures.

One of the goals of the BSG is to produce a computerized, interactive Bible that can be a game as well as an educational tool. In the meantime, BSG is promoting the Bible via radio broadcasting and audio Scriptures.

To assist in these projects, BSG will receive nearly $750,000 as part of the Opportunity 21 program, an effort of the American Bible Society and United Bible Societies to support Scripture distribution efforts around the world.

{This story is based on a report by Geoffrey Stamp, who recently toured Ghana to report on Opportunity 21 projects for United Bible Societies.}



▲ **A woman carries a tray of groundnuts on her head during a typical scene in a street market in Ghana.**

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CHINA CHALLENGE:
A Two for One Opportunity

In rural China, the Word of God is a costly commodity.

In parts of Gansu province, as many as 100 people share a single Bible, each waiting patiently for their turn to read the words of Jesus. And Christians living in An Kang, in Northwest China, must travel up to ten hours to obtain a Bible.

Chinese believers will do most anything to read the teachings of Jesus — and experience the joy of new life that he brings.

China Challenge Grant — your gift today will be worth three times as much to Christians in China!

A generous benefactor of the Bible cause will match, dollar for dollar, all gifts between now and May 15, 2001 — up to a limit of $100,000.

This Challenge Grant also allows the American Bible Society to take a giant leap forward in our ***CRUSADE OF LIGHT 2001*** — our *year-long* effort to reach twenty-five million people with the Word of God.

Our China Challenge allows us to deliver Christ's message to a rapidly growing church in China — a church desperate for enough Bibles. Take full advantage of this two-for-one challenge — and give generously.

China Challenge Grant Deadline is May 15, 2001

Crusade *of* Light

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Yes, I want to be a part of the ***Crusade of Light's China Challenge*** *and double the value of my gift to the American Bible Society. Let's deliver the Word of God to twice as many people in need!*

Enclosed is:

❑ My gift of $20 (worth $40 when matched) ❑ My gift of $100 (worth $200 when matched)

❑ Other $ _____ (doubles when matched!)

Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. _____

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