



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

RECORD

November | December 2002

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Word Walks
Among Us**

Two Celebrations in One

I wait eagerly for the Lord's help, and in his word I trust.

—PSALM 130.5 GNT

On Sept. 19, the Board of Trustees honored my wife, Marylou, and me with a surprise celebration of our 11th year at the Bible Society. Originally scheduled as a 10th anniversary event, when our world turned upside down on Sept. 11, 2001, the celebration was postponed a year. And that made it a very different celebration.

First, it followed by a week and a day a Bible Society tribute to the heroes that emerged from last year's tragedies [see story, page 10]. Second, it became a double celebration — looking back at what was accomplished in our first decade of service while reviewing my first year of a second decade.

During my first decade I saw the founding or rebirth of Bible Societies in 23 countries of the former Soviet sphere, including Russia, made possible only through a commitment of \$25 million from the American Bible Society. More recently we matched a \$10 million Maclellan Foundation grant, three for one, through the *Opportunity 21* program, in a focused effort to provide Scriptures in 75 of the neediest countries.

But, as the new millennium approached, our concern to get people more involved with the Bible — to counter increasing biblical illiteracy here at home — caused us to shift our domestic emphasis. We had to do more than provide Scriptures; we needed to work with churches to encourage people to read and get involved with the Bible.

Last year's events awakened a sense of vulnerability that is not natural to our national psyche — we Americans generally have an optimistic, "can-do" spirit. Yet our confidence was shaken. At the same time, our economy began a tailspin.

I see an element of providence at work throughout this past year — a year in which we began a series of new programs that get people to engage with God's Word. Since 9/11, people have generally looked at life with a new seriousness and are more frequently asking "What does it all mean?" It's an exhilarating time to be in the Bible business, to be able to offer guidance to people seeking surer footing.

We give thanks to God, especially in this holiday season, that the American Bible Society has had resources to do big things when big opportunities arose. We pray that God will provide resources to meet the current challenge. We must not let this new openness to God's Word pass unmet.

Eugene B. Habecker



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY RECORD

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ON THE COVER: *Nativity* by He Qi, blending traditional Chinese folk painting with western modern art.

RECORD

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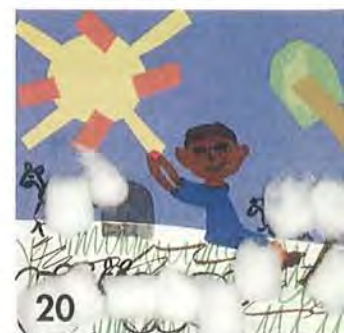
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We encourage you to send your letters to: Editor, American Bible Society Record, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023-7505. Telephone: 212-408-8710. Reach the Bible Society on the Web at www.americanbible.org

CARING BEHIND BARS

BY TRACINT LAGUI

"I WAS AWARE OF HOW HUNGRY THE guys must be for a kind word," says Paul Savage after visiting inmates at the State Correctional Institute at Frackville, Pa., this summer.

Mr. Savage, a senior administrator at the American Bible Society, who works in the New York Metro office, and Julian Gumbs, Derek Traut, Charlie Krueger and Sherrod Edmonds at the Bible Society were participating in one component of the Bible Society's Caring Program — *Operation Starting Line* (OSL). This collaborative partnership with Prison Fellowship and other like-minded ministries provides tens of thousands of Bibles in English and Spanish to prison populations across the United States.

Each year, OSL organizes nine or 10 events in correctional facilities around the country. A team of speakers and musicians minister, and the Bible Society provides Scriptures to inmates who enroll in Bible studies sponsored by other OSL partners. (More than 20,000 Bibles in English and Spanish have already been donated to facilities in 12 states, and the Bible Society plans to distribute tens of thousands of Scripture booklets in both languages by the end of next summer.)

After the event, Mr. Savage and other volunteers greeted and spoke to the 200 attendees. "They made a point of shaking our hands and hugging us," he recalls.

Chaplain Scot Dressler, who serves at the 1,000-inmate prison, says he deals with a dual challenge when reaching out to the men. On one hand, "there are a lot of guys who really don't want to hear anything about God," he says. But for those who do listen, getting them to accept God's grace and forgiveness, in light of the terrible crimes they have committed, is equally challenging. "These are concepts that don't come easy to our guys," says Chaplain Dressler.

A great help, however, is having the human contact



DAVID SINGER

from volunteers like Mr. Savage, which "can really go a long way to demonstrate the love of Christ," he says.

Mr. Savage agrees. "You never know who you're affecting. And you never know how far that care will extend." He speaks from experience. At one time his life followed the same destructive track. He had been in the streets in New York City, involved in drugs and other criminal activities, but by God's grace had never been convicted of a crime.

He accepted Christ more than 15 years ago, he says, and although the change didn't happen overnight, he now lives a dedicated Christian life. In addition to his work with the Caring Program, Mr. Savage also speaks at halfway houses, in drug treatment centers and at missions helping the homeless.

In August, he returned to Frackville with a message of hope and 68 Bibles. The men listened as he gave his testimony and emphasized that the Christian life is a "work in progress."

Other correctional facilities around the country in the OSL program report an increase in Bible study and a changed outlook among inmates.

From Adams County Jail in Brighton, Colo., an inmate named John wrote about his response to the Scriptures: "It has been my comfort, and it will continue to be a part of my life." From Allegheny County Jail in Pittsburgh, Susan wrote: "It brings me comfort in my time of suffering."

Drew Segawa, senior program administrator in National Programs at the Bible Society, says: "The American Bible Society continues to foster positive change in the lives of prisoners and ex-offenders across the United States." The Caring Program is now developing Christian mentoring and discipleship programs to equip local churches in their own ministries. ■



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 Can you give me a description of an angel?
(P.B., Keizer, Ore.)

A The English word angel comes from the Greek *angelos*, meaning messenger. An angel is a spiritual being (Hebrews 1.14), who is subordinate to God, and serving at God's command and pleasure to deliver a special message. They are not to be worshipped by humans (Colossians 2.18). In the Bible, angels function as messengers, but they are not as important as the message itself. Angels also serve God to help God's people and punish his enemies.

Angels have many functions. In Psalm 103.20 they praise God. They protect and watch over God's people in Psalm 91.11-12.

We learn more about the role of angels in the New Testament. They serve as messengers to the world in Luke 1.11-20. In Matthew 13.49 the angels are depicted as agents of God's judgment, and in Luke 22.43 as dispensers of God's comfort.

Only two angels are named in the Bible, Gabriel and Michael. (Two more angels, Raphael and Uriel, are mentioned in the Apocrypha.) Gabriel appears in both the Old and New Testaments. In Daniel 8.15-17 Gabriel interprets the vision for Daniel. And in Luke 1.11-20 Gabriel tells Zechariah, the aged father of John the Baptist, that his wife Elizabeth will give birth to John: "I am Gabriel ... I stand in the presence of God, who sent me to speak to you and tell you this good news (verse 19 GNT)." Michael also appears in the book of Daniel. But he has a more combative role, leading the host of angels opposing the forces of evil (Daniel 10.13, 21; 12.1, Jude 9 and Revelation 12.7).

The Bible leaves many questions about the nature of angels unanswered. The Scripture references provide few clues. Sometimes angels appear in human form usually involving some shielding of brightness or glory (Daniel 10.5-6). If they appear as human, they are described as male (Luke 24.4). Some angels have both human and animal characteristics (Genesis 3.24 and Isaiah 6.2-6). And sometimes they appear in other forms, such as flames from a burning bush (Exodus 3.2). ■

TRUSTEES

Grace in the Midst of Tragedy

When Diane Linen Powell talks about her faith, she points to an example of how it supported her through one of the darkest periods of her life — the death of her husband.

Referring to that terrible time when her husband, Jim, had been fatally injured while jogging and clung to life for five more days in a London hospital near Westminster Abbey, the Boston native says, "There is no drill for what happens when you lose a loved one."

"What prepared me was my faith," she continues. "To say that I was more full of faith and incredibly imbued with God's mercies was an understatement."

During that time, and in the months and years after his death, she says she truly experienced the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding ..." (Phillipians 4.7 KJV)

Mrs. Powell brings her faith as well as her vast knowledge of marketing and communication in broadcast and publishing to her position as an American Bible Society board trustee.

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Mrs. Powell earned masters degrees at the University of Sussex in England and Harvard University in Boston. She has served on the Board since 2000, is Vice Chair of Marketing and Media Resources Committee and on the Investments Sub-committee and Program Committee.

As a business professional she recognizes the challenges facing the Bible Society during uncertain economic times. "I do believe that fiscal responsibility is critical," she emphasizes.

Good stewardship of Bible Society resources requires a delicate balance — creating and funding programs that promote the transforming power of the Scriptures, while ensuring those programs will have maximum ministry impact on people around the world. The Bible Society, she says, must manage those resources to support future projects in the next 10, 20, even 100 years.

Having recently returned from a trip to Kenya and Egypt with her new husband, Mrs. Powell knows the great need for such programs. Comparing the poverty of some areas she visited to the wealth in the United States, Mrs. Powell says, "We have so much to be grateful for in this country that I wish everyone was dedicated to 'Thanks-Giving.'" ■ — **FRANCINE LANGE**



Diane Linen Powell





DOWN TO EARTH

God's Word Walks Among Us | BY DAVID SINGER

ON MOST LEVELS, THE FIRST CHRISTMAS WAS A SEEMINGLY INSIGNIFICANT "event." A Jewish peasant woman gave birth to a son in an animal stable, in a little-known town in an occupied region of the Roman Empire. And the "event" went *virtually* unnoticed for 30 years. Yet Christmas provides the greatest chapter in the greatest story ever told; in just three years Jesus changed the world as no one else ever could.

A few people took notice. Three foreign astronomers or "wise men," who followed a sign in the heavens, some shepherds and a few family members (through angelic visitations) all had some notion that this birth was unusual, even unique. (The wise men, in their search for the new "king," aroused the paranoia of the regional magistrate who failed in his own search to find the newborn "king.") Yet, even 2,000 years later, the identity and mission of the man named Jesus is hotly debated. As G. K. Chesterton wrote in *The Everlasting Man*, "There must surely have been something not only mysterious but many-sided about Christ if so many smaller Christs can be carved out of him."

A FLAWED CAMPAIGN?

Jesus wrote no books, had no educational credentials, apparently owned nothing but the clothes he wore. Some years after his execution, four of his devotees wrote pamphlets about his "work" and teachings but provided few of the details we might expect of promotional works, giving, for example, no hint about Jesus' appearance. And, except for one brief incident, Jesus remained invisible until the age of 30, when he began to recruit followers and set out on a three-year speaking tour proclaiming and embodying the good news of God. Yet he seemed to lack political savvy; he astonished audiences with miraculous healings and, occasionally, free food and wine, but not in the key locations — even his brothers felt compelled to offer him tactical advice. His campaign was, literally, short-lived.

Each time his "kingdom of God" campaign looked as if it were about to "take off," Jesus almost intentionally either frustrated the expectations of the crowds flocking after him or offended the leaders of his commu-

ILLUSTRATION: NATIVITY BY HE QI

He Qi, 1999

nity. While he showered immense love on outsiders and inspired the powerless to hope, he repeatedly confounded and frustrated the establishment who conspired against him. At what some call his inaugural address, his reading of Isaiah 61 in a synagogue in Nazareth, he at first wowed his audience with his eloquence, yet in the next moment so offended his listeners that they chased him from town. He often applied his uncanny, even prescient insight into people's psyche with blunt, incisive honesty rather than with courtesy and tact. He disdained special interests. His underfinanced campaign seemed flawed from the start. And yet today we taste the benefits of his good news: freedom, release from oppression and recovery of sight, even as we anticipate the perfection of these promises.

A NEW WAY OF SEEING

Although he had no academic credentials or formal training, Jesus spoke with a quiet, irrefutable and acknowledged authority — with a shrewdness that stunned and eventually silenced his critics. The combination of his person and message came across with inexplicable potency. After his death, the resurrected Jesus joined two despondent followers talking about his execution as they walked. They didn't recognize him until after they had stopped for supper and Jesus gave thanks for the food. Then he vanished. Overcome with wonder, they commented, "Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24.32 *GNT*)

This encounter offers a glimpse into how Jesus embodied God's Kingdom, suggesting that in a new heaven and a new earth we will recognize people more by their inner character — for their God-likeness — rather than by their physical appearance. In Luke 17.20-21 (*GNT*) Jesus said, "The kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen. No one will say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!'; because the Kingdom of God is within you."

A TANGIBLE SPIRITUALITY

In one way or another, believers wrestle with the unfathomable idea of bringing God and man, spirit and matter (nature), together. We are ready to accept that Jesus truly was Immanuel, God with us. We shy away from his human limitations. We accept his miracles and his Resurrection more easily than that

his struggles with fatigue or temptation were as "real" (and as tiresome) as ours. We willingly concede, "We can't match his obedience or his ability to love because Jesus was not *merely* human."

The Jesus of Christmas hints, in small and tantalizing ways, that there may be more potential in a reconciled humanity than we imagine. In a new, restored creation — in a new heaven (spiritual) and a new earth (material) — there will be a new, seamless symbiosis, where now there is fracture and dissonance. Peter's brief walk with Jesus on water allows us, perhaps, a fleeting glimpse of a new physics. Even the risen Christ — his resurrected body — while tangible, was different in other ways than before his Resurrection (Jesus invited his disciple, Thomas, to touch his wounds, and he ate fish, but he was also able to pass through locked doors). All this may hint at details of our own resurrected existence — at how our spirits will possess a kind of mastery over the material.

These glimpses suggest that our heavenly future will not be reduced or rarified into some ethereal, negative spirituality, but will, in ways analogous to the human Jesus, be physical. British author C.S. Lewis wrote in *Miracles*, "We also, in our heart of hearts, tend to slur over the risen *manhood* of Jesus, to conceive Him, after death, simply returning into Deity, so that the Resurrection would be no more than the reversal or undoing of the Incarnation [when God embraced our material, physical selves]." That the *returned*, glorified Jesus will have a tangible dimension coincides with his promise that he has gone to prepare a place for us — that we will need *places* to reside — that when Jesus speaks of preparing rooms for us in his Father's house, he is not

just speaking metaphorically.

A dialogue Jesus has with his followers in John 14 shows that they, like us, were not content with a *merely* human Jesus; they, too, were looking for something more extraterrestrial. "Now that you have known me," he [Jesus] said to them, 'you will know my Father also, and from now on you do know him and you have seen him.'" (*GNT*) Philip's response, "Lord, show us the Father; that is all we need," shows the serious disconnect — that the disciples were looking for something more *unusual*, somehow more spiritual, than Jesus. Apparently seeing Jesus' familiar human form clouded Philip's ability to see the



ILLUSTRATION: THE RISEN LORD BY HE OI

*Since time
began God
and the Word
have been
inseparable.*

divine person (and personality) standing right in front of him.

Philip's response mirrors a reaction opposite to that of the two men Jesus walked and ate with following his Resurrection. They caught a clear insight into the *person* of Jesus independent of his physical presence. While not disembodied, his physical identity was just a shadow of his solid, tangible spirituality.

MAKING A MENTAL CONNECTION

His follower John, in his Gospel, summarizes Jesus' uniqueness as "... the Word was with God and the Word was God." (John 1.1b *GNT*) In Jesus, the power of his person and his message are inseparable.

John begins his good news Gospel by laying out, in powerful poetry, a cosmic framework for God's desire to connect with us, through Jesus the Word who "became a human being and lived here with us." (*CEV*) He expresses the profound mystery of God communing with us — Jesus becoming the human embodiment, the hands, feet and heart of God's revelation to us. Through Jesus, the Word, God reaches out to embrace us. John wrote, "From him [the Word] all the kindness and all the truth of God have come down to us." (*CEV*) The Bible is God's written account of how God loves us. And that love is manifest when God makes a material connection with us through Christ, the Word.

Sociologist Jacques Ellul wrote, "The only channel of revelation is the Word ... that God expresses himself, acts, and is found only in his Word ... he uses the highest human faculty [language] to enter into the circle of human intelligence." Since time began God and the Word have been inseparable. John says that the man Jesus was that Word — God become flesh.

This metaphor of the Word tells us that God chooses to make himself known to us with a flesh and blood example. The written Word, the Bible, tells us about and guides us to the living Word.

MIND (SPIRIT) OVER MATTER

Elements of the Christmas story, of God embracing our humanity, go as far back as the first chapter of Genesis, where we read, "'Now we will make humans, and they will be like us. We will let them rule the fish, the birds, and all other living creatures.' So God created humans to be like himself; he made men and women." (Gen. 1.26-27 *CEV*) Even before God came to earth as a vulnerable human baby, he shared with us some qualities of himself — aspects of our humanity or person that set us apart from the rest of the natural, God-created world. Lewis explores ways in which we share in this Divine image; human rationality, he contends, cannot arise from the irrational randomness of nature — it is a manifestation of the supernatural in nature — that we, in some ways similar to Christ, already share that combination of natural and supernatural. This brings our spirituality very close to home — we experience our God-connection, the supernatural in our selves

with every rational thought we think.

Our rationality requires language and, again, ties us to our heavenly father through the Word. "Every act of speech," asserts writer Richard Neuhaus, "assumes that a truth has been recognized, or at least assumes the ability to recognize truth. God chooses to reveal Himself — to redeem our relationship with Him through language — through the Word."

Lewis summarizes, "... the difficulty which we felt in the mere idea of the Supernatural descending into the Natural is ... overcome in the person of every man. If we did not know by experience what it feels like to be a rational animal — how all these natural facts, all this biochemistry ... and sensuous perception, can become the medium of rational thought and moral will which understand necessary relations and acknowledge modes of behavior as universally binding, we could not conceive, much less imagine, the thing [Christmas, *the Grand Miracle*] happening." (*Miracles*)

Here another dimension of our *imago dei* or divine image is introduced — free will. Aspects of our God-imagined humanity — creativity and rationality — assume and include the ability to make reasoned, moral choices; these are choices that either build or destroy relationships. In this way, too, God endows us with *personhood* reflective of Divinity. Each time we choose to rise above natural inclinations governed by self-interest and, in obedience, follow Christ, we celebrate Christmas; we honor Christ's marriage of the spiritual and material. God, in bestowing on us his image, anticipated Christ's coming. It's as if God fashioned our humanness to receive His only begotten son.

Christmas anticipates ending the ageless quarrel between heaven and earth. Lewis wrote, "If we are in fact spirits, not Nature's offspring, then there must be some point (probably the brain) at which created spirit even now can produce effects on matter ... simply by the wish to do ... is a reality manifested every time you move your hand or think a [self-conscious] thought. And Nature, as we have seen, is not destroyed but rather perfected by her servitude [to spirit]." (*Miracles*)

That is the power and the challenge of the enigmatic Jesus who, at once, harmoniously represents the antithesis of everything to which we are naturally drawn — wealth, self-sufficiency, appearance, status, power — and yet he is alluringly, compellingly attractive in his love and obedience. In our best moments, Jesus represents all we want to be.

His teachings (and the Bible) are the wellspring of our concern for human rights and human dignity. His promises of the Kingdom's nearness reassure us that someday all will be right *with the world*; Jesus' sacrifice demonstrates, as nothing else could, God's love and God's eagerness for us to be reconciled with him.

Jesus, through the miracle of Christmas, affirms for us in a flesh-and-blood manner, our family connection with God; that through Christ, the Word, God reconnects with us. And through reading the written Word we can understand the life-transforming possibilities and dynamics in that relationship. ■

A Tribute to Heroes

09.11.02

It's a long way to the top

ginning



Remembering God on September 11

By Peter Feuerherd
Photographs by David Singer
and Thomas D. Sullivan



The Young People's Chorus of New York City, opposite page and above, performs Mozart's *Requiem*, a Mass for the dead, in front of Bible House to commemorate the victims of the 9/11 terror attacks.

WHERE WAS GOD ON SEPT. 11, 2001?

That question has reverberated in the souls and psyches of Americans for more than a year.

During its Sept. 11 anniversary observances held at its New York City offices, just a short subway ride from Ground Zero, the American Bible Society grappled with the question head-on in a *Tribute to Heroes Past, Present and Future*. We mourned the more than 3,000 people who died a year ago and honored those who sacrificed in extraordinary ways on that tragic day and the days that followed. At the same time, the musical tributes, speeches and quiet moments offered hope that a renewal of interest in the Bible will provide solace and guidance to a new generation growing up in troubled times.

Lisa Jefferson, the telephone company employee who spoke with Todd Beamer — a widely recognized hero who led a group that overpowered hijackers on United Flight 93 — before the plane crashed in a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001, answered the question in her own forthright way.

"Where was God on Sept. 11? He was with me. He gave me the strength to do what I needed to do," Ms. Jefferson told hushed and teary-eyed participants at a luncheon at American Bible Society's Bible House headquarters.

The luncheon honored New York City rescue workers and



DAVID SINGER

Above: David Pack performs. Right: In Times Square, Llewellyn LaRocque, right, thanks a man who has accepted some *Psalm 23* CDs to distribute to others.



THOMAS D. SULLIVAN

included a special Fallen Hero award presented to Doug MacMillan on behalf of his best friend Mr. Beamer. Mr. MacMillan now serves as chief executive officer of the Todd M. Beamer Foundation, dedicated to helping young people through spreading the word about Mr. Beamer's story.

Ms. Jefferson saw God's providence in her ability to stay calm that day, reciting *The Lord's Prayer* with Mr. Beamer while gathering from him a farewell message of love to his wife, Lisa. "In the midst of the chaos, God carved out 15 minutes of peace," she said.

Television personality Star Jones, a member of the ABC talk show ensemble *The View*, offered a keynote address that echoed a similar theme.

In an affirmation of her Christian faith, Ms. Jones said that she has never felt a stronger belief in God than she has since 9/11. In contrast to those who were flooded with doubts, she saw the hand of God through the entire tragedy.

"He was busy getting us through the day," Ms. Jones said, citing the examples of the heroic firemen and police officers and the actions of everyday people who got involved in loving, unselfish action.

The luncheon was the culmination of a two-day observance that began the night of Sept. 10 with a candlelight vigil outside Bible House. While traffic and theater crowds navigated through the busy Broadway intersection, a few hundred crowded the sidewalk.

The evening event included the premiere of Grammy-winning musician David Pack's new version of *Psalm 23*, produced

in partnership with the American Bible Society for the occasion. He was joined in singing "The Lord Is My Shepherd" by the Young People's Chorus of New York City.

In a highlight of the evening event, television personality Kathie Lee Gifford presented a *Psalm 23* CD to William Bell, New York City Commissioner of Children's Services. The gift was a symbolic offering to the children of America and New York City who suffered from the tragedy. By the end of the week, tens of thousands of CDs had been distributed by Bible Society staffers on the streets of the city, including 20,000 given out at Ground Zero; thousands more were downloaded



DAVID SINGER

A large crowd gathers silently in front of Bible House on Broadway to listen to music, testimonies and prayer offered in remembrance of those who suffered and died last Sept. 11.

from the americanbible.org Web site.

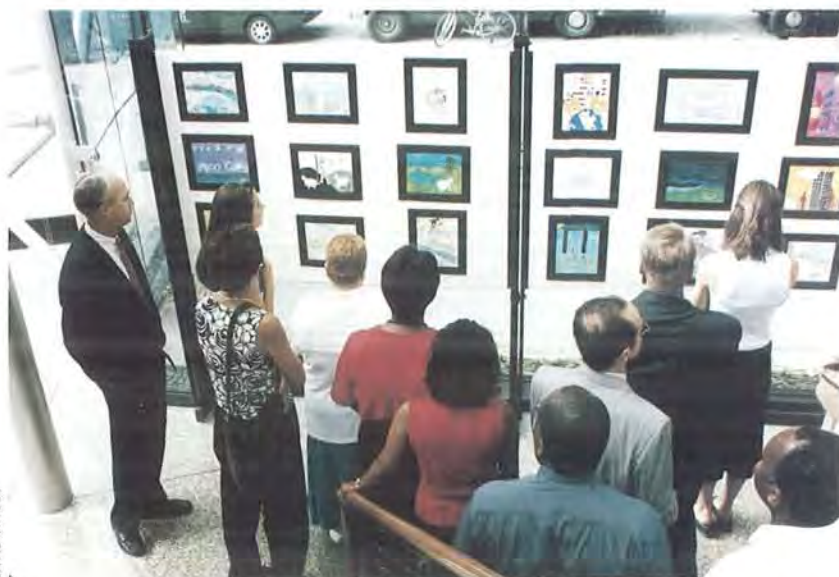
The Rev. Trevón Gross, senior vice president for Programs at the Bible Society, offered the benediction. He urged vigil participants — on a night when security concerns had caused the government to issue its highest "orange" alert — to look at each other and say, "I am not afraid because the Lord is my shepherd."

On the morning of Sept. 11, another ceremony was held outside American Bible Society offices. Perhaps its most memorable feature was a moment of silence.

At exactly 8:46 a.m., the hundreds gathered on Broadway and 61st Street fell silent, marking the exact one-year anniversary of the horror when a plane first struck the World Trade Center.

The quiet on a busy New York street corner was stunning. One woman wept for her fiancé who died while attending a business seminar atop the World Trade Center that fateful morning. Others stood in sober quiet; some fought back tears.

And, after that solemn minute, the Young People's Chorus broke the silence when they began singing Mozart's *Requiem*, a Mass for the dead. The chorus joined thousands of choirs around the world — from Brazil to Finland and beyond — who sang that piece in tribute to the 9/11 fallen.



Above: Visitors view winning entries from the Bible Society's children's art contest, based on Psalm 23's message of comfort [See page 20].

Right: Passersby receive Psalm 23 CDs and Scriptures in English and Spanish.



THOMAS D. SULLIVAN

Robert L. Briggs, senior vice president for Organizational Marketing at the American Bible Society, concluded the morning service with a reflection from Paul's letter to the Romans: "Nothing can separate us from the love of God," he reminded those who grieve.

One woman, an office worker in the neighborhood, quickly pulled aside an American Bible Society staffer. "Thank you for doing this," she said.

The morning continued with the unveiling of winning entries from the Bible Society's children's art contest, based on Psalm 23 (available for viewing on americanbible.org), and a Scripture and CD distribution in five symbolic locations around the city.

At the United Nations, in Battery Park (near Ground Zero), Union Square, Madison Square Garden/Penn Station and Times Square, Bible Society staff distributed booklets with Scripture quotations offering reflections on the 9/11 events and the *Psalm 23* CD.

Above Times Square, a giant television screen featured the Ground Zero ceremony that day at which political leaders recited the names of the nearly 3,000 fallen. Below, as noon passersby traversed the *Crossroads of the World*, as New Yorkers refer to the famous site, they were handed *Psalm 23* CDs and Scripture booklets. Some smiled in recognition, an unusual re-



THOMAS D. SULLIVAN

A father looks at a Scripture booklet distributed by Bible Society staff members in Times Square.

action in what may be the world's most congested space, usually filled with hawkers of all kinds who are invariably more ignored than acknowledged.

Outside Madison Square Garden — in hyperbolic New York language, "the world's most famous arena" — Bible Society staffer Barbara Bernstengel stood on a crowded sidewalk and prayed quietly with a troubled woman.

"Would you pray with me? I have a lot of people I need to pray for," the woman said softly, reciting a list of friends and family with illnesses and spiritual issues.

The day's concluding luncheon at Bible House featured a challenge from Dr. Eugene Habecker, president of the American Bible Society. He said the events of the past year have triggered "a tidal wave of hope" based on belief in the biblical God.

He looked to the example of Jesus — one who gave his life for his friends — reflected in the sacrifices of today's heroes.

Dr. Habecker commented that the world is very different than what it was a year ago. People are asking deep questions like never before, questions that the Scriptural resources of the American Bible Society are geared to answer.

"We start at a spiritual Ground Zero," he said, citing this spiritual resurgence. "Now is the time to ask 'Are we still awake?'"

The answer, at least evidenced in the response to the 9/11 events sponsored by the American Bible Society in New York, was a resounding "Yes!"

W e m e e t s e S t a d s

WHEN JAMES KELLER AND HIS WIFE, ANNETTE, set out to become overseas missionaries, they never expected to end up in their hometown of Fort Wayne, Ind. But these days the couple can be found ministering to a group of parishioners at the New Life Lutheran Church — a group that includes refugees from the Southeast Asian country of Myanmar.

"I am an overseas missionary in my hometown," says Pastor Keller. His hometown, according to some reports, hosts the largest concentration of Myanmar immigrants in the United States (Myanmar, renamed in 1989, is the former Burma).

Fort Wayne (population 205,727) is a good choice according to the U. S. government. Its low unemployment and crime rates earned it recognition as one of the best 50 cities in the country for relocation. In addition, says Heidi Boener, director of immigration and refugee services at Catholic Charities, "The cost of living [in Fort Wayne] is probably one of the lowest in the country."

Catholic Charities has served Myanmar citizens in refugee camps in Thailand, and, since 1989, has resettled many of them in Fort Wayne. Nearly half of the city's estimated 1,500 Myanmar immigrants have come by way of Catholic Charities. (Their needs are great, so help from other groups is welcomed.) "We try to help the ones that Catholic Charities cannot help," says Pastor Keller.

TO ASIA BY WAY OF FORT WAYNE

For Pastor Keller and his wife, Fort Wayne was the place to *leave*. They had grown up, met and married there but moved away for college and later headed to California, serving at the Grace Lutheran Church and School in Modesto — Pastor Keller as the director and teacher for the preschool and Mrs. Keller as the church's youth director. But

BY FRANCINE LANGE

Ministering to foreign cultures in our backyard



Tin Hla, far left, watches Bala Kyaw Swa and Pastor James Keller read from a Myanmar language Bible.

the couple's desire to minister overseas sent them back to Fort Wayne to attend the Concordia Theological Seminary, with the goal of heading out of the country as missionaries following their seminary training.

That was back in 1998, says Pastor Keller. Along the way they accepted an invitation to work with the New Life church, a congregation of about 100 located in a poorer section of town. "And they wouldn't let us leave," he jokes.

As they studied and added to their family (they now have five children), the Kellers began looking for ways to minister to the many Myanmar immigrants in town.

It didn't take long, recalls Pastor Keller. About two months after they began praying in earnest about such an outreach, they had their first opportunity. A local shelter referred a Myanmar woman to the church's English as a Second Language program. Church tutors helped her learn English, using a Bible as one of the textbooks, while showing her Christian care and love.

On weekends the Kellers sought out stalls run by Myanmar merchants at the outdoor markets to stock up on the tasty Asian mini bananas, coconut milk and bags of flavorful jas-

mine rice they loved, and to build friendships. Their oldest son, Peter, who usually suffered from food allergies, had no reaction to the Myanmar diet. He was the one who would pray: "Lord, let us just meet one Burmese."

To facilitate his ability to minister, Pastor Keller took language classes at a local Buddhist monastery, where he met many Myanmar Buddhists. His teacher, a monk, would also try to instruct him in Buddhist practices. In turn, says Pastor Keller, "I would try to teach him about Christianity."

Now, several years later, 67 Myanmar people go to the church. Not all are Christian, explains Pastor Keller, but as they hear the life-giving message from the Scriptures some embrace a new faith. In response, New Life has just started a bilingual worship service in English and Myanmar. Taking seriously the biblical mandate to care for the poor and oppressed, New Life also provides job counseling for Myanmar refugees and operates a rent-free "transitional" house for refugee families. A Myanmar host family helps newcomers adjust to American culture and life in Fort Wayne.

Parishioners also conduct Bible studies and language classes for Myanmar people in the city. Volunteers (including retired teachers) from another 12 Lutheran churches in the city tutor small groups of refugee children and adults. Others serve as public advocates. With limited English language skills, many need help navigating the civil bureaucracy, dealing with employment issues and utilizing medical services. "Quite simply," explains Pastor Keller, "people try to take advantage of them."

This ministry of care is given in response to Jesus' words: "... whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me" (Matthew 25:40 *Contemporary English Version*).

FOOD STAMPS IN THE OFFERING PLATE

One Sunday, an usher at New Life found food stamps worth \$3 in the offering plate. When he showed them to Pastor Keller, the pastor knew immediately who had placed them there. Tu, a Myanmar refugee from Thailand, had become a Christian shortly after arriving in America, but her husband, Ne, remained Buddhist. Ne wasn't happy about her new faith, he says, "and tried very hard to find reasons for her not to attend church."

That changed after Ne sought employment through Pastor Keller, who took Ne, along with some other men seeking jobs, to a plastics factory. But Ne wasn't hired. The following week, Ne returned with a more urgent need. He told Pastor Keller: "I'm going to be evicted. What do I do?"

Pastor Keller promised the desperate man that neither Jesus nor the church would allow him to become homeless or go hungry. His promise was based on his faith in a faithful God, not on his own means. "At that time," he explains, "we were having trouble paying the electric bill." The very next day, the factory called asking specifically for Ne.

When Pastor Keller urged him to allow Tu to attend services with her children, he agreed. The woman was so grateful that she placed the food stamps in the offering, just as Jesus said of the widow in Mark's Gospel, "she gave what she had," he says. Later, when Tu needed to stay home during her pregnancy, Ne began taking the children to church.

—F.L.

CONNECTING WITH THE BIBLE SOCIETY OF MYANMAR

While in the United States for a Gideons International conference, Say Plah, business manager of the Bible Society of Myanmar, heard about the unusual outreach of New Life from Roger Macke, another Gideon and an elder at New Life. He was impressed with their dedication and ministry to his people. "This is a good thing," he says.

Mr. Plah offered to help translate additional Scripture materials into the official Myanmar language (formerly called Burmese), and then called on James Walker, a video producer he had worked with at the American Bible Society in New York, to obtain some sorely needed Bibles. Mr. Walker arranged to have 200 New Testaments in the *Myanmar Common Language Version* shipped from Korea (a Myanmar distribution point), which are scheduled to arrive at New Life in November.

Pastor Keller says that while many people picture a mission field in some exotic location on the other side of the world, Americans do not need to go far to minister to other cultures. "The mission field has moved into your back yard," he says.

And, he adds, a major key to reaching this group is making Scriptural resources accessible to them in a language they can understand. With the gift from the Bible Society, he and his church will be able to place these resources into the hands of Myanmar seekers. "I'm excited about our partnership with the



STEVE UNSEN-MAYER

Bible study with Myanmar language Scriptures. Tin Hla, right, reads aloud, while Mee Mee, left, Tu Tu and Bala Kyaw Swa listen.

American Bible Society," he says, a partnership he encourages other churches and ministries to forge as they reach out to immigrants in their communities.

The Kellers continue their missionary work in Fort Wayne. The "instant results" American culture that surrounds them, says Pastor Keller, can make progress seem slow. But the Kellers are patient.

"What we're trying to achieve in our lifetime, God already sees as a reality," he says. ■

REPORT FROM MYANMAR

Unloading packages from a truck does not normally cause excitement and joy among workers. But when the cargo contains precious Bibles from the Bible Society of Myanmar, for which the 550 students at the Karen Baptist Seminary in Yangon have waited almost a year, the rejoicing is understandable.

These students are part of a minority of Christians living in Myanmar, a southeast Asian country that is roughly the size of Texas and bordered by Bangladesh, China, India, Laos and Thailand. About 89 percent of the 50 million people are Buddhist and six percent Christian.

Myanmar's 50 seminaries and Bible schools — both Roman Catholic and Protestant — graduate 15,000 full-time Christian workers every year. At this seminary, many of the students come in from remote areas of the country, traveling two or more days by bus, boat or train.

After graduation, students take an additional two months to study basic health care before returning home equipped not only to serve as pastors, evangelists and teachers, but also to minister to the community's physical needs.

The Bible Society of Myanmar is working to supply

these students and others throughout the country with Scripture materials. Through *Opportunity 21*, an American Bible Society global ministry initiative, the BSM distributed more than 600,000 Scriptures last year and nearly as many the year before. Through *O-21*, BSM will reprint locally several versions of the New Testament and promote the new *Myanmar Common Language Version* Bible. Plans are also in place to produce a children's Bible, Bible comics and 20,000 audio cassettes of Scripture selections for distribution to the visually impaired and illiterate.

"In the past," says the Rev. Saw Mar Gay Gyi, the BSM general secretary, "whenever people wanted Bibles, they came to us, but starting last year, particularly with the support of *O-21*, we are getting Bibles out to even remote areas." The BSM is also involved in 28 translation and five literacy projects. (There are at least 100 different languages spoken in the country.)

The BSM Bible work includes the attempt "to try to establish the kingdom of God in this country, a kingdom of love, peace, reconciliation, justice and equality for everyone," says Rev. Gyi.

—F.L.



A CELEBRATION OF [Service *for the* Word]

[BY THOMAS D. SULLIVAN]

DURING AN EMOTION-FILLED CELEBRATION HONORING Dr. Eugene B. Habecker's 11 years of service and leadership as president and chief executive officer of the American Bible Society, the Board of Trustees, staff members, friends and family gathered for an evening of tribute and appreciation for him and his wife, Marylou, in New York City this September.

Three musical ensembles opened the event with song, including choral works based on Dr. Habecker's favorite Scripture passages from the *Contemporary English Version*, composed especially for this occasion.

Dr. R. Lamar Vest, chairman of the Board of Trustees, presided at the dinner (held at Fordham University's Lincoln Center campus), saying that the Board and Bible Society have been benefactors of Dr. and Mrs. Habecker's "obsession to serve others."

The Rev. Fergus Macdonald, retired General Secretary of the United Bible Societies, spoke of how Dr. Habecker has labored intensely to "provide the churches with the Scripture tools they so urgently need," pointing to the *Opportunity 21* program, which Dr. Habecker had proposed. It is the largest international Scripture distribution initiative in history.

Board members made a personal contribution of more than \$220,000 to *Opportunity 21* in Dr. Habecker's name as a gesture of appreciation for his service. They also presented the Habeckers with a replica of the *Codex Vaticanus*, one of the earliest and most valuable manuscripts of the Greek Bible, acquired from the Vatican Library for the Bible Society's Library & Archives.

The Habeckers also received two books of congratulatory letters from well-wishers, including board members and staffers, as well as President George W. Bush and

former New York Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani.

President Bush wrote: "Your devotion serves as an example of hard work and leadership and is an inspiration to others." The Rev. Michael G. Roshak, a Russian Orthodox priest, attested to the "life-changing work of the spread of God's Word" through the work of the American Bible



▲ Marylou and Eugene Habecker, left, and trustee James Wood hold up a check for \$222,128.10, contributed by the Board of Trustees in honor of Dr. Habecker, to benefit the *Opportunity 21* Scripture distribution program.

Society and the United Bible Societies.

Ruth Stafford Peale, co-founder and publisher of *Guidposts* magazine, recalled how Dr. Habecker had so favorably impressed her and other trustees responsible for finding a new president. Mrs. Peale concluded, "He's been working ever since."

The Rev. Michael D. Messner, board member and a leader of the Assemblies of God, said, "More than ever, those who proclaim Jesus Christ as Savior need the American Bible Society." ■



Joy in the Midst of Difficulties

In spite of losses the Bible Society of Congo (BSC) suffered this year — debris from a volcanic eruption in Goma destroyed some 30,000 of their Bibles and a Scripture distribution vehicle — the Bible work there continues.

The BSC recently held its first exhibition for the general public in Kinshasa. The event, which took place at the BSC Bible House, aimed to describe the organization's activities and encourage support for Bible work in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Large panels displayed Bible history, an outline of the Society's mission and work in translating God's Word into 20 local languages as well as general translation efforts throughout Africa.

Videos and films, which included an historical account of the time the Bible was banned in Madagascar, proved popular.

The exhibit drew a wide range of visitors, including clergy and professors and students from the local Bible college. Among the attendees was Sgt. André Kaleko, who had found his Lingala Bible a source of support when he was serving at the front. He wrote about his experience in a visitor's book, and others added their comments.

Some people who saw the exhibition suggested that the Bible House show Scripture-based films on a weekly basis, while others asked the BSC to make the Old Testament available in an audiocassette format. ■

Your November gift will help spread the Good News in Ukraine. Your December offering will help support Bible work in the Democratic Republic of Congo. To find out more about joining the Bible-a-Month Club, fill out the reply form below, or write:

American Bible Society
Bible-a-Month Club
1865 Broadway
New York, NY
10023-7505
Bible-a-Month@
americanbible.org

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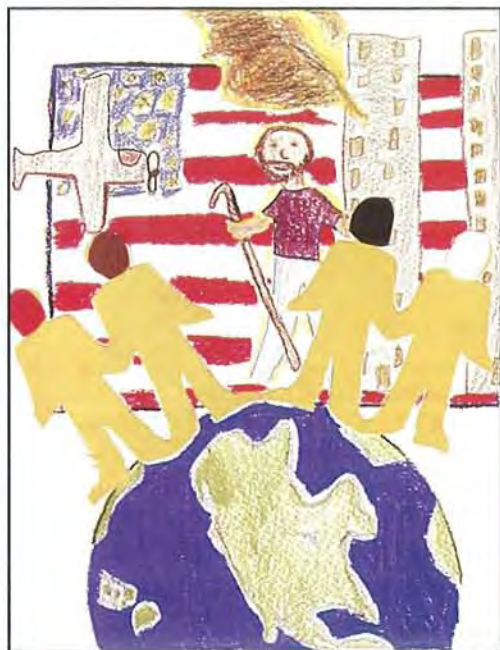
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BIBLE-A-MONTH CLUB
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NEW YORK, NY 10023-7505



PSALM 23:

Through A Child's Eyes



Justine, Age 11, MD
I feel loved by Jesus and that makes me feel safe.



Jessica, Age 5, AZ
God loves us so much that He guides and protects us wherever we go!



Ashley,
Age 9, CA
I know God will
guide me in every
step I take.



Cody, Age 5, WA
God loves us. We don't need
to be scared of bad things.



Peter, Age 5, IA
The Lord protects me
and children all around the world.



Katie, Age 12, VA
God helps me make
the right choices.



Laina, Age 7, AL
The LORD is
my shepherd...



Christopher, Age 6, NY
God protected me when the twin
towers fell down and I was watching
them. I was scared so I prayed to God.



Rebekah, Age 13, MN
The Lord rescued me when I
was having difficulty sleeping.
My Dad would sit up with
me and read to me from
the Psalms. I think God
was using my Dad to be
a Shepherd to me.



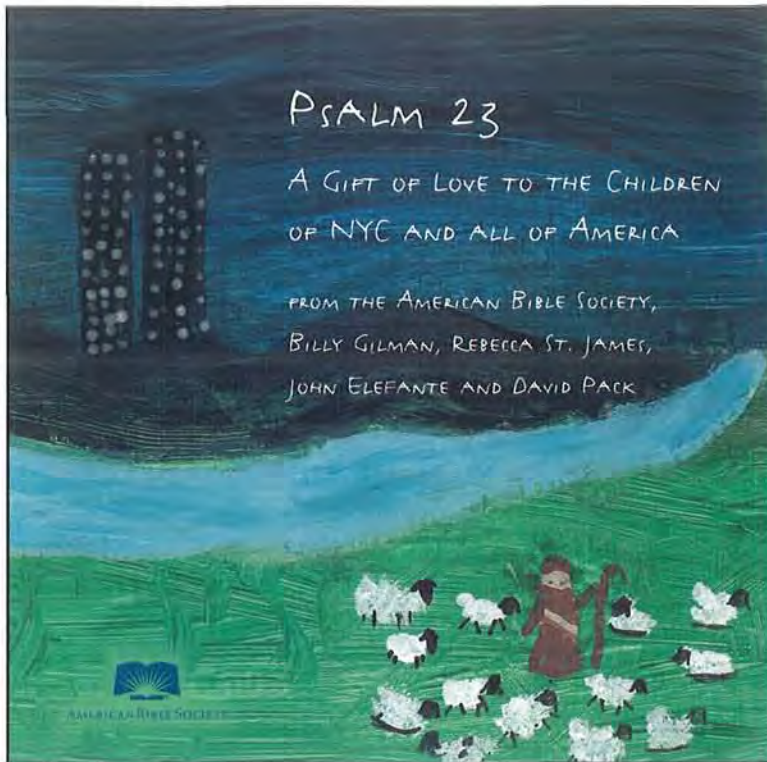
Mariah, Age 11, AL
Whosoever believes in the Lord will be comforted and protected their whole life.



Leslie, Age 9, PA
He guides me and gives me courage when I need it. He is my best friend.



Hannah, Age 6, AL
...in green pastures.



Julianne Age 11, GA
No matter what storms may come our way, Jesus will be with us through everything.



Sarah, Age 7, MO
The Lord is going to protect us and guide us. He promises that we will always be safe.



Jamie, Age 9, VA
I don't have to worry because the Lord is watching me and guiding my path

A Love Gift from Children for Children

People turn to the Psalms in times of celebration, crisis and praise. Originally composed as songs and poems, the 150 Psalms continue to be a source of hope, comfort and joy. Psalm 23's message of trust in God has resonated more keenly since the events of Sept. 11, 2001. Though the attackers struck in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Penn., God's children all around the world felt their blows.

In June the American Bible Society offered children a chance to express the hope and comfort they drew from this Psalm in the context of the Sept. 11 tragedy. Children from 33 states and Puerto Rico (134 in all) responded. A selection of their work is presented here, with captions written by the artists. (Captions have been edited for space.) These works were displayed in the Bible House atrium as part of the Bible Society's Sept. 11 remembrance [see article on pg.10]. The art can also be viewed on the Bible Society's Web site at www.americanbible.org.

Two of the entries were chosen to grace the covers of a CD of Psalm 23, set to music, which the American Bible Society commissioned from Grammy-winning musician David Pack. He sang the new arrangement with Billy Gilman, Rebecca St. James and John Elefante, and dedicated it to children who had lost parents and loved ones through the Sept. 11 horror. More than 45,000 CDs were distributed at key locations in New York City on Sept 11, 2002.



Lauren, Age 4, WI
This picture is: sky, sun, little girl, sheep, flower & grass.



Katharine, Age 9, NY
On 9/11th I truly felt protected by the promise of God's word.



Lydia, Age 11, IN
God gives us peace even in the worst times of our lives.



Elizabeth, Age 9, CA
God will provide. God loves us.



Madeline, Age 9, MI
I'm surrounded by love, no death or evil. Every step I take God is with me and protects us.



Coleman, Age 10, TX
Since God's word is true, we shouldn't be afraid of anything.



Stephanie, Age 9, CA
Jesus watches over us and takes care of us with love and kindness.



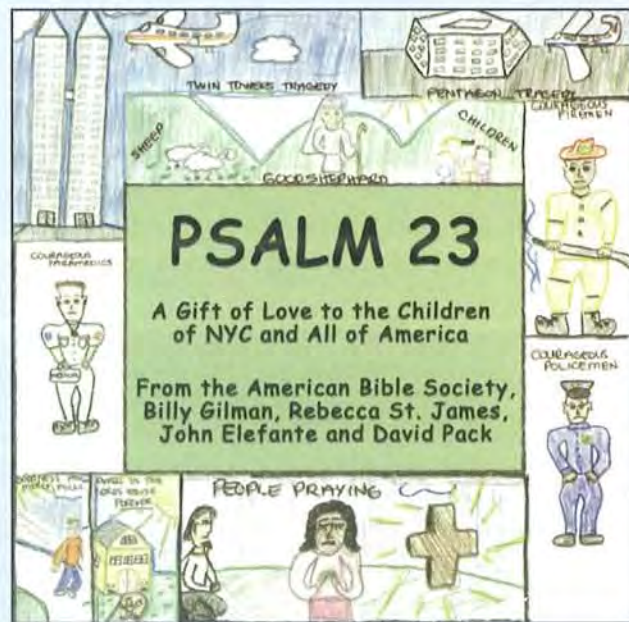
Jessica, Age 6, PA
Even when I am afraid and mean people do bad things, Jesus still takes care of me.



Andrea, Age 9, VA
God always has us in His hands. He is always looking after us.



Rachael, Age 11, GA
God is the Shepherd and we are the sheep. He has provided to take care of us.



Kody, Age 10, OR
God is telling me to trust Him and relax because He loves and will take care of me no matter what happens.



Shea'Mia, Age 12, MT
I know God has us all in his arms.



Jonathan, Age 11, VA
Jesus cares for us, so we do not have need of anything.



Sheree, Age 13, OK
Nothing is out of the Lord's hands.



Caitlyn, Age 6, CA
Jesus makes me feel safe.

GIVING THANKS

In the Wrong Place at the Right Time | BY FRANCINE LANGE

When the treasurer of Plymouth Church of the Pilgrim headed to his regular accounting job last Sept. 11, he didn't know that within the next hours the earth would literally crumble beneath him, taking thousands to their death. ¶ But as he prepares for Thanksgiving and reflects on the series of events framing that Tuesday, he celebrates with an abundance of gratitude.

Norm Jones has a lot to be thankful for this year. The 53-year-old accountant works for a major financial services firm that recently relocated his department to New Jersey. That's a longer commute for Mr. Jones, who used to be able to see his former office building at the World Trade Center from his Brooklyn Heights neighborhood, just one subway stop across New York's East River. But the inconvenience caused by increased travel time doesn't compare with his gratefulness for acts of kindness, fortunate decisions and an escape from death last September.

Mr. Jones had been working at the World Trade Center for nearly 15 years, occupying the 71st floor of one of the massive twin structures with 200 of his colleagues. The morning of Sept. 11, Mr. Jones arrived early to do some follow-up work for a Chicago affiliate. Then he heard the noise, a loud explosion (the first plane plowing into the North Tower).

"My office faces away from the North Tower, so I didn't see it happen," he says. But he did see a ball of fire flare to his side of the building, and a blizzard of paper blowing past the window.

Having weathered the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, he remained calm and phoned his wife, Jacque, to let her know he was OK. Then he heard co-workers yelling that the other tower was

in flames.

After another hurried call to his wife, Mr. Jones headed with others to the stairs. Moments later the building shook violently, ceiling tiles rained down and a strange smell (from leaking jet fuel) filled the air.

As Mr. Jones recalls the next events, he says he can be thankful for quite a bit. The damaged stairwell he stepped into remained uncongested and well lighted for the next 60 or so floors. He and a co-worker took turns carrying a young woman who had been struggling on crutches. "Fortunately," he says, "she was very petite."

Even so, after 20 floors, both men tired and slowed down. But a young man took over at that point and carried her the rest of the way, another 44 floors. Otherwise, he says, "we might have been in there still trying to get her down [when the building collapsed], so we're thankful for him."

Mr. Jones is also grateful that his company, which had nearly 4,000 of its employees working on 20 floors in the building, lost only 13.

He's thankful for the help and encouragement he received throughout the day

— cold water and the use of a phone from a family friend, and relieved hugs from fellow church members, his apartment's superintendent and his housekeeper.

The next Sunday, he and his wife and three children attended church and heard a children's choir's rendition of "Surely the Presence of the Lord Is in This Place." After that traumatic week, he says, "It was extremely moving."

Mr. Jones received a deluge of e-mails, cards and phone calls from friends and family around the world "saying that they'd been praying for me, and I was very thankful for that."

He doesn't dwell on the possibility



DAVID SINGER

▲ Norm Jones lives in Brooklyn Heights.

that he could have died. "You wonder why some people got out and some people didn't. ... it could have been different." But the psalm that King David uttered to the Lord, "Thou art a hiding place for me, thou preservest me from trouble; thou dost encompass me with deliverance" (Psalm 32.7 RSV) could also be Mr. Jones' prayer.

All in all, Mr. Jones knows his family's Thanksgiving this year will be special. "It'll be a *good* one," he emphasizes. ■

TOUCHING OTHERS WITH VERSE AND SONG

by FRANCES LATHROP

FOR SOMEONE WHOSE POETRY AND GOSPEL SONGS have been published and widely distributed in the United States and overseas, Edna Massimilla is surprisingly modest. "I feel like I have a gift of writing, and I'm going to use it for the Lord," she says. And, even after years of writing uplifting verses, Mrs. Massimilla, 86, pens on.

Her love of the printed word extends to the ministry she and her husband, John (now deceased), started in 1960. They established This Is Our Life Publications to provide books, poems and songs to people with disabilities and to their families, and more recently, to the elderly as well. In fact, she says, several organizations that serve people with disabilities have designated her "Poet Laureate of the Disabled."

One of her poems, "Heaven's Very Special Child," has touched an especially poignant chord with many. She wrote it to honor a daughter born with Down syndrome who eventually died of the condition. It has been widely reprinted in various forms, including an Ann Landers column, in books of poetry and on Web sites. Now it has gone international, Mrs. Massimilla says. She just granted permission to a group home in Japan to publish it in Japanese.

Mrs. Massimilla had an earlier encounter with tragedy; she was still a child when her mother died. Her aunt took her in and made sure she regularly

attended Sunday school with her two cousins. "It was a part of my life," she says.

Perhaps that is why she is particularly fond of the Bible Society's programs to engage youth with the Scriptures. "They really need it so much today," she says.

Her own connection with the Bible Society began with her father, who regularly contributed to the organization. "It seems to be a family theme," she says. Mrs. Massimilla carries on that theme by donating through a charitable gift annuity and by providing Bibles at cost to people who ask. She has assembled a unique Bible display in her Pennsylvania home. "I have a part of my apartment set aside with Bibles," she says, describing the area she has stocked with American Bible Society Bibles in English, Spanish and Russian.



Edna Massimilla

With no signs of slowing down and a large family to dote on (Mrs. Massimilla's remaining four daughters live nearby and she has 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren), she keeps very busy. Whether it is through a poem, a song or a Bible placed in someone's hand, Mrs. Massimilla says she will continue to share her poetic gift freely wherever she can.

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.

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Tax-free rollovers from IRAs/401(k)s may be an opportunity if Congress approves the CARE Act (legislation pending as of November 2002).

*Act Now! Payout Rates are determined by the American Council on Gift Annuities and may decline on gift annuities established after December 31, 2002.

Minimum age of issue is 50 for a Gift Annuity donor or beneficiary and a minimum amount of \$5,000. A Gift Annuity is not an investment but a gift in exchange for a fixed income stream for the life or lives of the beneficiaries. Deferred Gift Annuities are available to supplement your retirement income in the future, provided the income stream begins after age 50.



AMERICAN
BIBLE
SOCIETY

FOR THE RECORD

100 YEARS AGO

Bible Triumphs Over Its Critics

The November 1902 *Record* noted that some saw the Bible as being “under fire” from critics’ attacks. The editors of the *Record*, however, were completely confident that the Bible would triumph over its detractors.

“The Bible is indeed ‘an anvil that has worn out many hammers,’ and no one need fear as to its final vindication,” the editors wrote.

“From the beginning, the Bible has had its enemies, and in that sense has been ‘under fire.’ But it has a marvelous fashion of coming out of the fires of the attack unscathed, and turning the counsel of its foes into confusion.”

The *Record* quoted another Christian journal, *The Interior*, which stated that it is not the Bible that is under fire, but rather the man who attacks it. “The book upon which modern civilization is reared, which lies at the basis of our legislation, which softens rude manners and ameliorates the most wretched condition, is not in danger.”

50 YEARS AGO

Gift with a Christmas Meaning

In November 1952, the *Record* announced that 500,000 special Christmas greetings were being distributed during the 1952 Christmas season.

The American Bible Society had printed half a million copies of Luke’s Gospel as a “Christmas gift with a Christian meaning,” giving people an opportunity to share God’s Word.

“Everyone who uses these greetings will agree that this is an effective means of commending Bible reading,” the *Record* stated.

The December 1952 *Record* told the story of America’s northernmost Bible school, located 2,100 miles northwest of Seattle, on the small island of Adak in Alaska.

The teachers and children, who came from families in U.S. government and military service, raised \$82.20 for the Bible Society “in order that others might have the same privilege of studying God’s Word.” ■



THE GALLERY
at the American Bible Society

December 13, 2002 - March 15, 2003

Visions of Light

From Dec. 13, 2002, through March 15, 2003, the Gallery at the American Bible Society will feature “Testimony of the Light: Stained Glass and Architecture in the 20th Century.” Professor Virginia C. Raguin of the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass., will co-curate the exhibition along with Tricia Pongracz, curator here at the Gallery.

The exhibition profiles major design concepts that made use of glass in religious architecture in the 20th century — glass art that included the use of both figures and decoration. Displays of glass-making processes utilize a variety of materials as well as new processes that reveal how color and image are created.

The show emphasizes the interactive way stained glass art is used in religious architecture as well as the diversity of expression possible using this medium. A fully illustrated color catalog will be available. A symposium, co-sponsored by the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture, as well as other lectures and events, will also be part of the exhibition.

The Gallery’s current exhibition, “Icons or Portraits? Images of Jesus and Mary from the Collection of Michael Hall,” will close on Nov. 16 and travel to the Mobile Museum of Art, Mobile Ala. (Feb. 14 - June 8, 2003); the Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences, Evansville, Ind. (July 28 - Oct. 5, 2003); and the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Fla. (early 2004).

The Gallery is located at 1865 Broadway, at 61st Street, in New York City. The Gallery and all its programs are free. Hours: Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri.: 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.; Thurs.: 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.; Sat.: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Closed on Sundays. For more information, call (212) 408-1500, e-mail gallery@americabible.org, or visit us on the Internet at: <http://www.americabible.org/gallery/gallery.cfm> ■



Mary Clerkin
Higgins (1954-).
In the Beginning,
2002.

to the editor

We welcome letters from our readers. Letters should be fewer 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 absrecord@americanbible.org

Ask Jacquie reader note

Your articles always interest me and I look for them each time the *Record* comes out!

THE REV. LES BOUCK, PROVO, UTAH

Praise for Children's Choir

I enjoyed the article "The African Children's Choir — Young Singers Bringing Hope to America" so much! The children's smiling faces are so beautiful. I wish I could have experienced their presentation — singing and dancing and hugs.

MARIE WINBERG, MANITEE, MICH.

Life changes for youth with Scriptures

The stories about the young people [September/October 2002 *Record*] are particularly heart-warming. I found especially meaningful your emphasis on the changes that came when the Bible was read and believed; new life was imparted through faith in the Lord Jesus.

CARYL A. REID, HOLDER, FLA.

Quiet Time reader uses Bible reading guide

I am 86 years old and have been using "Quiet Time" from your *Record* magazine ever since I've received it. It has been such a blessing to me.

LOUISE CAPRON, BATTLE CREEK, MICH.

Sept. 11 article touches reader

The article "God's Word Sustains New Yorkers" reminded me of the Scripture "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee; the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10 KJV). To me that says that if a man's evil acts will not ultimately bring glory to God, he won't even allow them to happen.

I also include Charles H. Spurgeon's comments about that verse "[The wrath of man] shall not only be overcome, but rendered subservient to Thy glory. Man with his breath of threatening is but blowing the trumpet of the Lord's eternal fame. Furious

winds often drive vessels the more swiftly into port. The devil blows the fire and melts the iron, and then the Lord fashions it for his own purposes. Let men and devils rage as they may, they cannot do otherwise than subserve the divine purposes." (from Spurgeon's *Treasury of David*)

Our Father is in total control!!

EDITH G. LELAND, HIGHLANDS RANCH, COLO.

Corrections:

- Liana Lupas, curator in Library and Archives at the American Bible Society, wrote the article "The First Illustrated Bibles Printed in America" that appeared in the July/August 2002 *Record* (page 16). Her name was omitted in error.
- An article on prison ministry in Malawi in the September/October 2002 *Record* (page 15) stated that the total inmate population at the Zomba prison is more than 9,000. That number actually represents the entire inmate population in Malawi.
- The photo caption at the beginning of "The Bible in Public Schools" published in the September/October 2002 *Record* (page 12), identifies Trudy Whitehurst as the founder of Religious Released Time Education. Ms. Whitehurst is actually the founder of the Brooklyn-based Religious Released Time Education Headquarters, Inc. The program allows children — with parental permission — to be "released" from school on Wednesdays off school property for "the last hour of the instructional day to receive religious instruction."
- The same article (page 14) lists the number of Bibles distributed by Maryland Bible club members as 2,000. The correct number, which represents Bibles distributed by the club members in the past four years, is 22,000.

"Now Thank We All Our God"

"Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of him."

— COLOSSIANS 3.17 CEV

In Crestwood, Ky., a bedroom community northeast of Louisville, a Southern Baptist congregation searches for a new senior pastor. Their ForMinistry Web site provides an easy way to give prospective applicants a look into "who we are and what we believe." To date, they have received over 300 resumes. The interim pastor, who heads the search committee, wrote me to say, "Thank you for helping our church build and maintain our Web site. ... It's provided us a chance to get a better match in terms of candidates. Not all 'fit' by any stretch of the imagination, but as a result of your ministry, there are a lot fewer that don't match, making our job easier."

On the other side of the globe, a South Korean Presbyterian pastor and missionary to China and North Korea finds ForMinistry, and through e-mail shares with us the hardships they suffer and their need for materials to do their mission work. In response to my reply, he writes, "Your prayers strengthen us and our work. Please, feel free to e-mail me your prayer requests. We love you in Christ's love. Thank you."

Two stories with a common thread: thankfulness and technology. Saying "thanks" for the Web tools ForMinistry provides; expressing gratitude through e-mail for shared prayers. And underneath it all, thanksgiving to God for giving us the tools to create communications media that connect believers around the globe. While so much of communications technology is dehumanizing, we can also use technology in ways that demonstrate our love for God and our neighbor and that can build community.

Thankfulness and technology don't always go together. In fact, frequently the tone of cyberspace tends toward being individualistic and impatient. Net users, eager for the "latest and greatest" techno-toys, are often impatient for up-to-the-second information, instant service and the power to click-and-shop year round, Christmas and Easter included. A far cry from Paul's injunction that whatever we say and do (including how

we behave online) should be done in the Lord's name.

If we operate from a stance of gratitude and responsibility we will tend to listen first before we "speak" online. Recognizing our debt to others and to God, we will communicate with humility and integrity rather than joining the cacophony of those shouting to be heard in cyberspace. Our church Web sites will give visitors equal opportunity to engage with us and ask probing questions about who we really are as we seek to inform them about ourselves.

The other thing we can do is model gratitude and responsibility. Our church Web sites can include a monthly testimonial to share with the entire parish on how God has graciously touched the congregation in specific ways. We can publish an e-newsletter that includes "praise reports" for answered prayer. Our Web sites can include opportunities for the community of faith to serve others, sending a strong signal that we are indeed "our brother's keeper," responsible to each other for mutual support and encouragement. And we can invite each other at every turn to reflect on God's loving kindness in our own lives and to share these stories with others.

This season of Advent is a time in which we not only look back with gratitude for the Incarnation, but also anticipate Christ's coming again. It's an especially appropriate time to reflect on what God has done for us in Christ Jesus and to measure ourselves — online and offline — against the benchmark of Scripture: "Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of him."

Blessings and continued prayers that God will increase your faithfulness and fruitfulness online. ■

To read a full-length version of this and other articles, click on eQuipped.ForMinistry.com.

— CHRIS THYBERG

CThyberg@ForMinistry.com

Director, Ministry Development — ForMinistry

An Internet ministry of the American Bible Society

"Equipping the Church Online For Ministry"®

Search 



This fictional story is intended to illustrate the power of ForMinistry technology.

Katherine and Michael had just moved to a new town where they were planning to get married. But before they could say "I do" to each other, they had to make a lifelong commitment to the right church. Through ForMinistry's website, they found Father John and All Saints Episcopal and soon realized that they had not only found their soulmate but their soul-church, too! Check out www.ForMinistry.com and find out how they can help you strengthen your connection with your congregation.

*for***Ministry**[™]



Equipping the church online for ministry[®]

ForMinistry is an Internet ministry of the American Bible Society

BUILD FIND CONNECT SHARE

update

N A T I O N A L

■ UNITED STATES

The American Bible Society, sponsor of three conferences on Bible technologies over the past year, continues to make the Scriptures more easily accessible in multiple formats on the Internet through the development of a universal technology "language." This language will create common standards for cataloging and indexing.

The most recent conference, held in Rome in April, hosted 50 scholars, computer experts and Bible publishers, both commercial and not-for-profit, and was devoted to developing and refining an Open Scriptural Information Standard (OSIS).

Dr. Robert Hodgson, a manager at the Eugene A. Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship at the Bible Society, and a participant in the Rome meeting, said OSIS provides a common technology standard for preparing biblical text for publication.

"OSIS offers the opportunity to deliver Scriptures to more people, in more ways and in more languages," said Andrew Rugege, director, International Business Development at ABSinter-active (the technology arm of the American Bible Society). As an example, he said, Bibles are traditionally distributed in single-language editions. Yet many who need Bibles are either trying to learn English as a second language or to preserve their knowledge of their native language, hence the need for more multiple language Scriptures.

"OSIS will facilitate the publishing of mul-

tiple language editions at no extra cost," Mr. Rugege said. Delivering Bibles that serve practical language needs will keep the Bible at the center of people's lives.

1-800-flowers.comSM

■ NEW YORK

Just in time for the holiday season!

The American Bible Society has signed an agreement with 1-800-FLOWERS.COM® that enables the Bible Society's friends to help share God's Word with others when they make a purchase from 1-800-FLOWERS.COM.

Simply use promotion code **BIBLE** when ordering by phone at 1-800-FLOWERS® (1-800-356-9377) or during checkout when ordering online at www.1800flowers.com, and 1-800-FLOWERS.COM will give 10 percent* of the net proceeds from the purchase to the American Bible Society.

Now supporters of the American Bible Society can provide a two-fold blessing: delighting and surprising loved ones with thoughtful gifts, including beautiful plants, gourmet delights and fresh flowers, as well as helping the American Bible Society distribute life-giving Scripture materials to men, women and children around the world.

(*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 July 31, 2003, and void where prohibited. 1-800-FLOWERS.COM® uses Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryption technology to secure its Web site.)

■ COLORADO

Every year, on Super Bowl Sunday, Christians in more than 5,000 churches across the United

Presenters at the Bible Technologies Conference included, from left: Robert Pritchett, president and CEO, Logos Research Systems, Inc.; Dr. Steve DeRose, consultant in Structured Document Systems and Standards; Dr. Kirk Lowery, director, Westminster Hebrew Institute; Dr. Kees deBlois: United Bible Societies translation consultant; and Andrew Rugege, who serves as OSIS project coordinator.



DAUD SOESILO

States invite football fans to a Super Bowl party in their church or home and, with the aid of a Scripture-based *Power to Win* party kit, share the Bible's message of hope, guidance and love.



The kit was developed by several Christian sports ministries, including the American Bible Society's Sports Program, Athletes in Action and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. The Bible Society provides specially designed copies of John's Gospel with athletes' testimonies about why God's Word matters to them. The kit also includes a party planning guide, posters and a video featuring NFL players, including Trent Dilfer and Rich Gannon, who talk about their relationship with Jesus Christ.

For information on this outreach and to order the kit, please contact the American Bible Society sports office via e-mail at dhepburn@americanbible.org, by telephone at (719) 266 8446 or by clicking on the *Power to Win* Web site at www.gospelcom.net/rbc/sports/sb/.

■ FLORIDA

This November, close to 1,500 music lovers will clap, sway and dance to lively Latin rhythms at

a Scripture-promoting concert, an event being hosted by the American Bible Society's Office of Latino Affairs (OLA), to help publicize the Month of the Bible to Florida Latinos.

The campaign encourages Bible reading and study and evangelism through the distribution of Scriptures.

The free concert, for which OLA used its National Bible Reading Campaign's moniker, *The Bible is My Guide*, features Latino personalities including Ingrid Rosario, Dani Driggs, Renan Carias, Jaime Murrell and Miguel Angel Guerra, as well as OLA staffers Yvette Rojas, sales manager, and Ivy Rexach, publishing specialist, and the Miami Choir Alliance. Christians from all denominations were invited to attend and OLA will distribute booklets with inspirational Scripture selections in Spanish.

"Excellent music and a wonderful message," said Beatriz Duarte, an OLA manager for Programs and Marketing. "The concert is a great opportunity to share the beautiful message found in the Bible with others."

To read interviews from Latino singers, sports figures and church leaders affirming the importance of the Bible in their life and ministry, you may visit *The Bible is My Guide* online at www.biblias.org.



▲ The poster from *The Bible is My Guide* concert.

IN MEMORIAM

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

My Parents,
Mr. & Mrs. William and Dell
Black
Given by: Alice B. Worley

My Sister,
Mrs. Kathryn K. Carruth
Given by: Alice K. Johnson

My Husband,
Chauncey G. Goddard, M.D.
Given by: Mrs. C. G. Goddard

My Mother,
Iris Leach
Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Howard and Janet Hellman

My Daughter,
Rev. Janet Landwehr
Given by: Jane Mangold

My Parents,
Rev. Arthur W. Walther and
Trudy Walther
Given by: Carol Fender

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.

update

I N T E R N A T I O N A L



JAN INGE REVHEIM/STRØMME FOUNDATION

Children at a center in Nyagatovu display *New Reader Portions* they received from representatives of the Bible Society in Rwanda and the Norway-based Strømme Foundation.

Translator and pastor Thang Ngai Om serves the Cho Chin people in Myanmar.



JOSEPH HONG/ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER

R W A N D A

The Bible Society in Rwanda has collaborated with the Strømme Foundation, a Christian organization based in Norway, to distribute *New Reader Portions* in the Kibuye province of Rwanda. The Portions are being used with a literacy project designed for both adults and children.

In February, representatives from both organizations visited a literacy center in Nyagatovu and distributed 2,349 Portions to children and adults attending literacy classes at the center. At a second center in Rwimpili, visitors distributed 1,566 Portions to 384 children and 131 adults.

The distribution is part of a larger project intended to provide biblical materials free of charge to children and young people in East Africa who cannot afford them.

M Y A N M A R

In a country with more than 100 different languages, translating God's Word into yet another language brings Bible workers one language closer to providing the Scriptures to all their countrymen.

Thang Ngai Om, a pastor and Bible translator living in the mountainous Chin state in northwestern Myanmar, is taking the extra step to ensure the continuation of this work. As an example, he walked 62 miles to keep a scheduled meeting with a United Bible

Societies representative to review his latest translation work.

This became necessary when heavy rainfall prevented him from traveling from his hometown in Mindat to Pakokku, a 100-mile distance away. The dirt road connecting the two towns had been flooded or buried in mud. And with no phone lines in Mindat, Mr. Thang could not contact the UBS representative. So he decided to walk to another town where he could connect with a dry route to Pakokku.

His exhausting, three-day journey required wading and swimming across submerged areas. To keep the translation drafts and Bibles he carried with him dry, he draped some netting over an inflated tire tube, placed the materials in the net and hauled the tire behind him as he swam.

Originally a Buddhist, Mr. Thang became a Christian when, at age 22, Baptist missionaries shared the gospel with him and his family. Eager to serve God, Mr. Thang gave up his teaching job and traveled to Yangon, Myanmar's capital, to study theology. After graduating, Mr. Thang returned to Mindat to serve as pastor in his local Baptist church.

He got involved in translation work after attending a translation workshop in 1988. At that time, the Bible Society of Myanmar selected him to translate the Bible into Cho Chin. In early 2001, church members at the Myoma Baptist Church in Mindat dedicated and distributed the newly published Cho Chin New Testament. (About 80,000 people in Myanmar speak the Cho Chin language and some 60 percent of those are Christians.)

Mr. Thang wants every effort made to ensure that the liberating message of the gospel, in all its richness, will come alive in the hearts of his fellow Cho Chin people.

For more about Bible work with the people of Myanmar, read "East Meets West" on page 14 in this issue of the Record.

BIBLE IN THE NEWS

Preaching in the streets

■ In "Taking Jesus to the Streets," *The Dallas Morning News* profiled a number of preachers who bring the Word of God directly to men and women on city streets.

The article highlighted the work of three street preachers who minister to the poor and homeless in Dallas. The preachers described what drew them to this work, their heroes and their favorite Scripture verses.

Police officer and weekend preacher Zoltan Laký recalled being frustrated in his ministry. "I wondered if I was reaching anyone, if I should go into another ministry," he said. But one day, a man in a grocery store recognized him across the aisle and called out, "Brother Zoltan!" The man had heard Mr. Laký preach, and his life had changed. He had gotten off the streets and now had a job. "He prayed to be delivered, and he was delivered," Mr. Laký said.

Biblical principles are good business

■ Truett Cathy, founder of the Chick-fil-A restaurants, believes Sunday is a day of rest. So he keeps his outlets closed.

"People appreciate you being consistent in your faith," Mr. Cathy says. It's a silent witness to the Lord when people go into shopping malls and everything is bustling and you see that Chick-fil-A is closed."

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution profiled Mr. Cathy, who was keen to speak of how the Bible shapes his life and work.

Mr. Cathy's son, Dan, says that his father both teaches and lives out the Scriptures: "We were learning Scripture verses from early childhood, but more importantly, he lived a life of integrity. He was the same at home and teaching Sunday school as he was in the restaurant."

The U.S. House of Representatives wanted to hear his views about good business practices. Before he spoke, he told the newspaper, "We all in America are covered up in greed. The best solution is to get back to the Bible and get back to the Ten Commandments."

Scripture picture stories

■ *Picture Stories from the Bible*, published by Educational Comics, were a hit when they were published in 1945 as individual comic books.

Pioneering comics publisher M.C. Gaines and his successor and son, William M. Gaines, also produced five printings of the 232-page Old Testament Edition of the *Picture Stories*. The elder Gaines was a great believer in the power of comic books to educate. He also published *Picture Stories from World History* and *Picture Stories from Science*.

Scoop, an e-mail newsletter about comic books and collectibles, cited the Bible comics twice in one month. The newsletter's editor had fond memories of reading the comics in the early 1960s, which prompted him to draw his own version of David and Goliath, impressing one of his teachers.

Healing a healer

■ Dr. Ben Carson, who was featured on the cover of the August/September 2000 *Record*, was recently diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Physicians told the famed pediatric neurosurgeon at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore that the cancer was an especially aggressive form.

As prospects worsened, Dr. Carson told *The Washington Post* that he prayed, "Well, you know best, Lord." He spoke of Romans 8:28: "... all things work together for good to them that love God" (KJV).

His family, friends and hundreds of others prayed for a cure. Things improved: First, an expert told him that the cancer hadn't spread, as was originally feared. Then, Dr. Carson's surgery was a success. Prospects look good for a total recovery. ■



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.

DECEMBER

**God's Word:
Source of Joy**

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

- 1 Mark 13.24-37
- 2 Obadiah
- 3 Malachi 3.1-18
- 4 Malachi 4.1-6
- 5 Ruth 4.1-22
- 6 Nehemiah 8.1-12
- 7 Esther 9.18-32

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

- 8 Isaiah 11.1-16
- 9 Isaiah 12.1-6
- 10 Zephaniah 3.8-20
- 11 Zechariah 9.9-17
- 12 Psalm 24
- 13 Psalm 48
- 14 Isaiah 60.1-22

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

- 15 Isaiah 61.1-11
- 16 Isaiah 62.1-12
- 17 Jeremiah 31.1-14
- 18 Jeremiah 31.15-26
- 19 Joel 2.18-27
- 20 Micah 5.2-9
- 21 Luke 1.1-25

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

- 22 Luke 1.26-38
- 23 Luke 1.39-56
- 24 Luke 1.57-80

CHRISTMAS DAY

- 25 Luke 2.1-20
- 26 Luke 2.21-40
- 27 Hebrews 1.1-14
- 28 John 1.1-18

SUNDAY

- 29 Isaiah 9.1-7
- 30 Isaiah 52.1-12
- 31 Isaiah 55.1-13

JANUARY

**Believe the Good News and
Follow Jesus**

- 1 Mark 1.1-13
- 2 Mark 1.14-28
- 3 Mark 1.29-45
- 4 Mark 2.1-12

SUNDAY

- 5 Mark 2.13-28

EPIPHANY

- 6 Matthew 2.1-15
- 7 Mark 3.1-19
- 8 Mark 3.20-35
- 9 Mark 4.21-41
- 10 Mark 5.1-20
- 11 Mark 5.21-43

SUNDAY

- 12 Mark 6.1-13
- 13 Mark 6.45-56
- 14 Mark 7.1-23
- 15 Mark 7.24-37
- 16 Mark 8.1-13
- 17 Mark 8.14-26

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY BEGINS

- *18 Mark 8.27—9.1

ECUMENICAL SUNDAY

- 19 John 17.1-26
- 20 John 14.1-14
- 21 Mark 9.2-13
- 22 Mark 9.14-32
- 23 Mark 9.33-50
- 24 Galatians 1.11-24
- 25 Acts 9.1-25

SUNDAY

- 26 Acts 9.26-43
- 27 Acts 8.26-40
- 28 Mark 10.1-16
- 29 Mark 10.17-31
- 30 Mark 10.32-45
- 31 Mark 10.46-52

**The Octave for Christian Unity
is January 18-25, 2003.*

PLEASE PRAY

PARAGUAY — Pray for the thousands of children who will encounter God's Word through a new magazine in which Scripture selections appear. The magazine is proving very popular in the schools where it is distributed. Pray also for funding to take Scriptures and medical assistance by boat to people living along the Paraguay River.

CROATIA — Pray for the successful completion of a new Bible translation project, begun last year, and for continued success of Bible work in this country.

MACEDONIA (PART OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC) — Pray for a spirit of peace in this country, which struggles with ethnic tensions and economic hardship. Give thanks for the release of the New Testament on audiocassette for the blind and on CD-ROM for the deaf.

HUNGARY — Thank God for the success of the publication of Luke's Gospel, which combines three Catholic and three Protestant translations. Pray for God's blessing on a new fund-raising campaign for continued Bible Society work and the publication of a new edition of the Gospels, illustrated by Romani artists.

YUGOSLAVIA — Give thanks for the production of an illustrated children's Bible and related exhibition in a gallery in Belgrade to open in September. Pray for broader democratic freedoms and an improved economy to facilitate wider distribution of Scriptures.

A TALE OF TWO TRANSLATORS

THE WICHÍ PEOPLE IN Argentina and Bolivia have had the Word of God in their native tongue for many years, but it was based on a 16th-century Spanish version of the Bible. Since 1981, translation teams sponsored by the United Bible Societies (UBS) — of which the American Bible Society is a key member — have been struggling to create a new, more contemporary version of the Bible in Wichí.

One night, long before he joined the team as a translator, the Rev. Juan Toribio, who was living in Bolivia at the time, had a dream. He felt God speaking to him, asking him to return to his native Argentina, to serve his own people.

By selling some of their possessions, the Toribio family was able to raise enough money to get them part of the way back to Argentina, and loans and gifts got them the rest of the way. But even with that help, they had to hitch a ride on a freight train to get to Juárez.

After overcoming more obstacles, including partial facial paralysis, Rev. Toribio was ordained and joined the UBS translation team. He brought a great gift — he spoke Wichí long before he learned Spanish, so he speaks the native language in a pure form.

Roberto Lunt, who works with Rev. Toribio, says, "Together we're making a good translation for people who speak both languages — the Indian language and Spanish."

The story of another translator, Isidro Vilte, began when he was seven months old, and had barely survived a deadly disease. "God stopped short of taking my life because he had a purpose for me." He added, "Now I know he meant me to translate the Bible."

Mr. Vilte, who lives in Juárez, started working on the Wichí Bible in 1981. While some books of the Old Testa-



LARRY JERDEN/UBS

▲ Translator Isidro Vilte works in his study, oblivious to inquisitive local boys peering in.

ment had been translated into Wichí, others are yet to be translated.

But it has been a learning exercise. As the project moved forward, problems arose because Wichí has eight dialects. Mr. Vilte formed a reading committee with representation from each of the dialect groups. When the Wichí New Testament was first published, some people had difficulty with its meaning. So the translators made suggested changes, which led to improvements. "We needed to make sure we had a version that all the dialects could use. So far the new translation is being accepted pretty well," said Mr. Vilte.

The Wichí are waiting for the next stage. "For the past few years, they have been desperate to get a complete Bible in their own language," said Mr. Vilte. The growing Wichí-speaking church needs the Bible. "Everybody is waiting for it," he added, "and I am so happy because this work was assigned to me by God." ■



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

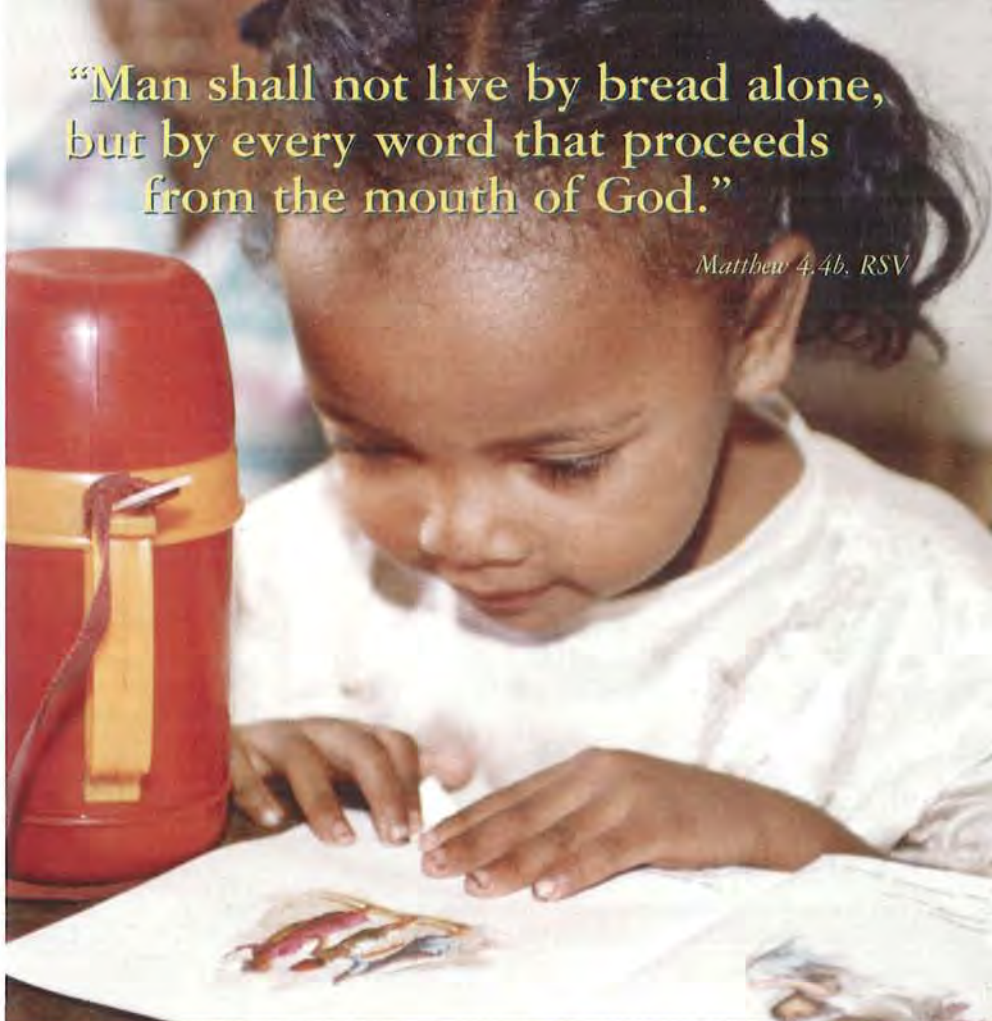
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**"Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceeds
from the mouth of God."**

Matthew 4:4b, RSV



Nothing is more important to a hungry child's body than having enough to eat, and nothing is more important to that child's heart and soul than knowing the Word of God. This Christmas, the American Bible Society will join Feed the Children in helping put the Word of God into the hands of thousands of hard-hit families nationwide.

With your help, the American Bible Society will give boys and girls their own copy of a children's Bible, delivered this Christmas season with much-needed food for them and their families. The Bibles will help children discover the true miracle of Christmas – God loves them so much that he sent his Son for them!

Please send us your gift today, and bless children with the gift of Scripture.

Yes, I want to share God's Word with needy children this Christmas.

☐ Enclosed is my gift of: \$ _____

Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

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