



RECORD

WINTER 2003

*The Jubilee Bible,
Not Just Another Book*
page 9

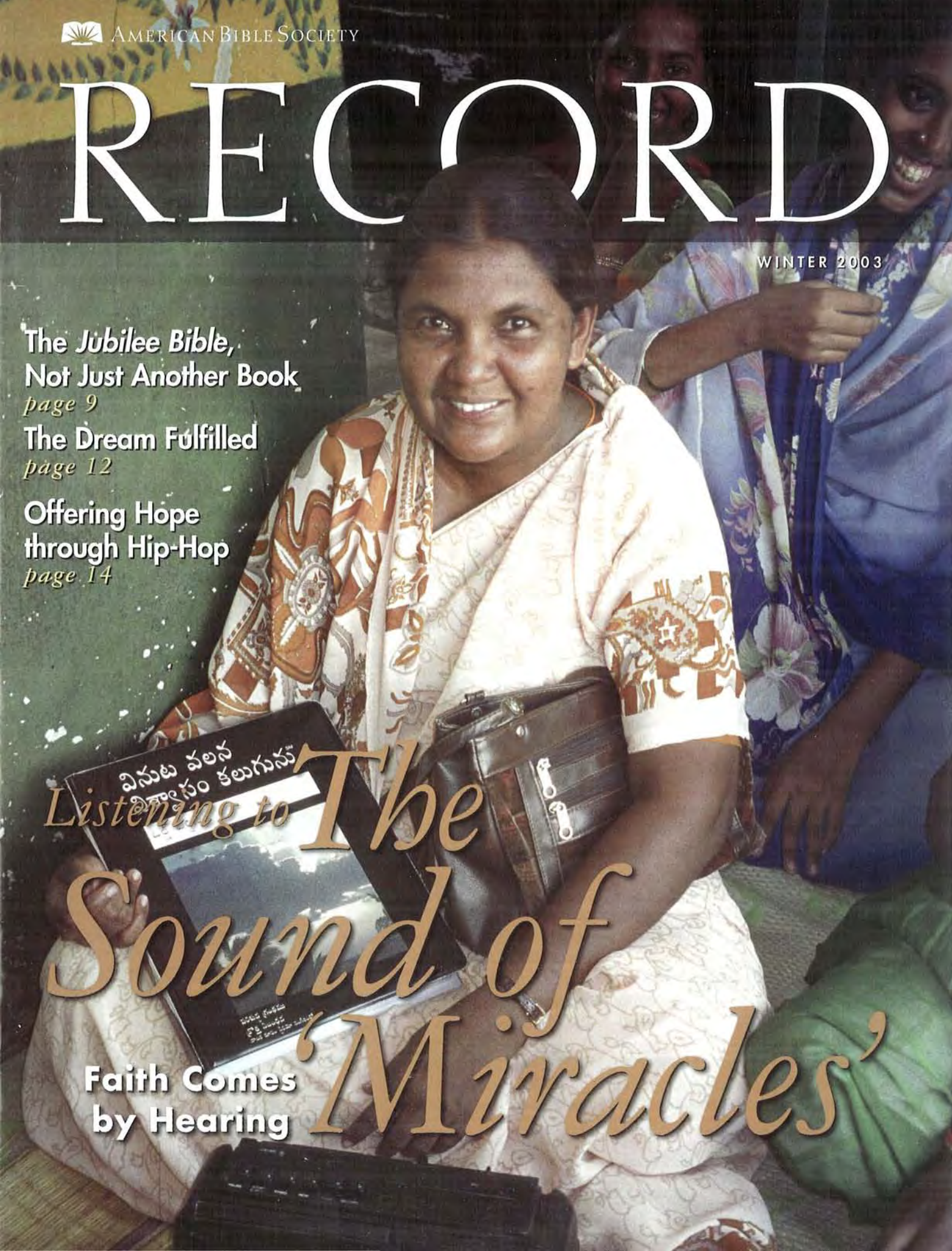
The Dream Fulfilled
page 12

*Offering Hope
through Hip-Hop*
page 14

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విశ్వాసు కలుగును
Listening to

The Sound of 'Miracles'

**Faith Comes
by Hearing**



Insights into Identity

The people who live in darkness will see a great light.

—MATTHEW 4.16 GNT

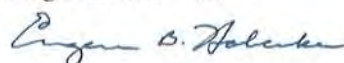
For the liturgically-oriented, we have entered the season of Epiphany — the manifestation of Christ, the light of the world. God's Word is rich with metaphors contrasting light and darkness, reflecting the broken world in which we sojourn. The light shed by the life of God's only begotten Son gives us a glimpse of the glory to come — of what healed humanity will look like. And even though we see as through a glass darkly (we get just a glimpse), without this glimmer of glory we are caught in a dim and shadowy existence, individuals disconnected from our spiritual roots.

Our current Gallery exhibition, *Reflections on Glass*, a sequel to our third Gallery exhibition, *Glory in Glass* (1998), literally shows how, in stained glass, the Word has inspired holy and glorious expressions of "light." It contrasts starkly with a recent exhibition at one of the famous art centers here in New York City, which employed another medium of light — wall-size motion videos — to depict, it seems, souls freed from life. There was no light or life in this show, but a dull and joyless stretch for meaning.

By the light of Christ, the living Word, these shadows recede and we can begin to fathom the possibilities of personhood as we begin to see and reflect Christ's divine countenance. Jesus embodied that aspect of light that points out for us the way home, that frees us from fear, compulsions, prejudice and possessiveness. Jesus instead exudes a union of spirit and will with his heavenly Father — purpose, compassion and generosity. His identity sprang from a supreme confidence in his knowing and grounding in the source of his being. He healed brokenness with acts of love. Jesus truly is our Epiphany.

This is the Word and hope you help us share with the world. Unfortunately, a weakened economy has put constraints on some people's ability to support us in this Bible sharing. Reduced giving this past year has caused us to trim back on every expense not directly related to our Bible-sharing. And this includes the *Record*. Starting with this issue we will shift to a quarterly publishing schedule for the next six months.

For many of you, who rely on our daily Bible reading guide, we've expanded the enclosed reading schedule to cover a full three-month period. I pray that reading God's Word will be a source of hope and your guide for growth during this New Year.




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The mission of the American Bible Society is to make the Bible available to every person in a language and format each can understand and afford. The Society is a member of the United Bible Societies, a partnership of Bible societies throughout the world cooperating to make Scriptures available to people everywhere in their own language.

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RECORD

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

VOLUME 148, NUMBER 1



ON THE COVER: Sugunamma shares God's Word in India using Scriptures recorded on audiocassettes. (Photo courtesy of *Faith Comes By Hearing*)

FEATURES

6 LISTENING TO THE SOUND OF 'MIRACLES'

Faith comes by hearing

9 THE JUBILEE BIBLE... NOT JUST ANOTHER BOOK

American Bible Society tells the story of African American faith

12 THE DREAM FULFILLED

In commemoration of Black History Month

14 OFFERING HOPE THROUGH HIP-HOP

Relating the Scriptures in modern, urban terms

20 SHARING THE TREASURE

One book, one library, one Word

22 HEEDING THE CALL

Story of one American Bible Society benefactor

31 GOD'S WORD RECLAIMS A LIFE

Jamaican minister describes his conversion



DEPARTMENTS

4 BIBLE IN THE NEWS

Scriptures in today's headlines

5 ASK JACQUIE

Readers' Bible questions answered

5 TRUSTEES

Meeting the challenge

16 BIBLE-A-MONTH CLUB

Living hope in the holy land

18 FOR THE RECORD

Looking back at the Society's heritage

18 PLEASE PRAY

Requests from around the globe

18 IN MEMORIAM

Our loved ones remembered

24 eQUIPPED ForMinistry

The church @ work

26 UPDATE

National news

28 UPDATE

International news

30 QUIET TIME

Daily Bible reading guide



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

BIBLE IN THE NEWS

Dr. Nida's major contribution

■ *Christianity Today* magazine featured influential American Bible Society translator Dr. Eugene A. Nida in a four-page interview.

Dr. Nida "has influenced the Bibles read by most Christians around the world," *Christianity Today* stated. The magazine quoted *The Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions'* description of Dr. Nida as the "premier linguist and translation consultant."

According to *Christianity Today*, "the translations he helped shape in over 200 languages make it easier for many millions of lay Christians and nonbelievers to grasp the meaning of the Bible."

In the interview, Dr. Nida said that the biggest challenge facing translators now is "a string of Mongolian languages that goes all the way from Mongolia to Turkey." A number of those languages "have nothing of the Scriptures."

In light of his contributions, the American Bible Society named its Eugene A. Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship in his honor. The institute continues the American Bible Society's heritage of uncompromising scholarship in Scripture translation.

Bible teachers save the day

■ Brendan Miniter, writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, pointed out that Ron Lantz, the trucker who phoned in the tip to police to arrest the suspected Washington, D.C., area snipers, and Todd M. Beamer, who led the attack against hijackers on United Flight 93 on Sept. 11, 2001, were both Sunday school teachers.

In an opinion article, Mr. Miniter described Mr. Lantz's turnaround to a religious life after promising his dying adult son that he would give himself in service to God. Since then, Mr. Lantz has worked hard for the Central Church of Nazarene in Fort Wright, Ky. He leads the men's ministry at his church, brings food to the hungry and teaches Bible classes on Sundays.

The *Journal* described how he organized a prayer

service at a truck stop to seek God's help in finding the snipers. The following week he pulled into a highway rest stop after his shift, spotted the snipers' car and immediately called 911. Police arrived quickly and arrested the men without incident.

Mr. Beamer, who cried his now-famous "Let's roll!" before leading airline passengers in a failed attempt to overpower the hijackers, also prayed before his heroic actions, reciting the Lord's Prayer from the Bible.

The *Journal* pointed out that both men drew from the Scriptures for their strength, concluding with a thought-provoking comment: "Perhaps there's a reason that again and again it is the Sunday school teachers who are helping deliver us from evil."

Surfing with the Scriptures

■ *Surfer* magazine reported on a new surfing video by Christian surfer Jesse Schluntz, "The Outsiders," which combines Christian witness and surfboard exploits.

Before his conversion, Mr. Schluntz had felt lost despite his success in surfing. Things changed after he started to study the Bible. When he attended his first Bible study, the power of the Scriptures touched him deeply. Mr. Schluntz told *Surfer*, "It was like a wave washed over me and took every ounce of pressure off my shoulders. I left feeling extremely humbled and strong at the same time."

Now he and some other top surfers who are Christians are beginning to reach out through the film and a fellowship, Found Nation. *Surfer* reported that the action video, which was filmed in Australia, Europe and Mexico, has become a supplement for the surfers' mission: "to spread the Word to the waves."

In related news, the Australian Bible Society has launched a *Surfer's Bible*, in partnership with Christian Surfers International. The Bible — a modern translation of the New Testament — has a full-color surfing-oriented cover and a culture-relevant introduction and conclusion. ■



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 tell me about the Rose of Sharon and aloe as used in the Bible? (CP, New York)

A The Bible mentions only two flowers by name, the rose and the lily. There is uncertainty about both because the Scripture uses several general terms for flowers. The word rose, mentioned only twice in Scripture, is not the flower called by that name today. "I am the rose of Sharon," Song of Solomon 2.1 (KJV) was most likely a tulip-like flower rather than a true rose. The mountain tulip, *Tulipa montana*, grows natively in the hills of Sharon, covering the ground with a display of deep red in the beginning of spring. The flowers are two to four inches wide with a rich crimson color, and bloom after the winter rains.

The word rose occurs again in Isaiah 35.1 (KJV), "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." Scholarly sources agree that the rose in this passage is most likely the *Narcissus tazetta*, which grows wild in the arid regions of the Holy Land. The narcissus is a white flower with a yellow crown, similar to the other narcissi and daffodils, and bursts into bloom after a desert rain.

The aloe mentioned in the Bible is a fragrant wood of the eaglewood tree that is used as a perfume. In Psalm 45.8 and Song of Solomon 4.14, aloe is listed along with other fragrant spices such as myrrh and cassia.

In the New Testament aloe is included in John 19.39, which tells of Nicodemus bringing 100 pounds of a mixture of myrrh and aloes to the preparation for Jesus' burial. In this instance the aloe is the bitter medicinal plant used in Egyptian embalming.

The plant is a small succulent with tapered, fleshy leaves edged in thorns. It grows throughout the Middle East, and is commonly used as a medicine or for embalming purposes.

Scripture references: King James Version (KJV)
Reference sources: *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, 1996; Baerg, Harry J., *Bible Plants and Animals*, Vol. 3, 1989 ■

TRUSTEES

Meeting the Challenge

As an educator, Sister Joan Curtin is acutely aware of the great needs today's children face — needs that must be met so they can thrive in this century. There's the need for them to become computer literate and to get up-to-date technology in the classroom. There's the need for functional and biblical literacy. And, "I think [children] need heroes," she says, "not Superman, but flesh-and-blood people who are courageous and who are giving their life day by day."

Sister Joan, as a trustee of the American Bible Society's Board for more than three years, does her part to encourage such heroism. She believes that people working together innovatively can make a difference. "What a great challenge and privilege to be creative in churches where we can be creative in the name of the Gospel," she says.



Sister Joan Curtin

She cites the Bible Society's new literacy program as one solution. "I think that's going to be very helpful."

Born and raised in Queens, N.Y., and a child of Irish immigrants, Sister Joan has heard of the struggles her relatives went through when they first arrived in this country. And with an increasingly diverse immigrant population — many cannot speak or read English — she thinks it is critical to provide a solid education as well as outreach, such as the Bible Society does, whether through literacy programs, in prisons or to youth, to both foreign and native-born. Add to that a foundation based on faith in Christ, and people will be able to weather tough times. "We always say to our teachers, 'If you can pass on the faith, you give people that lifeline.'"

Sister Joan has taught in New York since the 1960s and used the Bible Society's Scripture resources in her classrooms. She now serves as director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office of New York (the first woman director in its history).

No matter what the denomination, Sister Joan emphasizes, people committed to compassion and understanding will work wonders in the Lord's name. Referring to Jesus' disciples, a "motley crew" from divergent backgrounds, Sister Joan says: "They had challenges, we have challenges, but we have the inner strength and wisdom to meet those challenges because we have the Holy Spirit." ■

— FRANCINE LANGE



Listening to The Sound of 'Mira

BY LARRY JERDEN



SOME CALL IT A MIRACLE.

Others say it is God speaking.

It seems rather ordinary. But when someone pushes the button on the audio cassette player and the Scriptures are heard, miraculous things do seem to take place.

In India, a violent cement mason named Ananda allowed Sugunamma, a “Bible woman” evangelist, to play Scripture tapes on his front porch. Describing himself as an “idol worshipper” who wrestled with demons, he had never been able to understand the Bible because, like so many people in the world today, he does not know how to read.

“We had three children, but two of them died,” he says. “When the second child was dying, we went to many gods and goddesses to seek healing. But there was no answer, and the baby died.”

That’s when they began listening to Sugunamma’s *Faith Comes By Hearing* Scripture tapes, provided by the American Bible Society. “As we were listening, I came to believe in Jesus,” he explains, but he began to fear a demonic attack if he continued. Then, as he listened to the Bible story of Jesus driving evil spirits out of a demon-possessed man, he made a personal connection. “I realized that, with one command, Jesus could

Evangelist Sugunamma carries audio Scriptures and a tape player when sharing God’s Word in India.

Faith comes by hearing

cles'

send them all away," Ananda says, and his fear subsided.

Today, the once-violent mason is seen as a "man of peace," and his wife, who was told she could have no more children, is expecting a baby. The couple also shares their joy with others.

"We started with three people listening to the Scripture tapes outside our home, but now we have more than 30," he explains. "We are playing the tapes in five other villages as well, and in our own village we have 10 listening groups at different homes."



Ananda, second from left, tells a group in India about the God of the Scriptures who transformed his life.

THE SPOKEN WORD — *A Scripture Sharing Partnership*

Whether it is in a village in India, Africa or South America, or in a North American church or an English cathedral, many agree that God's Word is heard clearly when people listen to these audio Scriptures, which are produced by Hosanna, the Albuquerque-based organization that operates the *Faith Comes By Hearing* listening program.

The American Bible Society has been involved with this ministry (named for Romans 10.17 — "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.") since 1972, when Hosanna asked the Bible Society for help with domestic outreach. "The American Bible Society had recorded Scriptures to reach the blind," explains Morgan Jackson, the international director of *FCBH*. "But our research found that 80 percent of Americans who called themselves Christians didn't read the Bible. So we



Villagers in India listen attentively to the "spoken" Word from the *Faith Comes By Hearing* tapes.

asked the American Bible Society if we could use their *King James Version* and *New Revised Standard Version* recordings to reach listening clubs in churches to get the Bible into the hearts and minds of U.S. Christians."

As a result, more than 130,000 churches in the United States have used audio Scriptures over the last 30 years. And since the Bible Society gave Hosanna permission to produce the tapes, *FCBH* has become the world's largest producer of audio Scriptures.

"Today there are 47,000 churches in the United States that have used the *FCBH* program, and many use the Bible Society's *Contemporary English Version (CEV)*, the *Versión Reina-Valera* [in Spanish] and other audio translations to share God's Word with their people," Mr. Jackson notes.

LITERACY — *A Global Perspective*

If anything, *FCBH* is proving even more effective in the developing world than it is at home — and that is where the greatest need is, emphasizes Mr. Jackson, citing a depressing statistic. "The fact is, 50 percent of our world is illiterate."

The *CEV* translation is especially valuable for listening

because it is written in a contemporary style that is meant to be read aloud.

Not only are people hearing the Word, by hearing the Word they are encouraged to learn how to read. Susan Georgia, an *FCBH* staffer, explains that in countries where government- or church-sponsored literacy programs are available, the interest level among people can be low. But when the same people begin participating in the Scripture listening groups, the listening sparks a desire among many to be able to read. She and other *FCBH* representatives receive reports of people enrolling in literacy classes. In addition, she adds, “a lot of them will learn to read by getting a Bible and following along.”

The American Bible Society recognizes the great need for literacy, and is in fact initiating a domestic literacy program. So *FCBH* falls right in line with the Bible Society’s mission — to provide the Word of God to all people in a form they will understand and engage with — especially when it causes people to deepen their knowledge of the Bible.

The Bible Society’s *Opportunity 21* program — the largest



Morgan Jackson visits with a Quechua family in Peru.

Scripture translation, distribution and engagement initiative in modern history — has played a key role as the major sponsor of *FCBH* programs.

“In all, we have \$8 million worth of *O-21* projects projected for 15 countries,” notes Mr. Jackson, adding, “The Bible Society is matching our funding on a 50-50 basis, and so far we are halfway there.”

AUDIO SCRIPTURE DISTRIBUTION — *By Way of the United Bible Societies*

The ties with the global Bible Society movement go back even before *O-21*. “We had done dramatized versions of the Scriptures — with sound effects, music and different voices — for youth, but found that adults liked them as well,” Mr. Jackson recalls. “In 1991, Mae Alice Reggy-Mamo, then at the United Bible Societies’ Regional Service Center in Nairobi,

A KING’S RANSOM

Some 200 years ago, God revealed to King Somhlolo in a dream that a day would be coming when his Word would come to Swaziland.

In the dream the king saw a white man with straight hair coming to the country with a coin in one hand and a book of God’s Word in the other. When he awoke, King Somhlolo called his people together and shared his vision, saying, “God has warned us never to shed the blood of one who brings the Book of God’s Word.”



BIBLE SOCIETY OF SWAZILAND

The Lord said if the nation would eat the Word of God, or “Umculu,” they would live.

The king’s vision was recorded, and when missionaries came in 1834, the grandson of King Somhlolo sent for them and asked to be taught how to “eat” the Bible. To this day, the National

Somhlolo Festival of Praise is celebrated in thanksgiving to the Lord of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Unfortunately, poverty and illiteracy keep many Christians from ever knowing God’s Word. Even many pastors dare not preach against witchcraft or ancestral worship for fear of being killed.

But two years ago, on Swaziland’s day of National Thanksgiving, 20 pastors and leaders presented King Mswati III with the *Faith Comes By Hearing* dramatized New Testament in the SiSwati language. Radio and TV stations across the country carried the event live. Now, plans are now underway to broadcast the SiSwati New Testament in villages around the nation through Trans World Radio.

—Teresa Wessell

came to us and wanted the ‘dramatic’ version for Africa.”

At the time, in each of the 15 countries *FCBH* was working with, they were having to deal with multiple organizations and ministries. But they noticed that when meeting with key Christian leaders, the national Bible Society was always represented.

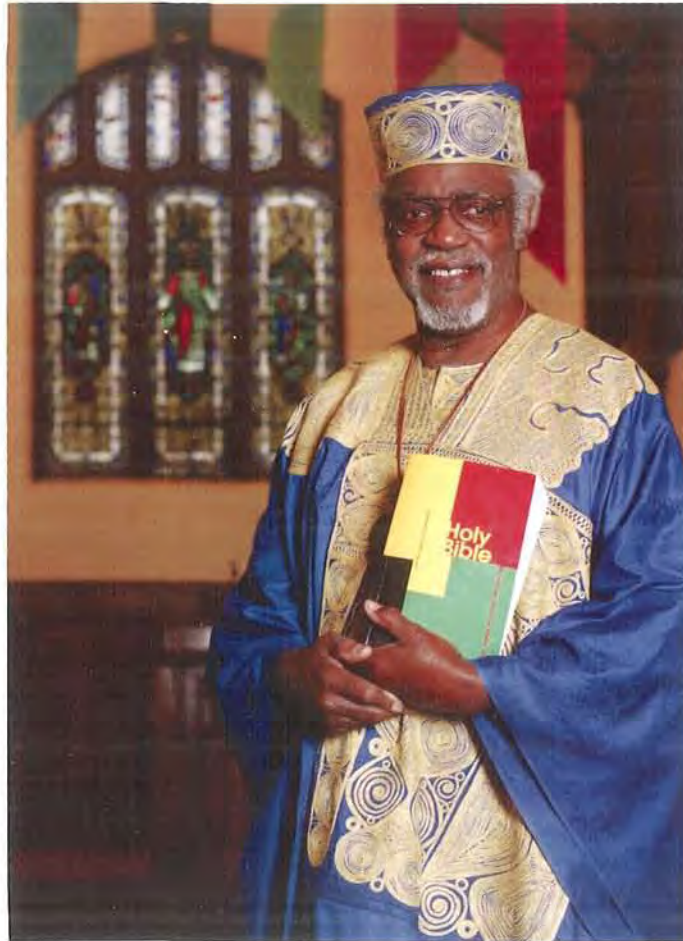
“We learned that the Bible Societies shared our vision for getting the Scriptures to all people, and that they worked with all of the churches,” Mr. Jackson explains, “so we agreed to make the Bible Society the organization of choice in every country.”

continued on page 19 >>

The Jubilee Bible ... not just another book

American Bible Society tells the story of African American faith

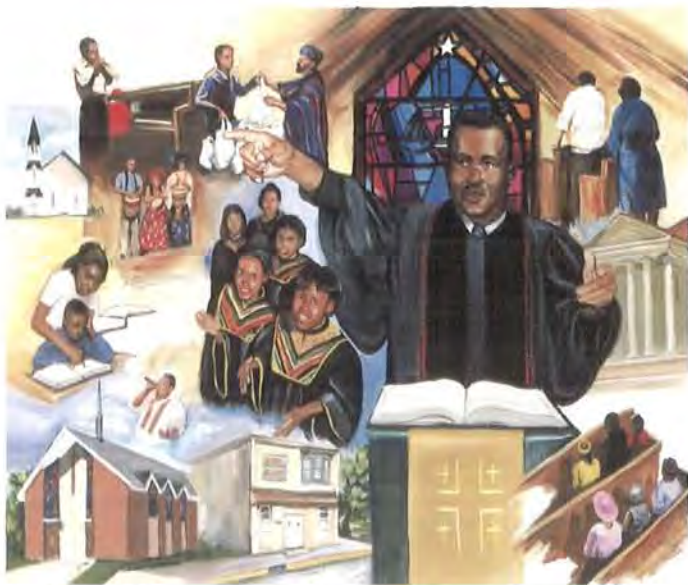
BY PETER FEUERHERD



DAVE HIBACEK

A THEOLOGIAN ONCE REMARKED THAT CHRISTIANS should read the Bible in one hand and the daily newspaper in another. The Rev. Maxie Turner would agree that the Scriptures have to be read in light of world events.

You can usually catch him each Sunday dressed in his colorful African-style robes at the Kwanzaa Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis. In his hand is a marked-up, paperback edition of the *Contemporary English Version Jubilee Bible* published by the American Bible Society. Paper clips mark pages with important passages.



The Black Church, an illustration by Kimanne Smith from the *Jubilee Bible*, published by the American Bible Society.

The robes, the uniquely named congregation and the well-used Bible reflect the unyielding passions of the 76-year-old retired Presbyterian pastor who has reflected all his life upon Christianity and the African American experience. When he reads the Scriptures, Rev. Turner is also reading the signs of the times.

He has encountered racism, cancer and the death of a son due to suicide. In times of social and personal crises, he doesn't believe there's much purpose in leaving a fancy Bible on a shelf unread.

"It's a tool. It's meant to be used," the Rev. Turner says, describing why his *Jubilee Bible* is so battered. "The more it's used, the more beautiful it becomes."

The *Jubilee Bible* is produced by the American Bible Society to celebrate African American history and Christian traditions and proclaim how the two are joined. It is available in three different translations: the



Scipio and Grandson, by Kimanne Smith. Scipio was murdered for teaching his grandson to read the Bible.

King James Version, *Contemporary English Version (CEV)* and *Good News Translation*, and each in both Catholic and Protestant editions. What makes it unique is 270 pages of added text, which tell the dual histories of African American life and the role that Africans, including figures such as Hagar, Zephaniah and the Queen of Sheba, played in the sal-

vation history described in the Scriptures.

The *Jubilee Bible* features scores of photos and illustrations intended to tell stories resonating with African American Christian faith. Its name is derived from Leviticus 25.8-10 (CEV), which tells of a time every 50 years in ancient Israel of celebration, when "everyone will receive back their original property, and slaves will return home to their families."

Originally published to coincide with the Jubilee celebrations of the year 2000, the *Jubilee Bible's* relevance



DAVID SINGER

The Rev. John Scott leads a congregation in Baltimore, many of whom read and study the *Jubilee Bible*.

transcended that millennium observance. Its impact continues to be felt among African American Christians.

The pictures in the *Jubilee Bible* speak thousands of words of history, culture and tradition. One illustration celebrates the role of women in the African American family. Another shows the death of Jesus as depicted by an African artist. An article by scholar Gene Rice of Howard University in Washington refutes the notion that black people carry with them the alleged curse of Ham. Together, the illustrations and scholarly articles remind black Americans of their important contributions to our Christian heritage.

Such a work is still needed decades after the civil rights

revolution, says Rev. Turner. Growing up, he notes, Africa was conveyed to him in pictures transmitted via the Hollywood backlots through the old *Tarzan* serials. His view of the contributions made by black people in American history was almost as limited. "I had relatives who were totally ashamed of our heritage," he says. The *Jubilee Bible*, he notes, is a testimony refuting that shame.

While the *Jubilee Bible* has made an impact on individuals, it has also blazed trails in the faith lives of entire congregations. In 2000, a program featuring the *Jubilee Bible* brought together African American and European American Christians in a series of discussions in the Detroit area. The discussions, involving church communities historically divided by race, culminated in a unity ceremony in October of that year.

Deborah Craig, the acting Sunday School administrator for Gethsemane Baptist Church in Baltimore, has ordered hundreds of *Jubilee Bibles* for her congregation.

The cultural and historical articles "give me a history of my heritage." She says that the book reinforces for her the vital role that the church and the Bible played in the history of African Americans through the tragedies of slavery and discrimination.

The *Jubilee Bible* has also proved valuable for youth in one of Baltimore's hard-pressed neighborhoods where Gethsemane is a part, says Ms. Craig.

"It helps our children understand where they came from," she says. The message is clear, even if the signs around them — broken families, crime and despair — often are not. Through the *Jubilee Bible*, she says, they learn that as young African Americans they "come from a very strong heritage of people."

She notes that the *Contemporary English Version (CEV)* biblical translation is a perfect complement to the articles on African American culture, providing accessibility to Scriptural meaning in an easy-to-understand language.

"We have a lot of children in the neighborhood. We try to be mentors for them," she says. "The language in the

CEV is much easier for them to understand." The text is valuable, she says, because it reinforces the church's view that "all people need to know who the Creator is and how awesome he is."

The Rev. John Scott, pastor of Gethsemane Baptist, is also director of church programs for the American Bible Society and is in charge of promoting the *Jubilee Bible*. It's a task made easier by the impact he's seen it make at Gethsemane.

Rev. Scott's largely African American congregants find that the book "helps legitimate who they are." He notes: "They've read everyone else's history. Now they are reading ours. And we're reading it along with a biblical context."

That context is vitally important to Rev. Turner in Minneapolis as he continues his studies of history and culture, all placed alongside God's Word. His own spiritual journey has taken him from the streets of Chicago, where he was raised, to work as a pastor with a keen interest in social justice, as well as an important role as adoptive parent and grandparent. He wonders how a good God could allow slavery and other kinds of oppression, and admits, "I haven't put that into a theological perspective."

Yet he still finds comfort in the Psalms, as well as the characters in the Bible who teach him eternal truths by way of their words and example.

He relates to "the Jesus who was misunderstood, when he was a prophet without honor in his own home." And he finds that his belief in human liberation is echoed in the *Jubilee Bible* he goes to frequently. His God, he emphasizes, does

not revel in slavery and oppression.

"Anything that belongs to the freedom of human beings this side of the Jordan is a blessing. We are not meant to be slaves to anything or anyone," he says, echoing some of the lessons he's learned in the *Jubilee* book.

(To order the Jubilee Bible or other Scripture resources, call 1-800-32-BIBLE or click on the American Bible Society online store at www.Bibles.com.)



“Anything that belongs to the freedom of human beings this side of the Jordan is a blessing.”

— The Rev. Maxie Turner

The Dream Fulfilled

African American Contributions to the American Bible Society

CONNECTING PEOPLE EVERYWHERE WITH THE SCRIPTURES HAS BEEN THE DREAM AND MISSION OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

from its inception. Last year, our own Library & Archives collection highlighted how African Americans have contributed to the realization of that dream. ¶ In celebration of February's Black History Month, we have reprinted here selected photo-

graphs from the exhibit, along with explanatory text.

With the launch of the Bible Society's Agency Among the Colored People of the South (supervised by African Americans) at the beginning of the 20th century and continuing through today's publication of the contemporary *Jubilee Bible*, African Americans have left an indelible imprint in the Bible Society's history that continues today.

Recognizing the need for ministry to this group, before and during America's Civil War years, the Bible Society distributed Bibles in the South among slaves who could read as well as to freed and runaway slaves.

In 1901, the organization imple-

mented a new "door-to-door" distribution method in response to an overwhelming demand for Bibles in the African American communities of the South.

Dr. John Percy Wragg, the man chosen to lead this new endeavor, directed the work of a handpicked group of Bible "colporteurs," or distributors, from his offices in the Gammon Seminary in Atlanta. They traveled throughout the entire South and the developing Southwestern states. The new strategy was successful, and the Agency later expanded to include the entire country.

After Dr. Wragg's retirement in 1929, the Agency was renamed the Haven Agency in honor of William I. Haven, the general secretary who helped launch

the program. As the civil rights movement grew, the Bible Society chose to eliminate any aspect of its operation that bore "any semblance to segregation," and in the late 1950s, the work of the Agency was integrated with the general work of the Bible Society.

By the end of the 1960s, more than 8 out of 10 African Americans in the United States lived in large cities along the East Coast. In response, the Bible Society focused its outreach efforts on inner-city areas where African Americans lived.

As we move into the 21st century, the Bible Society continues its commitment to build strong relationships with America's heritage groups. ■



◀ Long before the founding of the Agency, the Bible Society provided Scriptures for African Americans through their schools, churches and families. Young ladies from a graduating class at Granua School in Connecticut received their personal Bibles from the Bible Society in 1890.



◀ Miss S.E. Harris, a graduate of Atlanta University, became the first African American woman distributor in 1911. She helped establish the Agency's newest territory in Oklahoma.



▲ Mr. Perkins of New Orleans distributed some of more than 50 thousand free volumes of Scriptures that the Bible Society provided to a Mississippi flood refuge camp. "All the theologians in the state could not have done more to awaken a fraternal feeling among the different churches and races than the American Bible Society has done in the distribution of Scriptures in the flood district," he said (around 1927).

► The Rev. M.L. Vaughters, secretary of the Haven Agency's Houston Division, shown distributing Scriptures "from door to door" in Dallas (around 1933).



► Three little children asked permission to help circulate the Scriptures in Houston. They sold more than 800 New Testaments and Scripture pamphlets. (From a letter of Sept. 1, 1937, written by the Rev. M.L. Vaughters, Sub-Agency secretary in Texas.)



▲ Robert Ross, 22, distributes a Scripture booklet titled *Real Power: Good News by a Man Named John* (circa 1969) to interested young people in inner city Newark, N.J. Mr. Ross had been a high school dropout, but when the Newark Scripture distribution center closed, he finished school, and then enrolled in college.

◀ Dr. John Percy Wragg at work in his Agency headquarters in South Atlanta, Ga., around 1909. In 1920, when the Agency expanded, Dr. Wragg moved his headquarters to the Bible House in New York City. The Agency changed its name to the Agency Among the Colored People in the United States to reflect the organization's national expansion.



offering hope through

hip-hop

**Relating
the Scriptures
in Modern,
Urban Terms**

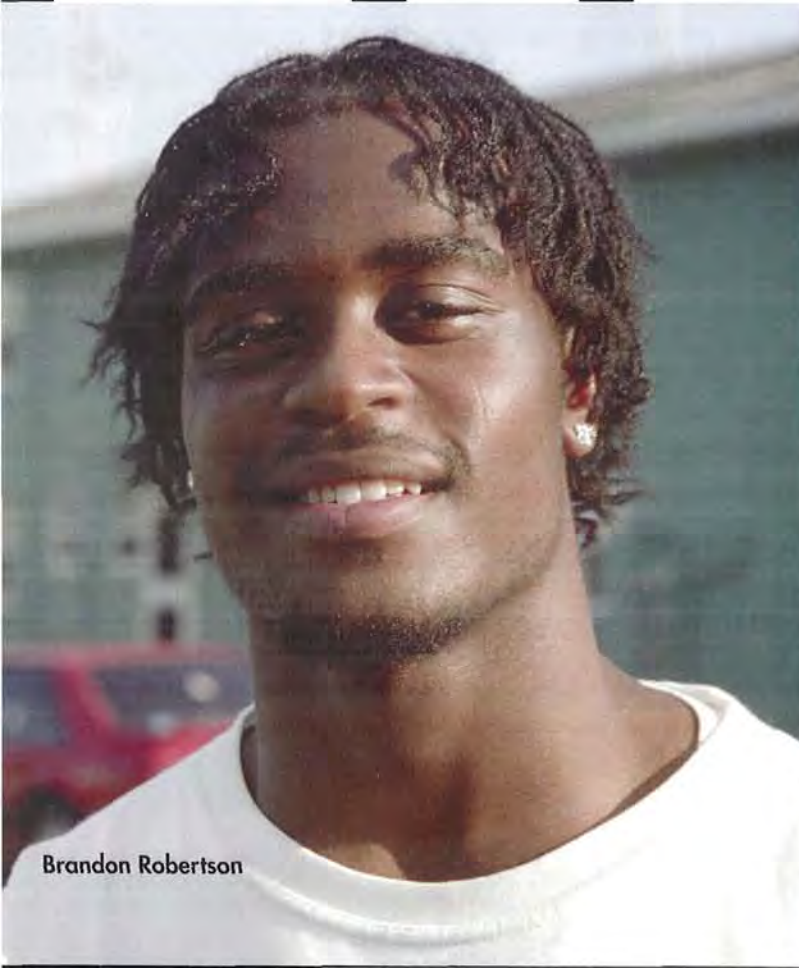
PHOTOS & TEXT BY THOMAS D. SULLIVAN

Each generation has its own distinct “flavor” of what’s in and what’s out — its own popular culture. For one group, a Frank Sinatra ballad strikes a deep chord. For another, rock-and-roll soothes. And for many of today’s youth, hip-hop music links them with their peers, regardless of ethnic and social background.

A growing number of churches across the country are incorporating elements of hip-hop culture in a Christ-centered context in order to connect with their young people. And kids, many for the first time, are relating in a remarkable way to the Scripture-inspired words, music and dance presented to their generation.

Brandon Robertson was in some trouble — poor grades in school, a disrespectful attitude at home. Although he was 13 at the time, Brandon’s mother knew that that kind of trouble had a way of growing into bigger things, and it had her worried.

One day, she came across a park outreach from Crossover Community Church to teens near her home, in Tampa, Fla., and brought Brandon to meet the youth pastor, Tommy Kyllonen. He invited Brandon to



Brandon Robertson

a Thursday-night service at the church, which uses the music, art and dance of hip-hop urban culture to spread the message of Jesus Christ.

"What really struck me was the hip-hop thing," Brandon says, describing the meeting he attended. He connected with the vibrancy of the young worshippers and kept going back. At Crossover, he also received an American Bible Society *T.R.U.C.E.* (To Reach Urban Children Everywhere) Bible, which is written in the easy-to-read *Contemporary English Version*. When he was younger, Brandon had gone to church with his grandmother, but he didn't understand the Scriptures. Yet the user-friendly Scriptures and down-to-earth exposition from Pastor Kyllonen, talking about what Jesus did, "how he sacrificed his life for everybody," made sense, says Brandon.

The church has distributed many hundreds of the American Bible Society Scriptures with youth-oriented cover art to kids who have never owned Bibles before, says Pastor Kyllonen. "This is attractive," he says, and "all the kids want one." Young people tell him, "Yo, Tommy, I never really understood the Bible, but that *T.R.U.C.E.* Bible, I can understand it."

Pastor Kyllonen has his own roots in the culture. Growing up in Philadelphia, he loved rap music, and when he went to Valley Forge Christian College, felt a call to serve inner-city youth. He explains that God "wanted me to do urban ministry, and go back to the culture I was part of and had a love for, and minister to those people, because I understand them." After transferring to Southeastern College in Lakeland, Fla., where he met his wife, Lucy, he graduated in 1996 and came on board as the youth pastor at Crossover (and is now senior pastor there). He began his outreach to youth by inviting a couple of teens over for pizza and Bible study. The group grew and expanded to include older young adults. Activities included a basketball league, and eventually the Thursday night worship with its exuberant style.

This unusual ministry works because Pastor Kyllonen can convincingly reach into the hip-hop culture with God's Word. He explains how his church — which has doubled in attendance



THOMAS D. SULLIVAN

Tommy Kyllonen, as "Urban D," performs at Fla.vor Fest, a gathering of Christian hip-hop enthusiasts, youth ministers and Christian performers.

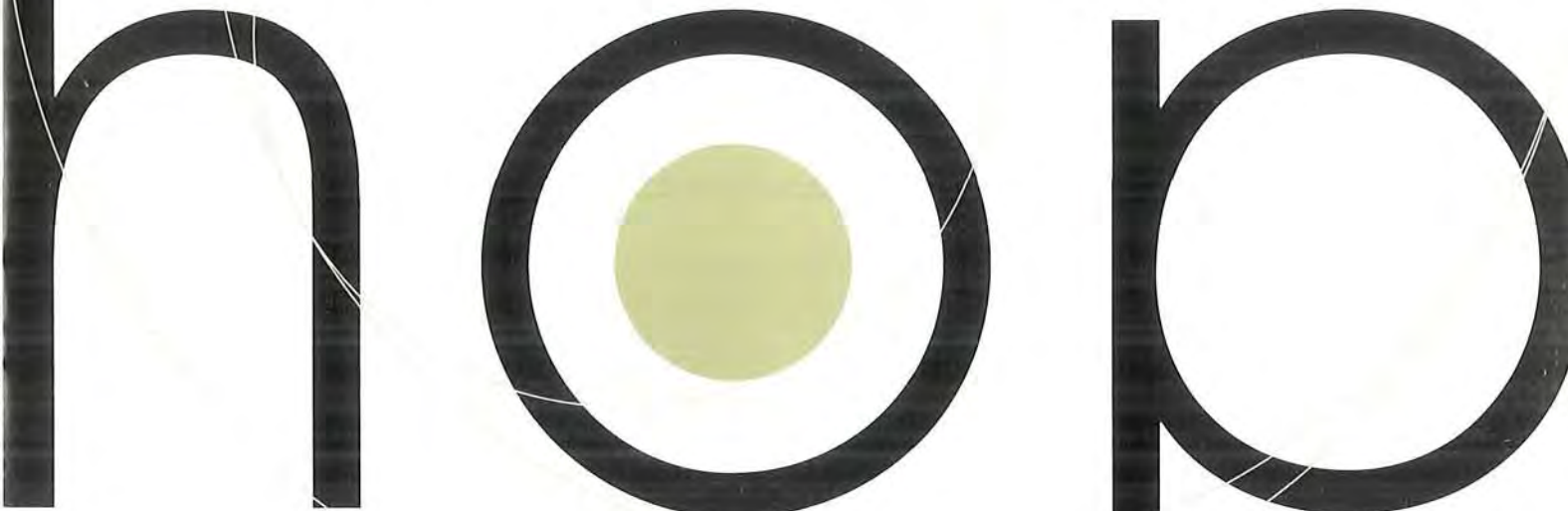
to 120 on Sundays and 220 on Thursday nights in less than a year — reaches out to this generation: "We're meeting them right where they're at," he says.

As Pastor Kyllonen describes it, Brandon liked the atmosphere at Crossover, but the Christian life wasn't fully clear to him at first. But gradually, as Brandon got involved in drama classes, learning to make Christian hip-hop music, "he really became more a part of things, and he was getting a little more mature," Pastor Kyllonen says, adding: "As he began to get diligent in some of the other things — rapping [speaking rhyming lines to urban rhythms], doing drama and singing. ... I think some of that carried on in some of his other habits."

In fact, Brandon received praise for improved work at school, he now plays bass in the orchestra in his high school in Tampa and he's on the honor roll. "God's really doing a lot of things in his life," says Pastor Kyllonen.

Now 17, Brandon credits his pastor's friendship and guidance, which were key in his transformation. "He's like an older brother," he says, adding, "He stuck by me." He points to a Scripture verse Pastor Kyllonen emphasized continually when he started Bible study at Crossover: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4.13) ■

continued on page 27 >>



Living Hope in the Holy Land

Exremely tight security in the West Bank has left many people in great physical need, lacking food and other basic necessities. For Palestinian Christians, the strict curfews have also created spiritual needs, since they have been cut off from the wider Christian community.

The Palestinian Bible Society's *Living Hope* program is seeking to meet the spiritual needs of Palestinian Christians, both adults and children, including the distribution of special packages of Scripture materials to Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jenin, Qaryout and Zababdeh. At considerable personal risk, the Bible Society team has been able to visit these areas, often traveling for many hours to find open roads.

When a group of volunteers arrived in Bethlehem recently, they found it impossible to drive into the city. So they carried in 1,000 Bibles and 2,000 New Testaments, where Christians from many different denominations received them with great excitement.

And in Qaryout, near Nablus, the *Living Hope* team has been focusing on children and has established positive links with the village school, including supplying the *God Is Our Shelter and Strength* Scripture booklets to staff.

For Labib Madanat, the Palestinian Bible Society's executive secretary, the *Living Hope* program is the expression of a desire to give "of ourselves as we give them the Scripture materials which carry the message of life and hope in Jesus."



Your January gift will help spread the Good News in the Middle East. Your February offering will help support Bible work in Southern Africa. To find out more about joining the Bible-a-Month Club, fill out the reply form below, or write:

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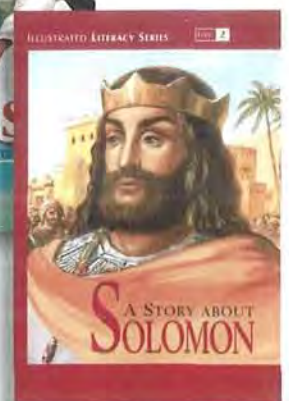
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FOR THE RECORD

100 YEARS AGO

Bible Bard

The January 1903 *Record* marked the centennial of Baptist hymnist John Burton, Sr.'s (1773-1822), beloved poem, "Holy Bible, Book Divine." Here is the original text of Burton's poem:

Holy Bible, book Divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine;
Mine to tell me whence I came,
Mine to teach me what I am.

Mine to chide me when I rove,
Mine to shew a Saviour's love;
Mine art thou to guide my feet,
Mine to judge, condemn, acquit.

Mine to comfort in distress,
If the Holy Spirit bless;
Mine to shew, by living faith
Man can triumph over death.

Mine to tell of joys to come,
And the rebel sinner's doom;
Holy Bible, book Divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine.

The author of the *Record* article, the Rev. James H. Ross, recalled hearing this often sung in his childhood Sunday school. ■

PLEASE PRAY

NAMIBIA — Give thanks for the launch of *Hope for the Highway*, a New Testament for motorists, and for booklets in all the major languages containing Scripture selections for people suffering from HIV/AIDS. Please pray for the Scripture distribution via a mobile Bible shop in the north part of the country. Also pray for the Bible translation project beginning for the Khoekhoegowab and Oshindonga languages.

PARAGUAY — Praise God for Bible distribution to residents along the Paraguay River in collaboration with government teachers and health care workers. Pray for funds to build a hospital boat to aid in mobile medical care and Scripture distribution. Thank God for the revised Guaraní Bible and pray for

the children and young people using the *Life of Jesus* Scripture booklets in Spanish and Guaraní.

BRAZIL — Thank God for the completion of the first Braille Bible in Portuguese, which blind people in Brazil will now be able to "read." Please pray that the Word of God will become more widely known among children and young people in this country.

TURKEY — Thank God for the launch of the new Bible translation in contemporary Turkish, made possible through prayers and donations from the faithful. Please pray for workers producing the Kurdish New Testament, and pray for successful future projects translating the Old Testament, a Bible dictionary and a concordance.

Correction:

In an article in the November/December 2002 *Record* (Caring Behind Bars, page 4), we misspelled American Bible Society staffer Sherod Edmonds' first name (it's spelled with one 'r' instead of two). We regret the error.

IN MEMORIAM

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

Helen S. Aamodt
Given by: David A. Aamodt

My Husband, Calvin Diederich,
Sr.

My Son, Calvin Charles Diederich
Given by: Carol Marie Diederich

In Memory of my beloved aunt,
Derfla R. Guthrie
*Given by the Estate of Derfla R.
Guthrie*

Claire Platter and Virginia Moe
Given by: Carolyn B. Cardle

My Husband,
Rev. Howard H. Schaar
*Given by: Mrs. Doris Eileen Schaar
and Ms. LaVerne*

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.



DIANE STINTON

Many poor children in Nairobi, Kenya, attend schools started by concerned Christians. The Bible Society of Kenya is providing *Faith Comes By Hearing* Scripture cassettes to teachers there.

The ties became even stronger in 1993, when Mr. Jackson visited with Dr. Eugene Habecker, president of the American Bible Society, at the organization's New York City offices. He shared the *FCBH* vision with the president and received an immediate response: "Morgan, this is exactly what we want to have done in the world." Since that day, they have become close friends. That friendship — and the partnership of the two organizations — opened the doors to collaborative projects in the former Soviet Union, Asia and Africa.

ORAL TRADITION, LISTENING GROUPS AND THE RADIO

Today, *Faith Comes By Hearing* has provided audio Scriptures in 145 languages in 65 countries, most in dramatized versions, which include up to 250 voice parts.

The drama, explains Mr. Jackson, fits well with cultures whose tradition includes passing on important information through storytelling. "In oral cultures like Africa, people say again and again: 'We want the drama. It fits our culture.' They feel Christ is talking to them, that they are 'there' with him."

In India, for example, a man who listens to the audio Scriptures in his village makes a strong connection with what he hears. "When I hear the audio Bible my heart is satisfied," he says. "It's like God standing in front of me speaking to me directly. The voices and sounds are so clear that it is very sweet for the illiterate. When I listen to the audio Bible all my troubles flee away. I do not have questions when I listen, but receive answers."

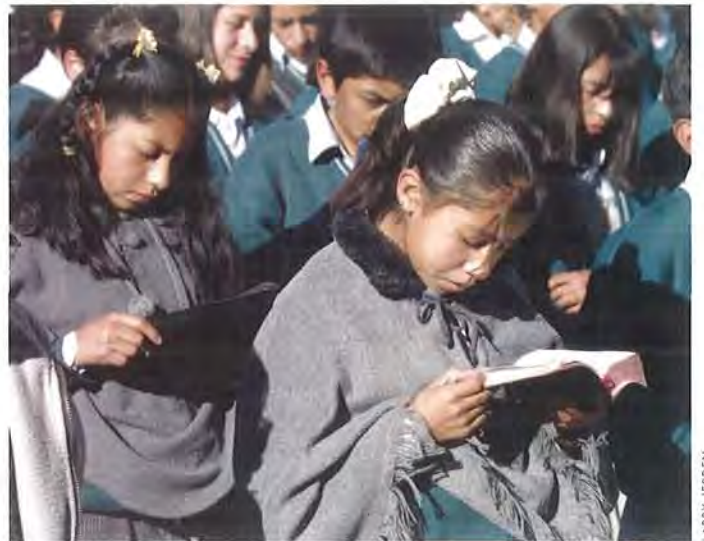
The *Faith Comes By Hearing* program also promotes listening in groups. The intent, says Ms. Georgia is to provide an atmosphere where people listen, discuss what they hear and grow together in their faith. Soon, she adds, "being in the Word of God daily" with fellow seekers "will become a habit." Groups of all sizes can be gathered in a church, prison, home, hospital

or school. Sometimes, as in the Colegio Cristiano Vida Nueva (New Life Christian School) in La Paz, Bolivia, hundreds may listen at one time.

At the New Life school, the 800 students line up in disciplined rows in the school's paved courtyard each morning. As they stand, the quiet chill of the thin Andean air is broken by words from a loudspeaker. The pupils, ranging from kindergarten through grade 11, listen intently. After the session, they march to their classrooms to discuss what they've heard, then pray and reflect on it. And many make decisions to become Christians.

Others are hearing God's Word over the radio, as Christian broadcasters such as Trans World Radio, and even local stations worldwide, use the *FCBH* tapes.

"The American Bible Society sponsored our first radio program in the Ashanti language in Ghana," says Mr. Jackson. More than half of the Ashanti population was listening every morning when selections from the New Testament were broadcast for 15 minutes daily. Now, *FCBH* is producing the com-



LARRY JERDEN

Pupils at the New Life school in La Paz, Bolivia, read along in their Bibles while listening to Scriptures transmitted through the schoolyard's loudspeaker before class.

plete Bible in Telugu, Swahili, Ashanti and the *NIV* (*New International Version*) in U.K. English for Africa.

Mr. Jackson says *FCBH* hopes to reach 16 million people through these various programs.

"We have had people say, after they have heard the Scriptures, 'We knew that the Word of God was in that book, but we couldn't read it.' They would be weeping as they would say: 'We thought God had forgotten us. Now we hear him talking to us. Thank you for bringing the Scriptures to us.'"

The partnership between the Bible Society and *FCBH* — as well as other collaborations with Scripture sharing ministries — reflects a deep commitment to do God's work wherever and however it presents itself. ■

Sharing the Treasure

ONE BOOK, ONE LIBRARY, ONE WORD / FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

The American Bible Society Library is a very rare library because it is built around a single book — the Bible — 55,000 copies of it in over 2,200 languages. And some of the copies are as rare as the Library. In fact it houses the largest collection of Bibles, rare and otherwise, in the Western Hemisphere, and has one of the largest collections anywhere in the world.

The collecting began with the founding of the Bible Society in 1816 and has never stopped. Its earliest copies of Scriptural manuscripts date from the 13th century. With new Bible translations being completed in more languages every year, and in new communication formats, preserving the Library's holdings continues to be vital.



This collection of printed Scriptures virtually spans the history of printing, providing a visual history of the art of printing the Word, and of printing in general. Among the Library's treasures are Tyndale's Pentateuch of 1530, the first portion of the Old Testament to be printed in English; Coverdale's Bible of 1535, the first printed English Bible; first editions of the Greek New Testament, the Luther German Translations, and all of the early American editions. The collection also includes colorful, elaborately illustrated manuscripts, such as a late 15th century illuminated Armenian manuscript of the Gospels. We even have a 15th century Torah scroll from the Jewish community of Kai-Feng-Fu in China.

The Archives, another Library resource, embodies the life and growth of the American Bible Society's mission. Its collection, which dates to our founding in 1816, includes over 2,000 linear feet of records covering virtually every dimension of the Bible Society's diverse ministry, both domestic and international. Included in these records are 85,000 documentary photographs and images of Bible work from around the world, as well as a growing video and audio collection.

Safeguarding the precious Library collection against the ravages of time and environment is crucial. The many Scriptures that are centuries old, some hand-lettered on parchment, are fragile — all of these rare volumes require a climate-controlled environment. Some are in need of restoration, an expensive, labor-intensive process. One such restoration project is the repair and rebinding of the 1922 Helen Keller 11-volume Braille Bible. Once the restoration is complete, this Bible will need an appropriate display case.

The purchase of new books is important for maintaining the Library collection as a valuable resource for scholarly research. One recent addition was a replica of the *Codex Vaticanus*, one of the earliest and most valuable manuscripts of the Greek Bible, acquired





from the Vatican Library by the American Bible Society's Board of Trustees in honor of Dr. Eugene Habecker's 11th anniversary as president of the American Bible Society.

Another expense is keeping the Library open to the public. In this way the Library helps to fulfill the Bible Society's mission to make Scripture available to everyone with an interest in God's Word. Library staff responded to nearly 1,800 requests last year, many related to scholarly research. However, our resources are not limited to the scholarly community alone, although they do represent a sizeable proportion of our researchers.

Dr. Mary Cordato, senior manager of the Library, is looking for *Friends of the Library* — people who have a heart for the Word and a desire to share in the expansion and preservation of this rare historical record. If you have an interest in this important Bible ministry please fill out and mail the attached coupon to: Choi Yee, *Friends of the Library*, American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023. She may also be contacted by phone at 212-408-1581, or by E-mail at cye@americanbible.org.

... *people need more than food to live — they need every word that the Lord has spoken. (Deuteronomy 8.3b)*

Dear Dr. Cordato,

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HEEDING THE CALL

BY FRANCINE LANGE

IVAN BOOKER'S LIFE FOLLOWS A PATH SHAPED BY God's providence.

At each juncture, from the courting of his first wife, to working in the business world, to serving as pastor in the Free Methodist, Congregational and Evangelical and Reformed churches, Mr. Booker has experienced God's support and guidance.

The Nebraska native, who will be 98 in July, recalls being raised in a Christian home, "going to church and doing what was right," but not practicing his faith until age 19, after meeting his first wife, Thelma Carpenter. He made a decision to follow Christ, due largely to her influence and devotion to the Lord.

After marriage and business college, his work as a general store owner, then at the Corn State Serum Company — a vaccine producer for hogs and cattle — for nine years, proved profitable. But God had other plans, and Mr. Booker began sensing a call to full-time ministry. Initially, says son Elon Booker, his father "resisted that call but felt absolutely compelled to do this."

Finally, with a heart set to obey, Ivan Booker prayed on a Friday: "Lord, if this is really what you want me to do, I need you to confirm to me in a tangible way that this is your will." That weekend, Mr. Booker received a letter from a congregation in Nebraska inviting him to hold a revival meeting in their church. He left his job, and for the next year and a half, as one meeting would be wrapping up, he'd receive another invitation to preach within the state, in Wyoming or in South Dakota. Mr. Booker never returned to the vaccine company, although they held his job open for him for a full year.

Later, Mr. Booker retired from full-time preach-

ing and, after moving his family to Washington state, sold real estate with a Christian company but preached many Sundays in and around Walla Walla.

Again, God's providence influenced Mr. Booker's life. He joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as a field real estate negotiator, "kind of at the bottom of the totem pole," explains Elon Booker. But rapid promotions took him to higher ranks, eventually as chief of the appraisal branch. Elon Booker believes his father's integrity helped speed his promotions; his father used his authority as chief of the appraisal branch to ensure that both sides — landowners and the government — would receive fair compensation for their deals.



Ivan E. Booker celebrates his 97th birthday.

Now retired, Mr. Booker no longer ministers actively, but his

love for the Scriptures fuels his contributions to God's work, including work funded through the American Bible Society Gift Annuity program. "The Scripture shows the way to spiritual and eternal life," he says. He has chosen to partner with the Bible Society to both promote God's Word and provide for his grandchildren and others (Mr. Booker's first wife died in 1986 and he remarried at 80, and his second wife, Jewel, passed away in 2001).

Mr. Booker's love for his Lord continues to shine through. Now living with his son and daughter-in-law, Eileen, his enjoyment includes: "Spiritual worship, fellowship with other believers, visiting with friends, reading and appreciating the Bible and Christian literature." ■

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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The Church @ Work

“Faith that doesn’t lead us to do good deeds is all alone and dead!” — JAMES 2.17 CEV

A new year. Resolution time, begun with good intentions, often ending in disillusion. The good news is that many churches are turning the corner from resolution to action, engaging in *holistic ministry* — outreach that integrates evangelization and social action — good deeds born in faith and done in Jesus’ name.

As you seek to equip your church for the existing and new ministries you are planning this year — whether it operates from a storefront in the inner city, a small congregation in a rural setting or a multi-building structure in a big city — some good questions to ask are:

- What solutions can we offer our community as it struggles with the challenges of people living in poverty, illiteracy, addiction?
- How can our church become the sign and substance of God’s Kingdom *shalom*, imitating Jesus’ example of preaching and healing?

A new book that helps answer these questions is *Churches That Make a Difference*, by Ron Sider, Philip Olson and Heidi Unruh. They describe what holistic ministries look like, and how to develop and maintain them in your church.

Many church outreach programs fail because they serve only the physical or only the spiritual needs of the people. As a result, congregations are looking for ways to fuse rather than separate these physical and spiritual needs. Holistic ministries develop programs combining the teaching of the Word with good deeds, showing Jesus’ love for the whole person, body and soul. Hearing God’s Word and seeing those words in action yields a powerful message that transforms lives.

People who serve in a holistic church let the community know they are committed to them, no matter what their circumstances. They welcome and appreciate all their neighbors, especially those who are difficult to love. They go out into the community to exchange ideas and resources, getting involved in local social service agencies, becoming advocates for justice, and helping the community solve its problems, show-



ing and sharing God’s light and love in the context of life’s daily struggles.

Congregations engaged in holistic ministry do not become social service agencies, but keep their Christian identity. As the faithful meet to worship, rely on the power of the Spirit through prayer and ground themselves in God’s Word, spiritual change occurs in the congregation as well as in those they serve outside their walls.

James tells us that faith might as well be dead if it’s not put into action. Indeed, faith will flourish when we share the good news of God’s love while at the same time addressing the common necessities of life — food, shelter, education. And actions, no matter how small or large, from food pantries and welcome wagons to after-school tutoring programs and counseling centers, can make a huge difference in any church setting. *Churches That Make a Difference* provides your leaders with examples of churches that put God’s Word into action to produce changed lives.

Come to eQuipped.ForMinistry.com for a full-length review of *Churches That Make a Difference*, pointers to online resources for holistic ministry and stories of churches that are changing their worlds, one life at a time.

— CHRIS THYBERG

CThyberg@ForMinistry.com

Director, Ministry Development — ForMinistry

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BUILD CONNECT SHARE

update

NATIONAL

■ NEW YORK

As heavy rains drenched New York City last Oct. 12, the American Bible Society joined Mission New York City and Firefighters for Christ to share God's love with firefighters remembering their fallen.

More than 70,000 firefighters, their families, friends and visitors from the city, across the nation and around the world gathered at Madison Square Garden to honor the firefighters who had died in New York City in the past year (including the 343 who responded to the World Trade Center disaster).

As honor guards marched solemnly up 8th Avenue toward the Garden, more than 80 volunteers braved a driving rainstorm to hand out New Testaments, Scripture booklets and sermon tapes. Workers included Bible Society staffers as well as those who had traveled in for the event from other states.

Richard Camacho, director of Mission New York City, said that some 16,000 Scripture materials were passed out to firefighters, police officers, emergency response personnel and passersby (6,500 Bibles came from the Bible Society).

On that day, he added, "there were hundreds of incredible stories of firefighters and NYPD officers seeking God's Word and asking our volunteers sincere questions about Christ."

On that day, he added, "there were hundreds of incredible stories of firefighters and NYPD officers seeking God's Word and asking our volunteers sincere questions about Christ."

■ FLORIDA

Taking a major step in outreach to Latino communities, the Office of Latino Affairs (OLA) has launched TuMinisterio, a Web site that provides tools for Latino churches and ministries sharing God's Word in Spanish through the Internet.

The U.S.-based Spanish-language counterpart of American Bible Society's ForMinistry offers free information on successful Web site construction and maintenance, church Web links, articles to help with church ministry, a newsletter, free Bible booklets in Spanish and discounts on Scripture materials published by the Bible Society.

Beginning this year, TuMinisterio will also work with Bible Societies in Spain, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Mexico to provide support for churches.

According to several research firms, including emarketer and Roslow Research, more than 33 million Latinos worldwide have Internet access. And Latinos represent the fastest growing ethnic group accessing the Internet according to a recent report from Nielsen/NetRatings.

Younger Latinos mirror techno-savvy youth worldwide, using the Internet and other electronic tools much more than their parents. Melvin Rivera, the ABS*interactive* international director, said, "We want to help churches share their relevant message of salvation and peace to a generation that is changing the way they are receiving information."

As chairman of the Hispanic Network of Christian Ministries on the Internet, he has also seen a huge growth in Internet use by Latino churches and ministries in the past year, a strong sign that Christian Latinos are tapping into this form of communication to spread the Gospel.

Now, churches can subscribe to TuMinisterio and join forces with other like-minded Latino Christian groups as well as the American Bible Society to share the life-changing Scriptures with seekers wherever they may reside — even on the Internet.

For more information about TuMinisterio, click on <http://www.tuministerio.com>. ■



FRANCINE LANGE

▲ A volunteer hands out Scripture materials to a bystander outside Madison Square Garden in Manhattan.

FLA.VOR FEST DRAWS CHRIST-CENTERED HIP-HOP ARTISTS

Young people crowd the hall, listening to a booming beat. The high-schoolers, college kids and young adults are energized.

Hip-hop performer Petitdee exhorts his audience to be bold in proclaiming Christ. He tells the group that some rappers can curse or talk about using drugs, "but we can't say 'Jesus.'" Using the hip-hop moniker, "Dog," to address his audience, he raps:



THOMAS D. SULLIVAN

"Dog, what you scared of?
"What you scared of?
"Jesus Christ!
"The most powerful name in the world I know!"

The crowd jumps in the air to the rhythm, shouting the song's chorus. As many see it, the music of the hip-hop culture often celebrates thuggery, drugs and spiritual blindness. But the passionate street poetry at Crossover Community Church in Tampa praises Christ and encourages his followers to be faithful.

In November, Crossover hosted a four-day "Fla.vor Fest," drawing Christian hip-hop artists like Petitdee, and enthusiasts from around the country. A strikingly diverse group of hundreds of young African Americans, Latinos and whites attended the event, which included workshops on Christian hip-hop outreach and life-style issues, ministry to people in impoverished neighborhoods, worship services and concerts.

While the attendees were non-traditional — many wore the hip-hop wear: low riding baggy pants, baseball caps and T-shirts emblazoned with large logos — the Scripture message was undiluted: For example, in a relationship workshop led by Pastor Kyllonen's wife, Lucy, she urged married couples to set aside time for prayer and Bible study together.

As a sponsor of Fla.vor Fest, the American Bible Society is also working with a number of the performers to "reach urban youth in relevant and compelling ways with Scripture resources,"



says Karmen Wynick, director of National Programs at the Bible Society. To fulfill this goal, the American Bible Society has developed *Elementz of Life™*, a program that aims to bring young people to faith, to encourage Christian maturity and to develop Christ-centered leaders. Pastor Kyllonen and other leaders of the *Elementz* initiative also met during the event.

At Fla.vor Fest, youth workers from around the country and the world learned how to use hip-hop in ministry, while Christian hip-hop artists came to learn about being more effective in their artistry and ministries.

Visitors were quite impressed, and look forward to attending Fla.vor Fest this November. One participant, Jose Ramirez, who traveled in from Mon-

real, hopes to start a Christian hip-hop music shop there and said that he was struck by the spiritual maturity at Crossover. He notes that Crossover members "put God before anyone and anything else. ... They want to glorify God."

Speaking at the festival's closing worship service, Pastor Kyllonen, who



performs as "Urban D," set out to teach. He urged those who came to focus on God, offering a sermon in rap:

The one who gave his only son
Christ
Who made the sacrifice
For prostitutes, average people and
those hustling for ice [diamonds]
He never thought twice
About giving his life
For this sinful race.
But we're quick to point the finger
And forget the attribute of grace.
We need a fresh taste
From above.
We're so quick to judge,
We need to re-evaluate our approach,
And reach them in Love.

Pastor Kyllonen points out that Crossover offers the hip-hop music, poetry, dance and drama for youth, but he is firm about what keeps them coming back: "It's not the hip-hop ... Because after a while, they would get bored and go somewhere else." What draws the young, he says, is "the Spirit of God here. It's the Word getting invested into their lives."

update

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



BIBLE SOCIETY OF BRAZIL

■ BRAZIL

Hermes de Souza can testify to the power of God's Word to change lives. A former gang leader, drug trafficker and mugger, Mr. de Souza received a letter from a missionary while he was serving a 10-year sentence in prison. The writer told him about Jesus' sacrifice and great love for him.

"The next day, I put aside drugs," he says.

He had already turned his hand to woodcarving in prison and began turning all his energy towards producing his sculptures. After proving to prison officials that he had indeed changed,

Mr. de Souza was able to establish a workshop to teach other prisoners. Eventually he mounted an exhibition of his work and was moved to a semi-open prison.

After his release and a visit to a former cellmate who was living in União de Vila, one of the most violent areas of São Paulo, Mr. de Souza decided to use his art for others. "God spoke to me and I decided to undertake work with children and adolescents in this community," he said. He established Nova União da Arte, a program that trains young people in woodcarving, wood decoration, dance and drama.

Items sold by the young people are now being sold in Brazilian shops and the project is gaining international recognition. Mr. de Souza uses the workshops to bring God's Word directly to young people. "I speak here about the ill effects of drugs, and of the great friend we can count on at all times, Jesus Christ," he said.

▲ **Hermes de Souza uses his woodworking skills to help youth.**

▼ **The Bible Society of the Congo lost its office and more than 3,000 Bibles in the volcanic eruption that demolished most of Goma last year. Nevertheless, staffers continue sharing the comfort of the Scriptures with residents such as these.**



LARRY JERDEN/UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

■ PHILIPPINES

With the distribution of a Scripture booklet, specially designed to bring prisoners hope, peace and reassurance of God's love, thousands of prisoners in the Philippines are receiving comfort. Some 76,500 of these booklets, entitled *Is There Any Hope for the Future?*, have been supplied in English, Tagalog (the first language of 23 percent of Filipinos) and Cebuano (spoken by 24 percent of the population).

The Philippine Bible Society, in collaboration with a sister Bible Society and funding from the *Opportunity 21* Scripture distribution program, has reached a good number of the 100,000 incarcerated men and women, most of whom have been rejected by their families and friends. Letters to the Philippine Bible Society from prisoners include words of thanks for the Scriptures and requests for complete Bibles.



PHILIPPINE BIBLE SOCIETY

▲ **The Rev. Medarlo Rivera, general secretary of the Philippine Bible Society, hands out copies of the Scripture booklet *Is There Any Hope for the Future?* to eager prisoners.**

One prisoner told of how he had wept when reading the booklet but that the words also brought him joy. The Philippine Bible Society reports that the distribution program also includes a greater collaboration with prison services, churches, local governments and fellowship groups.

■ SOUTH AFRICA

As a former assistant general secretary of finance at the Bible Society of South Africa, the Rev. Alan Stranex fully appreciates the need for funds to finance worthwhile projects. So when the date of his retirement drew near, he decided on an attention-getting fund raiser to supply audio Scriptures for functionally-illiterate Zulu speakers in South Africa: he walked 868 miles



BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY

▲ The Rev. Alan Stranex crosses the finish line at the end of his 868-mile walk to raise funds to supply audio Scriptures to South African Zulu speakers.

“When the project really got going, the amount of interest and support was overwhelming,” he said, adding, “The objective — the audio Scriptures — was grasped by many people and donations started to pour in.”

He said that the walk, from John O’Groats, the northernmost point in Scotland, to Land’s End, the westernmost point in England, was not unique; many other hikers had already accomplished it. But his attempt to draw attention to the needs of a people whose language is little known outside of South Africa drew enthusiastic response from people along the way. Churches welcomed him, people opened up their

homes to him and fed him and he received encouraging phone calls from around the world. As he walked, people stopped him many times to pray for him and the Bible cause.

Rev. Stranex completed the walk, arriving at Land’s End on July 20, 2002, but said the work to supply audio Bibles to those who do not read will continue.

■ LEBANON

Nearly 80 children recently participated in a three-day sporting and Bible-teaching event in Lebanon. In a continuing effort to focus on children, the Bible Society in Lebanon (BSL) organized a challenging and fun-filled program that included soccer, aerobic activities and basketball. Children also studied the Bible in sessions featuring printed materials with sports-related examples that apply biblical concepts to life. All children participating received a copy of the BSL’s Scripture pamphlet *The Ultimate Goal*.

The outreach, called KidsGames, originated in Spain in 1985 and now includes some 200 countries including India, Kenya, North and South Africa, countries in the Middle East and the United States. The program introduces age-appropriate Scripture such as Bible-themed coloring books and interactive CDs to children, ages four to 14. ■



BIBLE SOCIETY IN LEBANON

▲ The Bible Society in Lebanon officially opened *Bible World*, a Bible-experience facility for teens and children, featuring a computer tent with interactive and multimedia introductions to the Scriptures and a time machine/game room with a 25-minute film covering the Bible from Genesis to Jesus. The two-hour Bible experience, which also includes quizzes and a history on the development of the Bible, concludes with students receiving copies of the Gospel of Luke.



BIBLE SOCIETY IN LEBANON

▲ Children participated wholeheartedly in the KidsGames sporting and Bible-learning event sponsored by the Bible Society in Lebanon.

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.

FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
<p><i>Believe the Good News and Share God's Love</i></p>	<p><i>Believe the Good News and Come to the Lord in Prayer</i></p>	<p><i>Believe the Good News and Rejoice in Hope</i></p>
<p>1 Deuteronomy 6.1-9</p>	<p>1 Luke 18.1-14</p>	<p>1 Psalm 33</p>
<p>SUNDAY</p>	<p>SUNDAY</p>	<p>2 Psalm 34</p>
<p>2 Mark 12.28-34</p>	<p>2 Philippians 1.1-11</p>	<p>3 Psalm 62</p>
<p>3 Luke 10.25-37</p>	<p>3 Philippians 4.2-23</p>	<p>4 Psalm 65</p>
<p>4 Leviticus 19.1-18</p>	<p>4 Colossians 4.2-18</p>	<p>5 Psalm 71</p>
<p>5 Romans 12.1-8</p>	<p>ASH WEDNESDAY</p>	<p>FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT</p>
<p>6 Romans 12.9-21</p>	<p>(WESTERN CHURCHES)</p>	<p>6 Romans 5.1-11</p>
<p>7 Romans 13.8-14</p>	<p>5 Matthew 6.1-18</p>	<p>7 Romans 5.12-21</p>
<p>8 Romans 14.1-12</p>	<p>6 Psalm 51</p>	<p>8 Romans 6.1-14</p>
<p>SUNDAY</p>	<p>WORLD DAY OF PRAYER</p>	<p>9 Romans 6.15-23</p>
<p>9 Galatians 5.1-15</p>	<p>7 Psalm 67</p>	<p>10 Romans 7.1-13</p>
<p>10 Colossians 3.1-17</p>	<p>8 Psalm 77</p>	<p>11 Romans 7.14-25</p>
<p>11 Psalm 107.1-16</p>	<p>FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT</p>	<p>12 Romans 15.1-13</p>
<p>12 Psalm 107.17-32</p>	<p>9 Joel 2.1-17</p>	<p>PALM/PASSION SUNDAY</p>
<p>13 Psalm 107.33-43</p>	<p>*10 Joel 2.18-27</p>	<p>(WESTERN CHURCHES)</p>
<p>14 1 Corinthians 13.1-13</p>	<p>11 2 Chronicles 30.1-12</p>	<p>13 Mark 11.1-11</p>
<p>15 1 Corinthians 16.1-14</p>	<p>12 2 Chronicles 30.13-27</p>	<p>14 Mark 11.12-33</p>
<p>SUNDAY</p>	<p>13 Psalm 5</p>	<p>15 Mark 12.1-12</p>
<p>16 John 3.1-21</p>	<p>14 Psalm 30</p>	<p>16 Mark 14.1-25</p>
<p>17 John 10.1-21</p>	<p>15 Psalm 121</p>	<p>17 Mark 14.26-65</p>
<p>18 John 13.1-20</p>	<p>SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT</p>	<p>GOOD FRIDAY</p>
<p>19 John 13.21-35</p>	<p>16 1 Chronicles 17.16-27</p>	<p>(WESTERN CHURCHES)</p>
<p>20 John 15.1-17</p>	<p>17 1 Chronicles 29.10-25</p>	<p>18 Mark 15.1-41</p>
<p>21 1 John 3.11-24</p>	<p>18 2 Chronicles 1.1-13</p>	<p>19 Mark 15.42-47</p>
<p>22 1 John 4.7-21</p>	<p>19 2 Chronicles 6.1-11</p>	<p>EASTER SUNDAY</p>
<p>SUNDAY</p>	<p>20 2 Chronicles 6.12-21</p>	<p>(WESTERN CHURCHES)</p>
<p>23 Psalm 25</p>	<p>21 2 Chronicles 6.22-31</p>	<p>*20 Mark 16.1-11</p>
<p>24 Psalm 36</p>	<p>22 2 Chronicles 6.32-42</p>	<p>21 Mark 16.12-20</p>
<p>25 Psalm 136</p>	<p>THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT</p>	<p>22 1 Corinthians 15.1-11</p>
<p>26 Psalm 138</p>	<p>23 1 Samuel 2.1-10</p>	<p>23 1 Corinthians 15.12-34</p>
<p>27 Isaiah 54.1-17</p>	<p>24 Ezra 9.5-15</p>	<p>24 1 Corinthians 15.35-58</p>
<p>28 Jeremiah 31.1-14</p>	<p>25 Nehemiah 1.1-11</p>	<p>25 John 11.1-16</p>
	<p>26 Jeremiah 32.16-25</p>	<p>26 John 11.17-44</p>
	<p>27 Jeremiah 32.26-44</p>	<p>SUNDAY</p>
	<p>28 Daniel 9.1-19</p>	<p>27 Hebrews 6.1-12</p>
	<p>29 Jonah 2.1-10</p>	<p>28 Hebrews 6.13-20</p>
	<p>FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT</p>	<p>29 1 Peter 1.1-12</p>
	<p>30 Ephesians 1.1-14</p>	<p>30 1 Peter 1.13-25</p>
	<p>31 Ephesians 1.15-23</p>	<p><i>*Orthodox Christians will observe Holy Week from April 20-26 and celebrate Easter Sunday on April 27, 2003, and may wish to substitute the April 27-May 3 readings in place of the readings for April 13-19. This substitution will allow for the Passion and Resurrection readings to coincide with the Orthodox dates.</i></p>

GOD'S WORD RECLAIMS A LIFE

"I SMOKED MARIJUANA, THEN I MOVED TO smoking crack cocaine," Ricardo Burnett, 40, a resident of Kingston, Jamaica, admits. That changed after an encounter with the life-giving God of the Scriptures and the ministry of praying women. Now a minister and avid supporter of the Bible Society of the West Indies, Mr. Burnett recalls the events in his life leading up to his transformation.

The child of a broken home, he did not know either of his parents until he was 20. But God's invisible hand seemed to be orchestrating events to reveal the truth to him early on. Mr. Burnett talks about his young boyhood, when a woman took an interest in his education.

"She would send me to school each day," he says but "then she moved away so I dropped out. Later, though, I went to several schools. All of these places had people coming in to share the Word of God. So I believe that in those early years, the Word was taking hold of my heart."

Although spiritual seeds were being planted in the young man's heart, while they still lay dormant he went through some tough times, including homelessness and drug addiction.

"There came a time when I was living on the street and my family didn't want to see me any more," Mr. Burnett admits. Finally, the "seeds" of biblical truths began to sprout and he desired a change.

"My aunt said the church could help me," he says. "She invited me to her house where there were some women praying. By that time, I was desperate to stop the drugs."

"The women led me in a prayer to ask Jesus into my heart," he remembers. "I immediately felt that a load had fallen off of me."

The ladies gave him a Bible, and his aunt took him into her home. Mr. Burnett devoured the Scriptures, reading continually for two months. With a growing hunger to pray and honor God, he enrolled in a Bible college and now serves his community as assistant pastor at the Love and Faith World Outreach Ministries church in Kingston.

"Ours is an inner-city church," he explains, "with about 250 to 300 people attending each Sunday." The church runs a school and food program and distributes clothes, as well as providing jobs. It also offers sports for children. Mr. Burnett



LARRY JERDEN/UBS

▲ Now an assistant pastor, Ricardo Burnett credits the Bible for bringing him from drug addiction to hope.

explains his own role simply: "I encourage people to study the Bible."

He stresses that the Bible is the only hope for transforming Jamaica. "We have to tell people that the Word gives you joy, it gives you peace, it satisfies your mind," he says, adding, "It keeps you in touch with God. That is the answer."

Mr. Burnett also supports the collaborative work of area churches with the Bible Society of the West Indies to provide Bibles and Scripture resources to people when they open their hearts to God's love. ■

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