



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

RECORD

WINTER 2004

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in the Middle East
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UNTIL THE WHOLE WORLD
KNOWS...

[YEAR IN REVIEW 2002-2003]

Until the Whole World Knows

"What we have seen and heard we announce to you also, so that you will join with us in the fellowship that we have with the Father . . ."
(1 John 1.3, 4 GNT)

With poetic power, the Apostle John gives his reason for writing about "the Word of life," "that you will join with us in the fellowship . . ."

The Bible does not just lay out a state of affairs, such as the ordering of the cosmos or the ongoing struggle against evil, as important as these biblical themes are. John's news — the gospel — is his invitation to join in fellowship with Jesus Christ.

During this past year we have reviewed the ways we can most effectively assist others, especially churches, to enroll people in this fellowship of Christian family. We take up the charge Jesus presented in Luke's Gospel, that, "In his name the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins . . . be preached to all nations . . ." (Luke 24. 47 GNT)

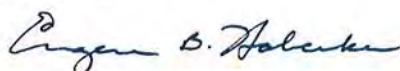
The American Bible Society comes alongside other ministries to help develop strategies, programs and Scripture resources that will help them effectively engage people with God's Word. We look for areas where churches feel challenged to help people make a "Jesus" connection, and ask them, "How can we help?"

One critical population isolated from the larger Christian community — one that has proven more difficult to effectively engage — is urban youth. We have set out to develop Scripture materials attractive to this demographic — gospel translations and formats, including music and comics, that speak the language of youth. Then, working with churches and other ministries, we plan to buttress all this with programs they can use to invite youth to join and thrive in the larger Christian fellowship.

With the help of faithful donors, we are extending our legacy of international outreach to assist churches here at home that minister in our growing ethnic communities; through partnerships with the United Bible Societies we are able to provide churches with Scriptures in the languages ethnic communities use.

Donor support has helped us bring to maturity our literacy program, using Bible stories to teach people to read — to help them grow spiritually and professionally. In all that we do, we depend upon the support and prayers of those who minister with us, "until the whole world knows."

For you we are enormously grateful.



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ON THE COVER: A young girl in Accra, Ghana, is one of the many thousands of people who have received God's Word through Bible Society distribution.

(Photograph by Maurice Harvey/UBS)

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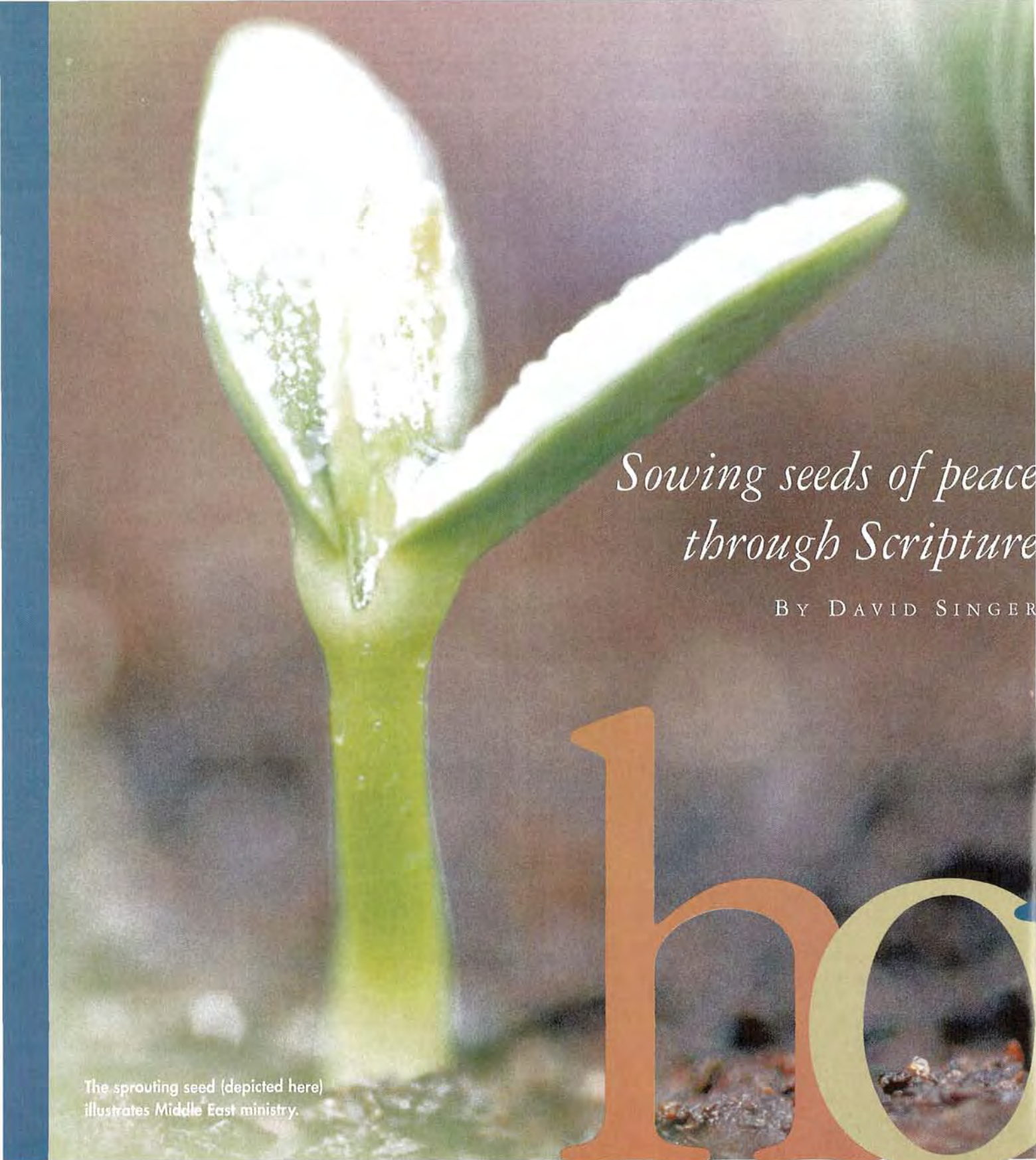
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IN MEMORIAM

Our loved ones remembered



We encourage you to send your letters to: Editor, American Bible Society Record, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023-7505. Telephone: 212-408-8754. Note: For questions for the American Bible Society not related to the Record, please call 212-408-1200. www.americanbible.org



*Sowing seeds of peace
through Scripture*

BY DAVID SINGER

The sprouting seed (depicted here)
illustrates Middle East ministry.

ho

Bible Society ministry reaches tens of thousands of Palestinian students like these through Scripture stories, games and music.



This past October, American Bible Society supporters and potential donors gathered in Lancaster, Pa., to hear about the current scope of Bible outreach in the Middle East.

“Sowing Seeds of Peace through Scripture,” explained Dr. Eugene B. Habecker, president of the American Bible Society, “reflects the multidimensional ministry of Bible Society work that is taking place throughout the Middle East. For more than half a century, a spirit of retribution, fear and distrust has stymied the world’s most prominent would-be peacemakers.

“It is into this complex of human suffering and strife that Labib Madanat from Palestine, Doron Even-Ari from Israel and Jamal A. Hashweh from Jordan bring the Good News. They serve as neighbors and as brothers in Christ, heading the Bible Societies of their respective countries, proclaiming and modeling a common message of hope where hopelessness abounds — a Kingdom message of peace and reconciliation.”

This theme of hope rang true as each guest speaker made his appeal for ministry support.

GOOD NEWS FROM PALESTINE

Labib Madanat, executive secretary of the Palestinian Bible Society, spoke eloquently of the signs of hope in Palestine. He began, “I’m smiling because I’m carrying the smiles of thousands of Palestinian children. I’m carrying the smiles of many in the nation {of Palestine} who are looking up for hope, and whose hearts and hospitality are open to the person of Jesus Christ.”

Labib talked about a headmistress at a school in the West Bank who had just sent a letter, saying, “We would love for you to come and partner with our schools. We can do programs for the children in our school together.”

Labib said, “Already, we reach between 30,000 and 40,000 Palestinian children in refugee camps with *Operation Palestinian Child*, where we sing with the kids, we tell them a story: The Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son. We take a gift, we take a smile, we take some joy. They are calling us, saying, ‘Come. We heard what you are doing with children.’”

“It’s not a big deal,” said Labib. “A puppet show, a story from the Bible. Very simple, yet very powerful, but that’s Jesus — very simple, yet very powerful. That’s the Word, the mustard seed. We believe death cannot conquer the life that flows from Jesus. And in the Palestinian territories, in Israel, this life is flowing.

“I owe this to the Palestinian children. But I owe it as much to the Jewish children. I owe it to every Israeli child blown up by a suicide bomber. I owe it to get more and more people from our nation who will sow seeds of peace.”

Labib cited the many other miraculous openings for Bible work in war-ravaged Palestine. “In a few days, a book fair in

Peace

in the Middle East

the Gaza Strip will take place, and we are among the first invited by the Palestinian Minister of Culture to take part. A class using the New Testament as a tool to teach English is being taught at Universities in Gaza.”

“We struggled for years to get a license for our bookshop in Nablus. So I went to the governor of Nablus and I told him about it. Nablus has only 600 Christians living among 200,000 other Palestinians.

“The governor said, ‘Why do you need a center for 600 people?’ I told him, ‘Sir, I’m not coming just for the Christians, because the Bible is for all, and Jesus is for all.’ He said, ‘I am honored to have a Bible shop in my city.’

“Librarians come to our Bible Center in Gaza and ask, ‘Can you establish a section for Christian books in our libraries?’

“A head of a Palestinian women’s society came to the Bible Center in Gaza, and said, ‘We have this program going on for some 300 Muslim women in the Gaza Strip, in Gaza City. What can we do together?’

“We said to her, ‘We’re about the Bible — didn’t you read our name?’

“She said, ‘That’s great! Maybe you can give some seminars to our women about what it means to be a Christian.’ ”

CALLS FOR HELP FROM JORDAN AND IRAQ

Jamal Hashweh, general secretary of the Bible Society in Jordan told how, in the midst of current misery, people in Iraq are searching for hope. Although there is, as yet, no Bible Society in Iraq, over the years the Bible Society of Jordan has been permitted to serve the Christian community there.

Jamal said, “. . . the church, throughout these last centuries prayed, ‘Lord, bring the message of hope again to the Middle East.’ It seems the Lord has answered this prayer. And today, doors that we prayed the Lord would open are open.”

“I was in Iraq right before the war and right after the war,” continued Jamal. “I saw people there who are so desperate . . . Many look to us and say, ‘Come and help us. Come over to Macedonia and assist us.’ ”

“When I speak about Jordan and Iraq, especially at this time, I know this is a golden era, a golden opportunity to take his Word to the people who are waiting to hear it,” concluded Jamal.

REACHING THE BROKENHEARTED IN ISRAEL

“Our daily experience at the Bible Society in Israel,” said Doron Even-Ari, executive secretary of the Bible Society in Israel, “is that we meet both Jews and Arabs who are perpetrators as well as victims in this bloody Palestinian-Israeli conflict. We meet broken people without hope who are crying out for dramatic change in their lives. After three years of intifada uprising, which has taken thousands of lives, injured so many and affected so many families, people are much more open and receptive to the Scriptures, to the Word of God.”

But then Doron relayed the other side of the Bible ministry challenge. “The last three years of terror have destroyed



From left, Jamal Hashweh, Labib Madanat and Doron Even-Ari, far right, join Emilio Reyes, vice president for our International Ministries, in singing praises for God’s work in the Middle East.

pilgrimages, tourism and the related economy, and that has affected us severely. We’ve had to reduce programs of free distribution of Scriptures. But the grace of God and opportunities for outreach are much greater, even as our resources diminish.

“We received a letter from an Arabic young lady from one of the Muslim cities who received one of our Scripture Peace Portions. She wrote, ‘I am so fascinated by the personality of Jesus this booklet illustrated. Can you send me a Bible?’

“We distribute thousands of these Bible Peace Portions in Hebrew to soldiers who come back to the camps on weekends. A Jewish girl, a young soldier, received one. She called one day with questions regarding the booklet, and because we cannot proselytize on the phone, we invited her to the Bible Society. This girl came and asked, ‘Am I losing my Judaism if I believe in Jesus?’ The answer was, of course, ‘No. You are turned into a much better Jew with Jesus.’ She joyfully left the Bible bookstore with a New Testament because she wanted to know more about Jesus.”

“I’m fully convinced,” said Doron, “that irrational hatred at the root of this bloody conflict will not be solved by rational agreements and peace treaties. At the same time, I’m encouraged and convinced that only the irrational love and powerful message of peace found in our Lord and Savior Jesus and in the Scriptures can and will extinguish this hatred, and bring his peace, his everlasting peace.”

Doron concluded, “In order for us to continue with our ongoing outreach projects, and start new ones to provide hope to the many who have lost hope, we are fully dependent on God’s abundant grace and provision, as well as on your partnership and support. Your support will enable us to keep our doors open and continue to sow the seeds of peace among his people in his land.”

To find out how you can help support this peace process in the Middle East contact Lewis von Herrmann at 212-408-1286 or e-mail him at LvonHerrmann@americanbible.org.

A Legacy of Innovation

BY EUGENE B. HABECKER, PRESIDENT

Last May a national news magazine ran a cover story on "Faith in America" with a subtitle that read, "It's as important as ever, no matter what you believe." That's our postmodern paradox — believe in anything, just as long as you believe.

The postmodern, spiritual eclecticism suggested by this subtitle, on one hand, may seem like a barrier to sharing biblical "truth."

On the other hand, postmodernism offers a unique openness to the mystery of faith that we haven't seen since before the modern "age of enlightenment," beginning in the 1500s. Postmodern thinkers are open to faith because they believe certainty is beyond our knowing — that faith is the best we can hope for. Such a posture allows the American Bible Society to come alongside and affirm that the Scriptures speak about the many ambiguities in this life.

The Apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthian church, acknowledged that

"We don't know everything and our prophecies are not complete. But what is perfect will someday appear, and what isn't perfect will then disappear." (1 Corinthians 13: 9,10) He also put it another way: "Now all that we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see him face to face." (1 Corinthians 13:12a)

At the Bible Society we are seeking to be servants of God who are able to earn a hearing for God's mystery of grace and mercy among the postmodern generation, especially youth. In developing Scripture-based programs for domestic outreach, we are ready to highlight the experiential aspects of a biblical faith. We want to be sympathetic to the postmodern generation's existential plight of living without certainty.

George Gallup and other opinion pollsters confirm that the United States is one of the most religious nations on earth. More than 90 percent of all Americans believe in some kind of higher power. Sixty-two percent say they belong to a church or synagogue. Yet nearly 40 per-

cent have no connection with any organized religion. But even among these, most claim to be privately religious or spiritual.

As these numbers suggest, the Christian church doesn't have a lock on religion in America. For one thing, the number of foreign-born Americans has doubled since 1970 to more than 10 percent. New immigration laws eliminate quotas based on geography and ethnicity, fueling the growth of Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim faith communities. In less than a decade our Asian population nearly doubled, while the Hispanic population grew by more than a third to 32.3 million.

This, too, presents the American Bible Society with a great opportunity. Through the United Bible Societies (UBS), we have begun a two-way partnership, providing

In December, Scriptures were distributed along with food to 5,000 Harlem residents in New York City. Larry Jones, president of Feed The Children, said, "As we feed the body, it's good to have the American Bible Society feeding the soul."

churches in these ethnic communities with inexpensive Scriptures available in many formats and in more than 100 languages. At the same time we encourage believers in these ethnic communities to support Bible Society work back in their country of origin.

These are exciting times for the American Bible Society. We are committed to sharing the Good News with the postmodern generation, especially disengaged youth, and with those among our growing ethnic populations. We have custom-tailored our strategies to help churches and other ministries connect people with the transforming power and person of Jesus Christ.

I thank all who have faithfully committed to join with us in this life-saving adventure. ■



DAVID SINGER

The Year in Review 2003

(DOMESTIC)

BY DAVID SINGER

Reaching the Next Generation With the Good News

✱By his own account, Dr. Henry “Hank” Allen was a troubled teenager. He’d found that Christianity was great for resolving end-game issues such as hell and grace, life and death, but offered him little capital to cope with everyday issues such as poverty, racism and disease. He had three retarded brothers and an abusive, alcoholic father. According to Hank, he was an angry youth who idolized the Black Panthers and other black militants.

But, like many young urban blacks, he loved to play basketball. The urging of his high school teammates and his love of “the game” lured Hank off to an after-school Bible club that included basketball. Hank was surprised and a little put off to find that the club minister was a bearded white guy who attended a Christian college. Hank says, “I

did my best to rattle his cage.” But to play, Hank had to endure a daily Bible study.

For the study, they used what Hank calls a funny little Bible with newsprint on the cover and simple, culturally neutral line illustrations inside. This *Good News Translation* Bible by the American Bible Society, says Hank, opened up a whole new world for him. “Had I not learned to study the Book — begun to learn to cope — find resiliency, I would have been dead by now,” he says.

“I’d found a Bible I could read, a Bible that helped me in dating, in my academic studies. It offered wisdom — it opened up a vast new world of knowledge I didn’t know anything about.” The seed had been planted.

Coming full circle: Dr. Henry Allen is helping the organization that opened God’s Word to him.



DAVID SINGER

Then, after one too many disputes with his intoxicated father, Hank found himself without a place to live. He was taken in by missionaries and, while living with them, decided to take his Christian commitment to a new level of discipleship. That was three months before he began his academic journey at Southern Illinois University.

Now Dr. Allen is applying his sociological training and inner city experience to help the Bible Society develop Scripture materials and programs that will aid churches in reaching today's generation of disaffected youth. He says he has come full circle; now he is helping the organization that translated God's Word in such a way that it spoke to him and helped him turn around.

The American Bible Society is exploring innovative ways that will get youth connected with God's Word, much as the *Good News Translation* got Dr. Allen and his generation connected. This mission relies on building working alliances with churches and ministries that share our vision to reach out to youth in the communication formats and styles that speak their language.

With *Elementz of Life*[™], for example, we are pulling together a dynamic team of young Christian performers, artists and youth workers to take the "language" of hip-hop music, dance and graphic art and infuse it with Christ's message, making the gospel more accessible to youth.

Last June, the Bible Society coordinated three days of outreach to young people in Indianapolis, Ind., that included a gospel-sharing performance

at Marion County Juvenile Center, several concerts at area churches and a youth gang summit. Many of the Indianapolis youth came to faith during that time. Earlier, in April, the Bible Society sponsored a Christ-centered hip-hop concert in Miami that featured award-winning performers. Every attendee received a portion of Scripture.

Another Bible Society venture, P.A.T.H.[™] (Pointing At-risk youth Toward Hope), is a mentoring program designed to connect volunteers from local

churches with offenders at juvenile detention centers. We are also looking to collaborate with ministries and organizations already established in this area of outreach (see related BronxConnect article on page 10).

Our Literacy Program provides a Scripture-based curriculum for use in inner city neighborhoods, where typically many children are unable to read at grade level. In partnership with the Bank

Street College of Education, a leader in developing early childhood education and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, we are piloting an illustrated Scripture-based literacy series called *Mission: Literacy*. This three-level tutoring series is designed to aid churches and community groups teach or improve members' reading skills, while teaching them from God's Word.

Each of these pioneering efforts springs from the Bible Society's vision to open God's Word in every way possible for people such as Hank Allen — to make the promises of Scripture a reality in their lives. ■



Christian hip-hop in Miami.

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A South Bronx Saga

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS
BY FRANCINE LANGE

The God of
and
chances

As the American Bible Society pursues its new emphasis, connecting young people with God's Word, we seek to collaborate with ministries that demonstrate the same "heart." One program, a mentoring initiative in New York City's notorious South Bronx, shows how Christ can successfully turn the tide of despair shadowing inner-city youth.

On a recent Monday evening in New York City, four teenagers lounge on metal chairs in a darkened auditorium, talking and laughing. Behind them, a graffiti artist's swooping rendition of a musical jam session vibrates through the gloom. Outside, a street vendor sells mini bananas, guavas and plantains from his wooden pushcart. Under the elevated train tracks across the street, a man furtively slips a small plastic bag into another man's hand. Car radios blast rap rhythms at ear-piercing levels as drivers squeeze their cars past others double-parked, shielding the transaction from view.

This is the South Bronx, neighborhood to a New York icon — grand Yankee Stadium, just two subway stops downtown — and birthplace of hip-hop music, an urban street-smart genre that has captivated millions of young fans



John, standing, Susan and Eddie participate in a variety of BronxConnect programs.

around the world. But the South Bronx also holds a less notable record; of New York City's five boroughs, the Bronx courts send charged juveniles to detention more frequently (58 percent of the time compared to Brooklyn's and Manhattan's 29 percent rate). In 2001, the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice admitted 5,313 young people under the age of 16 to detention — almost one third of them from the Bronx. Their charges ranged from truancy to robbery and assault.

These four teens, poised to enter the tenacious Bronx juvenile justice system, were offered an alternative by the courts: enroll in BronxConnect, a Christ-centered initiative that serves some 50 young people a year and the only youth alternative-

to-incarceration program located in the Bronx. Instead of jail time, or, as a condition of probation, these young people would be required to spend a couple of days a week meeting with BronxConnect staff and mentors, talking about their hopes and dreams and working to transform those dreams into reality. They chose the alternative, and that has made all the difference in their lives.

John (all minors' names have been changed to protect their privacy), 17, completed an internship working in the Bronx Borough President's office last May and his writing talent was put to good use. Susan, 16, works after school part-time, wants to be a lawyer and currently takes business classes while she considers enrolling in a Baltimore college. Eddie, 17, likes to fix things — computers, power plants, even airplanes. He did so well in BronxConnect this past summer that his charge was dismissed and he's about to enter the South Bronx Job Corps program. As for returning to jail, he's very clear: "If I go, it'll be to visit." Thomas, 16, has two dreams: to be a rapper and an auto mechanic.

COMING ALONGSIDE — THE MENTOR AND THE CHURCH

"Our mentors are developing relationships with our young people," says Ruben Austria, BronxConnect director, "and they're showing God's love to these kids by being there for them in a very practical way."

The mentors — whether staff or volunteers — play a critical role. All live in the Bronx, and some were born and grew up not far from this neighborhood. And they all have a heart for kids in trouble. Beatrice Santiago, a program youth worker and single mother raising two children of her own, says, "Everyone deserves a second chance. BronxConnect wants to be the light at the end of their {the kids'} tunnel."

That light is very much Christ-centered, although, as a court-certified program, BronxConnect cannot require the young people remanded into their care to participate in Bible studies or attend church. But through dedicated mentors, recruited from 30 area churches (some who come from similar circumstances), God's redeeming love shines strong and clear.

As Ruben explains, "the church is the body of believers, it's not necessarily a building or an institution," and the goal for each young person is to "experience subjectively the goodness of God and the life of Christ that is flowing through the people they are encountering." One mentor, Juana Velez, now a hospital and prison chaplain, explains why she volunteers with BronxConnect: "If I would have had someone reach out to me at 15, I know that I would not have gotten in half the mess I was in."

Churches in the Bronx also step in to minister. Crossroads



Teens at BronxConnect are matched with compatible mentors. Susan, left, says she connected right away with youth worker Beatrice Santiago. “We talk a lot,” says Susan, and “that’s important.”

Tabernacle, for example, runs a vibrant teens-only Thursday evening service that draws nearly 40 young people each week. Youth directors Michelle and Joe Lopez gear the services to address pertinent issues. “We’re trying to give them a foundation of the Word, as well as a sense of belonging,” says Michelle.

ADVOCATING FOR YOUTH

In an American Youth Policy Forum report called *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works and What Doesn't*, writer Richard A. Mendel details alternative methods that are effective in crime prevention among teens. He found that delinquent youth shared two characteristics: no significant attachments to caring adults (related or otherwise) and little or no involvement in positive activities. However, multidimensional community-based intervention programs for juvenile offenders, such as BronxConnect, kept kids from

returning to jail. (BronxConnect achieved an astonishing 83 percent success rate in its first year of operation.)

This program, formally recognized by the Bronx courts as an alternative to incarceration in 2000, serves under the auspices of Urban Youth Alliance, a 32-year-old New York Christian community youth organization and the largest and oldest minority-based urban youth development ministry in the country.

Working under that parent organization, BronxConnect taps into a variety of agencies that can serve the needs of the young people in their care. Students can hone job or college readiness skills, study skills — or pursue a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) if they’re too old to return to school.

Some get referrals to drug rehab services or, for mental health problems, will visit Full Circle Health, a faith-based psychiatric center in the Bronx. Ruben emphasizes the hands-on individualized approach taken for each young person. “Our



Staff members work with BronxConnect participants individually and in group sessions, depending on the need. Ruben Austria, front left, Beatrice Santiago, center, and Doug Knepper, standing, enjoy a light moment with Susan, right, Thomas, back left, John and Eddie.

job is to ensure, not only that they get referred to the right services," Ruben says, "but that they get plugged in and they follow through and complete them."

Staff members get connected with the kids' parents, pay home visits and accompany teens to court appearances; if necessary, they will help speed a school transfer if a student has been barred from returning to school because of an arrest.

Support Services Coordinator Doug Knepper says, "The court wants to see the negatives taken away ... but we really believe that you just can't take away from these young people's lives. You have to fill their lives with positive things. That's really what we're trying to do."

CASTING A WIDER NET

With an eye to the future, Ruben is working to expand BronxConnect's role. He wants the program to reach into detention centers in New York, to work with youth who did not qualify for an alternative program. Bridges and Horizon, youth detention centers in the Bronx, limit the access of outside organizations, and some ministries, including BronxConnect, have not yet been able to establish a consistent presence there.

That may soon change with help from the American Bible Society. Drew Segawa, a program specialist at the American Bible Society, pledged to work with Ruben to help BronxConnect gain access to these facilities as well as provide Bible Society Scripture materials for use with incarcerated youth. BronxConnect is an answer to Drew's prayer that God would "connect us with those {ministries} that already have the heart, the calling and the involvement" with troubled kids.

Drew heads up the Bible Society's P.A.T.H.™ (Pointing At-risk youth Toward Hope) mentoring initiative, which looks to collaborate with groups reaching out to young offenders (see related article from the Fall 2003 *Record*, page 10). BronxConnect, he emphasizes, "is already doing it."

Ruben says that BronxConnect measures success by not only watching a young person grow mentally and spiritually, but also by reaching out to help other struggling teens. "I know we've really done our job when we've got a kid who's been in the program for a couple of years and is able to speak to a group of peers currently incarcerated and tell them, 'Look, 18 months ago, I was where you guys are at, and I didn't think I could make those changes,' " and then points to the trans-

formation in his own life. (See related profile of BronxConnect graduate Manny Polonia, below)

Adds BronxConnect's Doug Knepper, "We're not going to be in their lives forever, but if we can start to plant a seed, and allow God to nurture it, I believe that's what's going to spur them on in the future, even when we're not there."

To learn more about BronxConnect, contact Ruben Austria at 718-681-8545 ext.17, or e-mail him at ruben_bc@uyai.org.

You may also access www.uyai.org.

To find out how you can support P.A.T.H.[™] or other American Bible Society youth-oriented initiatives, please call Drew Segawa at 888-596-6296, ext. 1310 (in New York City 212-408-1310), e-mail PATHmentoring@americanbible.org or write the American Bible Society, National Programs, 1865 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023. You may also access our Web site www.americanbible.org. ■

Connecting with Success

Manny Polonia can take you through the finer details of computer systems. He wants to be sure you understand what you are buying before you leave his Manhattan store. And when you're sitting at home, puzzling over the web of cables, Manny will patiently talk you through the maze.

Occasionally, he'll make a home visit. So it's easy to understand why this 20-year-old garnered two employee-of-the-month awards and was recently promoted to assistant manager at the Midtown computer store where he works.

What may surprise Manny's customers is the scene the Bronx native describes as he ran for his life along a dark beach in Coney Island several years ago, chased by a rival gang, their faces covered by bandannas. His goal was survival and his prayer desperate: "God, if you don't make something happen, this is it." Manny (whose given name, Emmanuel, means "God with us") escaped the gang, but, abandoned by his own "crew," soon encountered other rival members, and got a severe beating that landed him in the hospital. Later, when his father stood by his bed, he told Manny, "You are lost."

Manny's behavior leading up to that night only confirmed that assessment. As the oldest of three boys, Manny would watch his parents care for his severely asthmatic brothers. The special attention they needed often left him feeling unnoticed. At 14, seeking affirmation elsewhere, Manny joined

a gang and established himself as a leader. By age 16 he witnessed shootings, sold drugs on the street and saw friends get locked up. Manny realized he had to change or he would be destroyed by his life of violence and crime. He thought it was only a matter of time before a vengeful shooter hit his mark or the police nabbed him.

Then, one day in 1999, walking the halls of his high school, Manny wandered into an after-school drama session being conducted by the Urban Youth Alliance, a Christian youth ministry. There, he was introduced to Ruben Austria, who runs the BronxConnect mentoring program.

With gentle but firm encouragement from Ruben, Manny's world began to open up. That summer Ruben arranged for him to work at the American Bible Society bookstore. It was Manny's first real job. Ruben coached Manny, pointing him to Bible verses such as 1 Corinthians 10.13b, "God can be trusted not to let you be tempted too much, and he will show you how to escape from your temptations," and encouraged him to attend church. As the power of the Scriptures and the consistent love of BronxConnect staffers soothed Manny's aches, the allure of gang life faded. Soon Manny was spending all his spare time at the BronxConnect offices, where he would talk to other kids in the program. He also joined Ruben on visits to the Rikers Island Adolescent Reception Detention Center (one



Manny Polonia pays a visit to the Bible Society bookstore, where he worked for Hilda Perez and Chatman Payne (not pictured) one summer.

of the 10 jails on the island, which sits in New York Harbor). There he shared with kids not much younger than himself about life "in the streets" and the possible consequences. He didn't mince words: "If you don't get murdered," he told them, "you're going to get locked up."

Now, Manny visits Rikers detainees twice a month and serves as a peer counselor at BronxConnect. And although he enjoys his selling job, he is pursuing criminal psychology in college, because, he explains without irony, "I know the criminal mind."

As he reviews the ways he has experienced positive change in his own life and witnessed it in other young peoples' lives, Manny sees the conditions needed for a successful outcome: "God wants my past, my present, my future," he says. —F. L.



A Stewardship of *Opportunity* 2002

Dr. Lamar Vest, Chairman of the Board

As Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the American Bible Society, I am grateful to the many generous friends who have consistently helped us prosper in sharing the Good News in Jesus Christ. We are committed to achieving as much evangelization for our Lord as the generosity of our donor partners allows. This requires that we, as a Board, be wise in how we put to work the gifts our supporters entrust to us for doing God's work.

Even in today's difficult financial climate, our donors continue to share with us in Bible work; we have not hesitated to commit to pressing ministry needs. Recently, for example, through area churches, the American Bible Society sent thousands of Scripture booklets to victims and families of the Staten Island Ferry crash in New York City and to those affected by the wildfires in California.

Nevertheless, the market decline has caused us to trim staff, strive for greater fiscal discipline and review the effectiveness of each of our ministry efforts. In these lean times, only programs that show proven donor confidence can be sustained.

Our ongoing domestic agenda — developing programs that connect people with Scripture and the creation of Scripture products to support those engagement programs — springs from our faith in the day-to-day giving of donor partners. Donor faithfulness is also the mainstay of our ability to support the mission and ministry of the United Bible Societies (UBS).

We continue to invest the Lord's talents wisely. In 1947 the American Bible Society was instrumental in founding the United Bible Societies, an international fellowship that has grown from the original dozen members to a network of some 136 national Bible Societies. The UBS makes ministry and Bible translation possible in places where it could not exist in isolation, in places such as Vietnam, Cuba, China and even in Iraq.

But this ministry works two ways; our supporters have an opportunity to see their evangelistic passion and prayers making a difference, through the UBS fellowship, almost everywhere. The UBS also provides Scriptures in dozens of languages to ethnic populations in this country.

God has blessed us with a financial base that, through disciplined stewardship, enabled the Board to more than match a \$15 million challenge grant from the Maclellan Foundation to fund an aggressive global

Scripture outreach. *Opportunity 21* has already touched millions of lives with the living Word.

Maclellan chose the Bible Society for this challenge because they knew we had the vision to respond and the financial donor support to back it up. And our supporters have not let us down; your faithful gifts, passion and prayers for Bible sharing have helped this initiative succeed.

Earnings from reserves still allow us to cover overhead costs, permitting us to direct your contributions to the ministry for which you intended it.

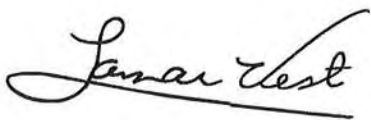
The need is great. A growing church

These expenses are paid from funds functioning as endowment, enabling 100% of donor contributions to be directed to international and domestic ministry.

- 2003

around the world cries out for the Word of life. And in places where God's Word is sufficiently available, such as here in America, we are investing in programs and products that will encourage people to read the Bible and embody its life-saving message.

The Bible Society is only able to do its part with your continued prayers and financial support. And for that we give God all the glory.



STEWARDSHIP REPORT

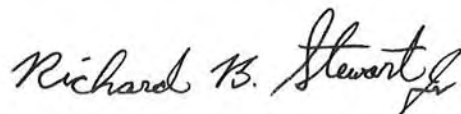
For 187 years, the American Bible Society has depended on millions of people like you to help us accomplish our mission to make the Bible available to every person in a language and format each can understand and afford. The adjacent report gives you a financial summary of the size and scope of our efforts to reach people with God's Word in fiscal 2003. During the fiscal year 2003, our operating expenses totaled \$99.0 million.

A weakened economy and the stock market decline over the past few years adversely affected funds available for overhead and ministry support services. Economic conditions also had a negative impact on donor contributions. These contractions have caused us to strive for even greater fiscal discipline and to improve the effectiveness of each of our programs. Nevertheless, we have been able to adhere to our long-standing policy that every donor dollar goes toward outreach programs.

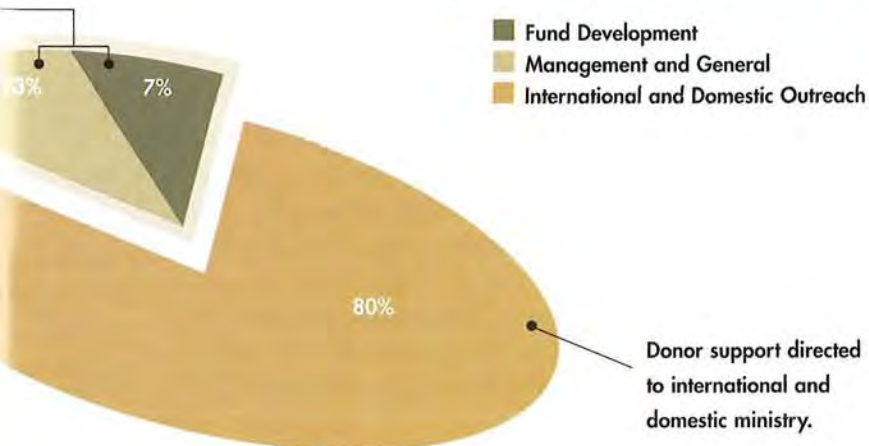
Many supporters help us ensure ongoing outreach by including the Bible Society in their wills. In 1843 the American Bible Society created the first charitable gift annuity and we are one of the largest charitable gift annuity administrators in the world. Through this flexible giving arrangement, supporters can meet their own financial needs while, at the same time, make an investment for the long-term future of the Bible Society's Word-sharing ministry.

Thank you for your involvement with the American Bible Society. We welcome and value all who join us in making God's Word more available.

*Richard Stewart,
Chief Financial Officer*



OPERATING EXPENSES 2003



(Complete audited financial statements are available upon request.)

The Year in Review 2003

(INTERNATIONAL)

Through the network of 136 United Bible Societies, we extend the Scripture outreach of our supporters to the far corners of the globe.

BY DAVID SINGER

A Miracle Makes a Worldwide Difference

✱ A block away from the U.S. Embassy, a hut shaded Emilio Reyes and his family from the hot Dominican sun. As they sat waiting, his mother pulled out her Bible and quietly began reading. After a while she retreated into prayer, then read for a few more minutes before again bowing to pray, seeking God's favor. Emilio's younger sisters and mother would soon immigrate to the United States. What remained to be decided was whether or not 14-year-old Emilio, born out of marriage, would be allowed to go with them. The U.S. Consulate had to determine whether or not Emilio, who bore his mother's last name, could be considered part of this family.

Finally the embassy door opened and they were all beckoned in. As a fearful Emilio approached the huge desk, the Consul standing behind it said, "Welcome to the United States of America." Emilio would go. With his bright grin brighter than usual, Emilio recalls that day, saying, "That was a miracle."

But Emilio found entering his new land of promise difficult. In 1973 the Lower East Side of New York City was a tough place for a young immigrant to grow up. "I was out of my culture. My stepfather was unfaithful to my mother," says Emilio. "My home life was bad — I was left to raise my two little sisters and brother."

He went into a tailspin of rebellion that lasted several years and took him to bad places. But his devout Catholic upbringing had prepared Emilio spiritually, so that when a friend invited Emilio to attend church, he went. The preacher's description of what it would be like to "burn in hell" changed Emilio forever.

He committed to follow Jesus. "I became very evangelistic," Emilio says. "My faith gave me purpose and direction." He began directing a youth program at church that grew from 30 to 80 mem-

Radio Luz reporter Tony Gutierrez, left, interviews Emilio Reyes at a Bible Society-sponsored Christian hip-hop concert held in Miami earlier this year.



DAVID SINGER

bers. After finishing high school, he attended Baruch College, a division of the City College of New York, and eventually graduated from an Assembly of God seminary to become pastor of Calvary Assembly of God Church in Brooklyn.

Remembering his ethnic roots

In 1994, the Rev. Emilio Reyes brought his passion for the Bible to work at the American Bible Society, where he developed a multidimensional Bible Society outreach to the Latino community throughout the nation. Recently named vice president for International Ministries, Emilio is now expanding the American Bible Society's working partnership with the fellowship of United Bible Societies (UBS), which the American Bible Society was instrumental in founding in 1947.

Emilio sees great promise in this relationship. Through faithful donor support, the American Bible Society has been the biggest backer of Bible Society work around the world. In return, UBS, which now numbers 136 national Bible Societies, has the potential to provide Scripture materials in more than one hundred languages to ethnic communities in this country.

Emilio envisions our UBS partners coming to the United States to do church planting among the ethnic communities in this country. He, in turn, encourages Christians in these same U.S. communities to join with the American Bible Society in helping support Bible Society ministry being carried out in their home countries.

Opportunity 21 — Huge Response to a Huge Crisis

✳ This international cooperation took on new dimensions with *Opportunity 21*. With the dawning of the third millennium, explosive church growth in many parts of the world had created an acute shortage of Scriptures. *Opportunity 21*, created jointly by the Maclellan Foundation, the American Bible Society, UBS and several other Christian ministries, was envisioned as a four-year response to this chal-



RUNE HANSEN/UBS

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

lenge. *Opportunity 21* called for the mobilization of Bible translation, publishing and distribution resources on an unprecedented scale, encompassing some 375 different projects in 75 countries.

The program foresaw providing Scriptures in a broader diversity of formats, an expansion of distribution channels and intensified Bible translation.

In the People's Republic of China, for example, where people are coming to faith in record numbers, the China Christian Council — through UBS and funded by the American Bible Society — created 70 distribution centers throughout the country and supplied them with Bibles, New Testaments and other Scripture-based materials. With aid from the American Bible Society, the Amity Printing Company in Nanjing in 2002 published nearly 2 million Bibles and New Testaments of these Scriptures.

The centers sit in large cities, to which Christians living in outlying areas do not have easy access. So *Opportunity 21* used donor gifts to purchase the first 16 of 40 distribution vans (villagers call them "Gospel Wagons") to deliver Scripture materials to these hard-to-reach rural areas.

Reaching Out in Small Ways

✳ In Latin America, Bible work focused on the many children and young people in developing countries

2003

(the international year in review)

suffering from extreme poverty. Esperanza López, a children's worker in Bogotá, Colombia, founded the Niños Triunfadores en Cristo home for street children. She cares for 62 children, infants to 13-year-olds, from the poorest section of the city.

She emphasizes, "the purpose of the home is to bring the children to God." And with Bible materials from the Colombian Bible Society and *Opportunity 21*, she is able to do so. "Since the moment I brought [the children] the Bible Society Scriptures," she says, "they have become more interested in the Bible."

The American Bible Society's international outreach also includes a vital partnership with Hosanna, the Albuquerque-based ministry that operates the *Faith*



LARRY JERDEN/UBS

In Colombia, a children's home provides Bible teaching in kid-friendly formats, including Scripture comics.

Comes By Hearing (FCBH) Scripture listening program. As a major sponsor, the Bible Society has contributed \$8 million to audio Scripture projects in 15 countries.

Morgan Jackson, the international director of *FCBH*, said that the audiocassettes, which contain the Word of God in various languages, are proving very effective in the developing world, where many people cannot read.

In Our International Backyard

* Much as Rev. Reyes has hoped, international outreach also occurs here at home. For Pastor James Keller and his wife, Annette, becoming missionaries

required nothing more than returning to their hometown, Fort Wayne, Ind. There they minister to a group of parishioners at the New Life Lutheran Church that includes 67 refugees from the Southeast Asian country of Myanmar.

Through Say Plah, business manager of the Bible Society of Myanmar, the church received 200 New Testaments in the *Myanmar Common Language Version* last year.

With the gift from the Bible Society, Pastor Keller and his church will be able to place these resources into the hands of more Myanmar seekers.



STEVE LINSENMAYER

Bala Kyaw, left, and Pastor James Keller read from a Myanmar language Bible.

Donors Make the Difference

* The American Bible Society relies on faithful donors to help fulfill the Bible-sharing mission. The 250 members of the Word of Faith Fellowship in Dearborn, Mich., "believe in giving," said their pastor, the Rev. Tony Buzzeo. The church, which has already given several million dollars to meet needs around the world, selected the American Bible Society's *Opportunity 21* program after reading about the changed life of a Romanian street child in our *Record* magazine.

Long-time American Bible Society donors Bob and Aileen Adams from Charlotte, N.C., provided support to an *Opportunity 21* project in Indonesia — translation of the New Testament into eight new languages. They traveled to Indonesia to meet with Indonesians and hear people tell how their lives had changed. "We felt a real bond with them," says Mr. Adams. "God spoke to us and made it very clear that this is an important ministry."

Echoing what many of our supporters have expressed over the years, Mr. Adams says, "We thank God for the Bible Society ... and what they're doing." ■



Healing in the Holy Land

In the face of unrelenting strife in the Middle East, the Bible Societies in Israel and the Palestinian Territories continue directing people to God's Word for comfort and guidance (see story on page 5). Hundreds of thousands of Scripture materials are placed in the hands of men, women and children in the Holy Land each year, through Bible summer camps, local churches and special distribution programs. As a result the Bible Societies receive many accounts of God's grace.

In one report, a Christian father in Lebanon named Mazen, distraught over his beloved daughter's recent cancer diagnosis, shared his anguish with his Bible study group. They looked up Scripture passages that assured of God's healing power and began to pray.

A week later, when they saw his daughter, Samira, she looked quite healthy. Samira explained that she had indeed been dying. "I was lying in the dark feeling so weak ... when I suddenly saw a bright light and a man dressed in white ..." I knew he was Jesus. He told me: 'Samira, I've come here to make you well!' At that moment, I started feeling as if a hot stream of electricity was moving through my body. My strength started coming back." Later, when Mazen took Samira to the doctor, tests showed no trace of cancer.

Your February gift will support Bible work in Russia. Your March gift will bring Bibles to India. Your April offering will provide Scriptures to South America. To find out more about joining the Bible-a-Month Club, fill out the reply form below, or write:

American Bible Society
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1865 Broadway
New York, NY
10023-7505
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americanbible.org

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the gallery

Celebrating Inspiration from the Word

located in the heart of New York City's cultural and art community, *The Gallery at the American Bible Society* serves as the only exhibition space in the city devoted exclusively to artwork that has been inspired by the Scriptures.

Last year, thousands of visitors stepped into what the *New York Daily News* has described as "a crisp, clean, quiet oasis in Manhattan," and which *USA Today* listed as one of "10 great places to explore religion in artistic detail."

Three recent exhibits differing widely in artistic flavor and medium but sharing the same reverence and focus on subjects inspired by the Holy Scriptures, received favorable reviews in the national media, including *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Washington Post*.

Finding Faith: Folk Art of Peru from the Collection of Antonio Lulli showcased 66 exceptional devotional works in the Lulli collection, including retablos (tabletop altars), santos (carved wood figures of saints), sculptures and carved wood gourds. All were made in the 20th century by artisans who were either self-taught or apprenticed in traditional workshops.

"The works in the Lulli Collection exemplify how, even in modern times, traditional art forms can bring the spirit of the Scriptures to life," said Dr. Patricia Pongracz, curator for *The Gallery* and organizer of the exhibition.

An earlier exhibit, *Holy Russia in Tuscany. Icons from the Collection of Francesco Bigazzi*, displayed for the first time in the United States the holdings of the Museum of Russian Icons, located in Peccioli, Italy. The icons date from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Stylistically, they illustrate both the traditional post-Byzantine style and the more naturalistic style influenced by western Europe and adopted by some iconographers beginning in the 18th century. Though all original works, the icons shown were all modeled on ancient and medieval prototypes.

Reflections on Glass: 20th Century Stained Glass in American Art and Architecture displayed stained glass windows reflecting the sacred architectural aesthetics and the richness of this artistic medium in the 20th century.



Retablo of the Artist in His Workshop, 1986, Nicario Jimenez

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

Current *Gallery* exhibitions can be viewed at www.americانبible.org. ■

The Gallery presents public programs and tours on a regular basis, and holds scholarly symposia and on-site art workshops for children.

Additional Gallery highlights:

- We received a \$10,000 grant from the Hyde and Watson Foundation (our second grant from them) for capital improvements in *The Gallery*.
- We also received the last installment of a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation for a symposia series, *New Directions in the Study of Art and Religion*.
- Our first traveling exhibition, *Icons or Portraits? Images of Jesus and Mary from the Collection of Michael Hall*, opened at the Mobile Museum of Art in Mobile, Ala. (the first venue of a tour that will continue into 2005).

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Typecasting the Son of God

Stop judging by external standards, and judge by true standards.

—JESUS; JOHN 7:24 (GNT)

Even as some of us decry the secularization of culture, our need for something deeper — someone to follow — shows itself in our tireless attraction to Jesus. Jesus has gotten more media exposure than any other history maker. Films such as *King of Kings*, *Jesus of Nazareth* and Campus Crusade's widely distributed *JESUS* all strive to successfully portray the reality and nature of the God-man — someone people died for and still die for.

The arrival of the third millennium also brought with it a wave of Jesus TV specials. Each of the three major networks featured a Jesus episode; each of these screenings wrestled with the challenge of portraying the incarnation on screen. Now two new Jesus films reinvigorate the discussion. Mel Gibson's controversial *The Passion of the Christ*, which reportedly reflects Mr. Gibson's religious zeal, restricts itself to the final days of Christ's ministry. *The Gospel of John*, which surrounds the complete and unedited narrative of John's Gospel with a rich texture of authentic audiovisuals, is a "must see" film.

Produced by Visual Bible International, *The Gospel of John*, like Campus Crusade's *JESUS*, chose the American Bible Society's very accessible *Good News Translation (GNT)* for its script. A combination of superb, nuanced acting, deft pacing and good camera angles manages to overcome many of the limitations of using any one of the Gospels as a movie script.

Only if viewers listen attentively, for example, will they notice that there is not a discernible syllable that is not part of the biblical text. In many scenes, even frequent murmurs from crowds or bystanders, while effectively supplying context, add no discernible language. And narration of John's commentary by renowned actor Christopher Plummer nicely connects the occasionally sparse dialogue of Jesus, played

by British actor Henry Ian Cusick.

Paradoxically, this lifelike experience — *seeing* Jesus in action — in some ways competes with John's intent to portray Jesus as "the Word." In our culture's obsession with image we want to *see* Jesus. Unfortunately, this *seeing* can become a virtual reality — where *seeing* can substitute as a kind of believing; it can become an artificial kind of knowing, not the true knowing of a personal relationship.

Admittedly, casting Jesus is no small cinematic challenge. How does one cut out moral and psychological perfection — unreserved love — all in the electric persona that Jesus was? Viewers from different Christian traditions come with an inexhaustible range of expectations.

And, except for Isaiah's prophecy that there would be nothing physically attractive about him, the Scriptures are virtually silent about Jesus' appearance. Altogether the Gospels provide a mere skeleton on which to construct a full-bodied and appropriate screen character, leaving much to conjecture.

On the other hand, some media representations, in an effort not to stray from the authentic dialogue given in the Gospels, settle for a wooden Jesus — one dimensional and distant. In *The Gospel of John*, Henry Ian Cusick's portrayal of the Christ reaches a new level in overcoming these difficulties.

Whether viewers have read or heard the entire Gospel of John in one sitting or not, this film provides a moving experience. And unlike with most other films, once having seen the movie, viewers who want to further ponder its meaning can find the complete script in the bestseller of all time. ■

By David Singer



SCRIPTURES IN TODAY'S HEADLINES

BIBLE IN THE NEWS

The Good Book for Teenage Girls

■ When Thomas Nelson Publishers in Nashville set out to create a new edition of the Scriptures that teens would actually read, their research revealed that most teen girls don't read God's Word, but they do devour fashion magazines, so Nelson went with *Revolve*, a different New Testament. *Detroit Free Press* columnist David Crumm wrote that it looks like a "glitzy magazine for young women."

Mr. Crumm enlisted feedback from a couple of teenage girls, who gave positive reviews. Said Ashley Verville, 17, "It's got the Bible in there, but it's also got all this great stuff on the sides of the pages just like a magazine. And I really liked these Bible Bios on women in the Bible."

Nancy Andrew, 16, said that she wished she had had the Bible to take to school. Then, she emphasized "You wouldn't look completely ridiculous pulling this out at lunch. It's not like some big, black Holy Bible you're pulling out. It's a magazine. A lot of people read magazines."

Mom's Labor of Love

■ Mothers across the nation find themselves scrambling for extra time wherever they can grab it. But one California mom used her precious minutes to handwrite two copies of the Bible, one for each of her children. Debbie Boling, 48, told reporter Amy White of *The Modesto Bee* that she "wanted to give them the type of Bible that would really mean a lot to them, a way of showing the importance that I put in the Word of God."

Mrs. Boling worked on the project for 10 years, handwriting Scripture verses on lined paper, which she then slipped into plastic sleeves and placed in binders. She presented the New Testaments at her children's high school graduation, and Old Testa-

ments at their college graduation.

Mrs. Boling told the newspaper that the project is something anyone can do. "My challenge isn't so much for everybody to write the Bible as it is to see the importance of it, not only reading the Word but living the Word and being that example to other people, whether your own children or other people you influence."

The Gospel as Rock Opera

■ A new rock opera called *!Hero* and starring Grammy winner Michael Tait of dc Talk is coming to New York. *Books and Culture* reports that the production "combines the heart of Stephen Schwartz's *Godspell* with what is essentially the same story as Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar*, set to music that is the modern rock and hip-hop equivalent of The Who's *Tommy* with the goals of a Billy Graham Crusade."

The opera casts Jesus as an African American born in Bethlehem (Pennsylvania) who takes his redemptive story to New York City. *Books and Culture* concludes: "Whether or not the venture succeeds, it should inspire anyone who hopes to present the gospel in fresh and relevant ways."

Christian Hip-Hop CD Released

■ On Dec. 13 the New York *Daily News* reported on the formal launch of *Elementz of Life™*, a project that hopes to reach at-risk youngsters by translating biblical messages into their pop culture language and lifestyle.

"I call what I do holy hip-hop," said rapper Sean Slaughter, who is one of a dozen or so hip-hop artists featured on a new American Bible Society-sponsored CD with a heavy beat and an unmistakable gospel message expressed in contemporary street language.

FROM DEPRESSION TO

FAITH

— BY ARUN SOK NHEP —

Every Sunday, an elderly woman arrives at the Naxay Evangelical Church in Vientiane, Laos, riding on the back of a motor-taxi. When she walks into the church, people greet her affectionately, calling her Maetu Manh, which means Grandma Manh in Lao.

She actively participates in church life, writing poems and songs to inspire the congregation. But not too many years ago, Grandma Manh had a very different life; she was isolated, ill and depressed.

Living in a village near Vientiane, a serious illness made her frail, limiting her mobility. Her husband had died and her five children had abandoned her.

One day, during harvest season, as she stood on the veranda of her house watching a group of people working in the rice field, one of the workers caught Grandma Manh's attention. They had stopped for lunch, and she noticed that one young worker sat alone under a tree, absorbed in reading a book. Curious, Grandma Manh walked out into the field and asked the woman, "What are



ARUN SOK NHEP

Grandma Manh was more than 80 years old when she read the Bible and accepted its truth.

you reading?" She told Grandma Manh that she was a Christian and that she was reading from the Bible.

The elderly woman sat beside the worker and, looking over the worker's shoulder, read silently to herself. When the lunch break was over, and the young woman got up, Grandma Manh asked to borrow her book for a few hours.

While the workers toiled, she read quietly under the tree. When the young woman returned, three hours later, Grandma Manh asked if she could keep the book overnight, and the worker agreed. Grandma Manh continued her reading, so captivated by the story of Jesus that she didn't notice the village children playing around her.

After another hour she jumped to her feet and headed for home, holding the Bible tightly. Some of

the children called after her, "Grandma, you forgot your cane." She called back, "I no longer need it!"

On that day, Maetu Manh gave her life to the Lord Jesus. She soon joined the church and received her own Bible. The forgiveness she felt from the Lord and the love she received from the people who welcomed her into their church family led her to forgive her own children. Eventually, one of her daughters returned home, and now lives with her.

Although Maetu Manh is now more than 90 years old and fragile, the Word of God, which spoke to her and brought her to new life 10 years ago, continues to sustain her, and is the inspiration she shares with others — how God saved her and loves her.

Arun Sok Nhep is a program consultant for UBS Asia Pacific. ■

CONTINUING A LIFELONG MINISTRY IN RETIREMENT

PAUL AND MARGARET LUDWIG
have looked to Psalm 37.5

BY JAMES WALKER

to guide them for most of their adult lives. “You need to commit your way to the Lord,” says Paul, quoting the Psalm. “I had to make dozens of major decisions and I prayed and trusted in the Lord, and never regretted a decision I made.”

Although the son and grandson of ministers, Paul wasn’t sure he wanted to follow the same path. But after graduating from college, he enrolled in Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., and served a one-year internship at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas. During that year, the pastor became ill and asked Paul to step into the pulpit until a replacement could be found. Paul reluctantly agreed, and hired Margaret — who would later become his wife — as his administrative assistant. At the end of that year, and

with much prayer, Paul knew he had found his calling; he remained as pastor, and the Ludwigs served Emmanuel for another eight years.

In 1958, Paul became a chaplain in the Air Force, and each new assignment, whether within the United States or overseas, gave him a fresh opportunity to preach and teach God’s Word.

Even after his retirement in 1982, Paul and Margaret have continued sharing the Good News with those they meet. “Getting the Word out doesn’t stop at our shoreline,” says Paul. In

1984, for example, they traveled with a tour group to China. Each evening, they invited their guide, Sean Xu, to join them in a time of Scripture reading and prayer. The last night of the tour, Sean Xu, who had already been learning English by reading the Bible, accepted Christ into his life and asked for a Bible so he could share God’s Word with others.

Two years later, the Ludwigs received a call from Sean Xu. He had emigrated from China and was studying chemical engineering in Chicago. (He now lives and works in Denver, Co., and he and his wife are active in a Lutheran church there.)

“I love to teach the Bible,” Paul says, and that love for sharing God’s Word provides a natural fit for him with the American Bible Society’s mission to reach the world. Although they don’t travel much

these days, the Ludwigs know that their support through their Bible Society *Charitable Remainder Trust* will help others receive the same life-giving Scriptures that have guided and sustained them throughout their lives.

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.



Paul and Margaret Ludwig

Internet Ministry to the Whole World

For the past four years, *ForMinistry*, the American Bible Society's Internet ministry has been reaching around the world and across the United States to help churches fulfill the Great Commission in novel ways. Some 25,000 churches now use *ForMinistry's* Web hosting services and software tools, a broad array of biblical resources and access to an expert online support team.

Our subscribers have been reporting back that *ForMinistry* is much more than a Web service. Churches use their sites to engage their young people with one another and the Word, connect with individuals who do not attend services regularly and even forge bonds between countries.

In the Garner Church of Christ in North Carolina, youth leaders recently set up a special youth site, which they hope will evolve into an outreach tool. They post the daily devotionals from youth meetings, information about upcoming events and links to groups that sponsor teen ministries as well as Christian colleges and local universities.

Web editor Stacie Pleasant writes: "We are also trying to get our teens involved in site development — suggestions for content, news items, etc. that they feel would be important to the success of the site and the spiritual growth of the kids. All teens need to feel that they have a purpose, and this helps to empower our group to reach other kids and make a difference in their community."

Another church in South Carolina, Triumph the Church and Kingdom of God in Christ, has taken Christ's message of redemption beyond the "high-

ways and byways" of its city streets. Assistant Pastor Sonya Hammond told us that even though the pastor would visit with elderly and drug-addicted residents in the neighborhood "we had a desire to reach more souls. I thought about the Internet — the millions of people out there who were as hungry for the Word as some we encountered on the streets."

With help from *ForMinistry* she launched a Web site to receive e-mailed prayer requests. Shortly after, they received an urgent e-mail about a woman deeply involved in drugs and the occult. Writes Ms. Hammond: "I printed (the e-mail) and read it to the congregation. We took the e-mail to the altar and there we prayed." A month later, another e-mail reported that the woman was doing better. They've also received prayer requests from a church in Africa, whose pastor wants to affiliate his church with Triumph.

This year, the Bible Society of Kenya publicly launched *ForMinistryKenya*, a joint initiative with the American Bible Society, to equip churches in the country and throughout Africa for ministry online.

"What would (the apostle) Paul have done had he the technology of today," asked the Rev. Jesse Kamau, moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. "He would have used it to reach more people for Christ." This past year, the Bible Society of Brazil and the Bible Society of Spain also launched versions of *ForMinistry* to serve their countries' churches.

Closer to home, *ForMinistry* helped churches across our nation celebrate Bible Sunday by providing free online resources, tips for incorporating Bible Sunday into church Web sites and more.

A new toolkit released in August includes new templates and improvements that make the services more user friendly. Each month 500 more churches go to *ForMinistry* to open a new site or take advantage of *ForMinistry* technology to improve an old one.

— CHRIS THYBERG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Cthyberg@ForMinistry.com

An Internet ministry of the American Bible Society
"Equipping the Church online For Ministry"®



Teens at the Garner Church of Christ work on their church's youth Web site. From left, Lauren Sewell, Josh Mobley, Brittny Modlin and Staci Talbott.

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>Filled with Hope and Sharing God's Love</i></p>	<p><i>Filled with Hope and Praying for One Another</i></p>	<p><i>Filled with Hope and Extending God's Promise</i></p>
<p>1 Luke 10.25-37 2 Galatians 5.1-15 3 Leviticus 19.1-18 4 Deuteronomy 6.1-9 5 Deuteronomy 30.1-10 6 Deuteronomy 30.11-20 7 Joshua 22.1-9</p>	<p>*1 Psalm 51 2 Habakkuk 1.1-17 3 Habakkuk 2.1-20 4 Habakkuk 3.1-19</p>	<p>1 Psalm 91 2 Luke 4.1-13 3 Luke 4.14-30</p>
<p>SUNDAY</p>	<p>WORLD DAY OF PRAYER</p>	<p>PALM/PASSION SUNDAY</p>
<p>8 Hosea 11.1-11 9 Hosea 14.1-9 10 Philippians 1.1-11 11 Colossians 3.1-17 12 Romans 8.31-39 13 Romans 12.9-21 14 1 Corinthians 13.1-13</p>	<p>5 Luke 11.1-13 6 Luke 18.1-14</p>	<p>4 Luke 19.28-48 5 Luke 20.1-19 6 Luke 21.1-19 7 Luke 22.1-30 8 Luke 22.39-71</p>
<p>SUNDAY</p>	<p>SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT</p>	<p>GOOD FRIDAY</p>
<p>15 1 John 1.1-10 16 1 John 2.1-17 17 1 John 2.18-29 18 1 John 3.1-10 19 1 John 3.11-24 20 1 John 4.1-21 21 1 John 5.1-21</p>	<p>7 Esther 4.1-17 8 2 Samuel 22.1-25 9 2 Samuel 22.26-51 10 1 Kings 3.1-15 11 1 Kings 18.1-29 12 1 Kings 18.30-46 13 Jeremiah 12.1-13</p>	<p>9 Luke 23.1-49 10 Luke 23.50-56</p>
<p>SUNDAY</p>	<p>THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT</p>	<p>EASTER SUNDAY</p>
<p>22 2 John 23 3 John 24 John 15.1-17</p>	<p>14 Numbers 14.1-10 15 Numbers 14.11-25 16 Ezra 9.5-15 17 Nehemiah 1.1-11 18 Nehemiah 9.1-15 19 Nehemiah 9.16-25 20 Nehemiah 9.26-37</p>	<p>11 Luke 24.1-12 12 Luke 24.13-35 13 Luke 24.36-53 14 John 14.1-14 15 John 14.15-31 16 2 Thessalonians 1.1-12 17 2 Thessalonians 2.1-17</p>
<p>*ASH WEDNESDAY (WESTERN CHURCHES)</p>	<p>FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT</p>	<p>SUNDAY</p>
<p>25 Joel 2.1-17 26 Psalm 48 27 Psalm 52 28 Psalm 63</p>	<p>21 Psalm 80 22 Psalm 81 23 Psalm 84 24 Psalm 85 25 Psalm 112 26 Psalm 113 27 Psalm 115</p>	<p>18 Galatians 3.1-18 19 Galatians 3.19-29 20 Galatians 4.1-20 21 Galatians 4.21-31 22 Colossians 1.1-14 23 Colossians 1.15-23 24 Deuteronomy 7.1-11</p>
<p>FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT</p>	<p>FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT</p>	<p>SUNDAY</p>
<p>29 Psalm 122</p>	<p>28 Daniel 9.1-19 29 Philippians 4.4-20 30 Colossians 4.2-18 31 2 Thessalonians 3.1-18</p>	<p>25 Deuteronomy 8.1-9 26 Deuteronomy 8.10-20 27 Psalm 78.1-16 28 Psalm 78.17-31 29 Psalm 78.32-55 30 Psalm 78.56-72</p>
	<p><i>*Orthodox Lent begins on Monday, March 1, 2004.</i></p>	<p><i>In 2004, Western and Orthodox Christians observe Holy Week and Easter on the same days.</i></p>

PLEASE PRAY

ASIA OPPORTUNITY — Praise God for the publication of 30 million Bibles by the Amity Printing Company in Nanjing, China. Give thanks for the continuing funds to purchase paper for Bibles, and through the *Opportunity 21* program, of Bible distribution vans to reach rural China. Give thanks, too, for the publication of the *Pictorial Bible Stories* for young people.

AUSTRALIA — Pray for indigenous translation of Scripture and for indigenous Christian leaders undertaking biblical training. Praise God that special Scriptures such as *The Surfers' Bible* are touching many lives.

JAPAN — Please pray for *Project 21*, which provides Scrip-

tures with a contemporary look, increasing their appeal to Christians and non-Christians. This includes a *Study Bible*, a *Casual Bible* and a *Sign Language Video Bible*.

NORTH KOREA — The government limits religious activities, and prohibits the production and distribution of Scriptures. In looking forward to the day when Bible work will be possible, the Korean Bible Society is raising funds to supply North Korea with a million Bibles. Please pray that we may soon be allowed to provide Bibles for our fellow Christians there.

PANAMA — Thank God that a recent survey found that the Bible is the most widely read and enjoyed book in Panama.

To build on this foundation, we will develop a series of publications on Bible-related subjects. To celebrate the bicentenary of the Bible Society movement, we plan to distribute 5,000 Bibles, 5,000 New Testaments and 50,000 Scripture booklets. Please pray that through these, 60,000 more young people will read the Bible message.

PHILIPPINES — Pray for the effective use of three *Opportunity 21* Scripture booklets designed for drivers, prisoners and street children, and a New Testament designed for police officers. Pray also for poor families receiving Bibles through the *Light for the Home* project. Ask God's blessing on our efforts to meet the spiritual needs of Filipinos with new Bible materials.

IN MEMORIAM

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

Dr. Harold Bennett
Given by: Dr. & Mrs. Eugene B. Habecker

Brian Harrington
Given by: Reginald H. Brockwell

My beloved Parents,
Rev. & Mrs. Kenneth P. MacDonald
Given by: Helen E. Beattie

My Husband,
Elmer M. McClure
Given by: Mrs. Kathryn E. McClure

In Memory of our beloved Son,
Lofton Sherrill Miller
Given by: Landon and Katherine Miller

In Memory of my beloved
Husband,
Andrew G. Millett
Given by: Mrs. Leatrice V. Millett

Marvin J. Nelson
Given by: Mrs. Bud Nelson

My beloved Parents,
Rev. Robert &
Mrs. Gracie Newcomb
Given by: Mrs. Ilene McKinney

My Wife,
Marie Hurley Prentice
Given by: William A. Prentice

My Wives,
Mrs. Lula M. Schneider
Mrs. Joyce D. Schneider
Given by: Mr. Maynard A. Schneider

Wilma Tucket
Given by: Linda J. Port

In Memory of my Parents,
John Wechsler and Matilda
(Smith) Wechsler
Given by: the Estate of Margaret V. Wechsler

Gertrude Whippo
Given by: Patricia Ingham

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.

ONE FAITH MANY EXPRESSIONS

A WORD FOR EVERYONE

On Jan. 30, 1864, Andrew Wellington Fink went off to fight in the Civil War carrying an American Bible Society Bible given to him by his mother. In a recent letter to the Bible Society, Helene Kline Mooty wrote: "My great-grandfather . . . came home from the war, got married, and had 11 children.



Bible Society supporter Helene Mooty displays photographs of her great-grandfather Andrew Fink (who carried an American Bible Society Bible into battle in 1864) and his wife, Susan.

All births were recorded in that Bible."

In a letter home, Mr. Fink included a line that must have been the heart cry of every soldier: "I hope it will not be very long until we will be home this fall if the Lord is willing."

According to Mrs. Mooty's account, "he did return home safely 18 months later with his Bible. He was married on 30 Jan 1868 (to Susan Henrietta Beadle), exactly 4 years to the day after his enlistment."

"This treasured Civil War Bible," wrote Mrs. Mooty, "has traveled from

the North to the South, back home to the North and now is back in the deep South and in the possession of Andrew Fink's great-grandson (and Mrs. Mooty's brother), Dr. John A. Kline in Montgomery, Alabama."

The Bible Society also provided Bibles directly to troops on both sides during our devastating civil conflict, wanting all Americans, regardless of political persuasion, to know whose children they ultimately were.

"Our work with the military is part of a long tradition," said Dr. Eugene Habecker, Bible Society president, who noted that the organization has been providing Scriptures to the U.S. military for all conflicts since the Mexican War.

Because the American Bible Society wishes to serve all Christian confessions, we keep our focus on the Word of God. By assuming that the Scriptures can speak for themselves, we

are able to eschew doctrinal controversies and come alongside groups, such as Christian military chaplains, whose constituencies represent a diversity of traditions, with editions of the Scriptures that will best fill their needs.

This past year the American Bible Society worked with Christian chaplains representing both Protestant and Catholic traditions to come up with a Bible that would serve all branches of the military. "Never before have the top military chaplains from each branch of the armed service come together to create a Bible to serve U.S. military personnel worldwide," noted Dr. Habecker.

"This is an historic event, and the American Bible Society is grateful for the opportunity to provide God's message of hope in these troubled times."

The special military Bible, using the Bible Society's *Good News Translation (GNT)*, points the reader to passages that address particular concerns of military personnel and their families. It highlights, for example, passages that relate to distress during times of separation, such as being away from home when a child is born or when a parent dies. This new Bible also includes copies of the military code of conduct and counsel on effective military leadership.

Although the Bible Society has developed these Scriptures for use by military chaplains, they are also available to the general public for \$9.99 per copy at www.americanbible.org. ■



Francisco Vargas, a security guard at the American Bible Society, reading from the new military Bible, recently returned from active duty in the Middle East.

Give a child the gift of God's Word this Easter

Too many children have never heard the greatest story ever told: that Jesus is *their* Savior.

That's why the American Bible Society, with the help of our partners at Samaritan's Purse, will distribute New Testaments to 100,000 boys and girls around the world this Easter season.

These children have come to know Christ through the outreach ministry of Samaritan's Purse . . . but so few have God's Word in their homes. Yet they are eager to grow in their faith and to share the "greatest story" with family and friends.

Please help reach out to them. Your generosity will be felt immediately in nations such as Angola, Colombia, Ghana, Malawi and Zambia. And throughout the coming year, the American Bible Society will provide Bibles to men, women and children around the world because caring friends like you have made it possible.

Thank you and God bless you for your generosity.

Funds raised in excess of the monies required to fulfill the Samaritan's Purse commitment will be used to help provide Scriptures to men, women and children all over the world.



Yes! I want to help give a New Testament to 100,000 of the world's most spiritually hungry children this Easter.

Enclosed is my gift of: \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ FAX _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

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



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