

RECORD

April | May 2000

FEELING HER WAY INTO THE LIGHT



NADINE
HAMMONS
KNOWS GOD'S
WORD BY
TOUCH AND
BY HEART

Finding What We Want

"If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples." John 13.35 (CEV)

Claims about having *the truth* are unfashionable in our pluralistic culture. However, recasting truth in terms of what people want can lead to a fruitful discussion.

Morality, for example, is a high priority for many. Evidence the proliferation of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) that focus on specific moral issues—groups such as Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, Compassion International, World Relief, or the World Wildlife Federation.

Advocates for each of these organizations represent a specialized "gospel" or set of values that does not necessarily encompass a full belief system or a religion. People are free to pick and choose among the moral concerns these groups represent, even though each is ultimately built on elements of *truth* from God's Word.

People are drawn to these organizations, in part, because they manifest a practical morality—one that makes a real difference. Matters of *truth* can seem abstract (and divisive). But there is nothing abstract about providing

medical care to refugees or food to starving children. People seldom argue with this kind of truth.

The same applies to teaching about the Bible in public schools. On page 12 we talk about a "third way" to present the Bible in a public forum—one that avoids proselytizing but also doesn't leave Scripture in the closet. When people

discover for themselves that issues they feel passionately about—whether it is human dignity, ecological responsibility, and other cultural values we share—come from God's Word, then they may look a little further.

Community, that sense of belonging, is another need felt by many people in our fragmented society. Whereas in the past bowling leagues and Rotary Clubs satisfied this social dimension, today church is one of the few organizational communities left. But what can be attractive about church is not only that it is a place where *truth* is taught, but also a place where community—a very practical *truth*—can be found.

People aren't always looking for *truth* in the religious sense. They look for plausibility. Will this cause or that group offer me something practical—something that I can use to live by? Jesus affirmed this when He prayed, "I am one with them [my followers], and you are one with me, so that they may become completely one. Then this world's people will know that you sent me." (John 17.23a CEV)

Biblically-based community is what *the truth* looks like. If we show people what they're already looking for, then not much else needs to be said. ■



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ON THE COVER: Nadine Hammons of Memphis knows her Bible. (Photo by Thomas D. Sullivan)

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‘I am Somebody. I am a Child of God.’



RESPONDING TO THE FIGHTING—Plane symbol indicates where plane strikes from three U.S. carriers hit Dong Hoi area in North Viet Nam. This was in retaliation for Viet Cong attacks on Pleiku and Tuy Hoa, unoccupied, in South Viet Nam. Broken line and arrows mark Ho Chi Minh trail, Communist supply route which has been used to ship up troops of Communist offensive.

A newspaper of the time maps out the war zone.

Ricky with wife Terry and daughter Heather.



Vietnam vet Ricky Rideout could teach the Biblical Job something about suffering.

Ricky has lived what most would pay never to experience. From Vietnam to Maine, the landscape of his life is dotted with intolerable pain, hardship and sorrow. In volunteering to enlist in the Vietnam War, Ricky had no idea that he would be forced into isolation for two years.

As a sentry dog handler, Ricky saw his unit only once per month. His companion on those lonely patrols was a dog he later named M.U.-B.A.R.—Messed Up Beyond All Recognition. On a very dark night while both Ricky and his dog were on patrol, the dog walked directly into an electrical wire fence. Watching helplessly, this man’s best friend was mutilated. Despite it all, MUBAR survived but lost a leg.

With MUBAR, Ricky went on to win the Silver Star, four Bronze Stars, and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry. The Cross of Gallantry was bestowed after Ricky crossed enemy lines to

rescue a member of his unit. Ricky dragged the soldier to what he thought was safety only to realize that the gurgled breath he heard was the man’s last.

Ricky was honorably discharged in October 1970. He had served his country well.

Filled with joy and excitement, Ricky looked forward to resuming life back home in Maine. But his joy was short lived. To his horror, Ricky, while employed as a driver, watched the clutch of his truck rip through the floorboards, severing his left leg.

“I was devastated!” recalls Ricky “What would I do with only one leg?” was the question he asked repeatedly. Newly married with an infant daughter to support, he faced the overwhelming challenges of the future.

“I could do it,” he told himself. “Although I did not feel like giving up, others began to treat me differently.”

A standard response from family members went something like this: “You could help...but your leg.”

The emotional wound went deeper than the physical wound. To the world, it seemed, Ricky was only half of a man. More than ever, life became a trial. With what strength he could muster, Ricky held on long enough to bury two sons within a 10-year-span. One was stillborn; another, Ricky says, simply stopped breathing, an apparent victim of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

That was the last straw. Shutting himself off from the world and his family, Ricky became a recluse. Embittered and aggrieved, his wife and one surviving child were shunned. “I did not permit anyone, not even my wife to hug me,” wrote Ricky.

Diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Dis-

order (PSTD), Ricky sought help from the local veteran's hospital. The medication he was given had an adverse effect. He felt drugged continually. Daily, he lived the horrors of his past while the future loomed ahead dark and dismal.

One fateful night, Ricky resurfaced from a drugged stupor to see Terry, his wife, reading her Bible. Terry had grown up in the church. He asked her what she was reading. "We talked a long time," he said. "It seemed like the first time even though we had been married for 25 years. After that we both began studying and reading



Ricky Rideout, soldier

the CEV Bible together. I started visiting her church and that made a difference in my life. With a restored faith, my wife and I have dedicated ourselves to serving Jesus."

Later Ricky received the *I Am Somebody* tape from the American Bible Soci-

ety. It provided more reassurance. He now assists ABS' work by distributing Bibles in his area.

The combination of ABS, his wife, and the Bible, "helped me to realize that I am a child of God! I am no longer depressed. It is all right to hug me now." ■ —Patricia Sinclair

A question for our readers:

"What Biblical passage or story made an impact on your life? How?" We'd like to know for possible inclusion in a future story in the *Record*. Please keep responses to 300 words or less. Submissions can be mailed to Peter Feuerherd, Editor: The *Record*, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023 or by e-mail at pfeuerherd@americanbible.org. The editors reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity and space considerations.

'Writing with Light'

Educator, television executive, ABS board member, father, husband, and grandfather—John P. "Jack" Blessington wears all these roles with a quick-thinking glibness and the self-deprecating wit of one who knows both the value of humor and the importance of not taking oneself too seriously.

Sometimes that wit can be misunderstood. Some have concluded that he must be from Pittsburgh, despite the fact that he is a Bronx, N.Y., native.

Jack studied at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Seminary in Baltimore. He left to pursue other interests, joking regularly to those inquiring about his seminary days that he wanted "to be archbishop of Pittsburgh, and nothing less."

He never became an archbishop but Jack's talents have flourished in a number of creative arenas. From 1959 to 1979 he was an educator, including stints as a consultant, teacher, and headmaster of a private school in Connecticut.

Since 1979, he has been with CBS, and is currently executive producer for the network's religious programming.

His frustration is that the commercial networks have not made a bigger commitment to exploring religion.

"It's hard to do something about religion on television without getting someone in trouble," he says.

He notes that the comedy hit of the '70s, *All in the Family*, started out slowly but steamrolled to top ratings. "That was a time when you had 13 weeks to prove your point," he says, noting that it is now common for struggling shows to be yanked after as few as three episodes.

As an ABS board member since 1987, he is regularly asked to draw upon his media experience. He would like ABS to explore more presentations of Scripture beyond the printed word through video, CD-ROM and other non-traditional formats.

"Media is writing with light. We shouldn't be afraid of it," he says. ■



JOHN P. BLESSINGTON



FEELIN' INTO

NADINE HAMMONS
PUTS HER MEMORY
TO THE LORD'S
SERVICE

GOING HER WAY THROUGH THE LIGHT

The Word of God has illuminated Nadine Hammons' life for many years. It started when she was very young, when she memorized the first Psalm.

That light shines more brightly for her,

and through her, now that she has memorized the New Testament. And now she hopes her gift of memory will be a blessing for others.

Now that she reached this milestone, this is her prayer: "Lord, I've given everything I have to this memory. And I present this to you and to people, and maybe it will inspire them."

Nadine is legally blind, but she doesn't want people to make a fuss about it. It's not the most important thing about her. For Nadine, her difficulties with sight pale in comparison with the gifts she's been given: faith, the love of her fam-

ily, music, and not least of all, memory.

Her feat of biblical memory has won her a great deal of attention. CNN featured her on a Sunday segment and she's been profiled in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* and *HomeLife* magazine. The National Bible Association honored her last year for memorization, inviting her to New York to perform at the National Bible Week Inaugural Luncheon at the Waldorf Astoria.

This adventure in memory has its roots in Nadine's youth, when she started to blossom as a musician. Teachers loved her lyric soprano

THY WORD IS A LAMP
UNTO MY FEET AND A
LIGHT UNTO MY PATH.
(PS. 119, VERSE 105,
KING JAMES VERSION)

STORY AND
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
THOMAS D. SULLIVAN



Thomas May, president of the National Bible Association, introduces Nadine at the National Bible Week Inaugural Luncheon.

voice, and thought she had great promise as a singer. She did indeed put her voice to use, singing in churches, and teaching others piano and voice lessons. But she didn't have the burning desire to sing for a living.

Her teachers and mentors had hoped for great things from her. Nadine wanted to live up to those expectations. Eventually, a worthy endeavor would appear, all in God's good time.

Up to the late 1960s, Nadine had lived and worked in Memphis for much of her life, as a medical transcriptionist. A woman asked her to sing the hymn "The Holy City" for a service. The woman recited the 21st chapter of Matthew's gospel at the service. That planted a seed in Nadine's mind.

Shortly after that service, Nadine moved with her parents to Arkansas, where she taught voice and piano. In her new circumstances, she had more opportunities for reflection. "I had time for the Word ... and time to think about the Bible," she says.

Increasingly, she

felt drawn to memorize a gospel, and particularly the Gospel of Matthew. She committed that gospel to memory in 1972. She enjoyed it, but over time, her remembrance of all the verses began to fade.

More than 20 years passed, and the occasion to memorize the Scriptures came again. Nadine had returned to Memphis, and she gave a program of song and Scripture on the last days of Christ for First Baptist Church, in which she recited passages of Matthew from memory.

A while after that, she says, "The Lord laid on my heart again: Why don't you memorize the New Testament?" For Nadine, memorization means being able to repeat the verses of God's Word in a conversational tone.

She says, "I wanted to be able to quote it like: 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.'" (1 John 1)

She speaks this passage gracefully, respectfully. She loves the *King James Version*, which suits the gentle Southern rhythms and stresses of her speaking voice. And the hymns she loves best are older ones, in keeping with the *KJV*. When she combines her mnemonic and musical talents for the public, she does older music. Performing newer songs, she says, "wouldn't fit" the *KJV*. "It's like wearing jeans to a wedding."

When she turned her attention to memorizing the Scriptures, she found that she made good progress—up to a point. Starting out with tapes as a memory aid, she then switched to using Braille Scriptures, many of which were printed by the American Bible Society. (Nadine proudly owns an ABS Braille volume whose binding has worn out from frequent use.)

Speaking in her Memphis living room, where a clock gently chimes the passage of time, Nadine explained about the central difficulty of memorizing the New Testament. She discovered that she couldn't keep all 260 chapters memorized—"Mark would confuse me with Matthew and Luke." This realization dawned on her slowly. "It took me longer to find out that I couldn't keep it all than I did to memorize it."

Nadine's project of memory took her three years. "When I was memorizing it, I *worked*,"

Nadine scans a New Testament passage.



Nadine says. But she says that she and her husband, Bob—"he helps me with everything"—didn't have to change their lifestyle for her Bible study. "I didn't steal away in a corner," she says. "I'd be working my mind when I'd be doing the dishes."

Because of the similarities of the Gospels of Mark and Luke to the Gospel of Matthew, Nadine decided she would have to forego memorizing Mark's Gospel, and some passages in the Gospel of Luke.

All in all, she "keeps" 206 chapters of the New Testament, plus 19 chapters of the Old Testament. Her memory requires practice, going over passages at least every other day.

Recounting the books that she keeps, she lists: Matthew, six chapters of Luke, seven chapters of John, Acts, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thesalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, First James, First and Second Peter, First John, and Revelation. She adds, "If somebody just had to have a certain chapter, there isn't a chapter that I couldn't get ready in a month."



Delving into Scripture has made her more conscious of her sins—and of Jesus' mercy. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 9)

Living with the Bible has changed her: "I have more compassion" for people, she says. It has made her realize the need for personal witness: "We need to deal with people on an individual basis," watching for the right moment to offer a word of Bible-based counsel. The secret is, "Don't ever take the dignity away from somebody."

Nadine's life is rooted in the great truths of Scripture: fear of the Lord, recognition of one's own sin, faith in Jesus' power to redeem.

She says, "I don't think that I'm perfect, but I do feel I've accomplished something." 📖

Nadine holds well-worn Braille Scriptures printed by the American Bible Society.

Two chapters are especially precious to Nadine: Isaiah 53 and the 17th chapter of John's Gospel. She says, "Something tugged at me" to memorize that chapter in Isaiah, the prophecy of Jesus' sufferings on the Cross.

John 17 was especially difficult—and very dear. "I couldn't figure out why I had such trouble with it." Then she realized that the chapter is unusual. It's Jesus' prayer for His followers. "It's a prayer for all of us," she says.

Spending so much time with God's Word has made a profound impression on Nadine. The Bible, she says, "is absolutely alive. When you handle the Word, when you read it, you're handling life itself. ... I think there's such depth in this that we can't comprehend it in this life."

Nadine has experienced how, as the Psalmist says, "The entrance of thy Word giveth light."

Translating Scripture

Creative
work
from the
Ozarks



Story and photos
by Peter Feuerherd

for a NEW MEDIA AGE



Dr. Donald A. Johns,
assistant director for
print translations

It's a scene out of a typical American home: on the couch is a well-worn video remote, etched with the pressure of countless fingers jabbing at the plastic implement. Nearby, on a bookshelf, is a Bible covered with dust, orphaned from inattention.

Bob Hodgson's job as manager of the ABS Research Center for Scripture & Media in Springfield, Mo., is to address the Bible attention deficit.

"The Bible Society would like the Bible to be as worn slick as your remote control," he says. There's no reason, he adds, why you can't find the Bible on your video recorder or CD-player the way you can on your dusty bookshelf.

The Center, opened last year and located in the city billing itself as the capital of the Ozarks, has played a central role in developing a wide-range of ABS products. They have included videos dramatizing the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, and other parables and stories from the Scriptures. The office has also produced two scholarly volumes on Scripture translation. And Dr. Hodgson, a former seminary professor, teaches a course on Bible and media sponsored by ABS at nearby Southwest Missouri State University.

The course, he notes, is about "how the media has shaped the message" of Biblical translation from the Dead Sea Scrolls to Hollywood. One such media treatment of Scriptures, he notes, can be found in *A River Runs Through It*, directed by Robert Redford.

That hit film, about two sons and their father, reflects themes of the Prodigal Son with barely a mention of the Bible. ABS' charge is to produce dramatic presentations of the Scriptures that reach just as wide an audience.

ABS, he notes, "has a long history of experimentation in media," dating from the effort in the 19th century to utilize the most efficient printing presses to radio and television in the 20th. The 21st century promises an era that will demand content for computers and videos, while older artistic forms will endure as well.

One such older artistic medium is music. A project of the Springfield office is an ongoing effort to translate the Scripture text into modern musical forms. Using the talents of musicians in nearby Branson, Mo., a tourist mecca for pop and country fans, ABS is pulling together

Dr. Robert Hodgson
poses in front of
19th-century ABS
printing press in
lobby of Springfield,
Mo., office.

er recordings of Scripture translations in rock, country, and salsa, among others.

One rap piece titled "In the Beginning" extols the Genesis story: "God commanded the light to shine, looked at it and said it was fine," note the lyrics. With sophisticated studio musicianship and mixing, the piece, sung by the brother/sister duet of Jonathan and Adele Fortier of San Francisco, mimics the urban hip-hop sound. Another piece, by armless Christian singer Tony Melendez, perhaps best known for having played the guitar with his feet for Pope John Paul II, is based on Psalm 31. It is sung in Spanish.

"We're working on a shoestring budget," says Dr. Hodgson. "But we're getting commercial value music. Many of the artists are donating their time or working below scale."

Dr. Hodgson, whose tastes run more towards National Public Radio than hip-hop, adds: "A lot of the music styles aren't mine. But they really open up the Scriptures." Participants in youthful test marketing surveys often remark with a surprised, "That's the Bible?"

Branson-based musician Harry Beckett has produced a number of the ABS songs. A classically-trained musician, he has an ear for contemporary pop styles.

One piece, quoting Philippians 2, is in alternative rock. Listening to the piece in the Springfield offices recently, Mr. Beckett comments, "Despite the dark quality, there's still a message of hope." Another piece mimics the popular and upbeat Back Street Boys, while another proclaims "Jesus is Lord" in a more traditional gospel style.

While Dr. Hodgson, a biblical scholar, orchestrates these ventures into alternative media, the office's interest in traditional forms of Scripture translation continues.

Dr. Donald A. Johns, assistant director for print translations, has worked for the past 10 years for ABS, assisting in work on the *Contemporary English Version* of the Scriptures and other projects. He joined Dr. Hodgson in the Springfield office—located on the ground floor of the downtown Hammons Building in Missouri's tallest building—when ABS consolidated functions among a number of its employees in the region two years ago.

Included in the Springfield office is a development program coordinated by Rob Smith, who oversees fundraising efforts in a five-state region. Debbie Atkinson, coordinator for the office, supervises accounting and business details, assisted by office manager Lora Meredith. Student interns from Southwest Missouri State provide assistance on creative projects.

A number of such projects are percolating from Dr. Johns' office, including a Scripture translation for worship use in English. He is also assisting the ABS effort to translate the Bible into Native American dialects.

The new English translation—now in the proposal stage—will be directed towards church-going Christians, familiar with such phrases as "manger" for the place where Jesus was born (by contrast, the more basic-level *CEV* version says that the Lord was born on a "bed of hay"). The goal is a Scripture translation with a contemporary yet more sophisticated feel.

The Native American project has ABS partnering with the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Already translators are at work in Alaska and in Mississippi listening and paving the way for the Bible in Eskimo languages and in Choctaw.

Dr. Johns notes that the Native American projects will take years. But the end result will be worth it to Christians who speak those tongues. While many Native Americans speak English, "their first language is what they will feel the most emotional and spiritual about. That is where the Word of God will hit a person."

When such translations happen, he says, those Christians realize, "God speaks my language, too."

It is a fitting sentiment emanating from the Springfield ABS office. Allowing Christians to hear God in their own language and dialect—whether that be in Choctaw, hip-hop, or salsa—remains its goal. ■



Harry Beckett, left, consults with Christian hip-hop artist Jonathan Fortier during recent recording session putting Scripture into contemporary music forms.

RESTORING A BROKEN

A New Way Seen to Teach About the Bible in Public Schools

If it were a marriage, the relationship between the Bible and the American public school would be characterized as a historically rocky relationship which has dissolved in recent years into icy silence.

But the First Amendment Center and the National Bible Association (NBA) would like to reconcile the two partners. Their plan—issued late last year—titled *The Bible and Public Schools: A First Amendment Guide* proclaims that the Bible deserves a place in public school education when it is taught in a scholarly, non-proselytizing way.

The document says that the Bible in public schools has been trapped between two opposed world views. One is the “sacred public school” model, in which students are indoctrinated into a particular religious belief. The other is the model of the public school as a “religion-free zone” in which the Bible, despite its huge cultural and historical impact, has been banished from the classroom.

Both such visions, prevalent in public schools at various times, are clearly opposed to U.S. Supreme Court rulings, notes the document. The authors point to a third way:

“In this third model, public schools protect the religious liberty rights of students of all faiths or none. And schools ensure that the curriculum includes study about religion as an important part of complete education,” the document states.

The plan—promoted by NBA, an interfaith organization based in New York devoted to encouraging Bible study and devotion, and the First Amendment Center, an Arlington, Va., secular foundation—has garnered wide support. The statement was signed by leaders from diverse groups, including People for the American Way, American Jewish Congress,

Oklahoma School

OKLAHOMA CITY — James Herider never had a doubt that the Bible could be used as a textbook in a public high school classroom without treading on constitutional toes.

“Any teacher knows you can’t pick up a good literature book or history book,” he says, “without finding references to Christianity or the Bible. It is one of the great literary works of our time.”

The Bible has inspired the world’s great composers, artists, and writers. Keats, Longfellow, Frost, and Shakespeare all were touched by the Bible, a literary genre that opened their eyes to a different way of seeing, says Mr. Herider, a 49-year-old teacher at John Marshall High School here.

“[The Bible] empowered them, and others, to write and create,” he says.

And it appears to be having the same effect on the students in Mr. Herider’s one-semester “Bible as/in Literature” course at this urban high school.

In January, Mr. Herider assigned the class the task of penning a “Bible Literary Journal” and issued the teen-agers a challenge: “Write to learn, to share and to grow in your understanding of poetry, prose, drama and in the crosscurrent of writings that have been drawn from the Bible in literature.”

He gave them a full semester to complete the project. Two weeks later Sharonda Smith, after pestering both her minister and Mr. Herider daily for feedback on her work, turned in her journal. “It was pretty interesting,” says Sharonda, a sophomore.

“I know the basics of the Bible,” explains Sharonda, who



Religious and advocacy group leaders announce support for document on teaching the Bible in public schools. From left, Chuck Stetson, National Bible Association; Charles Haynes, First Amendment Center; Kim Colby, Christian Legal Society, and Warren Nord, professor at University of North Carolina.

RELATIONSHIP

by Peter Feuerherd

the National Association of Evangelicals, the American Federation of Teachers and the Christian Legal Society. Just gathering this kind of support was an achievement; often the leaders of such groups meet in court, on opposite sides of religion in public school issues.

"We did better than we anticipated," Charles Haynes of

the First Amendment Center says. Positive reaction to the document, he adds, indicates that "we are on the cusp of a major change in thinking" about the role of the Bible in public school education.

Thomas May, NBA president, notes that his group has been working on this issue since the Supreme Court deci-

Shows How It's Done

by Jeanne M. Devlin

attends Holy Temple Baptist Church, "but I wanted to know the whole story. I like the wording, the way things are put in it. The Bible uses big words, and I wanted to read and understand it better."

The desire to acquire a better foundation of knowledge about the Bible prompted most of the students to enroll in Mr. Herider's course. The rest needed a literature elective or got a push from home. Steven Bruner, a sophomore, says his mother told him to take the course with the hope he might be better informed at church. Bradley Harbin, a junior, says he "just thought it might be interesting, because I had not really read the Bible before, and I knew it was real influential and the most-sold book of all time."

All seem clear, however, about what the class isn't.

"My students have said, 'This is not a Sunday school class. This is not my preacher telling me what to believe,'" says Mr. Herider. "Rather it is a doorway to understanding the Bible and the way literature has opened up and been influenced because of the Bible."

Such classes, says Dr. Donald Emler, who wrote the curriculum for the class, work in public schools as long as one is teaching about religion and not advocating the practice of a particular religion.

"You've got to have neutrality," explains Dr. Emler, dean of the Wimberly School of Religion at Oklahoma City University. "I don't think religion is neutral but education has to be neutral."

It was not Dr. Emler's Methodist minister nor his own

faith that prompted him to design Bible class curriculum in public schools. Rather, it was two rabbis who were convinced that tolerance of religious difference was possible only in a well-informed society. To be constitutional, he says, Bible classes must be voluntary (John Marshall's is a literature elective) and a teacher can neither teach that a religion is right or wrong, nor evangelize.

He concedes that there have been instances when teachers cross the constitutional line, but he says that well-trained teachers have no such problems. In fact, he says, any teacher who has taught about the political woes of Northern Ireland, the reasons for the Puritans' journey to the New World or the events that led to the Salem witch hunts has taught about religion.

"And they should not feel anxious about doing so," Dr. Emler says.

Mr. Herider couldn't agree more.

"The only risk in teaching this class," he says, "is getting in the way of the students' learning." ■



James Herider, teacher of "Bible as/in Literature" class in an Oklahoma City public school.

sions in the 1960s forbidding official public school prayer.

In many parts of the country, he says, school officials were too quick to embrace the model of the "religion-free zone" in reaction to court rulings.

"It was very clear that the Supreme Court was not supporting the idea that the Bible should never be talked about in public schools," he says. The educational approach embraced by the NBA and the First Amendment Center, "will not call upon people to proselytize in the public schools."

But, he says, "it will call upon people to move forward in constitutionally accepted ways to teach about the Bible in public schools so that we will see a change in Biblical illiteracy among our youth."

Still, there are opponents. Some evangelical Christians are concerned that a public school approach focusing on the literary value of the Scriptures will denigrate their belief in the historicity of the Bible. And Americans United for the Separation of Church and State are concerned that no matter how carefully constructed the curriculum, even elective courses on the Bible will descend into proselytizing.

Dr. Haynes argues that an educated person needs to learn about the Bible and the public schools have an obligation to provide the means to do that.

"I don't know what could be more central than literacy about the book which is the most important in shaping Western civilization," he says. "It's hardly neutral to leave it [the Bible] out. If public schools are to be neutral they must be fair."

Both Dr. Haynes and Mr. May agree that if their "third way" is to work, teachers will have to be trained. Few school districts in the country have Bible courses taught in the manner outlined in the document.

One teacher who has taught public school stu-



Charles Haynes

dents about the Bible is Angell Caudill of Winston-Salem, N.C. She has been teaching a Bible as literature course for six years. Now on a study leave at Wake Forest University, she is currently writing about ways to promote Bible education in public schools in ways consistent with the law.

Her class focused on the Bible as literature. Her high school students taking the elective course ranged from religious school graduates who are quite familiar with biblical literature, to newly-arrived Eastern European immigrants from countries where

Bible education was nearly non-existent.

Ms. Caudill's students have studied the religions of the ancient Middle East; examined the First Amendment's right to religious freedom; discussed movies on Biblical themes such as *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and examined the Last Supper in art from da Vinci to Dali. She even organized a field trip to a local Jewish temple to give students a sense of the religious tradition which animates most biblical literature.

In the six years she has taught the course, only one parent has registered any objections.

Despite the occasional objections, many Christians are confident that the third way promoted in the document can promote a lasting and constitutionally viable way to promote

biblical literacy among public school students.

Quoted in the *New York Times*, Kimberlee H. Colby, senior legal counsel for the Christian Legal Society, notes, "In the big picture, most Christian parents understand that objective teaching is better than ignoring or suppressing the Bible."

Whether this renewed relationship between the Bible and the public school can last remains to be seen. But proponents of this new approach believe that, if they haven't created the perfect marriage, they have at least begun what promises to be a long and fruitful relationship. 📖

Guidelines from the Document

The guidelines from the National Bible Association and the First Amendment Center state that "any study of religion in a public school must be educational, not devotional." They suggest:

- Bible classes be taught in an objective manner, neither promoting nor downgrading religion;
- Teachers for such courses should be selected for their academic qualifications, not their religious beliefs;
- The Bible may be used as a primary text but should not be the only text for such a course;
- Parents should be confident that the courses are academic and that a scholarly approach to the Bible is not intended to undermine or promote a particular religious view of the Scriptures.
- The guide also advises public school teachers to understand the distinction between proselytizing in a public school, which is unconstitutional, and teaching about religion that is objective, nonjudgmental, academic, neutral, balanced, and fair, which is constitutional.

Bible Translators Deliver God's Word to Mission Fields



Sem Marseille, executive secretary of the Haitian Bible Society, receiving a new Creole Bible from Jaime Goytia, UBS Americas regional secretary, in August 1993.

BY PETER
FEUERHERD

It happened late last year. Christians on the small West Indian island of St. Lucia were celebrating the introduction of a New Testament into Creole, the indigenous language of the largely English-speaking country.

Bibles in English are common across the island. Most people there can read them.

But the joy of hearing the words of Jesus in the local dialect overwhelmed many at the ceremony, bringing together religious leaders from most Christian denominations on St. Lucia.

"It was the most profound experience of my life to hear the Word of God read in my own language," notes Xavier Llewelyn, a local artist.

June King-Frederick, another St. Lucian Christian, adds, "This New Testament makes me feel very proud because it says to the Creole people that you are equal to everybody else."

From the Caribbean to Africa to the Indian subcontinent, translators working through United Bible Societies (UBS), of which the American Bible Society is a member, are making translations come alive in indigenous languages, many of which have little or no written material besides the Scriptures.

The translation effort is often laborious. But missionaries and local church leaders agree that having the Bible in local languages is invaluable in developing indigenous Christian communities and promoting pride in ethnic heritage.

One such lengthy effort is the ongoing trans-

lation work into Kikamba, a language spoken in Kenya. Last year, a Portion of the New Testament was translated, giving cause to celebrate for local Christians. The translation effort there has come a long way, but still has a long road to travel.

The first translation of Scripture into Kikamba was completed 150 years ago when an English missionary translated the Gospel of Mark. Work continued intermittently on the entire Scriptures. Finally, the entire Bible was completed in 1956.

Still, just decades later, local Christians have found that the 1956 translation does not take into account changes in their language. A new effort to translate the New Testament, begun in 1987, is now 80 percent complete. Publication is scheduled for 2001.

Mark Snowden of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention notes that translation efforts can run into obstacles. For example, translators in the West African nation of Burkina Faso had difficulty communicating that Jacob and Esau were twins.

"Twins are seen as a curse in that part of Africa," says Mark. The word for twin is seen as comparable to "jinxed" or "bewitched." Translators feared that people in Burkina Faso would believe that Jesus' ancestral line was bedeviled.

Another translation conundrum: A Native American tribe in Latin America had no word

(MATERIAL FROM UNITED
BIBLE SOCIETIES WORLD
REPORT WAS USED IN
THIS STORY)



The translation team in Burkina Faso. Back row from left, Richard and Lillian Phillips, Maxime Bakiono and, front row, Papias Ki, Pastor Elie Sow, and Pastor Enoch Pare.

for “bread.” Their society was based on corn. So one translation of John’s Gospel quotes Jesus, in that dialect, as stating, “I am the corn of life.”

Such adjustments are necessary, says Mr. Snowden, to make the gospels come alive for people. That translation, he notes, acknowledges, at least in that particular tribe, “if they didn’t have corn, they wouldn’t have life,” a metaphor for how Christians see Jesus.

Missionaries sometimes have to come up with their own translations on the spot.

The Rev. Steven Scherrer, a member of Maryknoll, a Roman Catholic mission order, worked for seven years among the Turkana people of northern Kenya, a group numbering about 200,000 living near the Sudanese border.

He led New Testament discussion groups with the help of UBS-produced Turkana Gospels. But there is no Old Testament Turkana translation, a problem which arose when he celebrated Mass (the Catholic liturgy relies on the Psalms and other readings from the Hebrew Scriptures).

Rev. Scherrer improvised, making his own translations day-to-day. “We translated in the morning and used them in the afternoon,” he says.

Jim and Viola Palmer, Baptist missionaries to the Miskitu Indians in Nicaragua, note that the recent UBS translation of the Scriptures into that tribal language has had a major impact on Christians there.

In one village, the 50 Bibles the Palmers brought

to the people late last year were not enough to meet the demand. “We almost had a riot,” they report, adding that “the people wanted a Bible and would sacrifice anything to get one.”

The translation and distribution of the Miskitu Bible, the Palmers hope, “will be the first step in a church growth movement that will give every Miskitu person the opportunity to hear the gospel.”

Translations of Scriptures for mission fields is also having an impact within the United States, as new immigrant groups come to this country. The Rev. Patrick Samway, a Jesuit priest and professor at St. Peter’s College in Jersey City, N.J., has found UBS Scriptures invaluable in his ministry to Haitian immigrants who attend St. Catherine of Genoa Church in New York City.

“It’s a real treasure,” he says, noting that Haitian Creole, a mixture of African languages and French, is largely an oral dialect. Haiti itself is nearly treeless, so there is no paper industry on the impoverished island. The Creole Bible would not exist without the support of UBS.

A by-product of the translation effort is that the Creole Bible serves as a written testament and unifier for Haitian Creole culture.

And its spiritual impact cannot be underestimated either, says Rev. Samway. He uses the low-cost Creole Bibles he buys at Bible House in New York City as graduation gifts for young people in his Haitian congregation.

“It’s the greatest gift I can give,” says Rev. Samway. ☛

Isaya and Joyce Emanikor, translators of the Turkana Bible. (Photo by Bible Society of Kenya)



Spanish Faith on Display in ABS Gallery

FOR THE RECORD

100 YEARS AGO



The raising of the cross in Zamora, Spain, during Good Friday procession, April 2, 1926. (Photo by Ruth Anderson, part of exhibit at The Gallery at the American Bible Society running through April 29.)

American Bible Society, in conjunction with The Hispanic Society of America, will present *Images in Procession: Testimonies to Spanish Faith* through April 29 at Bible House in New York City.

Focusing on 55 photographs taken by Ruth Anderson in the 1920s and 1930s, the exhibit features many photos on public display for the first time. Ms. Anderson, a curator and photographer for The Hispanic Society, documented Holy Week and other religious processions in Spain.

The exhibition explores the rich life of Spanish faith, particularly the fervent relation between believers and sculpted images of Jesus, Mary, and other figures of Biblical Christian faith.

The history of the processions date to the Middle Ages. "They are linked to beliefs tenaciously embedded in Spanish culture" and "require a careful evaluation of the faith and society which created them and whose needs they address," notes the exhibit catalogue.

Included in the exhibit are images from Mexico and New Mexico, reflecting how the religious practices of Spain crossed into colonial Latin America.

Visitors can hear guided tours in both English and Spanish by appointment. Further information can be obtained by calling the Gallery at 212-408-1500. A virtual tour is also available at <http://www.americanbible.org>. ■

Articles in the May 1900 issue of the *Record* described the work of the Bible Society in China and in translation of Native American languages at the turn of the last century.

Boxer Rebellion in China

That issue featured a lengthy and riveting piece of reporting from Charles F. Gammon, an ABS representative in China, who wrote about the Boxer Rebellion. During an era when China was coming under foreign domination from European colonial powers, small bands of young men formed to attack, often violently, outside influences. They were called "Boxers" for the Chinese phrase for "Righteous Harmony Fists" by which they described themselves.

"Aimed originally at the Roman Catholics, the movement gradually grew into opposition to everything foreign, and the natives in both Catholic and Protestant churches were the sufferers," reported Mr. Gammon.

"The situation is still serious; the reign of terror is far from ended," he wrote. "I need hardly say that under these circumstances all religious work is at a standstill in Shantung (one of the most affected areas)."

Translation for Native Americans

The May 1900 issue also included an article promoting ABS translation efforts among Native Americans. Addressed to children, the column noted that the first Bible printed in North America was a translation of a Native American dialect.

Translated by the Rev. John Eliot in 1663, that Bible, noted the *Record* columnist, was geared towards tribes which "have now all passed away, and the language is a dead language, for literally all who once could read it are dead."

But he emphasized that the Bible Society had made inroads into other Indian languages, including translations of Scripture into Choctaw, Cherokee, and Seneca, among others. The author quoted a missionary to the Cree Indians, who noted: "The Great Book is ever carried as the most prized of all their possessions."

The columnist added, "I wish it could be said that all white Christians loved their Bibles so much." ■

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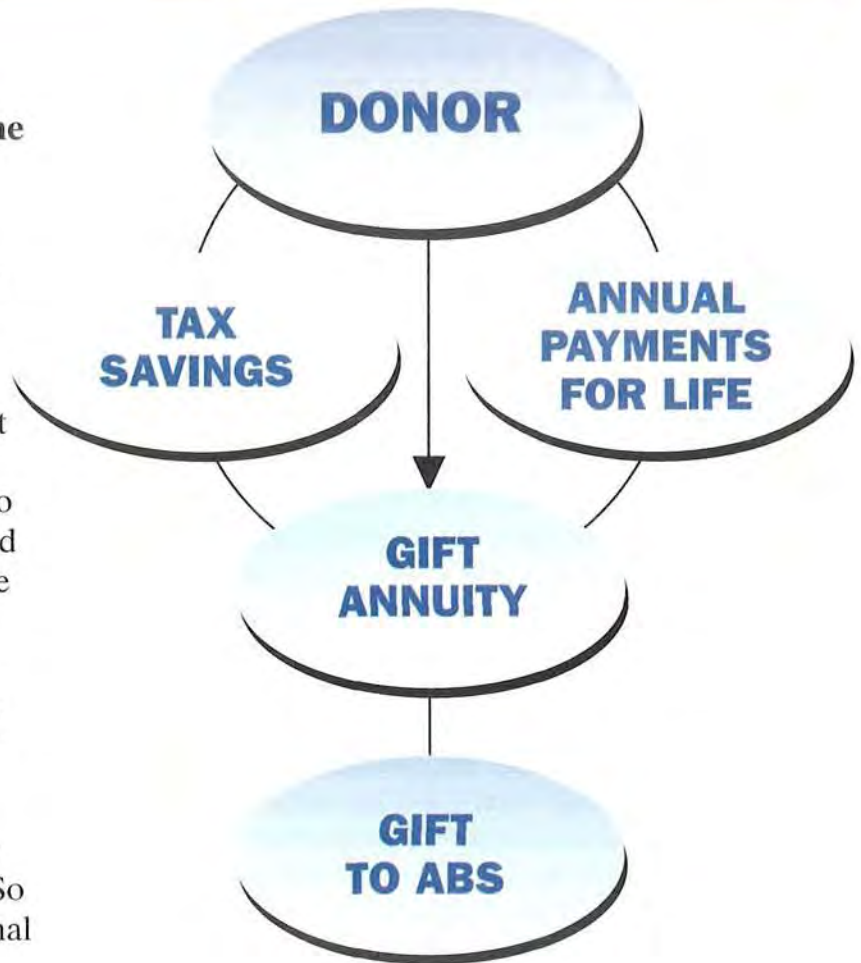
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Mildred Berg

Bringing Time, Talent and Treasure to the Mission

It was 1943 when Mildred Berg began working as a stenographer at the Seaman's Bank for Savings in New York City.

Many young men were at war. Opportunity beckoned for the women left behind. Mildred made the most of hers.

By the time she retired from the bank in 1983, Mildred had risen to become a senior vice president.

"It was competitive. It was demanding," she recalls. "I managed to work my way along and enjoyed it very much. I took what was not pleasant and things that were quite wonderful."

She attributes her success to a supportive mentor, who encouraged the nurturing of her skills in what was until recently almost always a man's world, and her appreciation for simple, straightforward communication.

"I believe in what I say. What I say I mean," she says. At the bank, she would tell her subordinates to keep their proposals in the form of one-page memos. It was a way, she says, to focus thought and bring clarity to a presentation.

Mildred, a former New Yorker who now resides in Boynton Beach, Fla., where she is a member of Ascension Lutheran Church, has never really retired from the world of management and memos. She has moved her energies from the world of money and banking into direct service for the Lord.

Soon after her retirement from the bank, she was elected to the board of pensions for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. "That was very challenging for me. It was almost like a new career," she says. During her tenure there, the assets of the pension fund increased considerably.

She has also served on hospital and nursing home boards. But her longest board service has been with the American Bible Society, an organization in which she deeply believes. She came to ABS through the encouragement of Edmund F. Wagner, who served as president of ABS from

1967 to 1985.

"I reluctantly agreed," she recalls. "But I never regretted it at all."

For the past 22 years, she has worked on the board, pursuing a wide range of committee interests, including finances, personnel, and partnerships. She enjoys the give-and-take of committee and board meetings, especially with the ABS group because it represents the entire Christian spectrum. Coming to agreement within such diversity can be a challenge, she says, yet the group is always united on the basic need to spread the Word of God.

Advances have been made, she says, in business management and developing creative ways to tell the Bible story in various media forms. She is always looking forward, noting "we have to develop new products and do new marketing" to reach the contemporary high-tech world of the 21st century.

But she is confident. ABS has been up to the challenge in the past, she says, using its resources to better translate the Word of God into contemporary life.

That translation work continues, she says, and she would like to be supportive of what she considers to be a vital Christian ministry.

"The mission of God's Church is to spread God's Word to everyone in the world," she says, noting that mission includes those who don't speak English or other European-based languages. She notes that many languages still await Scripture translations.

"That's the role of the Bible Society. We'll get there someday," she says confidently about the expanding translation work undertaken by ABS and the worldwide United Bible Societies.

She believes in the mission enough that she not only gives her time, she also gives part of her treasure as a generous benefactor of ABS. The time, talent, and treasure of Mildred Berg is dedicated to one premise: "We as Christians have to invest in God's Word and the mission of ABS," she says. ■

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PLANNED GIVING PROGRAMS SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY CAN BE OBTAINED BY CALLING THE MAJOR & PLANNED GIFT PROGRAMS AT 1-800-820-6227.

■ **'JESUS' TELEVISION SHOW A HIT IN ITALY**

The *Washington Post* reports that while a CBS-produced drama on Jesus won't air in the U.S. until May, it is already a hit in Italy.

In December, the government-run RAI Uno attracted more than 10 million viewers on one night, followed up by 12 million the next night for the conclusion of the two-part series. Italy—which has a population of 54 million—had not experienced such a television event since the World Cup soccer finals.

■ **KING JAMES BIBLE BOOK OF THE MILLENNIUM**

What's the book of the millennium? The London-based *Times Literary Supplement* posed that question to several distinguished writers and scholars. Five writers chose the King James Version of the Bible as the second millennium's most important book.

"The Bible has helped to shape our civilization as no other book has done," writes novelist Muriel Spark. "The structure of our thinking has been almost ... genetically formed by its moral force."

Writer Shena MacKay says the King James Version "contains more poetry, drama, history and narrative, and has inspired more great art of every kind, than any other work." "Nothing," writes novelist Doris Lessing, "has replaced [the KJV Bible] as a teacher of language, a broadener of minds, a unifier of a people."

■ **GERMAN THEOLOGIAN'S LIFE TURNED AROUND**

Gustav Niebuhr of the *New York Times* recently described the conversion story of German Protestant theologian Jurgen Moltmann, the recipient of the Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion for his book *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology* (Fortress Press, 1996).

Mr. Moltmann, 73, was, as a teen-ager, an agnostic who was drafted into the German Army during World War II. He was soon captured by Allied troops.

British authorities pinned up photographs of Auschwitz throughout the prison in Scotland

where he was held, prominently displayed so that each German prisoner would have to confront the enormous crimes of Nazism. At about that time, a British chaplain presented the young soldier with a Bible.

After seeing the Auschwitz pictures, notes Mr. Moltmann, he experienced profound shame and his zeal for German nationalism collapsed. But the Bible he received renewed his spirits.

On reading Psalm 39—"Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry"—he began to feel hope about a God who comes to his people in suffering.

"I never 'decided for Christ' as is often demanded of us, but I am sure that then and there, in the dark pit of my soul, he found me," Mr. Moltmann wrote about that turning point in his life.

■ **JUBILEE BIBLE FOCUS OF MEDIA COVERAGE**

The American Bible Society's *Jubilee Bible*, which includes a 300-page addition focusing on the Bible in African-American history, has been bolstered by a number of national news articles highlighting its release late last year.

Essence magazine, the most popular publication directed towards African-American women, notes that the *Jubilee Bible* is "the first good book to celebrate our faith, heritage and culture, as well as document slavery, Africans in the Bible, Black-church activism and the Black struggle worldwide."

David Crumm of Knight-Ridder, in an article published in the *Washington Post*, quotes Dennis Dickerson, professor of history at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn.

Professor Dickerson says the *Jubilee Bible* emphasizes that the Good Book "is a multicultural document that derives from a part of the world where there are many people of color."

The Rev. Fred Allen of the American Bible Society predicts in Mr. Crumm's article that the *Jubilee Bible* is on pace to sell 200,000 copies this year and a million by 2005. ■



The Rev. Gaius Musa (with glasses), general secretary of the Bible Society of Nigeria, and the Rev. Stephen Niyang, United Bible Societies' media consultant for Africa, were among the 169 passengers killed Jan. 30 when a Kenya Airways flight crashed into the sea off the Ivory Coast. The two men were returning from a UBS meeting in Nairobi. "We extend our loving sympathy to their families and pray that they may be remarkably comforted by the grace of our risen Lord and the great hope of eternal life," the Rev. Fergus Macdonald, UBS general secretary, said in response to the tragedy.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

■ UGANDA

The children of New Hope gather in an excited crowd around the Bible Society pickup truck while Joseph Sauli of the Uganda Bible Society provides the entertainment.

“OK, how many of you have touched a Bible. How many of you?” he asks.

Up go outstretched hands and amid peals of laughter, he hands out books.

Their smiling faces belie the background of the children. They are the orphans of Uganda, whose parents have been taken by war or AIDS, often before their very eyes.

But the New Hope Children’s Center tries to live up to its name.

“Our purpose is to bring the Fatherhood of God to the fatherless,” says Jay Dangers, the director. The symptoms of trauma, he says, are clear from the moment the children arrive.

“They cannot look you in the face when they are talking to you. Most have learned to cope

Joseph Sauli of the Bible Society of Uganda distributes Scripture Portions to children at New Hope Children’s Center. (Photo by Andrew Boyd of United Bible Societies.)



with their fears and bury them,” he says.

Mr. Sauli says the work of the Bible Society offers the orphans a sense of belonging.

“The children get to know they are loved,” he says. “When they see the pickup coming they know someone is caring for them.”

■ ROMANIA

Thousands of young people from all over this country gathered in Bucharest recently to write the Bible from memory in an effort to illustrate how the Bible is relevant for the youth of Romania. The event was sponsored by the Interconfessional Bible Society in Romania (IBSR).

Some 4,600 young people participated. In less than a half-hour, the young people had written the entire Bible out on 66 paper rolls, measuring in total more than 1.7 miles.

Viorel Dima of the IBSR noted that the successful event illustrated “the message that the Bible can offer the best solution for the moral and identity crisis that young people face.”

■ SOUTH KOREA

The Korean Bible Society (KBS) has launched an appeal to donors to provide more funds for Bible work in Cambodia. After the success of the new Khmer Bible launched in Cambodia last year, the KBS is determined to make an impact on the nation which suffered through massive genocide in the early 1970s.

Won Sok Soh, fundraising secretary for KBS, said the dream is to transform Cambodia, once known as “the killing fields,” into the “living fields.”

There are an estimated 50,000 Christians in Cambodia. All 9,000 copies of the new Bible have sold out. KBS is funding the printing of 4,000 more this year, and is planning to fund another 8,000 copies for next year. ■

NATIONAL NEWS

■ NORTH CAROLINA

Some 300 people in Andrews, N.C., did not huddle together in fear or join in drunken revelry to bring in the new millennium. Instead, in an effort sponsored by the Cherokee County Ministerial Association, area Christians rang in the new year with a Bible-reading marathon.

It took a total of 90 hours and 33 minutes with readers from 45 different churches to read the entire Old and New Testaments in English, Spanish, German, Portuguese, and Chinese.

Readers represented every occupation, including police officers, government officials, educators, doctors, and business people.

The oldest Bible read from dated to 1832. It was owned by area resident Moselle Puet. Its original owner was her grandfather who died in the Civil War.

Organizer Carl Hartman made sure that supplementary materials, including Scripture resources from the American Bible Society, were readily available at the readings.

"People came so faithfully for their appointments throughout the 90 hours, even at night. Tardiness was infrequent and dropouts were rare. It was surprising that most people had to be reminded that their time was up because they got so involved in reading the Scriptures," he said.

■ FLORIDA

Sociedad Biblica Americana, the American Bible Society's outreach to the Spanish-speaking, marked the end of the century with a concert attended by more than 10,000 people at Bayfront Park in Miami.

They heard Spanish-language Christian music and examined Scripture and other literature

distributed by *Sociedad Biblica Americana*.

The event was co-sponsored by a local Christian radio station.

■ NEW YORK

The American Bible Society has launched a program to distribute a special Scripture collection free of charge to every Catholic high school across the United States.

The Scripture collections are suited for use in high school classrooms and libraries. The collections feature hardcover books, electronic and video technology, as well as *Lectionary Reading Guides*, a three-year cycle of readings for Sunday Mass, major feast days, and weekdays.

"The collection is a vital tool of biblical learning and inspiration, as well as a guiding light on the path to Christian adulthood," said Father Robert J. Robbins, a New York priest and member of the ABS board of trustees.

The high school gift was made possible through a grant from an ABS board member. ■



New York Knicks guard Charlie Ward is presented with a Teddy Bear and a plaque by Pastor Bill Wilson and Liana Roa of the American Bible Society before a recent game at Madison Square Garden. With the help of Mr. Ward, Operation Holiday Hope, which was also supported by ABS employees at Bible House in New York, provided 40,000 gifts to poor children in Pastor Wilson's Brooklyn congregation last year.

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DELBERT BILLET
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MY HUSBAND,
ALMOND L. NICKERSON
Given by: Lois Nickerson

ERWIN E. NIELSEN
Given by: Winnette Nielsen

MY FATHER,
THEODORE A. OLSEN
Given by: Ruth M. Quigley

REV. ODDVAR BERG
MR. ALBERT L. PARDUE, SR.
Given by: George & Mary Drake

REV. LEON A. PIPER, SR.
Given by: Inez M. Piper

MRS. DOREEN POWELL
Given by: James W. Flanagan, Jr.

MRS. DIANE PROCTOR
Given by: Ted Asberg

OUR DEAR AUNT,
MRS. MARY BEE PURDY
*Given by: Mr. & Mrs. J. E.
Clarkson & Family*

MY PARENTS, MR. & MRS. E.
PAUL RICHARDS,
MY BROTHER,
CALVIN P. RICHARDS
Given by: Grace C. Richards

OUR SON, DANIEL ROEVER
Given by: Kevin & Diane Roever

BARRY COMER, FRANK ROSE
Given by: Rebecca Berna

EVELYN RUFFALO
Given by: Ernest J. Ruffalo

ANNE RYAN
Given by: Rita Junker

MY HUSBAND,
HANS H. SCHAFFT
Given by: Lillian R. Schafft

MY FATHER,
WILLIAM E. SCRIVNER
Given by: Bette R. Lienhard

CHARLENE SHERIDAN
Given by: J.M. Sheridan

MY MOTHER,
MARGARET SMITH
Given by: L. M. C. Wylie

HOWARD SNODGRASS
Given by: Margaret E. Fogde

MY MOTHER,
ETNA LOUISE SPRINGER
Given by: Nadine L. Egnew

LOIS STANLEY
*Given by: Bill & Carolyn
Heberling*

PANSY STEPHAN
Given by: Pat Stephan

MRS. MARION E. STEVENSON
Given by: Mary Clare Matthews

MRS. GENEVA STEWART
*Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Tim
Grizzard*

MY MOTHER,
MARGUERITE STIRLING
Given by: Rev. James Stirling, III

MY AUNT, GALENA S. STONE
Given by: Mary Jo Janski

BLANCHE STOVER
Given by: Paul W. Milhouse

MY PARENTS,
BURT & OLIVE TOWNSEND
Given by: Martha J. McKenna

MY WIFE,
RUTH S. VAN FAASEN
Given by: Jerold B. Van Faasen

RAY & JO VINSIK
*Given by: The Estate of Harriet
B. Vinsik*

LUCILLE WALKUP
Given by: Terry A. Walkup

LEWIS R. WHITFORD
*Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Ruff L.
Gentry*

HOWARD W. WINKELMAN
Given by: Dr. Roy Winkelman

MY SISTER, THEODORA WOY
Given by: Lois C. Woy

OUR DAUGHTER,
JANE CLARK WRIGHT
*Given by: Rev. & Mrs. Luverne
K. Clark*

*Memorials of \$100 or more for one individual or family unit
will be published in the ABS Record. For further details about the
memorial program, please write to: Donor Relations, American
Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023-7505.*



Bible Renewal in Uganda

Jolly Babirukamu has a cheerful name. She also has a cheerful nature to go with it. She is the People's Warden—a foreboding title but one which signifies important lay leadership in the church—of All Saints Anglican Cathedral in Kampala, Uganda. She has nothing but praise for the way the Bible Society has helped her ministry work.

"It has really helped us in our praise and worship," she says. "When we read the verses, we see how we can worship in spirit and in truth."

Uganda is a nation with more than a dozen tribal groups, as well as immigrants from Europe and Asia and a large refugee population fleeing strife in neighboring countries.

Within this diversity, Christianity provides a

unifying element: more than two-thirds of Ugandans are Christians.

Jolly has found that the Scriptures have provided a means to unify her congregation.

"Studying the Bible has shown us that to grow, we don't need to stick rigidly to our church traditions," she says.

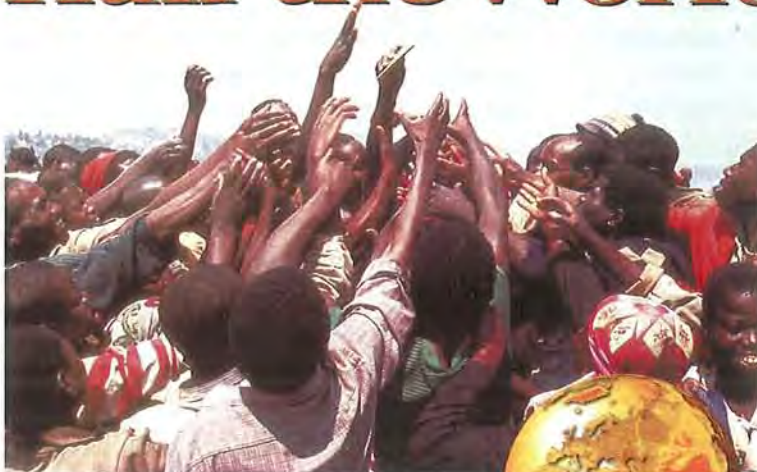
All Saints Cathedral has something for a wide range of Christians. Services include the joyful and exuberant African charismatic worship style to the traditional Anglican solemnity of Holy Communion. The renewal of the church has attracted a deep interest in Scripture study.

Thanks to supplies from the Bible Society of Uganda, there are enough Scriptures to go round for all the different groups studying the Bible. ■

Your April gift will bring Bibles to people in Sudan, and a May gift will provide Scriptures for Mexico. To find out more about joining the Bible-a-Month Club, fill out the reply form below, or write:

**American Bible Society
Bible-a-Month Club
1865 Broadway
New York, NY 10023-7505**

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For as little as \$4 a month, you can extend your reach to these nations by providing desperately-needed Bibles to the other half of the world.

As a member of the Bible-a-Month Club, you will share the precious gift of God's Word with people in every nation who long to read the Scriptures in their own languages. Each month you'll receive an exciting update, packed with stories and testimonies of the men, women, and children who receive the Bibles you provide.

Join the Bible-a-Month Club today! Simply fill out the coupon below. Or call toll free 1-800-32-BIBLE (1-800-322-4253) for more information.

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



Mail this coupon along with your tax-deductible gift in the envelope included in the ABS Record. Or mail to:

**American Bible Society
1865 Broadway
New York, NY 10023-7505**

Yes! I want to join the Bible-a-Month Club. I will give \$ _____ a month to provide _____ Bibles at \$4 each.
 My first Bible-a-Month Club gift of \$ _____ is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

04200REC



Knowledge, comfort, strength, and understanding come from the regular, disciplined reading of the Bible. So here's something to help you on your journey. 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.

PLEASE PRAY

Pakistan— We pray that God's Word will reach many who would normally not have access to it. Pray for peace as border tensions increase, and pray for the safety of Christians who often have to cope with violent threats and injustice. Pray for effective distribution of the Baluchi New Testament, and for translators working on the Siraiiki and Sindhi Bibles and the Pashto Old Testament.

Afghanistan— Pray for the success of relief work carried out among Afghan refugees in Pakistan, who receive Scriptures through agencies ministering there.

Australia— Please pray for the success of outreach efforts during the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, that the athletes and visitors who come to Australia this summer will be touched by God's Word.

Sri Lanka— Praise God for a new Bible House in this island nation. This year will see the launch of a new *Cover to Cover* Bible reading plan. *The Big Rescue*, a standard Sinhala Bible, is also nearing completion.

Bangladesh— The Bangladesh Bible Society is proud of the blessing of three Bengla Bibles. Please pray that the impact of these Scriptures will be seen in a flowering of Christian faith in the country.

[The above prayer requests are edited excerpts from the United Bible Societies Prayer Booklet 2000, which in April is focusing on the needs of Bible Societies in Asia.] 📖

MAY 2000

A Fresh Beginning by Sharing God's Love

- 1 1 John 3.11-24
- 2 1 John 4.7-21
- 3 2 John
- 4 3 John
- 5 Romans 3.21-31
- 6 Romans 5.1-11

SUNDAY

- 7 Romans 8.1-17
- 8 Romans 8.18-30
- 9 Romans 8.31-39
- 10 Romans 12.9-21
- 11 Romans 13.8-14
- 12 Romans 14.1-12
- 13 1 Corinthians 13.1-13

SUNDAY

- 14 Galatians 5.2-15
- 15 Philemon
- 16 Hebrews 13.1-21
- 17 Mark 10.13-16
- 18 Mark 10.17-31
- 19 Mark 10.35-45
- 20 Mark 10.46-52

SUNDAY

- 21 Hosea 11.1-11
- 22 Hosea 14.1-9
- 23 Micah 7.8-20
- 24 Luke 6.27-36
- 25 Luke 6.37-42
- 26 Luke 10.25-37
- 27 John 15.1-17

SUNDAY

- 28 Matthew 22.23-40
- 29 Mark 12.18-34
- 30 Deuteronomy 6.1-9
- 31 Psalm 136

JUNE 2000

A Fresh Beginning by Being Renewed by the Holy Spirit

- ASCENSION DAY
- 1 Acts 1.1-11
 - 2 Acts 1.12-26
 - 3 John 14.15-31

SUNDAY

- 4 Romans 12.1-8
- 5 Galatians 5.16-26
- 6 Galatians 6.1-10
- 7 Ezekiel 36.16-38
- 8 Ezekiel 37.1-14
- 9 Ezekiel 39.21-29
- 10 Joel 2.28—3.8

PENTECOST SUNDAY

- 11 Acts 2.1-13
- 12 Acts 2.14-36
- 13 Acts 2.37-47
- 14 Acts 3.1-10
- 15 Acts 3.11-26
- 16 Acts 4.1-12
- 17 Acts 4.13-22

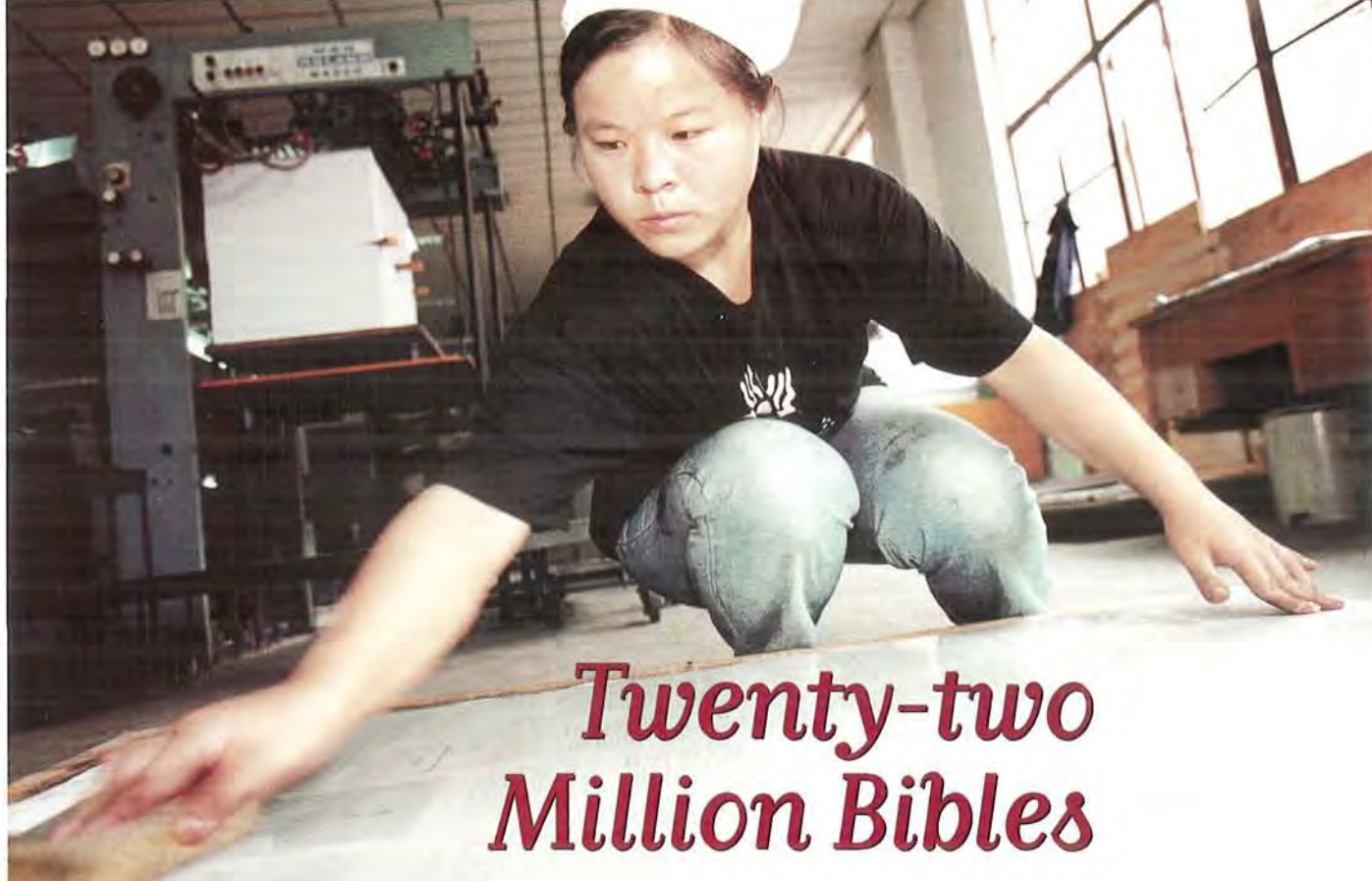
SUNDAY

- 18 Acts 4.23-37
- 19 Acts 5.1-16
- 20 Acts 6.1-15
- 21 Acts 8.4-13
- 22 Acts 8.14-25
- 23 Acts 8.26-40
- 24 Acts 10.1-16

SUNDAY

- 25 Acts 10.17-33
- 26 Acts 10.34-48
- 27 1 Corinthians 12.1-11
- 28 1 Corinthians 12.12-31
- 29 1 Corinthians 14.1-12
- 30 1 Corinthians 14.13-25

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS WILL OBSERVE ASCENSION DAY ON JUNE 8, 2000, AND PENTECOST SUNDAY ON JUNE 18, 2000.



Twenty-two Million Bibles

and Still Counting

The Amity Press in China prints the Good News. Late last year, it also received some good news—it was granted permission from the government to print an additional 300,000 copies of the Bible.

Every year, an application is made to the government for the quantity of Bibles that the China Christian Council (CCC) is allowed to print at the Amity Press. But there is often capacity at the press to print more. Given the ongoing need for Scriptures, especially in rural areas of China, the expanded production of Bibles will mean that many more Christians will be able to obtain copies.

“With these additional Bibles, more people in China will have a Bible for themselves, and we thank God for this answer to the prayers of many, and for the effort of the CCC,” said Kua Wee Seng, deputy coordinator of Asia Opportunity Programs of United Bible Societies.

The total number of Bibles distributed each year by the CCC is now 2.8 million. Amity

Press has published more than 22 million Bibles since it began in 1987. The growth in Bible publishing shows the changes taking place in China.

Last year, the Chinese marked 50 years of the People’s Republic of China. Mr. Kua noted that the anniversary provided an opportunity to reflect on the growth of Christianity in China.

“This should be a time when we can remind ourselves of the amazing spiritual transformation of the country,” he said.

In 1949, there were fewer than a million Christians in China. During the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, all churches were closed and all Christian activities banned. Today there are an estimated 13 million Protestants and five million Catholics in government-sanctioned churches, as well as millions more who attend non-registered churches.

One religious leader recently noted: “There can be no doubt that the survival, revival and growth of the Chinese church over the last 50 years is one of the truly great miracles of church history.” ■



Above: Woman engrossed in Bible during Sunday service at St. Paul’s Church, Nanjing.

Top of page: A worker prepares an offset printing plate during the production process at the Amity Printing Company in Nanjing. (Photos by Rune Hansen of United Bible Societies.)



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY
 1865 BROADWAY
 NEW YORK, NY 10023
 www.americanbible.org

Reaching China with God's Love

God's Word is penetrating the heart of this ancient land...and Christ's love has overcome fear and despair.

In a nation where Bibles were scarce and hidden just a handful of years ago, the Bible Society, in partnership with the China Christian Council, has witnessed a miraculous move of God in this ancient land. Since the presses started rolling in 1987, millions of Chinese men and women have been reached with the lifesaving message of the gospel.

Economic woes, limited transportation and harsh living conditions plague people in the rural outreaches of China. Most of these people can't afford a Bible of their own.

Our work in China has already reached millions with God's Word. While we still have the freedom to distribute Scriptures in this vast region, our goal is to bring God's Word to those who long for their own Bible.

We are so excited about this new initiative, *Mission...China 2000*, an ambitious outreach to place over a million Bibles (1,000,000) into open hands throughout rural China this year! Will you join us in working with an even greater intensity this year?

For more information on supporting the *Mission...China 2000* initiative, please call 1 (888)ABS-8262 (1-888-227-8262).



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