 AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

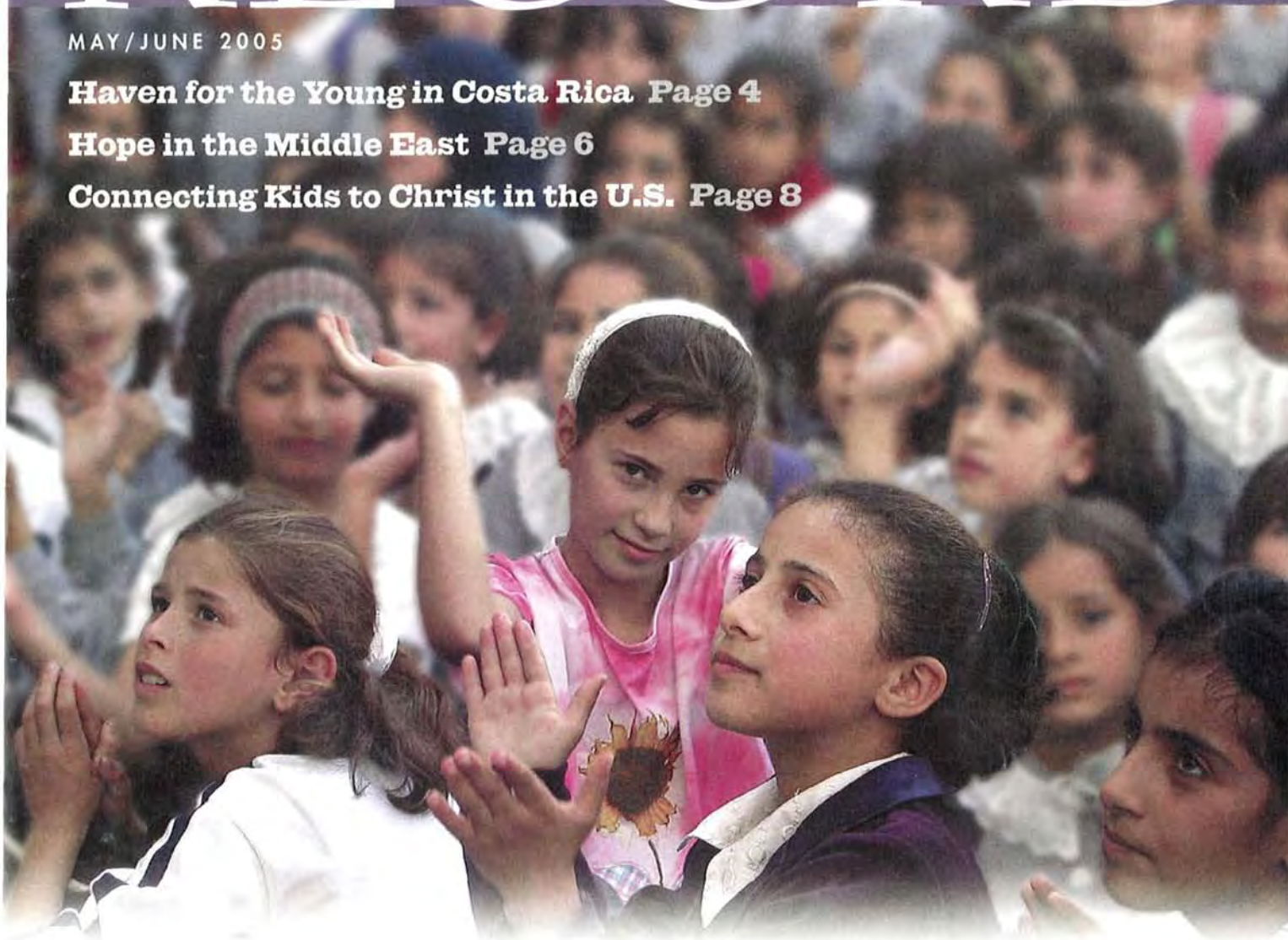
RECORD

MAY/JUNE 2005

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Good News for
CHILDREN
Around the World

Why We Do What We Do

"... so all people may experience the Bible's life-changing message."

You are part of a life-changing legacy, helping us to faithfully pursue our mission for nearly 200 years — to provide God's Word in languages and formats that are accessible and at prices people can afford. We have seen the Holy Spirit honor your faithfulness; we have witnessed God at work through his Word, transforming peoples' lives in hundreds of countries, millions of times over.

However, throughout much of the Western world, the spiritual climate has changed. At the time of the American Bible Society's founding, in 1816, it was generally accepted that God's Word had the power to change lives. For many people today, the Bible is just another good book.

For this reason we've amended our mission statement to affirm our confidence in the Scriptures; we have made explicit our purpose — to see peoples' lives changed through a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, the living Word, by embracing his message.

Our mission statement now reads: "The mission of the American Bible Society is to make the Bible available to every person in a language and format each can understand and afford, *so all people may experience its life-changing message.*" (The added phrase is italicized.)

This is at the root of our passion — to make an eternal difference. We act out of conviction and obedience to Christ's call so that, in the words of our founders who quoted Habakkuk 2.14, "... the whole 'earth be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.'"

We advocate that everyone embrace God's Word. We implore people to study the Scriptures. We make the case that Jesus is God's provision for restoring our brokenness.

Second, we provide Scriptures and ministry resources tailored for churches and fellow ministries working to connect people with the transforming person of Jesus Christ. Our ministry to youth is but one example.

Third, we partner with other mission-oriented organizations to get God's Word into the hands, hearts and minds of as many people as possible — that they embrace its message of hope and forgiveness.

I want to thank every one of you for your faithful support of this great calling. Together we can help "share God's Word with the world."

In the service of Christ,




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

Published continually since 1818, the *American Bible Society Record* is the official periodical of the American Bible Society and the second oldest publication in the United States. It is published six times per year, and is sent to as many of our supporters as budget allows, including anyone contributing \$20 or more in a year to the Society. Postage is paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. Other publications are encouraged to reprint the text of any *Record* articles, but prior written permission must be obtained from the *American Bible Society Record* to reproduce any images. Publications reprinting the text of *Record* articles must include a credit line. Please send a copy of the issue to the *Record* at 1865 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023. (ISSN 0006-801)

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AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

MAY/JUNE 2005
VOLUME 150, NUMBER 5

ON THE COVER:
Children in the
Middle East learn
Christian songs
of peace.

(Photograph by
Simon Azozian)



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PLEASE PRAY

COSTA RICA > Praise God that the Bible Society of Costa Rica can freely distribute Bibles and encourage people to read them and that the authorities continue to endorse this as a way of instilling values among young people.

CUBA > Give thanks for Bible work in Cuba — conducted by the UBS Central America Regional Service Center — for the distribution of Bibles and other resources. The UBS still supplies churches, libraries and seminaries and takes part in conferences, ordinations, graduations and dedications.

EL SALVADOR > Thank God for

his constant protection in the midst of the violence in which we live. Also thank him for the acceptance of the Bible *en Lenguaje Actual* (in the current language) and for the collaboration of churches and volunteers.

GUATEMALA > Thank God for strengthening our *Faith Comes By Hearing* audio Scripture listening program. Pray that this year at least 1,100 local churches may be blessed by it. The program is now promoted in Spanish and in 22 local languages.

HAITI > Pray for Scripture distribution to people living in areas affected by

flooding. Pray for the safety of the Haitian Bible Society staff and volunteers, and pray that we may be able to raise sufficient funds to move to a safer location.

HONDURAS > The Bible Society of Honduras staffers thank God for opportunities to influence society, including government and private enterprise, and for the way in which he has made our Bible Center a positive testimony to our country. Pray that we use these opportunities wisely. With the economy in upheaval and poverty increasing, Honduras needs prayers for peace. ■



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



C O S T A R I C A

The Beehive

A H A V E N F O R

STREET KIDS



Upon his arrival to Central America in 1502, Christopher Columbus was so moved by its beauty that he named the land Costa Rica, the Rich Coast. Today, its 4 million citizens can claim the longest life expectancy in the Western hemisphere.

by David Singer | Photographs by Dag Smemmo

And with stable industries in tourism and coffee, it is a relative paradise for many, but not all.

The country's growing number of street children, currently estimated at 143,000, represents about 3.5 percent of the population.

While many Costa Ricans seem to ignore their plight, the Bible Society of Costa Rica, working with social agencies and Renacer (Rebirth) — the only organization in the country currently working with at-risk girls — has set out to raise awareness and respond to the needs of children who roam the streets of San José and other cities.

One Bible Society response has been the creation of a children's club called *Nofetín* (Beehive in Hebrew) made possible through *Opportunity 21* funding — a four-year global Scripture outreach that ended in 2003. The Bible Society hopes to find funds to continue to help kids like Tony.

Finding His Heavenly Father

Tony, a young boy from Puntarenas, knows firsthand the difference the club can make. When his father deserted his family, Tony felt angry, frightened and depressed. His mother heard about a three-day camp the club was going to sponsor and thought it might help her son.

On the first day of camp, Tony participated in *Reaching for the Stars*, a Bible-reading exercise constructed to convey God's love as a father. From that day on, his mother says, Tony's spirit reawakened and he gets along better with other children.

The camp experience connects children and their parents to the Scriptures in fun and engaging ways, and then encourages them to share what they've experienced. They are provided with Scriptures to hand out to friends and family, thus taking the "honey" from the "beehive" out into the community.

The clubs give children from troubled and poor backgrounds an opportunity to laugh and feel loved while getting practical instruction in life skills. Events, held every two months, include games, Bible story enactments, quizzes, various competitions and a clown act. Each exposes kids to the values and hope found in the Bible.

Word on the Streets

Volunteers opened the first *Nofetín* club in

2000, and, by September of that year, 500 children were attending. Volunteers canvass local businesses for support and The Salvation Army provides facilities for club events and meals for the children who attend. Concerts help raise funds to aid the street children and increase social awareness about the ways in which people can get involved.

After working with the street kids, the Bible Society realized that holding Bible classes for parents would help them reinforce what their children learn about the Bible. The Bible Society aims to distribute Scriptures to 100,000 households where at-risk children live.

Word in the Schools

While concentrating on street kids, the Bible Society has also been at work in the schools, producing colorful posters with Bible verses on themes dealing with the moral and ethical issues that children face. In a letter of appreciation, student Juan Marcel Garcia wrote, "These posters have a good message for every human being. Several . . . have prompted me to be a good person in the future."

The posters hang in schools across the country, reinforcing other Scripture programs such as the video *Know Your Bible*, one of 13 designed to stimulate discussion about the Bible — its origins and its relevance to modern life.

Nofetín volunteers follow up the viewings with visits to the schools, giving presentations on biblical values and the rights and responsibilities of children.

Teachers, too, are being influenced by this emphasis on the Bible. By sponsoring an hour of Bible studies for teachers each school day morning, the Bible Society is seeing spiritual rebirth among several generations.

E If you would like to support this kind of Bible witness, please visit our Web site at www.americanbible.org or use the enclosed envelope.



Nofetín offers children from poor households — and those who have no homes — a time of love and laughter. Club activities may also include literacy training, and in many cases the child's only opportunity for a good meal. The Bible Society's outreach to the children often includes the rest of the family.





OPERATION PALESTINIAN CHILD

by Francine Lange | Photographs by Simon Azazian

Bringing Hope to the



Holy Land

For many modern-day pilgrims, a trip to the Holy Land offers an inspiring backdrop for their faith. Towns like Bethlehem, Jericho and Jerusalem are no longer just names in the Bible. In this century, conflicting claims for that land fuel a festering bitterness. Palestinians passing between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank suffer through long and humiliating searches at checkpoints. Decades of mistrust and anger erupt in the blasts of suicide bombings, sniper killings and the bulldozing of homes. Children growing up in these surroundings don't envision a future for themselves. In the midst of this dark setting, though, seeds of hope are taking root.

Focus on the Little Ones

Children in a school in Bethlehem stand up to sing a new song: "My heart is filled with joy since the day Jesus came into my heart." In the Gaza Strip, some 400 Palestinian students who'd been chanting

the glories of martyrdom now shout a Christian song called "Peace to God's People Everywhere."

This radical change comes through *Operation Palestinian Child*, a unique outreach of the Palestinian Bible Society, to the poorest villages in the Palestinian territories. Children learn of the Good News through songs, puppet shows, clown acts and skits centered on stories from the Bible.

This ministry, says Labib Madanat, executive secretary of the Bible Society, offers a different path for children who, because of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian hostilities, "are fed rancor, they are fed bitterness, hate, humiliation, revenge, glorification of death, oppression — all the ingredients that can make them the terrorists of the future."

Gifted and Dedicated

Child Group, a dedicated team of young people, travels for hours, navigating numerous checkpoints and dangerous neighborhoods to share God's love. George, its creator, and a self-proclaimed minister to children, has developed a multifaceted, child-friendly program with his talented team: Tony writes songs and puppet plays about Jesus. Twenty-two-year-

old Shireen interacts with the female students (girls are forbidden to speak with men). Sam takes the leading role of "Marwan" in the puppet plays. "I'm mostly touched when I see a child smiling or singing," he says, and shares his dream: "[That] the children who learn our teachings would carry out the message to the next generation."

Christ's Message to Live and to Give

The Bible Society contacts town leaders and teachers to introduce Child Group. Out of respect to the parents, they do not distribute Bibles directly to the children. "In a way, our service is like an appetizer for the Word of God," Labib says.

"Many people will ask, what are we doing? We're just a small bunch of crazy Christians who are doing a little here, a little there, while everything else is working against us."

Labib tours the United States, garnering support through "church adoption" programs, for specific venues for *Operation Palestinian Child*.

H Visit our Web site www.americambible.org to learn more about ministry around the globe.



LESSONS OF PEACE > Thanks to additional support from American Bible Society donors, Palestinian children can envision a future of hope instead of despair, Christ's love instead of hate, and lessons of peace instead of death and destruction.

Outreach in the Middle East — More Successes



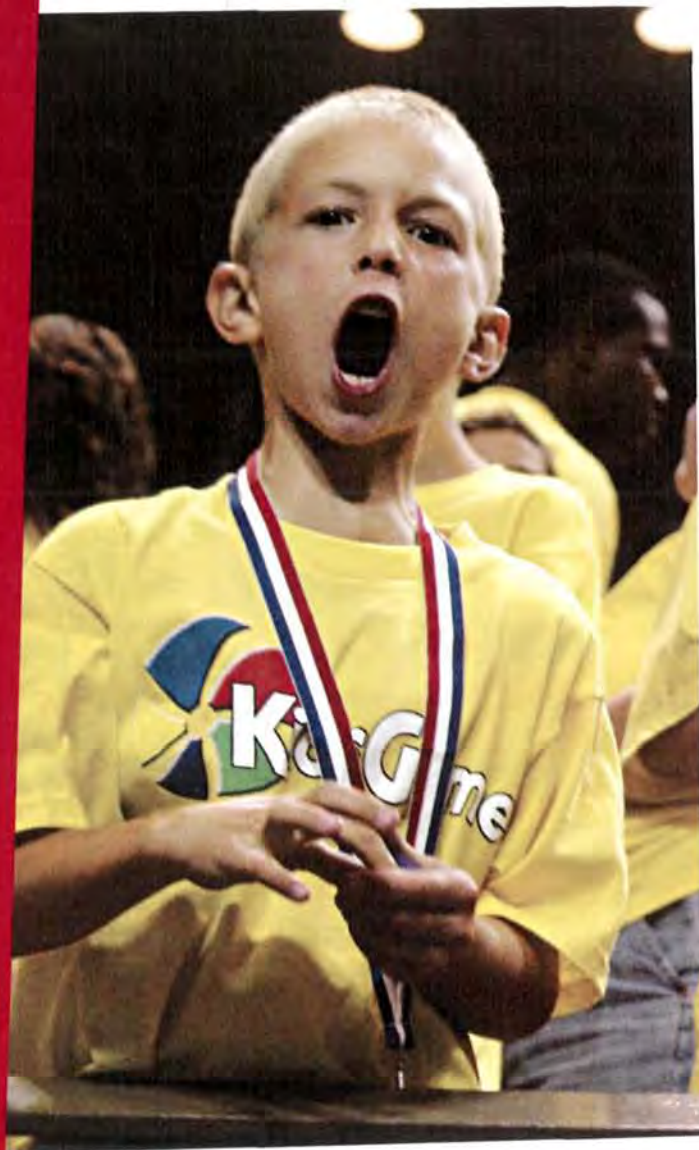
BIBLE CAMPS— Five-day educational camps for children in villages and towns in the West Bank helped hundreds of children learn biblical principles such as honesty, love and loyalty.

OUTREACH TO ORPHANS— Child Group performed for some 80 orphan boys and girls at a boarding school in Bethany, and each child received toys, candy and Bible stories.

PROVISION FOR BODY AND SPIRIT— The Bible Society joined with another ministry in Bethlehem to provide poor Christian school children with new backpacks and, with approval from the parents, a children's Bible in Arabic.

We are grateful to Simon Azazian from the Palestinian Bible Society, who contributed to this article.

Connecting Kids to



The clock was running; water sloshed and spilled. In the stands, thousands of kids with parents, friends and coaches cheered for their team on the stadium floor. Using cupped hands, 10 lines of girls and boys passed handfuls of the rebellious liquid from one team member to another, feverishly vying to deposit the most water into a "goal" bucket at the end of the line. After a frenzied, soggy three minutes, a buzzer sounded, separating the winning team from the rest.



Thus ended the third of three competitions highlighted at closing ceremonies last July at the TD Waterhouse Centre, home to the NBA's Orlando Magic in Florida. This was the big payoff for teams from each of 10 sites, concluding two weeks of Bible study, skits, sports and crafts involving more than 5,000 children, ages six to 14, from 40 churches and civic organizations in the Orlando area.

Similar ceremonies took place in 10 other cities across the country. Youth sports festivals were first held in the Middle East and the United States in 2000. That year the first fledgling venue in Orlando enlisted the participation of five churches and 300 kids.

While still in its infancy here in the United States, elsewhere these sports festivals have become a worldwide phenomenon propelled by the realization that most people (80 percent) who make decisions for Christ do so between the ages of four and 14. In 2000, about 325 churches and 50,000 children participated globally. In 2002 the movement spread to 60 countries, reaching 600,000 kids. Last year, churches and other ministries in more than 100 countries reached more than two million kids.

A simple mission statement, "To instill hope and positive

Christ



Christian values in the children of the world through sports and games," is what ties this rapidly expanding movement together. Sports activities bring people together no matter what their race, language, religion, age, culture or gender; on the playing field, in the pool or on the court, differences are forgotten. Each group effort reinforces unity.

The whole worldwide enterprise depends on volunteers, business sponsorships and other contributions; there are no paid staff or organizational budgets.

The American Bible Society is doing its part to help build this outreach by providing key Scripture resources. In 2004 and early 2005, building on a theme, "winning the race," taken from the life and teachings of the Apostle Paul, the Bible Society provided 15,000 *Contemporary English Version (CEV)* New Testaments titled *God's Playbook* that also included articles such as "How Can the Bible Be My Game Plan?" and "Does God Really Want Me on His Team?" The Bible Society added a 32-page coloring book based on the Apostle Paul's journeys, a Bible quiz and winners' medallions. These were strung with red, white and blue ribbons and embossed with Paul's admonition to "run to win" from 1 Corinthians 9:24.

Built on an Olympic Games model, each festival begins with an opening ceremony, followed by a variety of sports and other activities that derive Scriptural principles and life skills from what the children experience. The sports events, held at churches and other sites throughout a city or region, usually run for two weeks, and conclude with an Olympic-style, citywide celebration.

Dick Seems from Tabernacle Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis cites two reasons for bringing the festival to his city. "I liked what I saw them doing in Orlando: evangelism for kids and getting the churches working together as the body of Christ." He adds, "In 2002, the churches that came together for these youth festivals started working together in other ways: sports events, jobs programs, training programs — and now we network regularly by e-mail."

He recounts how the program has grown from four to 20 churches and from 300 to 1,000 kids at 15 locations in just two years. He praises the concept. "Sports draw like a magnet. And, in the end, they learn more than just Bible stories. The curriculum helps the kids experience what the Bible characters felt; it validates the Bible characters as real people."

continued on page 10



PLAYING BY GOD'S RULES > Volunteers drew from the life experiences of the Apostle Paul in sports competition to help children learn how God's Word makes a difference in relationships and real-life situations — that playing according to God's rules can add to their fun. Some children received their first ever Bible teaching during the youth sports festivals.

“We’re using sports and Bible study to teach God’s lessons on reconciliation.”

— Barry Baker, Athletes in Action

He also sees that the interchurch competition makes the children aware of the broader Christian community — that it’s larger than just their own church, parish or country. “For many kids in an urban setting,” says Dick, “. . . [they] don’t have the option to go to a sports camp or music camp. Their families don’t take vacations. These festivals become the highlight of their summer.”

The festival coordinator at Common Grounds Community Church in Indianapolis, Megan Schmidt, says that half the attending kids do not come from her church. “We’ve encouraged the community to get involved. It’s great for kids coming from elsewhere to hear about Jesus.”

“Each day,” she explains, “we focus on a different life quality from Paul’s life — qualities such as interdependence, connectedness, perseverance or overcoming. These are key [concepts] for a kid’s growth — words from the Bible that help them gain an outlook on life — but they are also gaining it from Jesus; it’s an amazing gift.”

Many of the children participating in the Indianapolis festivals were recruited through advertising in the public schools. Emilie Balliett, children’s pastor at Shepherd

Community Church and a festival volunteer, says, “If some of these kids weren’t in the program, they’d be at home with no parent present. Some of them wouldn’t get meals. In the world today, with everyone out for themselves, these games teach teamwork — they show the body of Christ unified.”

Barry Baker, on loan from Athletes in Action to coordinate last year’s festivals in Cincinnati, says that one beauty of the festival movement is its flexibility — each community can adjust the curriculum to suit its particular needs. “In Cincinnati, where racial tensions are high, we focus on reconciliation,” says Barry.

“We’re using sports and Bible study to teach God’s lessons on reconciliation — not just racial,” explains Barry, “but gender, social, economic, denominational — the ‘whole shooting match.’ Our battle cry is to change the culture of Cincinnati one heart at a time.”

Barry explains that the organizing committee decided early on that any church or civic group that wanted to get involved had to match up with a church that looked different racially and socio-economically. “We had volunteers from urban and suburban churches team up to canvass neighborhoods, door-to-door, inviting un-churched kids. Sometimes that 20-minute walk together was an eye-opener. Loving one another, inclusion and reconciliation is a message churches and families need to hear.”

In Cincinnati, kids can choose from a number of tracks: basketball, soccer, puppetry, gymnastics, music or press corps. Carmon and Simone, one wielding a camera, the other a notebook, chose the press corps track. They put out a newspaper that reports on kids’ experiences at the festival. Carmon says that they learn to “put Christ first. Kids say that through the games they learn teamwork.” Simone says, “It’s not about who wins or loses, but all of us working together and having a joyous time in the name of the Lord.” ■



MINISTERING IN COMMUNITY > It typically took the coordination of 40 or more volunteers and church staff to carry out a two-week youth sports festival at each of five locations in Cincinnati last summer. Adults from 12 urban and suburban communities ministered together, modeling the core of Christ, to help shape the aspirations and attitudes of a future generation.

Faith Across Generations in Poland

Poland's Christian heritage dates back to the 10th century. The country is known as one of the most Christian of European nations as well as the birthplace of the late Pope John Paul II. The faith of Poland's people helped bring down an oppressive Soviet regime some 15 years ago and continues to be passed on to new generations through religious education taught in schools, churches and families.

Emma Nawrocka, who has worked for the Bible Society in Poland for nearly 40 years, remains strong in her faith — drawing comfort from God's Word — even through the political, social and economic upheavals in her country. Her grandchildren, Paul and Anna Pajak, also look to the Scriptures for guidance.

Paul, 17, recently attended a youth conference organized by the Lutheran Church in Warsaw, where he was one of 1,000 young Christians. "It was good to meet so many other young people and see just how many are out there who want to follow Jesus," he said. "I learned that as Christians we are engaged in a learning process all our lives. For me, one of the things that particularly struck me was the Fifth Commandment: 'Thou shalt not kill.' I understand now that this commandment is not just about killing in a physical sense — we can kill each other in many different ways, according to how we act toward other people."

Fifteen-year-old Anna said, "I have attended Bible classes in our church since I was seven." Last year she was confirmed in her church and her class had to memorize Psalm 23. "We learned it as a song, so it's much easier that way."



Your June gift will help support Bible work in the Caribbean. Your July gift will support Bible work in the United States. To find out more about joining the Bible-a-Month Club, fill out the reply form below or write to:

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BIBLE IN THE NEWS

Jesus Shines on DVD

■ In *The St. Petersburg Times'* (Florida) review of the film, *The Gospel of John* (upon its release on DVD), the newspaper's film critic wrote, "Using the American Bible Society's verbally streamlined *Good News Bible*, screenwriter John Goldsmith and director Philip Saville turn the screen into a pulpit with better production values and performances than Christian cinema usually possesses. The performances — especially [actor Henry Ian] Cusick's impressive common-man approach to the role of Jesus — are superb."



Ashley Smith: A Christian Hero for Our Time

■ According to *The New York Times*, on March 12, 2005, Ashley Smith left her apartment for a quick trip to the store and returned, only to be taken hostage by Brian Nichols, an accused rapist and fugitive suspect in a deadly Atlanta court shooting spree. Her faith and experience in life, combined with common sense and compassion, worked to save her life and that of her captor. *Times* reporters Shaila Dewan and Laurie Goodstein quoted columnist Terry Pluto of the *Akron Beacon Journal*: "She was willing to meet him as almost a fellow wounded warrior.' . . . [Terry Pluto] said Ms. Smith, by sharing her past with her captor, followed a principle used by many prison ministers to gain trust: show them your scars.' "

According to *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, some people think Ashley's sharing made her an "angel" in Brian's eyes. Ashley's aunt, Kimberly Rogers, said, "You have to watch out when you get our Bible study praying. Things shake and move." The family's longtime minister, Frank Page, who baptized Ashley when she was 12, said, "What's interesting about Ashley's experience was she was an ordinary person used in an extraordinary way. Christ calls us to live a life that's different, a life of hope."

The Economy of Redemption

■ The Rev. Earl Kooperkamp, of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, on West 126th Street in Manhattan, is in the "business of redemption," much like some of his parishioners who spend their time redeeming bottles and cans for the 5-cent deposit, reported David Gonzalez in *The New York Times*.

Father Kooperkamp told Mr. Gonzalez, ". . . I realized there is a moral economy of redemption that is literally embedded in the Scriptures. God has created an abundance, and it is out of that abundance that we live in fellowship with one another."

Mr. Gonzalez wrote, "[Father Kooperkamp] reached over to his Bible and read aloud a passage from Leviticus that said grapes and grains that fall to the earth were for the needy and the stranger. 'Just like you cannot harvest to the edge of the field, what you drop on the ground is not yours anymore,' Father Kooperkamp said. 'It was never yours. It's God's. And since He is the God of the poor and the alienated, you have got to leave something for them . . . On Good Friday, God does redemption big time . . . The rest of the year, these guys do it small time, a nickel at a time.' "

Comfort in Overwhelming Grief

■ Canadian farmer Marc Woerlen faced an unimaginable loss: while he was away from his farm, the southern Ontario man lost his wife and seven children to a deadly fire. But he told the *Toronto Star*, "God grant me the power to take each day one at a time."

Reporter Sonia Verma wrote, "As farmers, the Woerlens worked hard, but lived a life that allowed them to share many special moments together. [Mr. Woerlen] said, 'When I was working in the fields, I'd come home and have a coffee with my wife, or take my kids with me to the hardware store. I feel very privileged to spend those extra hours with them.' [Now] he sees the rest of his life as a test of his faith in God and every day reaches for his Bible for comfort and strength."

INMATES GET A LIFE-CHANGING VERDICT

BY LIZ SMITH

STAFF CHAPLAIN ROB BROWN LOVES TO TELL THE STORY OF an inmate he once knew who came to the Lord the first day of his incarceration. The inmate told Chaplain Brown (then serving as a prison chaplain in California) that he had pulled a book from a dusty pile being swept up by another inmate. Shaking it off, the prisoner realized it was a Bible someone had carelessly tossed on the floor. He carried it to his bunk to read. Later that night he prayed to receive Christ. Chaplain Brown says he longs for a day when an extra Bible lying around could touch the heart of every incoming convict.

For the past 12 of the more than 30 years he has ministered as a prison and jail chaplain, Chaplain Brown has relied on the American Bible Society to supply most of the Bibles he gives to inmates. Since 1983, he has served as Staff Chaplain and is currently pastoring Division V (5) of the Cook County Department of Corrections, in Chicago, Ill. Every year, some 120,000 inmates pass through the Cook County Department of Corrections. "We could easily use an additional 50,000 Bibles a year around here," he says.

As a full-time missionary to the incarcerated, Chaplain Brown doesn't collect a salary from Cook County, and neither do any of the 30 other volunteer prison chaplains there

who conduct a total of 250 religious services a week. He raises his own support to fund his work in Chicago and also serves as the executive director of Chaplains for Christ, Inc., a national and international prison ministry. In this capacity he oversees prison outreaches in Chicago, Texas, Oklahoma, Nebraska and affiliates in seven countries. He has ministered in the prisons of 27 other countries. Chaplain Brown adds that, thanks to the generosity of Bible Society donors and others, Chaplains for Christ has placed tens of thousands of Bibles into the hands of men and women desperately searching for hope and encouragement.

As a self-described former "hard core" atheist, Chaplain Brown recalls the day, 30 years ago, when he visited an orphanage in Mexico. He listened to the powerful testimony of a transformed alcoholic. That day, he came to faith in Christ.

Chaplain Brown, who is married and has seven children, praises God that his labor for the Lord is not in vain. Though he faces many challenges — including an epidemic of crack cocaine abuse in the prison population over the last 20 years — he has also seen former inmates return to preach the Good News in the prisons.

He says the final "verdict" is in: the Bible changes lives. ■



Chaplain Rob Brown has been offering a Scripture-based "way of escape" to inmates for more than 30 years.

VISION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

BY FRANCINE LANGE



BOB AND AILEEN ADAMS STAY CURRENT ON THE SOCIAL issues affecting their city of Charlotte, N.C. So when *The Charlotte Observer* newspaper published articles about the growing gang problem there, they took notice. And after attending a Global Bible Summit in New York City last year — where Chicago gang members talked about how the American Bible Society's *Elementz of Life*® *4 the Streets* magazine and music CD touched their lives — these long-time Bible Society supporters decided to get involved.

The Adams read the first issue, "Blowin' out the Madness: Violence, Addiction, Gangbangin'," featuring stories written by young people confronting issues such as sexual and physical abuse, gang life and self esteem. The accounts are raw, but each includes a Scriptural way of redemption as well as hotline numbers for kids to call in times of crisis.

Bob says that gangs can now be found even in small towns, not just the big cities. Detective Joel McNelly, from the Gang Intelligence Unit of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Police Department, confirms the *official* number of gang members in the city as 900, "but it's probably closer to 2,000." With children as young as eight joining up, the Unit is starting to see a "generational" phenomenon, from children to grandparents in the same gang.

When Bob and Aileen returned to Charlotte after the summit, they had no idea that carrying back several copies of *4 the Streets* and the CD would rouse such intense community-wide interest. Bob shared the materials with Bill Matevie, a chaplain at the Mecklenburg County Jail, and from there Bob contacted The Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Club of Greater Charlotte and Catholic Youth Services. "These people are very excited," says Aileen.

The Adams have now developed a 35-member e-mail list from this group (and it's still growing), linking together people concerned for Charlotte's youth and working with at-risk kids.

This spring, the Adams invited this group, the mayor, the president of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and other influential community organizations in Charlotte to meet with Liana Roa, the *Elementz* program manager, and two former gang members. Liana and her team will describe how they present the gospel in the "language" of today's youth and demonstrate how the *Elementz* materials are being used to reach Chicago gangs and how they can be adapted by groups.

The Scripture-based materials can appeal to young men and women who desperately need God in their lives.

Bob (who also contributes to Bible Society ministry through a planned-giving arrangement) says he will raise funds for this program and invite companies in Charlotte to participate. He knows that all their donations go directly to American Bible Society work. ■

You can obtain more information about planned giving programs sponsored by the American Bible Society by visiting us at www.americanbible.org, or calling the Planned Gift Programs Department at 1-800-820-6227.

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update

N A T I O N A L

■ WHAT TEENS BELIEVE

A majority of American teenagers (71 percent) believes that Jesus rose from the dead and will return to Earth to judge good and evil, according to a survey conducted by the American Bible Society in February 2005. Only a little more than 11 percent do not believe this and nearly 17 percent said they were "not sure."

This fourth in a series of surveys on American teens and spirituality provides a snapshot of youth perceptions of the Resurrection and Jesus' return to judge good and evil.

A random sample of 1,000 males and females from across the country, ages 12-17, participated, evenly split by gender and age.

The survey is part of an ongoing emphasis by the Bible Society to reach out to American youth with the message of the Bible that can change their lives and to discover their religious inclinations and beliefs.

To obtain a copy of the complete survey, please call Roy Lloyd at 888-596-6296 x8731 or e-mail him at Rlloyd@americabible.org.

■ NEW MUSEUM OPENS

The Museum of Biblical Art (MOBIA), the nation's first scholarly museum of art and the Bible, opens with two inaugural exhibitions in a newly designed space at the American Bible Society in New York City this May.

"MOBIA has been established to shed light on the many ways in which the stories and symbols of the Bible have influenced art," said Dr. Ena Heller, the museum's executive director.

Coming Home!: Self-Taught Artists,

the Bible, and the American South explores the impact of evangelical Christianity on the works of self-taught artists.

Organized by the Art Museum of the University of Memphis, with support from Humanities Tennessee, the National Endowment for the Arts and The Rockefeller Foundation, the exhibit features more than 120 works by 73 artists.

For Glory and for Beauty: Highlights from the Collection offers a singular glimpse of this "library of a single book" from the American Bible Society's Rare Scripture Collection. Its curator, Dr. Liana Lupas, said, "Our collection of printed Bibles is the largest in the United States and one of the largest in the world."

■ BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADE

The Coalition of Urban Youth Workers, a consortium of New York City youth leaders founded at the

American Bible Society, has accepted the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's invitation to head up the Youth Committee for the Greater New York Crusade in June.

The team will be coordinating initiatives that relate to youth and the Crusade to make the event "relevant" to a generation unfamiliar with Billy Graham's powerful gospel message.

The Coalition represents more than 60 Christian organizations working with youth, including World Vision, Youth for Christ and Teen Challenge, as well as local churches and five members of the Bible Society's *Elementz of Life*® Department.

■ PRISON OUTREACH

The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has selected Drew Segawa, manager of the Correctional Program at the American Bible Society, to chair the prison committee

for the Greater New York Crusade in June. "This is a huge responsibility," said Drew, "and a tremendous blessing for me to be a part of this Crusade."

Drew will be coordinating logistics and teams for ministry to inmates at local correctional facilities — scheduled to occur a week before the start of the Crusade. ■

◀ **Anderson Johnson, *Jesus: Behold the Man*, 1980s, paint on cardboard, collection of Carl and Marian Mullis**





VLADIMIR LEONOV/BIBLE SOCIETY OF RUSSIA

■ R U S S I A

Just west of Siberia and inside the Arctic Circle live the Nenets, reindeer farmers residing so far north they have been all but forgotten by modern society. Last December, the Bible Society in Russia delivered free Bibles and Scripture materials for children to this isolated group, fulfilling a Scriptural mandate to reach out with God's Word "to the ends of the Earth."

■ A Z E R B A I J A N

Rafik, one of the Udi-speaking Christians in Azerbaijan, eagerly awaits the translation of the Bible into his own language. "I've always believed in God, even though I've never had a Bible," he said. "During the Communist period, I used to say 'Jesus Christ,' but I didn't know what it meant; it was just like a saying for me. Once I heard the Bible message, those words gained a deep and significant meaning for me, and now I have Jesus in my heart."

Today, some 4,000 Udi people live in Azerbaijan, mostly in the village of Nij. In the past, their traditions included a strong Christian foundation. But under eight decades of Communist rule, the Udi saw their foundation attacked, their Bibles and liturgies burned and their churches destroyed.

► Rafik eagerly awaits the translation of the Bible into his heart language.

It has only been in the past few years that the Udi in Nij have been permitted to reestablish a congregation. And until now, they'd been using Scriptures in the Russian language, but a discovery of ancient manuscripts believed to be biblical texts in Udi has fueled a longing within this people — for Scriptures in their language of origin.

In order to fulfill that dream, Jonathan and Bonnie Kim — originally from South Korea, now based in Baku — have undertaken the translation project. "According to the Bible, there is only one thing that lasts forever: the Word of God," said



DAG SMENO/NORWEGIAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Jonathan. "We want to spend our lives doing something with an eternal perspective."

Although the Kims have a particular affinity for

languages, learning the Udi dialect has proved a challenge. Despite some difficulties, Mr. Kim said, "Getting the translation under way is a matter of urgency."

■ N I C A R A G U A

The start of the academic year saw the highest number of student registrations in the history of Nicaragua. But in spite of the increase in the student population, young people have fallen away from some basic values, including respect for others and a strong work ethic. Many are slipping into lifestyles that include drug and alcohol abuse and gang membership.

The Bible Society of Nicaragua has been working to remedy this trend with its program, *Equipping the Teacher*, providing Scriptures to teachers in poor districts. "The Scriptures are helping to restore the values that Nicaraguan society has lost," said Freddy Fonesca, the Bible Society's general secretary. ■

quiet time

We hope you will use this guide in your daily study of the Bible. Please write to tell us how you use it.

JUNE 2005

Rooted in Christ and Sharing God's Love

- 1** Romans 12.9-21
- ***2** 1 Corinthians 13.1-13
- 3** 2 Corinthians 8.1-15
- 4** 2 Corinthians 9.1-15
- SUNDAY**
- 5** Psalm 36
- 6** Psalm 136
- 7** Hosea 1.1-2.1
- 8** Hosea 2.2-23
- 9** Hosea 3.1-5
- 10** Hosea 11.1-11
- 11** Hosea 14.1-9

SUNDAY

- ****12** John 3.1-21
- 13** John 10.1-21
- 14** John 13.1-20
- 15** John 13.21-35
- 16** John 15.1-17
- 17** John 15.18-16.4a
- 18** John 21.1-14
- SUNDAY**
- 19** John 21.15-25
- 20** Deuteronomy 6.1-9
- 21** Matthew 22.23-40
- 22** 1 John 1.1-10

- 23** 1 John 2.1-17
- 24** 1 John 2.18-29
- 25** 1 John 3.1-10
- SUNDAY**
- 26** 1 John 3.11-24
- 27** 1 John 4.1-21
- 28** 1 John 5.1-21
- 29** 2 John
- 30** 3 John

** Orthodox Christians will observe Ascension Day on June 2, 2005.*

*** Orthodox Christians will celebrate Pentecost Sunday on June 12, 2005.*

JULY 2005

Rooted in Christ and Experiencing God's Mercy

- 1** Psalm 23
- 2** Psalm 32
- SUNDAY**
- 3** Matthew 18.21-35
- 4** Genesis 33.1-17
- 5** Genesis 45.1-28
- 6** Genesis 49.29-50.14
- 7** Exodus 33.1-23
- 8** Exodus 34.1-28

- 9** Numbers 14.11-25

SUNDAY

- 10** 2 Samuel 9.1-13
- 11** Joel 2.1-17
- 12** Jonah 3.1-10
- 13** Jonah 4.1-11
- 14** Micah 7.1-20
- 15** Zechariah 1.1-17
- 16** Zechariah 10.1-12

SUNDAY

- 17** Malachi 3.5-18
- 18** Isaiah 40.1-17
- 19** Isaiah 40.18-31
- 20** Isaiah 41.1-20
- 21** Psalm 103
- 22** Psalm 106
- 23** Psalm 111

SUNDAY

- 24** John 8.1-11
- 25** John 9.1-12
- 26** John 9.13-41
- 27** Romans 3.9-31
- 28** 2 Corinthians 2.5-17
- 29** 2 Corinthians 5.11-21
- 30** Ephesians 2.1-10

SUNDAY

- 31** Hebrews 10.1-18

IN MEMORIAM

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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:

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