

 AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

RECORD

June | July 2001

**The Bible:
'A Way of
Liberation'**

*Pollster
George
Gallup
gauges the*

**QUIET
REVOLUTION**

Pentecost: The Promise of Easter

All of us can tell you that God has raised Jesus to life! —ACTS 2.31 CEV

It had been 50 days since the crucifixion, 10 days since the disciples had seen Jesus taken up into a cloud. And now the disciples huddled in Jerusalem, waiting for the power Jesus had promised — the power of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus said would ignite in them the drive and desire to “tell everyone about [him] in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and everywhere in the world.”

After three years of miraculous ministry, raising the dead, feeding thousands with just a few loaves and fishes, healing the lame and the blind, Luke records in the Book of Acts that a mere 120 faithful followers of Jesus had hung together, waiting for the promised power. Apparently, following his crucifixion, most of those hanging around Jesus’ road show had run for cover. The promise of the resurrection hadn’t yet been fully realized—its power not yet unleashed.

But once again, God’s strategy was flawless. Pentecost, the Jewish harvest festival, had drawn God-fearing celebrants from all across the Roman Empire — people who spoke many different languages — to Jerusalem. The stage was set for a miracle that would send the good news of spiritual rebirth — of resurrection power — across the known world in one dramatic burst of divine anointing.

As part of the resurrection promise Jesus had said, “... if you have faith in me, you will do ... even greater things [than I am doing], now that I am going back to the father.” What a puzzling promise this must have been to his faithful band — that after he left them they would see him when others couldn’t — that because he lived, they would live.

And then in tongues of fire, through Peter and the other apostles, the Holy Spirit began to make sense of it all. Centuries before, at the tower of Babel, God had dispersed a rebellious and confused humanity. Now, through the power of his spirit, God spoke to and united in one faith people of many different languages and traditions.

Three thousand were baptized that day as the church began to spread throughout the world. How fitting that Jesus’ promise of spiritual power and new life would come to pass during a harvest festival. Today, by distributing the Scriptures in many languages, the Bible Society continues to carry God’s message of new life. And the great harvest festival continues.



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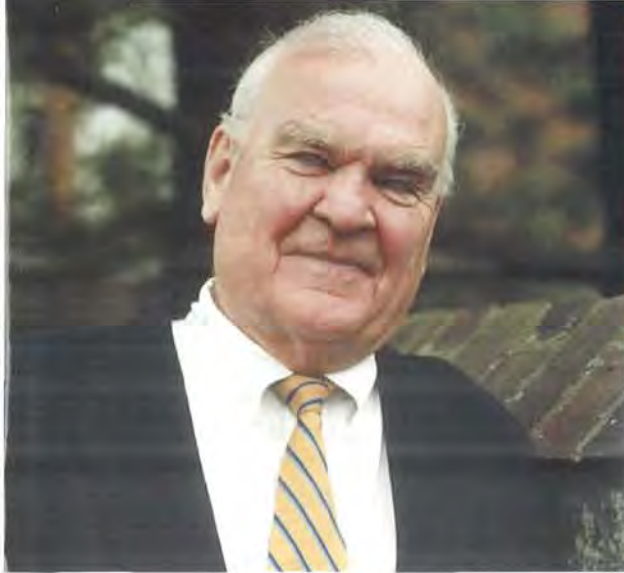
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absrecord@americanbible.org

The mission of the American Bible Society is to provide the Holy Scriptures to every man, woman and child in a language and form each can readily understand, and at a price each can easily afford. This purpose, undertaken without doctrinal note or comment, and without profit, is a cause which all Christians and all churches are urged to support. The Society is a member of the United Bible Societies, a partnership of Bible societies throughout the world cooperating to make Scriptures available to people everywhere in their own language.

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ON THE COVER: Pollster George Gallup, Jr. (Photo by David Singer)

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

'WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND!'

JIMMY ANDERSON WAS A CREEK Indian boy from Oklahoma. Many years previously, he had applied for seminary training close to home, but two weeks before school was to start no word had come about his acceptance.

He went to Dr. B. Frank Belvin, General Missionary of the Muskogee-Seminole-Wichita Baptist Association, to inquire about what to do. Dr. Belvin had been praying that God would call a young Creek preacher who would one day replace him. He suggested that Jimmy apply to Eastern Baptist.

Sure enough, Jimmy discovered that a scholarship awaited him. The tuition would be completely provided. Each semester the funds were provided through the generosity of Dr. Eugene Nida, chief translator for the American Bible Society's *Good News Bible*.

Jimmy wrote to Dr. Nida telling him who he was, how the help was appreciated and that the entire three-year course had been successfully completed.

Jimmy and his wife went on to minister to the Navajos in New Mexico. Years later he would succeed Dr. Belvin as General Missionary to the Creeks, Seminoles, and Wichitas, fulfilling Dr. Belvin's dream and prayers.

In 1967 the Southern Baptists held a convention in Dallas, and Jimmy was invited to speak. As he sat on the platform,



▲ The Rev. Jimmy Anderson, right, with David Gowan of the American Bible Society.

gazing at the program in his hand, he recognized a name.

The younger man looked down the row of chairs and saw his benefactor. The miracles and events that brought him to this day had just come full circle and he could barely contain himself.

He rose slowly and approached the podium. His voice was calm, not betraying the deep gushing emotion in his breast.

"A person on this very platform was used by God at a vital point in my early life. He helped this Indian preacher get through seminary, not knowing who he helped ... Before everyone here, I

want to personally thank Dr. Eugene Nida and the Lord, for how God used this man in my life."

Now it was Dr. Nida's turn. He scurried across the stage and hugged Jimmy, lifted him up and pulled him to the microphone.

Dr. Nida acknowledged that he had never met Jimmy but confirmed that here was a visible answer to his prayer that an Indian preacher would go on to be God's servant to his own people. Everyone in the great auditorium stood in ovation as Dr. Nida promised continued prayers for this young leader and gave praise to the Lord in witness to the marvelous working of his grace! ▲

The Rev. Jimmy Anderson told this story to David L. Gowan, Coordinator, Native American Program, American Bible Society.



▲ Dr. Eugene Nida



Jacquelyn Sapiie
Associate Director of the
ABS Library at Bible House

askjacquie

Readers are encouraged to submit their questions about the Bible to Jacquelyn Sapiie, associate director of the ABS library at Bible House in New York City. Questions can be forwarded to absrecord@americanbible.org, or Jacquelyn can be reached at 212-408-1203 or via regular mail at 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

Q Who was the twin of the apostle Thomas? (J.H., Buffalo Grove, Ill.)

A The name Thomas comes from an Aramaic word meaning twin. The Gospel of John refers to Thomas three times as "Thomas, called Didymus" (Jn. 11.16; 20.24; 21.2), using the Greek word for "twin." No record of his sibling's identity has been preserved.

Thomas is best known for, after having been told of Jesus' resurrection, refusing to believe in it until he actually touched the wounds of his Savior. (John 20.24-29). The story is responsible for the phrase "doubting Thomas". However, upon first seeing the risen Jesus, Thomas exclaimed, "You are my Lord and my God!" According to Christian tradition, Thomas spread the Gospel all the way to India, although that is not verified in Scripture.

The question of who his twin was cannot be answered.

Various traditions, Syriac and Egyptian, suggest that his personal name was Judas, and that Thomas was not a personal name but a title or nickname.

Information is from the *Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Part 3*, Tyndale House Publishers 1980. ■

TRUSTEES

Finding a Return on Mission

Willis C. Fritz, banker, knows about "return on investment." Mr. Fritz, member of the Board of Trustees for the American Bible Society, also knows "return on mission."

For the past 20 years, Mr. Fritz has contributed his business expertise to the American Bible Society.

Mr. Fritz is a graduate of Iowa State University and earned a master's in business administration from New York University. His career in banking included stints in New York as well as Dallas.

Mr. Fritz and his wife, Dodie, are members of the United Methodist Church. They have four children and eight grandchildren.

"I'm interested that the people who contribute to the American Bible Society are supported and looked out for," he says during an interview from his home outside Dallas.

Now retired, Mr. Fritz worked for Republic Bank of Dallas, now Bank of America, as an executive vice president charged with approving loans to corporations.

"Our mission at the American Bible Society is not to make money," he says. It is, rather, ensuring that the resources of the American Bible Society are placed at the service of the mission of biblical distribution. And he thinks that "return on mission" has been abundant in recent years.

For example, he noted, the investment that the Society made, with the United Bible Societies, in a Bible printing press in China has paid dividends in its impact on Christians there.

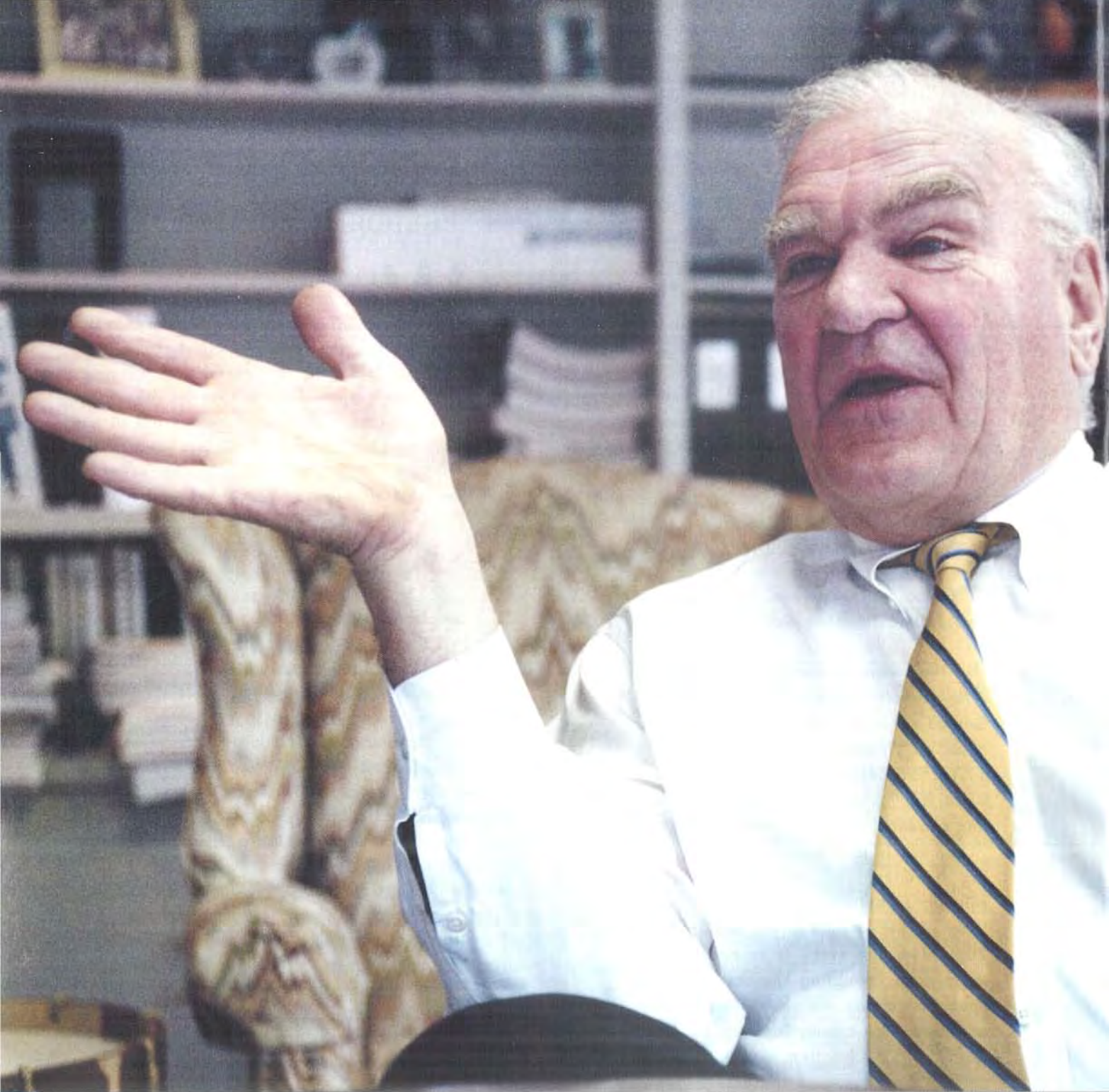
Amity Publishing, the Chinese company that produces Bibles [see story on page 21], has been a huge success, says Mr. Fritz.

"We examined it and found out we exceeded our expectations for our initial investment," he says.

In the United States, he says that American Bible Society outreach to minorities, including Spanish speakers, Native Americans and African Americans, is another shining example of the "return on mission" that the board seeks. ■ — *PETER FEUERHERD*



Willis C. Fritz



QUIET RE



*Pollster sees the
Bible as a key
to Transformation*

BY PETER FEUERHERD

AT HIS OFFICE OVERLOOKING THE TRANQUIL STREETS of downtown Princeton, N.J., George Gallup, Jr., bangs away at an ancient Royal typewriter. In the corner, its massive word processing capacity underutilized, sits a sleek, modern computer.

Don't let the choice of hardware fool you, however. Mr. Gallup — whose firm, founded by his father, has become synonymous with survey research in American life — has his pulse on modern life, chronicling the emergence of what he calls a “Quiet Revolution.”

Results gleaned from the thousands polled by his firm

VOLU TION

PHOTOS BY DAVID SINGER

over decades culminated in a body of research from which Mr. Gallup posits a theory as well as a hope. Americans, he says, are in a seeking mode. They are exhausted by political corruption and diatribes, the stress of keeping together home and job, and harbor an abiding sense that mere acquisition cannot equate with self-fulfillment. They are, in short, in search of spiritual meaning. And it is the duty of the Christian churches to fill that vacuum in the soul, says Mr. Gallup, 70, who began his career in a small Texas Episcopal church ministering to African Americans.

"Americans are reeling from the excesses of the last century. We're seeing a tremendous surge in interest in spirituality. They are looking to God for a way out," he says.

Although he graduated with a degree in religion from nearby Princeton University, Mr. Gallup decided to forego formal ministry. Yet his work in the family firm has become a ministry in itself.

His father founded the firm on the premise that political reform and democracy could be enhanced if the voice of the average person could be heard in the civic forum. George Gallup has focused — with a similar reformist

vision — on how faith affects American life and how it can be of even greater service to the common good.

For much of the past few decades, his work — including dozens of books and hundreds of articles — has focused on spiritual life among Americans.

"I felt the call of God early on," he says. As a public opinion researcher, he has focused on "how people respond to God's will for them." His work is invaluable for Christians and others interested in a spiritual snapshot of American life over the past 35 years.

What he's found, in many respects, should make Christian leaders optimistic about the future.

A whopping 96 percent of Americans claim to believe in God; 84 percent say Jesus is the Son of God; 79 percent believe in miracles and 95 percent say they pray, all percentages that rank the U.S. at or near the top of any other industrialized nation.

And that bedrock religious belief is backed by a strong sense of the importance of the Bible. Some 93 percent of Americans own a Bible, and about 40 percent read the Scriptures at least once a week. Some 900,000 Americans are members of small Bible study groups.

That's the good news. While some may see the glass jar representing American spiritual life as half-full, there is also reason to believe it is half-empty. When Mr. Gallup looks at the jar, he is alarmed by a glaring growth in biblical illiteracy.

"We revere the Bible," he says. "But we don't read it." That is evident in a regular Gallup poll quizzing people on their knowledge of Scripture.

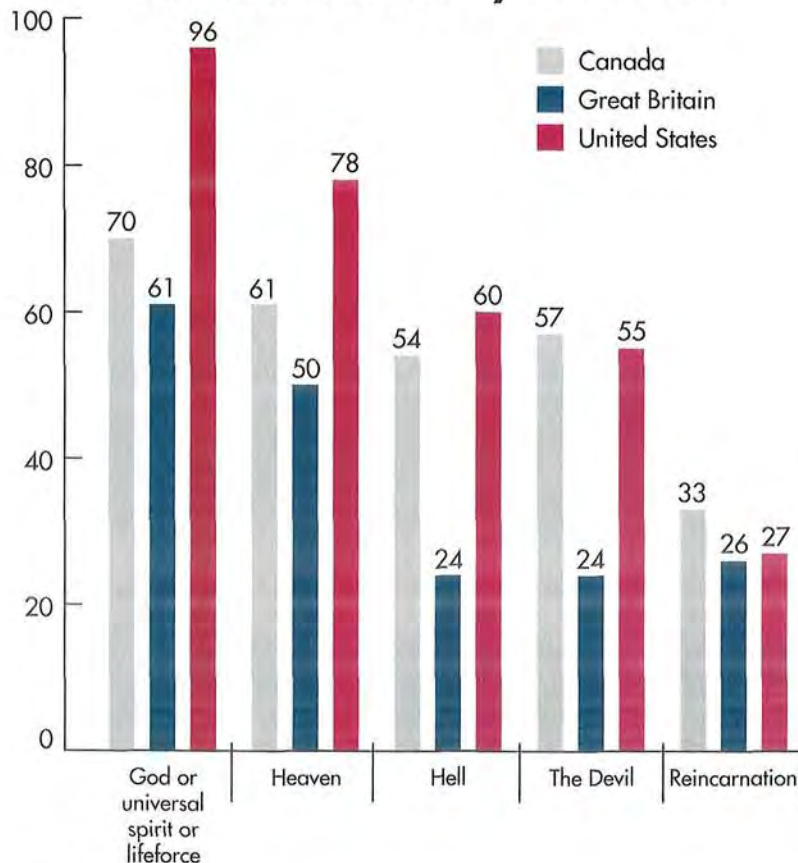
Less than half of Americans know the first book of the Bible, what country ruled Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, the definition of the Trinity and who delivered the Sermon on the Mount. And while the American public is supportive of the Ten Commandments, only a small percentage can recite what they are.

This lack of knowledge of the Bible is reflected in American spirituality, notes Mr. Gallup. While Christianity retains a strong hold, a lack of Scriptural knowledge results in a huge void in understanding.

"Americans tend to believe everything," he says. For example, a majority of Americans will say that Jesus is the only way to salvation, and still another majority will claim that all routes to God are equal.

"They don't know what they believe and

America Surpasses Other Nations in Faith Matters by Belief in:



Source: The Gallup Poll, Gallup Organization, Ltd. (United Kingdom), Gallup Poll of Canada, 1995

► **George Gallup polls regularly about the impact of the Bible.**

why," he says.

While Mr. Gallup can recite the data with the ease of a skilled and objective numbers cruncher, he can also interpret their meaning as a Christian concerned about what he knows about American society.

The Bible, he believes, is God's inspired document. "Without it, other movements take over," he says. "If God is not there, something else will rush in."

He sees the lack of biblical knowledge and devotion in American life as contributing to various social ills such as drug addiction, alcoholism, family break-ups, racial discord and a lack of response to the concerns of the poor.

"The Bible is a way of liberation," he says. His favorite story in Scripture is that of Jesus healing a leper, working against the prejudice that consigned those afflicted to the bottom rung of Jewish life at the time.

Modern Americans are feeling a need for liberation, he says. Having described the illness, Mr. Gallup offers a prescription: the proliferation of small Bible study groups needs to be encouraged by the churches. "Faith grows best in the presence of faith," he says.

He practices what he preaches, being part of a small biblical faith-sharing group. The task is simple: group members read a Scripture passage, reflect on its meaning through discussion, and end with prayer.

Such groups mirror what is happening in the wider culture. Some 40 percent of Americans belong to some small group dedicated to a shared pursuit. Of that number, 60 percent are in small faith-sharing communities.

That phenomenon is a big part of the "Quiet Revolution" Mr. Gallup is now tracking. Another part is the growing Alpha program in the Episcopal Church and equivalent programs in other denominations as well. Alpha involves religious education for adults over a period of 10 weeks, a time when people are encouraged to ask all sorts of questions about faith, including basics about Jesus and why God allows evil. It is designed to encourage spiritual seekers to consider Christianity.

Even the Internet — blamed by some for destroying



community and face-to-face interaction — is proving to be a spur to promoting faith communities, particularly among the young seeking common values with their peers.

The challenge of the churches in the new millennium, says Mr. Gallup, is to forge "free-floating spirituality into religious commitment." Christians can fill the void. Yet, he cautions, "if they don't it could end up in movements that glorify the self and not God."

The stakes are enormous, says the pollster. If Christians can ignite biblical faith, he says, there is no telling what impact it might have. Just as Jesus touched the lepers, American Christians could provide hope for the hopeless.

Mr. Gallup himself is part of a church group that not only provides Christmas presents for the poor in nearby Trenton, N.J., it also invites them for a meal in prosperous Princeton.

"Most Christians will move out to the edge of society. But not all the way," he says, citing a litany of those on the margins of our culture — the abused, the drunk driver, the person with AIDS.

"Christians need to be bold and reach out to the lepers of society, the ones we least want to like, the ones we are scared of," he says.

That's the kind of quiet revolution Mr. Gallup hopes for: one that could clang noisily onto the American scene, transforming lives via renewed interest in the Bible. It is a transformation even older than an ancient typewriter, containing more megabytes of power than the sleekest new computer hardware. ■

OPPORT

Rebuilding Lives in India BY RUNE HANSEN, UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES



RUNE HANSEN

TO THE OUTSIDER, INDIA CAN SEEM TO BE A BEWILDERING PLACE:

It has a billion people in an area a third the size of the United States while having more than three times the number of people. Its people speak a staggering 1,650 different languages or dialects and official languages alone number 15. ¶ It has long

suffered from poverty on a scale seldom seen anywhere else. And in recent years, it has suffered more than its share of natural disasters: a 1999 flood and cyclone in the eastern state of Orissa; flooding last year

in West Bengal and an earthquake this year that devastated the western state of Gujarat, killing at least 50,000 people.

But for all its suffering, India challenges those who, looking no further than

“big picture” statistics, neatly label it as a nation burdened by universal poverty and disaster. In the state of Kerala, in its southwestern tip, for example, literacy and life expectancy are almost as high as in developed countries.

Development across India offers striking contrasts: Its economy includes traditional village farming and modern agriculture, handicrafts and a wide range of modern industries.

If India is a land of great challenges, it is also a land of great opportunities, including the spreading of the Christian message even in difficult times of perse-

UNITY 21

cution. Tradition has it that Christianity first came to India in A.D. 52 through the Apostle Thomas, who was said to preach the gospel and convert Jewish traders in the port of Muziris. Some in India claim to be descendants of those early Christian converts.

India has become a focus of attention of *Opportunity 21*, a program to support Bible work throughout the world sponsored by the American Bible Society and United Bible Societies. *Opportunity 21* plans to raise \$90 million to promote Bible distribution around the world.

India is slated to receive \$6 million through the program. Only China will receive a larger share. The funds will be used for a variety of programs, including Bible translation. In a country where 1,650 languages are spoken, Bible translations are available in only 55. The Bible Society of India (BSI), according to a statement, is determined "to make the Word of God available to all the different people groups in the country."

Alongside Bible translations into native languages, BSI is hoping to reach the massive numbers of young people. A

Children's Bible is planned for distribution in both print and CD-ROM in 14 languages to reach the 35 percent of India's billion people who are under 15 years of age. Currently there is no Children's



▲ New Christians are baptized in a river in southern India. Their faith is being tested by radical Hindu groups.

Bible in any of the indigenous languages.

These efforts will take place in an atmosphere of persecution that, despite violence directed against Christians, has not stopped the spreading of the gospel. Christian faith is being promoted through the efforts of zealous workers such as Kumara Swami, general secretary of *Operation Mobilization (OM)*, a major partner in *Opportunity 21*.

"We can't count on the police," says Mr. Swami who, via OM leads a major evangelization and Bible distribution effort.

"When our evangelists are attacked, we always call the police," he says. "Sometimes they don't show up, sometimes they come and do nothing and there have been incidents where they

have actually participated in the attacks."

We are sitting in a hotel lobby, talking quietly. He starts looking around anxiously.

"Can we sit in the car and talk?" he whispers. Unpleasant experiences have taught him to be careful. One recent incident is on his mind.

"We were standing by our van talking openly about

our next destination. When we arrived there local Hindu extremists were waiting for us and started pelting us with stones, but we managed to escape."

Some OM evangelists have been stopped by the police and had all but personal Bibles confiscated.

"The problem is that the police think that this kind of behavior is backed by the political authorities," he says.

Since the coalition government with Prime Minister Atal Bihar Vajpayee from the Hindu nationalist party came to power in 1998, things have worsened, he says.

continued on page 24 >>

FOODS

Letting the Bible fill the spiritual emptiness often mistaken for the hunger for food.

BY PATRICIA SINCLAIR

U L

There is no doubt about it: we are hooked. Not on phonics, but on food.

The magnitude of our society's preoccupation with food and eating cannot be understated. You name it, we've got it: Anorexic, bulimic, overweight, underweight, stockiness, skinniness, grossness, slenderness — it is the American condition. It is such that moguls of the weight-loss industry spent \$25 million-plus on advertising campaigns for after-holiday guilt trips. In trying to undo years of harmful binging disorders, many Christian-based dieting programs are combining faith and fitness as a prescription for holistic healing.

Eating and enjoying the food that God has given is actually a gift. The Bible tells us in Acts 14.17b "He gives food to you and makes your hearts glad" (*Contemporary English Version*). Whether it is the delectable, delightful, sumptuous and hearty, black satin chocolate raspberry cake, or Tahitian vanilla swirls, or Torta Divina, to valentine's cake, strawberry short cake with cream filling, hot fudge sundae, or the good old American favorite apple pie and ice cream, all were given by God for our enjoyment.

The furor created both in the secular and Christian communities over what should or should not be eaten, and in what quantities, is astounding. In an interview with *The New Yorker*, Gwen Shamblin, founder of the multimillion-dollar *Weigh Down Diet* program, contends that the "fatness of America is the symptom of



STEVE NIEDORF/IMAGE BANK

a spiritual crisis: overweight people have mistaken a spiritual emptiness for hunger for food.” Could this be true?

Apparently, many Christians are taking this trend seriously. “Since God has saved us and given us abundant life why not use the same power for weight management?” was the query that started the *First Place Dieting* group over 20 years ago, said Nancy Taylor, leadership training director. The name is derived from Matthew 6.33.

The *3Ds*, *Diet Discipline and Discipleship* is just one among many other diet plans that addresses our preoccupation with food. If the *3Ds* does not work, *First Place* will teach you the difference between physical and emotional hunger. The *Step Forward Diet* takes you through a 12-step program where you are urged to “cast your cares on God, not on the refrigerator.” However, if you fall short of the 12 steps and make it only to 11, there is still help. You are welcome to partner with *Weight for Jesus*, which connects like-minded dieters through prayers and daily devotions.

Once the hoopla is over and the dust has settled, the old-fashioned way of touching the heart of God is through fasting, not dieting. The *Weight Watchers* scale is no match for the Bible with its uncontested track record. The heroics of great men and women are worth noting more so than any *Weight Watchers* point system.

Take, for instance, the prophetess Anna, about whom the Bible states, “Night and day she served God in the temple by praying and often going without eating.” (Luke 2.37b CEV). Consider King David, who demonstrated deep contrition for his

adulterous liaison with Uriah’s wife by going without eating to show his sorrow. David believed in his heart that this act of contrition along with the abstinence for food would influence the response he received from God. Queen Esther saved her people, the Jews who lived within the Persian Empire, from annihilation only after she had fasted and prayed for three days and nights.

Not all biblical references to food are about giving up gastronomic pleasure. For example, the apostle Paul argued that Jewish dietary laws should be relaxed for gentiles interested in following Jesus (Acts 15.19).

Of course, no discussion of this nature would be complete without mention of Jesus and his 40-day fast. Matthew’s Gospel states that at the end of Jesus’ 40-day fast, he was immediately led by the Holy Spirit into the desert to be tested or tempted by the devil. Rather than fulfilling the devil’s request to turn stones into bread to satisfy his hunger, Jesus responded with these words: “no one can live only on food. People need every word that God has spoken.” (Matthew 4.4 CEV). According to Jesus, the correct diet plan is to desire food for the soul.

There are other Biblical references that underscores God’s attitude on the discipline of fasting. In fact, there are even a few points in Isaiah chapter 58 on how a fast should be approached and conducted.

Although you may not earn brownie points, fasting and praying are the surefire methods for maintaining a healthy balance in life. According to the Bible, no down payment is required, and the benefits are guaranteed. ■

China Celebrates 25 Million Bibles

What's the second biggest bestseller in China? The answer, surprisingly, is the Holy Bible, ranking below only a collection of the work of Deng Xiaoping.

That interest in the Scriptures would never have taken off without the work of Amity Printing Company, a Bible publishing firm that began with the support of the United Bible Societies (UBS), the worldwide federation of Bible societies of which the American Bible Society is a member. Amity Press, which only began in 1987, recently celebrated the publishing of its 25 millionth Bible. At the event, held in Nanjing, were representatives of UBS, the China Christian Council and the State Administration for Religious Affairs.

The growth of the company has been enormous. It published its 1 millionth Bible in 1989, and now its output has increased by twenty-five fold.

During the ceremony, Bishop K.H. Ting, president of the China Christian Council, congratulated Amity Printing Company for the impact of its work.

"The Bible is no longer a foreign book in China," he said. "Many intellectuals, the university community and high school faculties and students are buying and seriously studying the Bible."

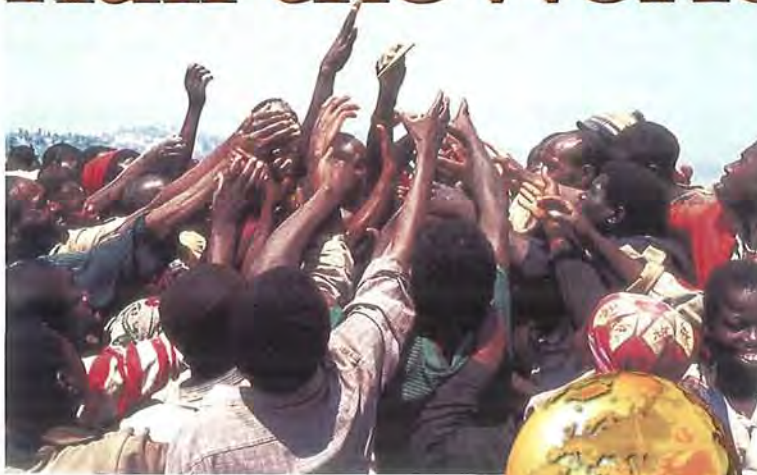
China now has 70 Bible distribution centers located throughout the country, with the exception of Tibet. Amity publishes the Scriptures in Chinese, Braille, English and seven minority languages. ■



Your June gift will bring Bibles to people in India, while your July offering will provide Scriptures here in the United States. To find out more about joining the Bible-a-Month Club, fill out the reply form below, or write:

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06201REC

ON THE SEVENTH

The Sabbath, it's not just about Sunday



HOLIDAY...

BY ELAINE NOLE

By the seventh day God had finished his work, and so he rested. God blessed the seventh day and made it special because on that day he rested from his work.

—GENESIS 2.2-3 CEV

AFTER THE CREATION, GOD RESTED. HE DIDN'T SAY, "LET ME create one more thing." Or "Let me finish one more project." No. Genesis tells us clearly, "God had finished his work, and so he rested." So the Sabbath began.

The commandments tell us to honor the Sabbath, to keep it holy. In Exodus we learn that the Sabbath was both for worshipping God, and for people, their servants and animals to rest. For centuries, Christians observed the Sabbath. Even during the heinous period of slavery in our nation's history when it was legal to own human beings as slaves, it was not acceptable for them to work on Sunday.

Yet here we are in the third millennium after Christ's birth, a nation of overworked, over-stressed individuals, who for the most part no longer observe the "rest" aspect of Sabbath. We have little time for reflection or worship. Clergy complain that children don't have time to attend religious services or Sunday school because their schedules — with sports and other extra-curricular activities — don't allow for it. Our children are now as busy as we are. We schedule "play dates" for them. As a child I just opened the door and went outside to play. Life was simpler.

When I was little I thought "Sabbath" was an observance just for Jews. It was their "Sunday," their day off from work and their day to worship while the rest of us did our Saturday things — played, went shopping with our parents, and perhaps visited the library. At least that's how we did it in our house. On Sunday mornings we would go to church together as a family and then go to my grandparents in the afternoon. There was a predictable routine to our lives, and while we may not have dis-

cussed it or thought of it as Sabbath, we were clear on what Sunday meant. It was God's day, a day of rest and worship, and a day to be with family. It was not about squeezing in a couple of hours on that work project or about standing on line at Kmart to take advantage of the weekend sale. In fact, in an era when blue laws were still intact, it was rare to find any stores open except for the requisite bakery where we bought our crumb buns and the stationery store where we bought our newspaper. Even finding a drugstore open involved a trek and divine guidance. The only people who worked on Sunday were the ones who had to — doctors, nurses, police officers and firefighters.

Like everyone else, today I find myself more and more pressed for time, with weekends for catching up on whatever I haven't been able to do during the week — laundry, banking and other errands. I yearn for a slower pace and I know I'm not alone. We are a nation booked to the hilt. Perhaps it is time to reconsider the value of Sabbath.

The root of Sabbath has been variously defined as "to separate," "to cease, desist," "coming or bringing to an end," and "pausing" or "sitting calmly." Sabbath was intended to be a time apart. It created a distinction in our lives. "When we lost Sabbath, we lost the sacredness of time," says The Rev. Donna Schaper in her book *Sabbath Sense: A Spiritual Antidote for the Overworked*.

There is little distinction between work and rest. When was the last time you "sat calmly"? In our culture we equate busyness with a meaningful life. But a busy life is not necessarily a full one. In fact, sometimes it's just the opposite.

The Scriptures instruct us, "Be still and know I am God." (Psalm 46.10) If stillness is a prerequisite to knowing God, it's a wonder that any of us in our fast-paced culture know him at all. Even regular Sunday worship does not guarantee that we will know God if we approach it as just one more item to cross off our to-do list. Being physically present in a church is not enough. True Sabbath requires a more meditative state, resting in God's presence. It requires that we stand still and be still. In fact, Sabbath requires that we just "be." Ms. Schaper talks about the value of being over doing in order to restore what she calls "Sabbath sense."

This relationship between rest and spirituality is not new. In Genesis we learned that God rested on the Seventh Day. We talk about "resting in the Spirit." But perhaps rest is not just a component of spirituality but a prelude to it. A balanced life gives one time for both work and rest. Perhaps this is what Jesus meant in the Gospel. He wanted us not to do away with the Sabbath. But he said we need to balance what needs to be done, for example, helping a neighbor and feeding the hungry, with what is nonessential.

How many of our Sabbath activities are really essential? Each must decide for himself. As for me, I want to start celebrating Sabbath. I want to make that distinction and give my soul a rest. ■

June 15 - September 15, 2001

The Holy Land through the Eyes of Explorers

The 63 photographs on display at the Gallery at the American Bible Society, dating from 1890 to 1925, explore the Holy Land's history and religious heritage. The exhibition is a unique photo visit to the land of the Bible as seen by the pioneering scholars of the *École Biblique* of Jerusalem.

Since its foundation in 1890 by French Dominican fathers, the *École Biblique* of Jerusalem has been a preeminent research center and school for biblical and archaeological studies. The *École Biblique's* location in the Holy Land, its faculty's reputation and its internationally renowned library have attracted scholars and students of many faiths.

This collection includes more than 20,000 photographs of the Holy Land and Near East, dating from the turn of the 19th century. Many of the photographs represent an irreplaceable record of a way of life that has now disappeared.

The national touring exhibition of *The Holy Land through the Eyes of Explorers* was organized by the American Friends of the *École Biblique*, 7200 W. Division Street, River Forest, IL 60305. ■

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **June 28, 5:30 - 6:30 pm**
F. E. Peters, Professor of Middle East Studies, History and Religion, New York University
Pilgrims, Explorers and Tourists: The Changing Faces of Jerusalem
- **July 12, 5:30 - 6:30 pm**
John Monson, Professor of Archaeology, Wheaton College
Shifting Sands: The Historical Geography of the Holy Land
- **July 26, 5:30 - 6:30 pm**
Julia Ballerini, Ph.D.
Early Travel Photography of the Holy Land
- **August 9, 5:30 - 6:30 pm**
Rev. Marcel Sigrist, O.P., Professor and former Director, *École Biblique*, Jerusalem
Archaeology, History and the Bible

FOR THE RECORD

100 YEARS AGO

Famous Americans Speak to ABS Cause

Issues of the *American Bible Society (ABS) Record* in the summer of 1901 were filled with accounts of famous Americans addressing issues involving the Bible cause.

One was W.E.B. DuBois, a founder of the NAACP. A professor at Atlanta University at the time, he told the American Bible Society about the need to minister to black Americans.



The Rev. J.B. Wragg

The *Record* editors endorsed the outreach to black Americans, noting: "In the school and church life of this people there are coming forward many who have the gift of leadership and who can perhaps better reach their own people than any other missionary workers."

The *American Bible Society Record* announced that the ministry to black Americans would be spearheaded by the Rev. J.B. Wragg, a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Newnan, Ga.

Another famous American addressing concerns dear to ABS that summer was then Vice President Theodore Roosevelt.

In an address to the Long Island Bible Society, the vice-president emphasized the importance of Bible education.

He said that the Bible had such an impact on civic life that it would be "impossible for us to figure to ourselves what that life would be if these teachings were removed. We would lose almost all the standards by which we now judge both public and private morals."

Mr. Roosevelt concluded: "If we read the Bible, we read a book which teaches us to go forth and do the work of the Lord; to do the work of the Lord as we find it; to try to make things better in this world, even if only a little better, because we have lived in it."

Within months, he had an opportunity to practice what he preached. Following the assassination of President William McKinley in September, Theodore Roosevelt became the 26th president. ■



“Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples”

Jesus Christ

At the American Bible Society, we take Jesus’ Great Commission seriously. In fact, over the past 30 years, in cooperation with the United Bible Societies (UBS), we have distributed over 14 billion Bibles and Scripture Portions.

Yet, there are still millions who have yet to hear of God’s love for them.

Won’t you help us in our effort to complete Jesus’ Great Commission?

Remember the American Bible Society in your Will. To learn more, complete the following.

- Please send me a copy of the ABS Will planning guide, “A Legacy of Hope.”
- I am considering including ABS in my Will.
- I have remembered the American Bible Society in my Will.
- I have a specific question. Please call me.

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RECJUN01

APPRECIATING PROFILES IN COURAGE

RETIRED ATTORNEY WARREN

Cole of Daytona Beach, Fla., knows he's been blessed. At this stage in his life, he readily appreciates the small things.

Whether it's time spent with his wife Rose Mary in their eighth floor condo overlooking the ocean; regular Bible study classes, or just the news that his law school alma mater, Duke University (Class of 1950), has won a national basketball championship, Mr. Cole — described by some around Daytona Beach as the prototypical Southern gentleman — keeps busy in his retirement.

"On any big decision, I pray on it," he notes.

As a successful attorney in booming, post-war Florida, Mr. Cole has accumulated many blessings. In return, he has looked to spread those blessings. One commitment he has made is in the American Bible Society (ABS), the recent recipient of a generous charitable gift annuity from Mr. Cole.

He admires the ABS for its mission to spread the Bible. A Presbyterian elder, he believes that mission is worth supporting for its importance to all of Christianity.

"It's a fundamental necessity for the world," he says. "Various denominations can get at cross-purposes on theological points. But ABS' dedication to the Bible is non-denominational."

Mr. Cole is part of that generation whose faith and work habits were forged by the experiences of the Depression and World War II.

Born in Massachusetts, he came to Florida when he was 5 years old. He graduated from high school in 1944 and went to Naval officer training school. The Navy, as fate would have it, helped to pay his

BY PETER FEUERHERD

way through two Miami universities — the one in Florida and the other in Oxford, Ohio.

After earning his law degree at Duke, he returned to Daytona Beach where he practiced all forms of legal work, excluding criminal law. His successful practice has allowed him to retire and pursue other interests, including regular Bible school classes.

He and Rose Mary have five children and four grandchildren. Special prayers have been focused on his



Warren and Rose Mary Cole

grandson Matthew of Houston, Texas.

Now 15, at eight months of age Matthew was in a severe fire. Doctors at the time gave him only a 40 percent chance of survival. While he lived through the experience, thanks in large part to the work of the Shriners Hospital in Galveston, Texas, Matthew has not had an easy time of it.

"He's had more problems than anyone since Job," says Mr. Cole, noting that his grandson has gone through more than 50 operations and, because of a severe reaction to needed medication, deafness.

In his Bible study, Mr. Cole has gravitated towards characters that exhibit courage. His favorite biblical figure is Stephen, the first deacon in the early church whose martyrdom is described in the Book of Acts.

"He told them off," said Mr. Cole. "And of course he paid the price. I just admired his courage."

It's those stories of courage that Mr. Cole wants to encourage in his retirement years. ■

More information about planned giving programs sponsored by the American Bible Society can be obtained by calling the Planned Gift Programs Department at 1-800-820-6227.

BIBLE IN THE NEWS

Changes in biblical translation chronicled

■ *Christianity Today* reports that Scripture translation in mission regions has been transformed by advances in technology over the past few decades.

Wycliffe Bible Translators — an organization that has partnered with the American Bible Society and other Bible societies to make the Scriptures accessible to all — notes that because of computer technology and other advances, it has been able to nearly cut in half the time it takes to translate the New Testament.

Back in 1982, such translations took some 15 years. Now they only take about eight.

Wycliffe reports that translators in the field are now able to instantaneously communicate with their home offices via e-mail, a process that just 20 years ago could take up to five months via traditional mail.

While productivity has skyrocketed, the Bible translation effort is far from complete. Of the more than 6,500 known languages, only 2,261 have a complete Bible translation. It is estimated that 380 million people still await a Bible translation in their native languages.

Exhibit affirms faith of Japanese artist

■ *Religion News Service* writer Chris Herlinger reports that a recent American Bible Society exhibit vividly illustrates the strong Christian faith of Japanese folk artist Watanabe Sadao (1913-96).

Watanabe's work placed biblical themes in a Japanese setting. For example, the Last Supper includes Jesus and his disciples enjoying a meal of fish and rice. In another example, John baptizes Jesus while wearing a kimono.

The Gallery at the American Bible Society exhibit, held in New York this spring, featured 59 Watanabe prints drawn from the collection of art historian Anne H.H. Pyle.

Watanabe, the son of a printer, converted to Christianity as a young man after nearly dying of tuberculosis.

Patricia Pongracz, curator for the exhibit, notes that Watanabe's work offered a response to the spiritual despair that afflicted postwar Japan.

"It was like a phoenix rising," she says of Watanabe's faith. "It was an expression of faith when there was little faith around."

ABS project wins rave review

■ *The Philadelphia Inquirer* notes that the CD-ROM version of the American Bible Society *CEV Learning Bible* takes the guilt out of Scripture reading.

The reviewer writes that the Bible has transformed Western culture. Yet it remains a difficult read for many.

"If you are among those who want to get past the stumbling blocks to reading and understanding the Bible, consider this CD-ROM version," the newspaper review says.

The article raves about the helpful maps and study guides throughout the Bible. The CD-ROM version offers "a collection of art revolving around biblical themes," "commentaries and articles on the book's contents," and information on "the cultural and geopolitical currents of the ancient Middle East."

Information on the *Learning Bible*, both in print and CD-ROM versions, can be obtained on the Internet at www.americanbible.org.

Biblical news from the United Kingdom

■ *Newsweek* reports that a London East End teacher has translated the Bible into Cockney slang. Among the changes from traditional English: Noah's boat is referred to as a "nanny goat," bread is called "Uncle Fred," and sons are referred to as "currant buns." ■

update

NATIONAL

■ FLORIDA

The name of the American Bible Society's outreach to Latinos in the United States has changed. Formerly known as the *Sociedad Bíblica Americana*, the new entity is called the Office of Latino Affairs (OLA). The new name is a way of fully identifying the Plantation, Fla., based office with the wider work of the American Bible Society, noted the Rev. Emilio A. Reyes, vice president for Latino Affairs for the American Bible Society.

All aspects of Spanish-language American Bible Society outreach is a part of the work of OLA.

One of the first efforts by the newly-named office was a recent outreach to residents of *Edificio Casa Granada*, a housing development in downtown Miami built by the East Little Havana Community Development Corp., a non-profit group devoted to promoting home ownership among Spanish-speaking immigrants.

The event, called *Noche de Buenas Nuevas*

(Night of Good News), was brought together by a number of Christian groups. Mr. Reyes was joined at the event by Dr. Marco Antonio Ramos from the South Florida Center for Theological Studies, the Rev. Florentino Almeida from the Soldier of Christ Church and the Rev. Miguel Gomez from Santa Barbara Church.

The homeowners enthusiastically welcomed the Bibles.

"I rejoice when I see so many people receiving the Word of God," said Mr. Reyes. "This project has been launched to reach hard-working people who have recently moved to this country and have limited resources. Now, thanks to the project they may own a home. So we thought that it would be great to give them a Bible when they move into their homes."

■ MICHIGAN

Zondervan Publishing, based in Grand Rapids, and the American Bible Society have announced an agreement under which Zondervan will become the exclusive commercial publisher for the *Good News Translation (GNT)* Bible. The translation was previously known as *Today's English Version* and the *Good News Bible*.

Zondervan is the world's largest Bible publisher. The *GNT* is a proprietary translation of the American Bible Society, which will continue to publish the translation for the church market.

The *GNT* translation — known for its everyday language — is estimated to be in the homes of 20 percent of Americans. Zondervan and ABS are committed to making it available in a variety of electronic and audio formats, as well as in specialty editions for devotional readers, new believers, those whose second language is English, youth and children. ■



The Office of Latino Affairs (OLA) of the American Bible Society recently distributed Scriptures during *A Night of Good News* in Miami. From left are Beatriz Duarte of OLA, the Rev. Miguel Gomez, Amparo Tabuada, and Emilio Reyes, vice president for Latino Affairs.

■ ENGLAND

In complete or partial form, the Bible is now available in 2,261 languages, an increase of 28 over the course of a year. The figures were compiled in the *2000 Scripture Language Report* published by United Bible Societies (UBS), based in Reading, England.

The report includes information compiled by the American Bible Society (ABS). UBS is the worldwide federation of Bible Societies, of which ABS is a member.

Last year, 16 Portions of the Bible were registered in languages that had no recorded Scriptures before 2000. Informed estimates put the number of languages spoken in the world at 6,500.

■ UKRAINE

An American-born conductor has staged a musical drama of Christ's Passion performed by the Kiev Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. The drama was sponsored in part by the Ukrainian Bible Society.

Roger McMurrin moved to Kiev in 1993 with his wife, Diane. He serves as a pastor of Holy Trinity Church, leads Bible study classes and coordinates assistance for the poor, as well as serving as a conductor.

Kiev residents listen to Rev. McMurrin's Kiev Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in concert halls as well as on television. He is also host of a Christians arts program on Ukrainian television.

■ BRAZIL

The Bible Society of Brazil has pledged to continue working among prisoners in the wake of the most violent and widespread jail rebellion in the country's history. Twelve prisoners died

and several people, including police officers, were injured when riots broke out in 29 prisons simultaneously in February.

Erni Seibert, Bible Society of Brazil communications director, noted, "Hundred of volunteers work among prisoners with great dedication, trying to help them change their lives by bringing them close to God through reading the Scriptures. This work will continue to be done."

Mr. Seibert noted that social workers and prison volunteers who were in the prisons at the time of the riot were not physically harmed.

■ NORWAY

A recent celebration in Tysfjord marked the translation of the New Testament Bible into Lule Sami, a language spoken by a group that traditionally followed the herds of reindeer around the snowy wastes of the Arctic. Today they live in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

The translation was completed by four Lule Sami from Norway and four from Sweden. It took three years to complete at a cost of \$468,000.

Asked why it was worth such an effort for just a few thousand people, Anne Lisbeth Lagset of the Norwegian Bible Society responded, "Everyone is entitled to hear and read God's Word in his or her own language." ■

▼ **Queen Margrethe II of Denmark; the Rev. Morton Aagaard, center, general secretary of the Danish Bible Society; and Bent Rohde, graphic designer, look at some of the Queen's illustrations used in the National and Family Bible published by the Danish Bible Society. (Photo by Rune Hansen.)**



“Even though the government officially backs the constitution [which guarantees religious freedom] there is no doubt about what they actually stand for. With slogans like ‘India for Hindus’ and ‘Only Hindus are Patriots,’ they whip up a hostile attitude towards Muslims and Christians. Backed by this policy of silent endorsement, the Hindu extremists can continue their physical terror,” notes Mr. Swami.

Dr. B.K. Pramanik, general secretary of the Bible Society of India, notes that the charge that Christians practice forced conversions has hurt the church in his country.

Yet, he argues, “You can’t force anyone to become a Christian. It will always be an individual and voluntary decision. A genuine spiritual change only takes place where God’s spirit works in each individual.”

Still, the vast majority of Hindus repudiate the hate campaigns. Last year George Fernandes, then India’s defense minister, praised the impact that Christianity has on the nation.

“The ultimate test of your patriotism is what you do and what you don’t do,” he says in a recent magazine article.

He acknowledges that whether Christian missionaries should convert people will continue to be a protracted debate in India. Yet, he says, the missionaries have

FAST FACTS

Population: 1 billion

Annual income per capita: \$440 (U.S.)

Government: a coalition led by the Bharatiya Janata Party

Languages: India has 15 official languages. English enjoys associate status but is the most important language for national, political, and commercial communication. Hindi is the national language and primary tongue of 30 percent of the people.

Literacy: 52 percent

Religious profile: Hindu (83 percent), Muslim (12 percent), Christian (2 percent), Sikh (2 percent), Buddhist and Jain (together about 1 percent).

Background: In recent years Christians, who number about 40 million, have suffered from church bombings and violence at the hands of radical Hindus. Some commentators say the radicals regard adherence to any other religions as indicating a lower degree of commitment to India, others that the attacks are a response to the way social work performed by Christians is posing a challenge to the inequalities of India’s caste system. Some Christians charge that the attacks take place with the connivance of the party that heads the coalition government.

“done work to raise the level of consciousness of the people through education, giving a sense of dignity to the people through institutions which look after health needs. ... So providing education, health facilities, and creating good citizens can’t generate anti-national feelings in the people. If anything, I believe they generate a sense of loyalty towards the nation.”

Christians in India continue to build

that loyalty not only to their country but to their faith as well. Their numbers have skyrocketed in the past century: from 1.5 million in 1851 to 8.4 million in 1951 to more than 40 million today. They are, after Muslims, India’s second largest religious minority. Christians there continue to look forward to the future despite — or maybe, as it’s been proven time and again over the centuries around the world — *because* of persecution. ■

IN MEMORIAM

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

My Wife,
Mrs. Jane W. Alonso
Given by: Wesley J. Alonso

Emil Brakensiek
*Given by: Arrow
Adhesives Co.*

Our neighbor,
Filomena D’Arbenzio
*Given by: George & Dolores
Frenzel*

My Father-in-Law,
Rev. Dr. Robert O.
Franklin
*Given by: Rev. Dr. Ralph M.
Reed*

Hans Kunz
*Given by: Mrs. Marguerite
Manley*

Caroll, Florence and Dale
Voss
*Given by: Arrow
Adhesives Co.*

Memorials of \$500 or more for one individual or family unit will be published in the American Bible Society Record.

For further details about the memorial program, please write to:

Donor Relations, American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York NY 10023-7505.

to the editor

We welcome letters from our readers. Letters should be fewer than 300 words and focused on articles that have appeared in the Record. We reserve the right to edit them for clarity or space considerations. You can send your letters to: Editor, American Bible Society Record, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023-7505. You can also reach us via e-mail at pfueberd@americanbible.org

Thoughts on forgiveness

Re: the story on biblical forgiveness in the December/January issue.

People most often have a problem with forgiveness because they somehow think their forgiveness minimizes the deed or makes it all right. This is not so.

We need to remember that while Christ forgives us he never approves of a sinful deed. Forgiveness does not mean approval. It means something is so bad, there is no other remedy except forgiveness.

Forgiveness should be reserved for those situations for which there is no repair, no restitution. The price of forgiveness may seem expensive, but it carries rewards to those who are willing to pay the price. Forgiveness is as much for the forgiver as it is for the forgiven.

Just a little talk with Jesus can set many things straight. Are you willing to forgive? If not, are you willing to be made willing to forgive? Jesus can do that for you, if you let Him know.

Mary A. LaClair
Vernon, N.Y.

Bridging the racial divide

I received your publication with the cover story on racial reconciliation [February/March].

The article brought out that the participants focused on their differences, specifically the color of their skin. Does our God in Three Persons see the color of our skin? Then there is the quote from Reanetta Waldman: "My ancestors suffered so I still feel some of that suffering." Really? How is a posture like that supposed to help in bridging the "racial divide"?

When are we going to stop reminding each generation of the negatives and start focusing on the positives in our history of racial relations here in America? ... When it comes to forgiving and forgetting in areas such as our racial history we seem to want to remind each generation of the negative parts of that history. What is the purpose of reminding? It is simply to prevent forgetting. But basic behavioral science will tell you that we will never achieve any significant reconciliation until we let it all go, forgiving and forgetting it all.

Bill Sebl
Oakdale, Calif.

A blessing

The Quiet Time Scripture readings in the *Record* [page 26] have been a blessing to me. I read the Bible selection in the morning after prayer.

I like the topic for the month. It gives a single thought to the readings.

Dorothy Christmas
Montclair, N.J.

A daily habit

Each morning after showering and before breakfast, I read the selections appointed for that day in the lectionary of the *Episcopal Book of Common Prayer* and I then read the selection appointed for that day in the ABS Daily Bible Reading Guide.

I look forward to this feature in every issue of the *Record*. It is a welcome addition to my daily Bible study.

Edward E. Krause
Wynnewood, Pa.

quiet time

We hope you will use this guide in your daily study of the Bible, and that you will write to tell us what you think of this feature and how you use it.

PLEASE PRAY

In June and July, the United Bible Societies ask for prayers for the work of Bible societies in South America, including:

ECUADOR – Pray for the people of Ecuador, many of whom are struggling economically, and ask God that we will be able to bring them blessing and comfort through his Word.

PERU – Pray for two programs in particular: *Bread of Life*, which aims to provide breakfast and Scriptures to needy children, and *Peru: There is Hope!* which gives material and spiritual help to the country's poorest people in the area of Huancavelica.

CHILE – Give thanks for our radio series *Evangelical Listeners*, broadcast by stations throughout the country; for the *Prisons* program and for the *Keep Away from Drugs* program. Pray that our distribution programs for soccer fans and school students continue to be successful.

BRAZIL – Ask God that *Studying with the Bible* — a series of nine books on Christian education — will boost outreach to young people and children.

PARAGUAY – Pray for a solution to the political crisis here, which has caused profound social and economic problems. Prayers are needed for the many poverty-stricken children who have been abandoned by their families and are forced to beg for survival.

JULY

Growing in Faith and Trusting in God's Kindness and Mercy

SUNDAY

- 1 Psalm 23
- 2 Psalm 25
- 3 Psalm 26
- 4 Psalm 27
- 5 Psalm 28
- 6 Psalm 32
- 7 Psalm 57

SUNDAY

- 8 Isaiah 40.1-11
- 9 Isaiah 41.1-20
- 10 Isaiah 43.1-13
- 11 Isaiah 43.14-28
- 12 Isaiah 48.1-11
- 13 Isaiah 48.12-22
- 14 Isaiah 49.1-13

SUNDAY

- 15 Isaiah 49.14-26
- 16 Jeremiah 31.1-14
- 17 Jeremiah 31.15-26
- 18 Jeremiah 33.1-13
- 19 Hosea 6.1-11
- 20 Hosea 11.1-11
- 21 Hosea 14.1-9

SUNDAY

- 22 Joel 1.1-20
- 23 Joel 2.10-17
- 24 Joel 2.18-27
- 25 Jonah 3.1-10
- 26 Zephaniah 3.8-20
- 27 Zechariah 10.1-12
- 28 Psalm 86

SUNDAY

- 29 Psalm 103
- 30 Matthew 18.21-35
- 31 Titus 3.1-11

AUGUST

Growing in Faith and Building Up the Body of Christ

- 1 Luke 12.1-21
- 2 Luke 12.22-48
- 3 Luke 12.49-59
- 4 Luke 13.1-21

SUNDAY

- 5 Ephesians 6.1-24
- 6 1 Thessalonians 1.1-10
- 7 1 Thessalonians 4.1-12
- 8 1 Thessalonians 4.13 – 5.11
- 9 1 Thessalonians 5.12-28
- 10 1 Timothy 1.1-11
- 11 1 Timothy 1.12-20

SUNDAY

- 12 1 Timothy 2.1-15
- 13 1 Timothy 3.1-16
- 14 1 Timothy 4.1-16
- 15 1 Timothy 5.1-25
- 16 1 Timothy 6.1-21
- 17 2 Timothy 1.1-18
- 18 2 Timothy 2.1-13

SUNDAY

- 19 2 Timothy 2.14-26
- 20 2 Timothy 3.1-17
- 21 2 Timothy 4.1-22
- 22 Titus 1.1-16
- 23 Hebrews 13.1-25
- 24 James 1.1-11
- 25 James 1.12-27

SUNDAY

- 26 James 2.1-13
- 27 James 2.14-26
- 28 James 5.7-20
- 29 2 Peter 1.1-21
- 30 2 Peter 2.1-22
- 31 2 Peter 3.1-18

CONVERTS IN NIGERIA SEEK SCRIPTURES

PAMBEGUA, NIGERIA – BIBLES AND THE Hausa New Testament on audio cassette were two items requested by the Rev. Mohamed Ishakue, who is in charge of a special rehabilitation center here.

The center was established by the Rev. Isaya Audu, a university lecturer who was concerned for new Christian converts suffering persecution. When a Hausa-Fulani person converts, members of their community often put pressure on them to renounce their new faith. If they refuse, they are beaten and dispossessed.

These people are often in need of a refuge where they can deepen their knowledge of the Scriptures and grow in faith.

“Most of the people come to the center because they have been threatened by their parents or their relatives,” said Mr. Ishakue. Even at the center the Christian converts are not beyond danger, and, in some cases, they are moved to another, more Christian area.

One such convert is B., whose full name is not used here to protect his identity.

When B. became a Christian he lost his house, his lands and even his inheritance. The head of his family forced him to leave the area and warned him never to return. He has nowhere to live, and nobody in his area is willing to employ him. Without financial support, he cannot marry. Often it is only through the support of the churches that new converts can ever get married.

At the center, Mr. Ishakue runs Bible studies in the evenings, but his resources are limited. Although the Bible Society of Nigeria (BSN) provides some Scriptures for the center, many of the refugees in the center lack reading skills. Following a suggestion from BSN, Mr. Ishakue is investigating setting up a *Scripture Listening Program* in which new converts can hear the Scriptures in their own language.

But a cassette translation of the Scriptures into the Fulani language is not yet available. Still the BSN is planning to provide appropriate Scriptures for outreach to the many groups in northern Nigeria through funds from



GEORFREY STAMP

Opportunity 21, an effort spearheaded by the American Bible Society to promote Bible distribution around the world.

Opportunity 21 is a \$90 million campaign funding 375 projects in more than 60 nations over the next three years.

▲ **The Rev. Mohamed Ishakue runs a refuge for new Christian converts in Nigeria.**

(This article is based on a story by Geoffrey Stamp, a photojournalist who recently traveled to Nigeria to report on Scripture distribution for the United Bible Societies.)

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