

RECORD

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the gospel story *page 12*

TRADITION RENEWED

Translation work brings new life to Choctaw Indian Bible.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sharing God's Word

The Word that gives life was from the beginning. —John 1.1a CEV

In the previous *Record* I wrote about our new look, built on a refined brand mark that shows God's word as a source of light and hope. And graphically speaking, what began as a transition to our new look in the July/August *Record*, gets its full expression in this one.

Our new logo, in its fullest expression, includes the motto, "Sharing God's Word with the World." That's the story behind every story in our magazine. It's our reason for being.

Last year we distributed more than 77 million Scriptures in this country and assisted the world fellowship of 135 United Bible Societies with \$19 million to distribute another 507 million Scriptures in hundreds of other countries.

In addition to making God's Word available we also make it accessible, translating the Scriptures into new languages and formats every year. ABS has participated in translating at least some portion of Scripture into 20 native American languages, doing current translation work in Navajo, Gullah, Yup'ik, and Choctaw [see story page 6].

ABS has taken a lead role in *Opportunity 21*, the largest Scripture promotion effort in history [see the October/November 1999 *Record*], committing \$60 million over the next three years to help fund more than 375 distribution, translation, publishing, and capital improvement projects in more than 75 countries. But these are just numbers. What matters is the end result—rescued lives, transformed by the living Word who is Jesus Christ.

In 1947, ABS General Secretary Frederick W. Cropp articulated the heart of the ABS mission stating, "The Bible must be open and read. We need to read and know about the Bible in order to meet the daily battles of life ... it is realized that Bibles translated accurately in the idiom of the people, published ... and distributed ... are of no practical value until they have been read and acted upon ..."

In *Eat This Book*, Eugene H. Peterson writes, "We grow in accordance with the revealed Word implanted in us by the (God's) Spirit ... As we read this book, we come to realize that it is not primarily informational ... but formational, shaping us into our true being."

This Word that we share—God's Word—is nourishment for new life.



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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.

Published continually since 1818, the *American Bible Society Record* is the official periodical of the American Bible Society and the second oldest continuous publication in the United States. It is published six times per year, and is sent to anyone contributing \$4 or more each year to the Society. Postage is paid at New York, New York, and additional mailing offices. Other publications wishing to reproduce any of the articles contained herein are encouraged to do so. A credit line acknowledging the source of the material and a copy of the issue containing such material would be appreciated.



ON THE COVER: Choctaw school child during dance program. (Photo by Dean Schauer, courtesy of Wycliffe Bible Translators.)

RECORD

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

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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.americانبible.org

Opportunity

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GOD'S WORD: LIGHT FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

LAST YEAR
67 MILLION REQUESTS
FOR SCRIPTURES
WENT UNMET
IN 80
COUNTRIES.

THAT'S WHERE WE COME IN.





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 What is the meaning of hyssop in the Scriptures? (W.D.C., submitted via e-mail)

A The word "hyssop" is the usual translation for the Hebrew word "ezov." The references in the Bible probably pertain to the Syrian hyssop, or marjoram, a shrub with thin branches, gray-green leaves and small, white flowers growing in spikes. It is generally agreed that it is not the European hyssop, a garden herb in the mint family that does not grow in the Middle East.

In Hebrew tradition, the hyssop symbolized humility. It is associated with sacrifice in the Old Testament. A bundle of hyssop served as a brush with which the blood of the sacrificial lamb was sprinkled on door posts during the first Passover in Egypt (Exodus 12.22). Hyssop was used to sprinkle cleansing blood on the people of Israel (Exodus 24.6-8, Leviticus 14.4). The writer of Psalm 51 referred to sacrifice symbolically when he cried to God for forgiveness: "Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean." In this passage, hyssop is also regarded as a symbol of purification. ■

TRUSTEES

Where His Heart Is

As a Navy pilot in World War II, Harold Clark Bennett heard a call to the ministry, a vocation he heard as "clear and urgent."

Fifty years of ministry as a pastor culminated in his work as president/treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1979 to 1992, a denomination he led through years of growth in numbers and influence.

Dr. Bennett is now enjoying retirement in a summer home in the mountains of North Carolina and much of the rest of the year at the home he and his wife, Phylliss, share in Brentwood, Tenn.

While he has no pastorate or active post in his denomination, Dr. Bennett has never really retired. As an active board member of the American Bible Society, he spends time nearly every month shuttling to Bible House in New York City. His frequent flying is the result of a labor of love.

"I feel the mission of ABS is parallel to my mission in life. ... My ministry has been devoted to getting people to read and understand the Bible. The distribution of the Bible by ABS falls right where my heart is," he says.

Since 1979, he has served on various ABS board committees.



Dr. Harold Clark Bennett

But perhaps the project dearest to him is the 10-year effort to produce *The Learning Bible*, an ABS book published this year. *The Learning Bible*, an effort Dr. Bennett helped supervise through his work on the ABS board, combines a *Contemporary English Version* text with hundreds of maps, illustrations and notations to guide readers through the sometimes complex world of the Bible.

The Bible is still a bestseller, "but there's a need to get people to read and understand it," says Dr. Bennett. ■

TRADITION

Translation work brings new life to Choctaw Indian Bible.

RENEWED

Biblical translation is often imagined as scholars pouring over ancient texts in musty libraries.

That's one kind.

But don't look for biblical translator Pam Smith there. Instead, you are more likely to find her chatting at her kitchen table with her husband Roy at their home in Philadelphia, Miss. They talk in bilingual harmony, chatting in Choctaw, the dialect of their Native American tribe, and Southern-style American English.

It is a typical American scene: Mom and Dad at the kitchen table, their son, Reagan, 23, and their daughter, Annette, 15, coming in and out from work and social gatherings. Yet



Roy and Pam Smith

there is something atypically holy going on in the Smith home.

Frequently Pam and Roy, who works as a residence director at a local Choctaw school, grapple with the intricacies of finding the words in their trib-

al language which can best communicate the Scriptures.

"Do we have a word for shoreline?" Mrs. Smith asks her husband as she pores over Genesis 49.13-15, which describes Jacob's promise to his sons that they will possess a wide band of territory as God's Chosen People.

The Smiths are stumped. There is no such word for the Choctaw, who have historically

By Peter Feuerherd



lived in landlocked areas of eastern Mississippi and Oklahoma, and have no experience of oceanfront property. They concede they might have to just insert an English word.

Biblical translation is not about simply consulting dictionaries. For the Choctaws, it involves a give-and-take, locating the proper meaning for words and how they best communicate God's Word.

It is a slow, laborious and painstaking process. A new translation of the Choctaw Bible—a New Testament in Choctaw was first published by the American Bible Society (ABS) in 1848—is still in process, and has taken more than a decade. Wycliffe Bible Translators began the project, and now ABS has joined the effort as an active partner.

To date Mrs. Smith and others on the team have translated the Book of Luke, Jonah, and parts of Isaiah, Amos, James, and 2 Thessalonians, as well as videos depicting the Christmas and Easter stories.

Scripture, including the old and new translations, are sold through the mail and via local churches. And, once a year, a table featuring various Choctaw Scripture materials, including videos, pamphlets, and T-shirts, are sold at an annual fair held near Philadelphia. The summer fair brings together Choctaw people from across the U.S., as well as locals and tourists interested in Native American culture. At this year's fair, many of the Scripture materials sold out as fair patrons, enjoying cultural dances and the Choctaw game of stickball—a variation on lacrosse used in traditional

times as a means to settle disputes—purchased items.

While Mississippi is sacred to the Choctaw, most live in Oklahoma, where they were banished by the U.S. government in the "Trail of Tears" in the 1830s.

At that time, President Andrew Jackson attempted a massive relocation of Native Americans living in the eastern U.S. to areas west of the Mississippi River. One of his targets were the Choctaws who, ironically, fought on the U.S. side at the Battle of New Orleans, the triumph in the War of 1812 which earned Jackson his political fame.

A remnant remained in Mississippi on their ancient tribal lands. Mississippi Choctaw now number about 10,000, and live on tribal lands as well as in the local towns. Most are Christians, a tradition brought by missionaries in the 1820s.

Once mired in poverty, economic development over the past decade has transformed the tribe. New industries, including a lucrative casino, a greeting card factory and a facility producing parts for airport people movers, have transformed a region where once there was more than 80 percent unemployment. Now there is practically full employment. The tribal leadership runs the businesses, and shares the wealth with its people through scholarships and other programs.

While the tribe is enjoying unparalleled economic prosperity—evidence is found in the new homes and schools put up by the tribe which dot the area—the Choctaw language itself has not been so fortunate. Inter marriage, television, and even increased education in English-language schools erode its impact.

Ken York, a Choctaw school principal and the first member of his tribe to earn a doctorate, is working to reverse that trend as a member of the Choctaw Bible Translation Committee.

The project has more than just a religious significance, says Mr. York, a member of St. Theresa's Catholic Church.

"Language transmits culture. If we don't have the language, we will just be like everyone else," he says.

Choctaw is a traditionally oral language, without a large written tradition. Perhaps the most important written material in Choctaw is the 1848 ABS New Testament. It was written in a language, contemporary in its time, now archaic to many Choctaw speakers today. It is still revered by many Choctaw

▼ Pam Smith, right, consults with Lucinda Jim.



Christians as a sacred text given by God to the tribe. The translators of the new version, respecting that tradition, emphasize that they plan to supplement, not replace, the older text.

Mr. York, who also teaches Choctaw language at a local college, notes that having the Scriptures and a biblical video series in modern Choctaw will eventually prove invaluable.

With such material, "in 100 years from now people will be able to come and learn (the language). This is one way of continuing it."

For Mrs. Smith, who has worked on the project for the past five years, the translation effort has been a spiritual as well as a cultural awakening.

The daughter of a Baptist pastor, Mrs. Smith notes that the Scriptures come alive for her as she pores over the meanings in the sacred text.

Every day, work in the tiny trailer office of the Choctaw Bible Translation Committee begins with a prayer in both English and Choctaw. The prayer is shared by Geri and Harry Harm, two mission translators who came to Mississippi 16 years ago to start the project, and Lucinda Jim, a Choctaw who provides feedback and insights on language usage. Each



translation is also gone over by an evaluation team of Choctaw speakers representing churches in the area.

"We have to internalize what it's saying in English and then put it into my language. It takes great thought," says Mrs. Smith.

Mrs. Jim, a member of a local charismatic congregation, grew up in an atmosphere in which God was often seen as a non-Choctaw speaker.

"As a child I never paid attention. I always thought church was for older people," says the mother of four.

Now she prays in a combination of Choctaw and English. She is confident that she is heard.

"God understands what I'm trying to say. He sees the heart," she says. For example, she notes, a

Choctaw translation of Jesus' Passion on video makes it seem "like he's speaking directly to me."

The Harms, while involved in the project from its beginnings, have moved to another mission field in Asia. Before leaving, Harry notes that the couple accomplished what they set out to do.

"The goal was to get people to do a translation program, then leaving and letting them do the work," he says. Their efforts were assisted by Wycliffe, which sponsors training sessions for the Choctaw translators, and ABS, which provides funds for salaries and other expenses.

Local pastors, supportive of the translation effort, see it as part of a general renewal—economic, cultur-



al and religious—that the Choctaws are experiencing.

The Rev. David A. Hamm, pastor of three local Catholic churches including Holy Rosary in Tucker, notes that many Choctaw do not speak the language and fewer still read it. But his church sings hymns in Choctaw and is looking forward to having a full set of Scriptures in the local language.

"Our goal is to eventually do a bilingual Mass in Choctaw and English," he says. He believes that the two languages can co-exist in liturgy as well as in wider life.

That is the belief the entire Choctaw translation project is based upon. English is needed for further economic development; yet Choctaw will, the translators hope, continue to live as a language speaking to the cultural and spiritual longings of a people.

In any case, there's a recognition that there's still a lot of work to be done around the Smiths' kitchen table. ■

▲ The traditional Choctaw game of stickball is a highlight of annual Mississippi fair, above.

◀ Roy and Pam Smith, left, Choctaw translators.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER FEUERHERD



Jordanian baptismal site rediscovered.

By Peter Feuerherd

◀ Pilgrim Dan Morris-Young on the banks of the Jordan.

HISTORY *at the* RIVER'S

(Peter Feuerherd, editor of the Record, visited Jordan in June with a group of writers in the religious press as guests of the Jordan Tourism Board)

Mohammed Waheeb kicks up the Jordanian desert dust as he trudges towards the most famous river in Judeo-Christian religious history. To the west, he can see the ancient city of Jericho, where the Bible says the Chosen People won a great military victory. To the east looms Mount Nebo, where Moses looked over the Promised Land he would never enter himself.

But Dr. Waheeb, 38, is perhaps on the holiest ground of all. For evidence points that it is here, in Bethany, east of the Jordan, on this barren landscape broken only by a small, seemingly miraculous grove of trees and greenery fed by underground springs, is the spot where Jesus was baptized (John 1.28). That is the belief upon which this soft-spoken Muslim scholar has staked his career.

It is a few square miles which, for Christians, marks a vital turning point in salvation history. Dr. Waheeb, an archaeologist, devotes his life to excavating that history.

His religious faith, he tells a visitor, is widely encompassing. His friends call him "Father Mohammed" because of his interest in the Christian holy sites. As a Muslim, he notes, it is in accordance with the Koran to have respect and admiration for the biblical figures of John, Jesus and the prophet Elijah, whose ascension chronicled in the Old Testament is said to have also occurred here.

He offers a perfectly Christian orthodox explana-

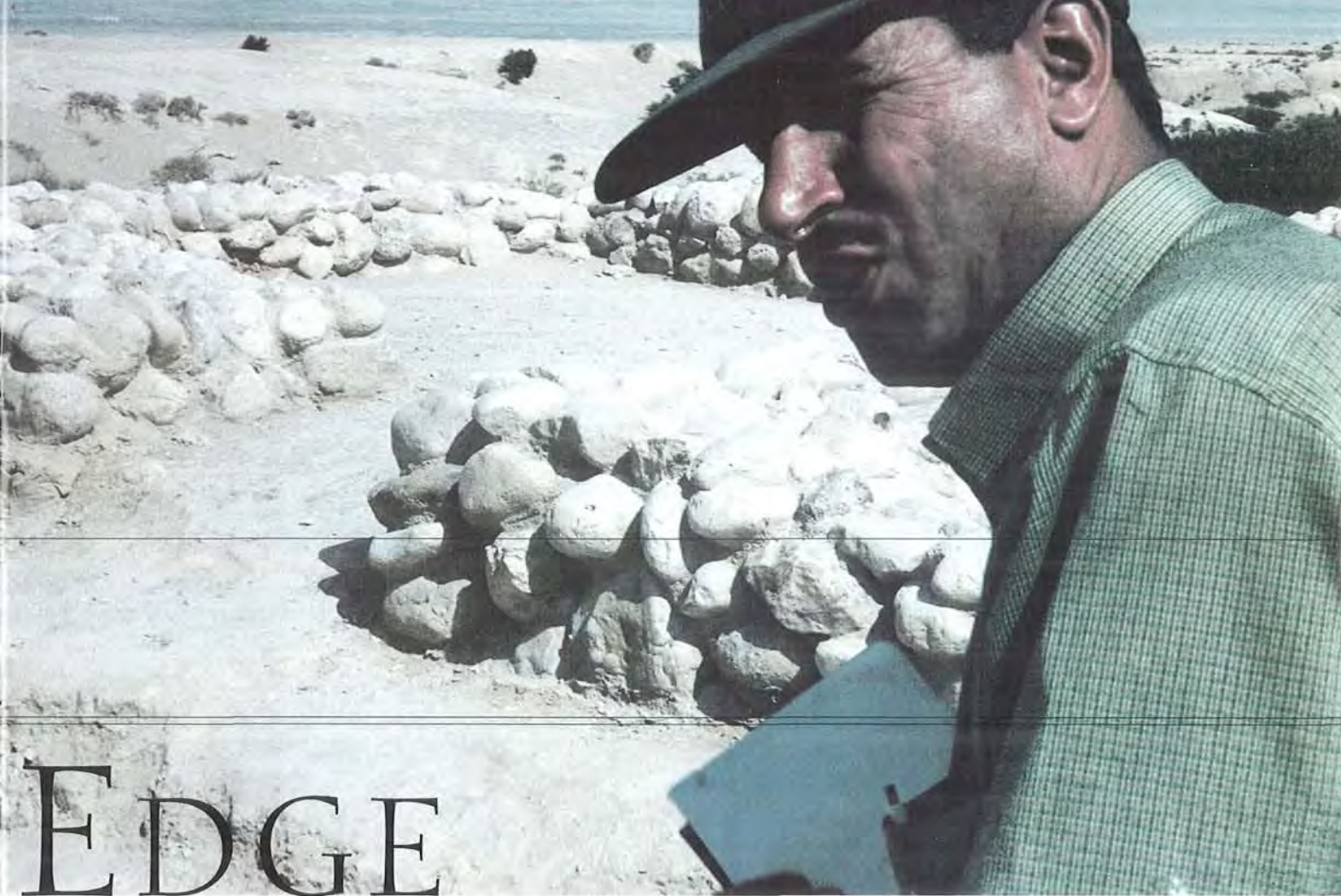
tion as to why this site is important: "The Father, Son and Holy Spirit were visible in one place. This is the only place you could see the Holy Trinity together."

While his faith tells Dr. Waheeb that this is the actual site of seismic religious happenings, his archaeological expertise, perhaps more importantly, compels him to select this spot as the place where Jesus was baptized, even though others have made claims for other locations.

First, there is the evidence from the Bible itself, from John's Gospel to the Book of Kings. That Old Testament book describes the prophet Elijah, who spent time in exile in this region, living in the desert much like his ascetic prophetic successor, John the Baptist.

"Without understanding Elijah you can't understand why John the Baptist chose this area," he says.

The foreboding desert region was infamous as a spot where few ventured because of its harsh landscape and brutal heat. John, the new Elijah, saw himself as part of the ancient Hebrew prophetic tradition and chose the area for its isolation. And as it did for Elijah, this area, provided a haven from gov-



EDGE

ernmental authorities who were peeved by John's prophetic chidings.

Second, there is the topography of the place. In the midst of the desert lies a narrow patch of greenery, fed by underground springs which empty into the Jordan. Today, the river is barely a creek at this point, with most of its water being dammed upstream in Syria and Israel. During Jesus' time, it would have been much wider and majestic.

Third is evidence from the massive archaeological digs of the past few years, made possible only when the formerly tense border between Israel and Jordan was pacified by a 1994 peace treaty between the two former enemies. The area was formerly littered with landmines, only in recent years deactivated. Red flags indicate potential danger areas.

Those digs, much of it unearthed by Dr. Waheeb and his associates working with the support of the Jordanian government, clearly indicate that at least the early Christians believed that Bethany beyond the Jordan was a holy site. Near the river are shrines, many from the third and fourth centuries. Also buttressing Dr. Waheeb's argument are the remains of a sophisticated water system, baptism pools, and the

documentation of Christian monks and hermits.

Even today, the area of the baptism site is barely accessible. The only regular human presence near the river area is a handful of Jordanian soldiers manning a border post.

The quiet is broken only by occasional visits by archeologists and interested visitors to the excavation sites. The Jordanian government, interested in promoting Christian tourism, has built a road leading to the site over the past year. But the road goes only so far. Getting down to the river requires a bumpy, sand-churning jaunt via four-wheel-drive vehicle.

During ancient times, when the river flowed more freely, the shrine sites would have been in the middle of a flood plain.

The early Christians, discounting Jesus' advice to build structures on a solid foundation, constructed churches here in clear violation of common sense, says Dr. Waheeb.

But they were propelled by a faith which transcended common sense.

"It's not a good place for people to come. The answer why they did is the meaning of John and Jesus," he says. ■

▲ **Mohammed Waheeb, baptismal site scholar.**

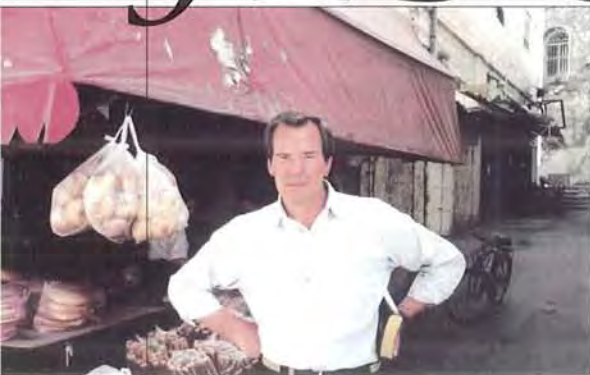
“DON'T JUDGE BY APPEARANCES. JUDGE BY WHAT IS RIGHT.”

—JESUS; JOHN 7:24 (CEV)

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF WORLDWIDE CHALLENGE

JESUS ON SC

Typecasting



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ABC

▲ Peter Jennings on his *Search for Jesus* in Jerusalem.

▶ A *Jesus* film showing in a country of the former Soviet Union.

Over the years, the Son of God has gotten more media attention than any other history maker. Films focusing on Jesus, such as *King of Kings*, *Jesus of Nazareth*, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, and Campus Crusade's widely distributed evangelistic *Jesus*, have had varying degrees of success portraying the reality and nature of God who becomes human.

Jesus remains a personality of high public intrigue. Even as we hear reports decrying the increasing secularization of society, religion and spirituality linger on in the public imagination. Two musicals, *Godspell* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, tried to meld Jesus to the hippie culture. Two years ago Bill Moyers televised a ten-week group discussion of Genesis on public television. *Touched by an Angel* continues to attract high viewer ratings on CBS.

The arrival of a new millennium has stirred a new wave of Jesus TV specials. This past year each of the three major TV networks featured a major Jesus episode: *Mary, Mother of Jesus* on NBC, *The Miracle Maker* on ABC, and a four-part miniseries on CBS. Each of these screenings wrestles with the sticky matrix of interpretation that confounds any attempt to flesh



REEN

the Son of God by David Singer

out images of the incarnation.

Casting the role of Jesus—how to add personality to this most frequently depicted religious icon—is fraught with cinematic minefields. What did the incarnation look like? Viewers from different religious traditions come with a broad range of expectations. And each new film or TV episode adds another layer of hues.

In this regard the gospel accounts are at once sparse and rich—virtually silent about Jesus' appearance, but rich in the texture of his character. Filmmakers can only guess; how did Jesus carry himself? The Gospel gives us flashes of Jesus as both meek and forceful, strident and engaging. Did he have a sense of humor? Was he most often serious?

Many media representations, in an effort not to stray from the meager dialogue given in the gospels, sometimes settle for a wooden Jesus—someone one dimensional and distant. In 1977, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Franco Zeffirelli's six-hour NBC mini-series, broke out of this mold, presenting us with an engaging Jesus many could relate to—someone with a more or less full-orbed personality.

During last May's rating sweeps, CBS entered the fray with

its four-part series *Jesus*, betting that yet another portrayal of the son of God would draw still sufficiently high ratings. While sidestepping the stiffness that can result when scripting stays close to a Gospel text, Jeremy Sisto, as Jesus, seemed uncertain about how to meld the God-man duality. He came across as the most popular guy on his block, but uncertain about what to do with his appeal. His mother, played by Jacqueline Bisset, has the clearer vision for his messianic mission. This rendition makes no bones about Jesus' miracle-working or his divine connection. But this Jesus seems reluctant to engage his calling—to lead and teach. His "calling" seems all too *laissez faire*.

Always a favorite icon of the church, in our media age, more than ever we want to see Jesus—but media seeing tempts us into a realm of virtual reality. Seeing is now even more than believing—it is a kind of knowing. Media images of Jesus offer viewers a kind of virtual knowing.

In keeping with what visual media demand, Jesus is invariably cast as someone attractive. The closest the Scriptures come to any physical description of Jesus is a prophecy written cen-

turies earlier. Isaiah, in a reference about the coming Messiah, writes, “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.” This oblique disclaimer counters modern expectations that a charismatic leader who would turn the world upside down must be eye-pleasing. In this respect, at least, Jesus doesn’t fit comfortably into the movie-star mode seen thus far in media portrayals.

The gospels focus on Jesus’ less tangible qualities of heart and soul—on a compassionate teacher, a God-driven healer and miracle worker. They accentuate Jesus’ down-to-earth character directed by a prophetic, otherworldly orientation—a blue-collar tradesman getting into theological disputes with the religious establishment. These are difficult qualities to weave into one convincing personality.

Always an interpretive quandary is how to flesh out a Jesus script. The gospels give us some of Jesus’ teachings and cryptic, sometimes coded sketches of dialogue—altogether a mere skeleton on which to construct a full-bodied movie-set character.

Still, films such as *Jesus*, the collaboration between the Genesis Project and Campus Crusade for Christ seen billions worldwide, manages a compelling message without adding to the gospel text. Used widely for evangelism, it has now been translated into 500 languages. (This film is used extensively by members of the United Bible Societies and is central to a number of *Opportunity 21* projects.)

Most recently ABC anchor Peter Jennings, in his two-hour documentary *Search for Jesus*, took a more limited approach. He did not try to recreate the son of God on screen. Instead he set out on a journalist’s hunt to find the Jesus of history, a plausible Jesus. He said, as a journalist, he could not divine whether or not Jesus was the Son of God—such questions were “a matter of faith.” He was willing to settle for the man behind the gospel myth.

Mr. Jennings gives the impression that, as an objective journalist, he went far and wide to gather a balance of perspectives about the son of God, while remaining the neutral reporter. Yet the majority of Bible scholars that guide Jennings through his search are members of a small cadre of academics called the Jesus Seminar. The ones Jennings cites seem intent on peeling away from the gospels material they consider most likely reconstructions of the early church. They only use the Scriptures as a good “starting place.”

So Mr. Jennings’ search is not bound by the New Testament witness. When asked by *Christianity Today*, “Do any of Jesus’ remarks leave you wishing he said more?” Mr. Jennings replied, “The very first place we visited was the controversial Jesus Seminar. I was struck by their intellectual attempt to try to decide (vote on) what Jesus really said,” inferring that he doubts we can know much of what Jesus “really” said. Few traditional Christian voices about issues of substance, such as who was Jesus’ father, get much time on camera.

Unlike European paintings of Jesus from the Middle Ages, most media reenactments seek to establish an authentic historical context for the life of Jesus. Mr. Jennings’ *Search* adds to

this a vivid picture, emphasizing the political tensions and economic conditions of first-century Palestine.

He builds a case for Jesus as a political rebel intent on overthrowing Israel’s Roman oppressors. Marcus Borg, a participant in the Jesus Seminar, sums up this redefined Jesus: “... when we turn the story of Jesus into the eternal sacrifice for sin that makes our forgiveness possible, then we really set aside that which mattered so much to him [Jesus], namely the poor, the untouchables, the suffering of people.”

Mr. Borg’s statement contradicts gospel accounts of the Last Supper and what many believe is a core message of God’s Word—that in Jesus God made provision for our forgiveness. By elevating Jesus’ concern for the disenfranchised—what some consider only symptomatic of the underlying problem (sin)—to be Jesus’ end goal, they frame the message of the Good News as a sociopolitical agenda.

Virtually everything we can know about the Jesus of history we learn from the gospels. There are a few exceptions. The Roman historian Tacitus confirms Jesus’ execution by Pilot. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus makes two references to Jesus, though they are disputed by some. So, outside of the Scriptures, we can know very little about history’s most influential figure.

Given his aims, Mr. Jennings may have done the best job he could. His limits of discovery, as a hard-facts reporter, led him to offer more plausible explanations about events pointing to Jesus’ divinity, including the virgin birth and other miracles, while sidestepping anything Jesus said about himself or his mission. The *Search* was more circumspect with the resurrection, concluding that, given the astonishing spread of Christianity, “something unique must have happened.”

The flow of this search, the unrelenting march of changing images, typical of media presentations, allows little time for critical reflection. One image quickly follows another, leaving us with impressions, sometimes inspirational, sometimes distressing, sometimes disappointing.

Bottom line, there is little room in this search for anything transcendent. Still, this *Search* got high viewer ratings.

The promise and hope of the Good News—of Jesus showing that us the deeper dimensions of living, showing us that even in everyday life there are moments when we can reconnect with the source of our being, keeps Jesus a hot media subject. In the popular mind there still seems this awareness that in Jesus there resides the keys to what is right and whole.

The Scriptures do not offer much of the stuff on which visual media representations of Jesus depend. However satisfying or disquieting these virtual encounters may be, does God mean for us, through meditating on his Word, to engage Jesus on another, more immediate level as well?

Dallas Willard, in the *Divine Conspiracy*, writes “He comes where we are, and brings us the life we hunger for. An early report reads, ‘Life was in him, life that made sense of human existence.’ (John 1.4). To be the light of life, and to deliver God’s life to women and men where they are and as they are, is the secret of the enduring relevance of Jesus.” ■

Speaking the Word

Merle Worth Translates



▲ Director
Merle Worth

► On location at the *Resurrection* set: From left, executive producer Fern Lee Hagedorn; ABS consultants Adele Reinhartz, Dr. J. Ramsey Michaels, the Rev. John David Larson; director Merle Worth.

Inside a New Jersey storefront church, director Merle Worth speaks with actor James Caviezel, who is narrating the 20th chapter of John. They are making translation of John's Gospel with film, not paper and ink.

Ms. Worth tells the actor, "I'd like a slightly more miraculous feel" to the description of Mary weeping outside Christ's empty tomb. The scene is repeated. Mr. Caviezel huddles with Ms. Worth. A take is spoiled by a car's horn outside. James Caviezel paces. They try again. Mr. Caviezel's voice reflects Mary's sorrow. Ms. Worth beams. "That was wonderful," she says.

"Image and sound are becoming the natural tongue," says Merle Worth, who has directed six short video translations of gospel passages for the American Bible Society.

As societies once passed on their traditions through speech, and then later, through the written word, Ms. Worth sees us entering a new phase: Now we pass on our most important truths by means of moving pictures and sounds. And she works hard to make her films true and truly moving.

Her films—made in close collaboration with Bible Society consultants and staff members—present Gospel stories in modern contexts, with characters in contemporary dress. In this filmmaking process, Ms. Worth functions as part of a translation team, working as the equivalent of the "native speaker" who faithfully transfers the Scriptural message into the grammar and syntax of film.

The video translations vary in their approach and feel. Some, like *The Visit*, a translation of Luke 1.39-56, are music videos. In *The Visit*, the musical group *Women of the Calabash* sings the verses of Scriptures, telling the story of Mary's joyful trip to her cousin

Elizabeth. Others, like *Out of the Tombs*, dramatize the gospel stories. *Out of the Tombs* retells the story of the man with evil spirits from the fifth chapter of the Gospel of Mark.

Out of the Tombs brings out an often-neglected aspect of the story—the formerly possessed man wants to leave with Jesus. No, Jesus instructs him. Go home and tell them how much good the Lord has done for him, says the Messiah. At the end of the video, the man, freed from possession and filled with joy, speaks to his townspeople.

Originally interested in studying medicine in college, Ms. Worth became intrigued with filmmaking. "I originally went into film because I thought it would be a healing instrument," she says. She found the best opportunities to create healing works in the 1971 documentary *Raga*, and a 1997 Oprah Winfrey special, *About Us: The Dignity of Children*.

Making films of the gospel stories has given Ms. Worth scope to wrestle with the largest matters of the human heart. She found it a fascinating and exhilarating experience. For her, the key is "to capture the emotional line" of the dilemmas.

For example, she wants to raise a question in *The Neighbor*, a film on the Good Samaritan story. She wants viewers to ask themselves: "I have found a victim lying on the roadside. What do I do?" Her film sets the story among members of two opposing groups of young people.

Ms. Worth makes her films to be compelling for young people. She wants to make clear that choices made in biblical times are like choices made by teen-agers today. "Is the Good Samaritan dilemma that radically different from what young people are facing in cliques and gangs?" she asks.

in a New Tongue

Scripture in Image and Sound *by Thomas D. Sullivan*



Imagination is a key to finding images that portray the biblical stories in moving pictures, but Ms. Worth also relies on the scholarship of staff members and consultants of the American Bible Society.

With these films, Ms. Worth sees the opportunity to “capture a fresh generation” with the gospel

stories. She’s joyfully embraced this challenge.

The Life of Jesus project gives the American Bible Society “the most astonishing opportunity ... to make the Word available in the bloodstream,” she says. “I don’t know of a more exciting way to work and conceive—and ultimately, to live.” ■

100 YEARS AGO

The Bible in Demand

In the fall of 1900, the American Bible Society Record took note that while the French philosopher Voltaire—who had predicted that the Bible would be consigned to the scrap heap of history by the 20th century—was long dead, the Bible was very much alive.

“It has been more than 120 years since that brilliant but blasphemous Frenchman died, but the book which he slandered is not forgotten,” noted a columnist in the November 1900 issue of the American Bible Society *Record*.

The previous month’s issue of the *Record* offered evidence that the Bible was still having an impact on the culture.

“In one of the big department stores in New York the other day I saw two stacks of Bibles, each about eight feet high—miniature pyramids, rising in the center of the book department,” noted a *Record* correspondent.

The correspondent asked the clerk how the store was going to rid itself of so many Bibles. Easy, responded the store employee.

“Perhaps you never had any experience in the book business or you would know that the Bible is the best-selling book we have,” the clerk said. “We sell more copies than any other book in stock.”

Bibles in those days sold for \$1.20, for a deluxe version, and 70 cents, for an economy model. That one New York department store sold nearly 18,000 Bibles every year.

“Moreover, the Bible has been published in hundreds of languages and dialects, and it has been sent all over the habitable globe,” the *Record* noted.

While it remained a bestseller, the Bible does not “court popularity,” the *Record* noted.

The secret of its popularity, noted the *Record*, was not hard to discover.

“It reveals God. It speaks with the authority of God. It is the word of God. It deals with the greatest of all subjects — those which relate to God, and to the human soul, and to man’s eternal destiny.”

The *Record* editors noted that the Bible had triumphed over its critics. ■



A version of the King James Bible, published in 1539. Its history will be described in an upcoming television documentary conceived by the American Bible Society.

‘The Faithful Traitors’ tells story of Bible translation

The *Faithful Traitors*, a one-hour documentary film on the history of Bible translation conceived by the American Bible Society and produced by Banyan Communications, will be broadcast on the Odyssey Network on Sunday, November 26, at 2:00 p.m. Eastern time.

The documentary presents the subject of Bible translation in a relevant, compelling and informative format. It takes the viewer from the early days of Scripture translation (Jerome), through the Renaissance and Reformation (Wycliffe, Luther, King James), and into current translation work (American Bible Society, United Bible Societies). The goal of the film is to illustrate the long and complex history of Bible translating and to stimulate new interest among viewers, encouraging them to use their Bibles, some for the first time.

The title, *The Faithful Traitors*, highlights the challenge of translating a Biblical text in a way that is understandable to readers yet does not stray from the context or sense of the original. Because the texts, or at least earlier translations of the texts, are well known, translating has been a risky business through the centuries, with translators often considered “traitors” to the original text.

The program is hosted by Mike Maus, an award-winning former NBC News correspondent. It was produced by Allen Admire of Banyan Communications. ■

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RECCT1000

ONLY 81, ABS ANNUITANT MAKES PLANS TO SERVE THE LORD

The caller expressed concern about octogenarian Dalora Knutson. She was planning to drive alone from her home in Arkansas to her sister's home in Indiana, a 691-mile trek in the middle of a summer that had become notorious for sudden rainstorms.

"You are driving alone?" the caller asked.

She offered a quick response.

"I'm only 81. Why can't I?"

It's a question Mrs. Knutson, now enjoying a steady income from her American Bible Society annuity, has been asking all her life. Across the U.S., she has organized people for faith and good works as the wife of a Lutheran pastor who led congregations in the states of Washington, Montana and Minnesota.

In retirement in Bella Vista, Ark., Mrs. Knutson, now a widow, still spends her time organizing members of the United Lutheran Church there to make quilts and sewing kits for victims of disasters through the auspices of Lutheran World Relief.

Mrs. Knutson, a native of Michigan City, Ind., has been familiar with the work of ABS for years. She has been a longtime member of the Bible-a-Month Club, in which donations are raised to pay for Bibles for people around the world.

She became an ABS annuitant because she believes in the Society's mission. She gets a small income from her investment, but "the way I figure it, if I ran out of money, ABS would get something." She hopes that



Dalora Knutson

through her investment in ABS, "one or more persons will be able to see Christ as their refuge."

She said she always wanted to be a missionary, but her late husband, the Rev. Evans Knutson, had other plans. He spent his ministry largely in small towns and rural areas, hoping that the young people he worked with would maintain their church affiliation even when they would leave for bigger cities.

Through the years, the couple adopted four children via Lutheran childcare agencies they made contact with in each of the churches they served. Three of their children

were Americans; another was a Greek war refugee. They also were foster parents to five other children. All the children are now adults, scattered in various locations across the U.S.

Last year, she had some serious heart surgery. While on the operating table, she told God that if he wanted her to go, to let it happen, but if he had more work for her to do, she would be happy to live.

For Mrs. Knutson, her subsequent recovery sent a clear message: She is only 81, and God still has plans for her in this world. ■

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

BIBLE IN THE NEWS

Biblical fast for captives in Sudan

■ Columnist Nat Hentoff of New York's *Village Voice* recently reported on a 21-day fast begun by African-American clergy to call attention to continued slavery in Sudan, where a prolonged civil war has pitted a mostly Muslim north against a largely Christian south.

The Rev. Michael Faulkner, pastor of the Central Baptist Church in New York, began the fast after hearing about continued reports of enslavement and bombings directed against Christians in southern Sudan.

The fast, said Rev. Faulkner, is designed, in the words of Isaiah 58:5-6, "to loose the chains of injustice ... to set the oppressed free and break every chain."

Mr. Hentoff quotes Francis Bok, a former Sudanese slave who is now an associate in the Boston-based American Anti-Slavery Group, in a special appeal to American Christians in recent Congressional testimony.

"I came here today to call on all Americans of goodwill, especially my black brothers and sisters whose ancestors suffered as slaves. You must help us," Mr. Bok told Congress.

A Polish view of the Ten Commandments

■ Film reviewer Stanley Kauffmann of the *New Republic* heaped praise upon a series of 10 films, all based on the Ten Commandments, which were recently shown in New York City.

The films were made for Polish television by Krzysztof Kieslowski, a Polish director who died four years ago at the age of 54. The entire package is titled *Decalogue*.

Each film deals with a different commandment, as they are lived out (or not lived out), in a huge apartment complex in Warsaw. The film on the first commandment is the story of a young scientist who learns a terrible lesson about the fallibility of science. The tenth segment—based on "Thou shall not covet they neighbor's goods"—is about two

sons who inherit their father's stamp collection.

The films, note Mr. Kauffman, "breathes—almost trembles with—compassion and insight."

Decalogue, after its New York run, will be shown in other American cities this year.

Cereal box Scriptures withdrawn by General Mills

■ Cereal maker General Mills issued an apology for the placement of 12 million CD-ROMS featuring computer games, dictionaries and Bibles in boxes of Cheerios, the *Washington Post* reported.

"While inclusion of the Bible may be seen as added value by some, it is the company's policy not to advance any particular set of religious beliefs," a statement issued by the company noted. "Inclusion of this material does not conform to our policy, and we apologize for the lapse."

The CD-ROMS were created by Rhinosoft Interactive of Wisconsin, and were based on software copies of the Bible provided by Zondervan Publishing of Michigan.

The cereal box fiasco provided fodder for radio talk shows around the country. Some listeners of WABC radio in New York praised the Bible cereal concept for promoting needed moral fiber; others complained that General Mills had eroded the separation between religion and breakfast.

'Man in Black' a devoted Scripture reader

■ *Evangelical News Service* reports that country singer Johnny Cash has considerably reduced the size of his Nashville bathroom because of his love for the Bible.

Most of his bathroom is now a private book collection, including his many Bibles. "I own every translation," he notes. ■

update

N A T I O N A L

■ CYBERSPACE

The American Bible Society (ABS) has renewed its site on the World Wide Web, available at <http://www.americanbible.org>.

People now can make the ABS page their personal home page by utilizing the new



▲ **Sweet Honey and the Rock perform in ABS-produced Christmas video. (Photo by Edy Ferguson.)**

resources for Bible-oriented Web users that include links for personalized news reports and a current weather forecast for the user's hometown. Users may also register on the site, a short and uncomplicated process that makes it possible for them to have a more personalized experience each time they visit the ABS site.

New benefits available include a searchable Bible, free e-mail with a daily Scripture-based thought, an opportunity to request prayer support and special prices on selected Bible resources from the ABS catalog.

Pastors and church leaders can use the site to access www.forministry.com, an ABS-supported site that includes a directory of thousands of churches and offers each Christian church a free multi-page starter Web site.

Pipes Spectacular, the world's largest organ concert, will be held in churches across the USA Oct. 15. It will be co-sponsored by ABS and the American Guild of Organists. For information on concerts in your area contact www.agojq.org.

■ NEW YORK

Bethlehem came to a Manhattan studio during the filming of the Gospel of Luke's account of Jesus' birth, performed by the music group *Sweet Honey and the Rock*.

The Nativity video, now available, features Luke 2.1-21, and is the latest in an ABS series of videos bringing biblical stories alive in new technology and translation techniques.

Another ABS-produced video titled *God Speaks to Me* is also available this Christmas season. The video tells the story of Bible translation efforts among the Native Americans of Central America.

Among the tribes profiled are the Miskito and Sumo people of Nicaragua; the Garifuna of Honduras; and the Mayans of Guatemala.

ABS videos are available in English, and in the case of the Central American video, in Spanish. They can be ordered through the ABS catalog or on-line at www.americanbible.org.

■ MICHIGAN

The Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit and the American Bible Society (ABS) will sponsor a five-week series of dialogues designed to increase social awareness and racial reconciliation via a focus on the *African American Jubilee Edition* of the Bible, published by ABS.

Plans call for up to 10 churches in the Detroit area, representing diverse racial communities, to commit to a series of discussions around the concepts of social justice and reconciliation through September and October.

The discussions will culminate in a Celebration Weekend on Oct. 20-22, with a symposium on the Bible at the Ecumenical Theological Seminary and a Sunday worship service at the Second Baptist Church. ■

■ EAST TIMOR

Chaplains serving with Australian peacekeepers in East Timor assisted in providing 10,000 copies of a new translation of the Gospel of Luke in the local language of Tetum Prasa, a dialect spoken in the region of Dili.

The translation work was kept secret because Indonesian authorities have discouraged the use of local languages, forcing people to use Indonesian. Translators prepared a draft of the gospel in East Timor, which was then taken to Australia for printing. The project was supported by Bishop Carlos Belo, a leader in the Catholic Church in East Timor (most East Timorese are Catholics; there is a long history of conflict with the Muslim-led Indonesian government.)

The East Timor gospel was produced with the financial support of the Bible Society in Australia.

■ LITHUANIA

A new translation of the Bible into Lithuanian has been produced by the Bible Society of Lithuania.

The first interconfessional translation of the Bible in Lithuanian was printed in Finland and released in Lithuania at the end of last year. Originally only a print run of 3,000, more will be available by the end of this year, according to Dr. Mykolas Mikalajunas, executive director of the Bible Society of Lithuania.

He noted that the demand for the Scripture has far outstripped the original supply.

■ UNITED KINGDOM

Nearly \$15 million has been designated to special projects under the United Bible Soci-

eties (UBS) *Opportunity 21* program, according to the Rev. Bill Jefferson, Opportunity 21 global coordinator, based at UBS offices in Reading, England.

"*Opportunity 21* is well under way," says Rev. Jefferson, noting that the program funds more than 375 projects in some 75 countries.

Much of the funding for the projects has been generated by the American Bible Society, which

is expected to contribute \$10 million by the end of this year. *Opportunity 21* is also sponsored by the Maclellan Foundation, based in Memphis, Tenn.

Opportunity 21 has an ultimate \$90 million goal involving a partnership among the Maclellan Foundation, ABS and UBS.

Projects currently being funded via Opportunity 21 include:

- ▶ the distribution of Scriptures for pilgrims visiting Rome this Vatican-designated Holy Year;
- ▶ a special Bible exhibit for pilgrims visiting Jerusalem;
- ▶ distribution in Egypt of a cassette tape of the Gospel of Matthew;
- ▶ the distribution of some 39,000 contemporary Bibles for young people in Cuba;
- ▶ work promoting evangelization in war-torn Sudan, and
- ▶ a Scripture distribution in 16 major languages in India. ●



▲ A woman holds her Bible as she sings at a women's Bible club meeting in Benin. Africa is a special focus of *Opportunity 21*. (Photo by Maurice Harvey, United Bible Societies.)

IN MEMORIAM

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

<p>My Husband, Leonard Aarhus <i>Given by: Betty J. Aarhus</i></p>	<p>Dave & Paul Dahlberg <i>Given by: Peter & Mary Ellen Dahlberg</i></p>	<p>Archie Hollis <i>Given by: Dr. Elizabeth Young</i></p>	<p>My Wife, Jeanette McNew <i>Given by: Gerald R. McNew</i></p>	<p>Esther C. Smith <i>Given by: Betty June Kegerreis, John R Helfrich, Cindy Minoletti, Cheryl Wexel</i></p>
<p>My Father, Jimmie E. Abbott, Sr. <i>Given by: Judith E. Smith</i></p>	<p>My Husband, Rev. W. Ellis Davis <i>Given by: Frona Davis</i></p>	<p>Edna Horn <i>Given by: Bronda J. Clarridge</i></p>	<p>Rev. Ammon L. Merkey <i>Given by: Gladys V. Merkey</i></p>	<p>John P. Snoke <i>Given by: Mary R. Snoke</i></p>
<p>My Brother, Bill Athens <i>Given by: Nick Athens</i></p>	<p>Gene Davis <i>Given by: Dr. & Mrs. Robert M. Bidwell</i></p>	<p>Cecil Hudmon Tim Hudmon <i>Given by: Mrs. Cecil Hudmon</i></p>	<p>Dr. Robert S. Miner, Jr. <i>Given by: Melody L. Davis</i></p>	<p>My Son, John Frank Speaker <i>Given by: Jacquelyn L. Speaker</i></p>
<p>My Husband, Arthur Baack My Son, Allen Baack <i>Given by: Olga Baack</i></p>	<p>Bennie B. Dobbins <i>Given by: Carol B. Dobbins</i></p>	<p>My Father, Daniel Jantz <i>Given by: Jerry L. Jantz</i></p>	<p>Elenora Moore <i>Given by: Emily S. Hoef</i></p>	<p>My Father, Russ Stahl <i>Given by: Tim J. Stahl</i></p>
<p>Joyce Bishop <i>Given by: Joel G. Bishop</i></p>	<p>Patry Duvall <i>Given by: Tron Inc.</i></p>	<p>Dr. Carl T. Jones <i>Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Paul M. Krater</i></p>	<p>Margaret Morgan <i>Given by: Ann Morgan</i></p>	<p>Mrs. Betty Strough <i>Given by: Hermia E. Niemann</i></p>
<p>My Aunt, Olga Bogen <i>Given by: Laurie Radde</i></p>	<p>My Parents, George & Leah Ecbroth <i>Given by: Betty J. Haas</i></p>	<p>My Husband, Vern M. Jones <i>Given by: Wayne E. Jones</i></p>	<p>David Olds, Sr. <i>Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Milton B. Jensen</i></p>	<p>Austin Stutzman <i>Given by: Wayne & Pat Sledge</i></p>
<p>My Husband, Carl C. Bowen, Sr. <i>Given by: Myrtice P. Bowen</i></p>	<p>My Sister, Lillian D. Elmquist <i>Given by: Jean Elmquist</i></p>	<p>Bernice Jordan <i>Given by: Edward & Virginia Scroggs</i></p>	<p>My Husband, Edward A. Owen <i>Given by: Olive Owen</i></p>	<p>Mr. W. D. Thompson <i>Given by: Susan Gilley</i></p>
<p>Kay Broadhurst <i>Given by: Elizabeth K. B. Cox</i></p>	<p>Cora E. Feltman <i>Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Edwin J. Patterson</i></p>	<p>My Parents, Gertrude & Oscar Kilgore <i>Given by: Aileen Kilgore Henderson</i></p>	<p>Rev. Paul M. Robinson <i>Given by: Cornelia Parrish</i></p>	<p>Mrs. E. Tjeerdsma <i>Given by: Anthony Admiraal</i></p>
<p>Margaret A. Broecker <i>Given by: Dorothea W. Broecker</i></p>	<p>My Husband, Rev. Charles W. Field My Son, Charles Walter Fields <i>Given by: Mabel Olive Fields</i></p>	<p>Orville W. Kloeckener Adele F. Kloeckener <i>Given by: Demis Kloeckener</i></p>	<p>Mr. Pepper Roberts <i>Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Brady Boling</i></p>	<p>My Father, Dr. W. N. Tefit <i>Given by: Larry & Diane Tarr</i></p>
<p>My Husband, John Browning <i>Given by: Mrs. Randall C. Browning</i></p>	<p>My Brother, Paul K. Gibbons <i>Given by: Kevin Gibbons</i></p>	<p>My Wife, Betty Klumper <i>Given by: John C. Klumper</i></p>	<p>Our Son, Theodore Romberger <i>Given by: Mr. & Mrs. John S. Romberger</i></p>	<p>My Parents, Frederick & Mary Turner <i>Given by: Florence M. Dalton</i></p>
<p>Rosa L. Bucciantini <i>Given by: Dorothy L. Cascia</i></p>	<p>Delphine Gross <i>Given by: Erma L. Rebg</i></p>	<p>My Wife, Clara M. Kohler <i>Given by: Erwin A. Kohler</i></p>	<p>My Wife, Jullianne Faith Sandford <i>Given by: Wayne Sandford</i></p>	<p>My Husband, Allen Turriff <i>Given by: Florence Turriff</i></p>
<p>Dorothy Burgess <i>Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Teneyck</i></p>	<p>My Mother, Nella M. Hanes <i>Given by: Barbara Locklar</i></p>	<p>My Father, Cletus H. Koster <i>Given by: Paula Kasica</i></p>	<p>David William Sapp <i>Given by: Dr. & Mrs. Robert W. Timberlake</i></p>	<p>My Sister, Deborah Tutty <i>Given by: Mrs. John Meriwether Lewis</i></p>
<p>My Husband, Leon Burns <i>Given by: Marjorie E. Burns</i></p>	<p>My Husband, Carl Hanson <i>Given by: Hanna Hanson</i></p>	<p>Augustine Leo, Jr. <i>Given by: Carol M. Smith</i></p>	<p>My Sister, Mrs. Hannah Schneider <i>Given by: Lorraine D. Welch</i></p>	<p>My Sisters, Lorraine Tuyls & Jeanne Linnane <i>Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Collaer</i></p>
<p>My Husband, Paul R. Busch <i>Given by: Winifred J. Busch</i></p>	<p>Vern Hansen <i>Given by: Mark & Sherry Miraldi</i></p>	<p>My Husband, Lawrance Lutz <i>Given by: Shirley Lutz</i></p>	<p>My Mother, Eva Senkevech <i>Given by: Mary E. Anderson</i></p>	<p>My Husband, Johannes Vasby <i>Given by: Dagnar E. Vasby</i></p>
<p>My Husband, David Catling <i>Given by: Caroline R. Catling</i></p>	<p>Lula B. Harvey <i>Given by: Ray F. Howard</i></p>	<p>My Sister, Geraldine Matzko <i>Given by: Mary Pappen</i></p>	<p>My Uncle, Ed Shimmel <i>Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Garrow</i></p>	<p>Our Beloved Daughter, Joy Lynn Visser <i>Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Gerald R. Visser</i></p>
<p>My Beloved Husband, Enid M. Clapp <i>Given by: Emma J. Clapp</i></p>	<p>My Aunt, Irene Hawthorne <i>Given by: Travis & Jobmie White</i></p>	<p>My Mother, Irene Martin <i>Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Robert Mucks</i></p>	<p>Elsie & Ted Stepmann <i>Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Allan Fink</i></p>	<p>My Parents, Mr. & Mrs. Charles H. Ward <i>Given by: Mrs. C. D. D. Doren</i></p>
<p>My Parents, Anna & Thomas Courtney <i>Given by: T. Allen C. Hale</i></p>	<p>My Wife, Grace Henkel <i>Given by: Vance Henkel</i></p>	<p>Alice H. Maxted <i>Given by: Mr. Edward K. Pollard</i></p>	<p>My Dear Husband, Carl Skupski <i>Given by: Emice L. Skupski</i></p>	<p>Mrs. Lois Westerberg Wessman <i>Given by: George & Ellie Westerberg</i></p>
<p>My Mother & Father, Nellie Cowley Vander Cowley My Sister, Lavelle Cowley <i>Given by: Martha Grace Cowley</i></p>	<p>My Husband, Dr. Charles Hogue <i>Given by: Barbara J. Hogue</i></p>	<p>My Husband, Richard H. McClendon <i>Given by: Algalene S. McClendon</i></p>	<p>My Mother, Elvie E. Skipper <i>Given by: Ama Lee Pearson</i></p>	<p>Betty Wright <i>Given by: The Robert P. Thomas Family</i></p>
<p>Sylvia Crissman <i>Given by: Norma C. Fetters</i></p>	<p>Hettye Hohmann <i>Given by: International Sunday School Class At Tallwood Baptist Church</i></p>	<p>Irene McDonald <i>Given by: Mary Biven</i></p>		

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

Responding to Massacre in Uganda

As police in Uganda continued to exhume mass graves containing the bodies of members of a religious cult, the Bible Society of Uganda is preparing a Bible Selection which will address the issues raised by the horror from a Scriptural perspective.

This summer, some 470 members of the doomsday cult called the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God, were found burned alive in a church in the village of Kanunga, southern Uganda. It was the most massive murder/suicide in modern history since the deaths of 914 people in the People's Temple in Guyana in 1979.

Since then, more bodies have been discovered, with the death toll said to have risen to more than 900.

Police now believe they are investigating one of the largest mass murders on record. One theory is that cult followers handed over their money to their leaders in the belief that the world would end on Dec. 31, 1999, but began to ask for it back when the prediction failed to come true.

Many of the corpses showed signs of violence, such as machete wounds and strangulation. In some mass graves, dozens of women and children have been found, suggesting that whole families had been ruthlessly murdered.

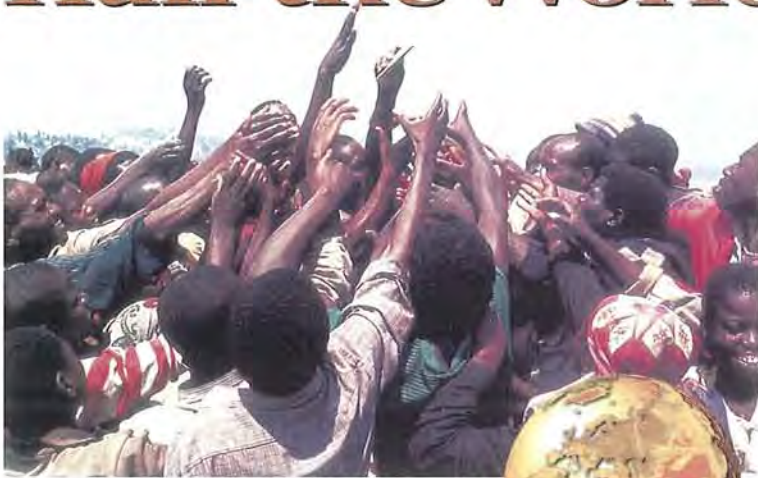
Henry Kalule, general secretary of the Bible Society of Uganda, said that the Society has been working on a special Bible Selection which aims to address the issues of cults and obsession with the end of the world.



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

American Bible Society
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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.

NOVEMBER

A Fresh Beginning by Giving Thanks and Praise for God's Blessings

- 1 Luke 17.11-19
- 2 1 Samuel 1.1-11
- 3 1 Samuel 1.12-28
- 4 1 Samuel 2.1-10
- SUNDAY**
- 5 1 Chronicles 16.1-6
- 6 1 Chronicles 16.7-22
- 7 1 Chronicles 16.23-36
- 8 Psalm 118.1-18
- 9 Psalm 118.19-29
- 10 Psalm 65
- 11 Psalm 66
- SUNDAY**
- 12 Psalm 67
- 13 Psalm 93
- 14 Psalm 95
- 15 Psalm 96
- 16 Psalm 97
- 17 Psalm 98
- 18 Psalm 99
- BIBLE SUNDAY ***
- 19 Psalm 100
- 20 Psalm 108
- 21 Psalm 144
- 22 Psalm 145
- THANKSGIVING DAY**
- 23 Psalm 146
- 24 Psalm 147
- 25 Psalm 148
- SUNDAY**
- 26 Psalm 149
- 27 Psalm 150
- 28 2 Corinthians 8.1-15
- 29 2 Corinthians 8.16-24
- 30 2 Corinthians 9.1-15

* National Bible Week is November 19-26, 2000

DECEMBER

A Fresh Beginning by Proclaiming God's Promises to All People

- 1 Genesis 12.1-9
- 2 Galatians 3.1-18
- FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
- 3 Luke 21.25-33
- 4 Zechariah 8.1-17
- 5 Zechariah 8.18-23
- 6 Zechariah 9.9-17
- 7 Zechariah 10.1-12
- 8 Zechariah 14.1-11
- 9 Zechariah 14.12-21
- SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
- 10 Luke 3.1-20
- 11 Malachi 3.1-7
- 12 Malachi 4.1-6
- 13 Isaiah 40.1-11
- 14 Isaiah 42.1-9
- 15 Isaiah 43.1-13
- 16 Isaiah 43.14-28
- THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
- 17 Zephaniah 3.1-13
- 18 Zephaniah 3.14-20
- 19 Luke 1.1-25
- 20 Luke 1.26-38
- 21 Luke 1.39-56
- 22 Luke 1.57-66
- 23 Luke 1.67-80
- FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
- 24 Luke 2.1-20
- CHRISTMAS DAY**
- 25 John 1.1-18
- 26 John 1.19-34
- 27 Hebrews 1.1-14
- 28 Hebrews 2.1-18
- 29 Hebrews 3.1-19
- 30 Hebrews 4.1-13
- 31 John 3.1-21

PLEASE PRAY

SEYCHELLES – Pray that a new Creole New Testament will help people gain a better understanding of the Scriptures, particularly among the young, who make up 70 percent of the population of the Seychelles.

SOUTH AFRICA – Pray for the success of the United Bible Societies World Assembly scheduled for South Africa in October.

ANGOLA – Praise the Lord for giving Bible workers here the strength to endure the daily difficulties caused by armed conflict.

MADAGASCAR – Praise God for the production of the story of Ruth on video, and for the publication of the Malagasy Children's Bible. Pray for a high level of interest in a Bible contest for young people, held in partnership with the Ecumenical Youth Council.

ZIMBABWE – Pray that the Shona and Ndaou New Testaments will penetrate people's hearts, preparing them to face the challenges of the new millennium, and that peace and stability will return here. A Revised Shona Bible is planned by the end of this year.

(The above prayer requests are edited excerpts from the United Bible Societies Prayer Booklet 2000, which in October is focusing on the needs of Bible Societies in Southern Africa.)

COPE WITH DISTRESS

The ministry of the American Bible Society, while it supports efforts to deliver the Scriptures overseas, is also concerned with helping people here at home cope with troubles and afflictions.

Benefactors of the American Bible Society (ABS) recently received a booklet titled *Finding Shelter and Strength in God's Tender Care*. The booklet brings together excerpts featuring Scripture passages targeted at those in need, particularly victims of domestic abuse, those who have lost homes due to natural disasters, and families experiencing death and other stresses.

"We want to provide hope and strength from the Scriptures," noted Dr. Eugene Habecker, president of ABS. The excerpts are from the easy-to-read Contemporary English Version.

Excerpts from the Scriptures in the booklet provide solace for those who have been victimized by violence from family members, such as these verses from Psalm 55:



*"Listen God, to my prayer!
Don't reject my request.
Please listen and help me.
My thoughts are troubled,
and I keep groaning
Because my loud enemies
shout and attack.
They treat me terribly
and hold angry grudges.
My heart is racing fast,
and I am afraid of dying.
I am trembling with fear,
completely terrified."*

Those who have lost possessions in natural disasters are comforted by this verse from Matthew 6.34: "Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough to worry about today."

Those who have lost a loved one are asked to consider this verse from Lamentations 3.24 "The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him."

Distributing Scripture to those in trouble is a central focus of ABS ministry. A gift of \$8 provides more than 10 booklets for shelters, churches and youth centers. A gift of \$16 will produce more than 20 booklets. A gift of \$32 will fund more than 40 booklets.

Information on how you can give can be obtained by reading the back cover of this magazine.

When **strife** strikes close to home. . .

Your gift can provide a shelter in any storm!

Our booklets, such as *Finding Shelter and Strength in God's Tender Care*, feature Scriptures targeted for those in need.

Sometimes it's hard to see God's light when life is a living nightmare. Yet it's amazing how God always finds a way to speak to our individual needs through His Word. Your gift can help provide Scriptures to prisoners, the infirm, the blind, our armed forces, disaster victims, and others in search of strength and hope here in the United States.

Yes! I want to help provide Scriptures of encouragement!

Here is my gift to help the American Bible Society bring the hope that God's Word brings to a world so desperately in need of His love.

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____

Name _____

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