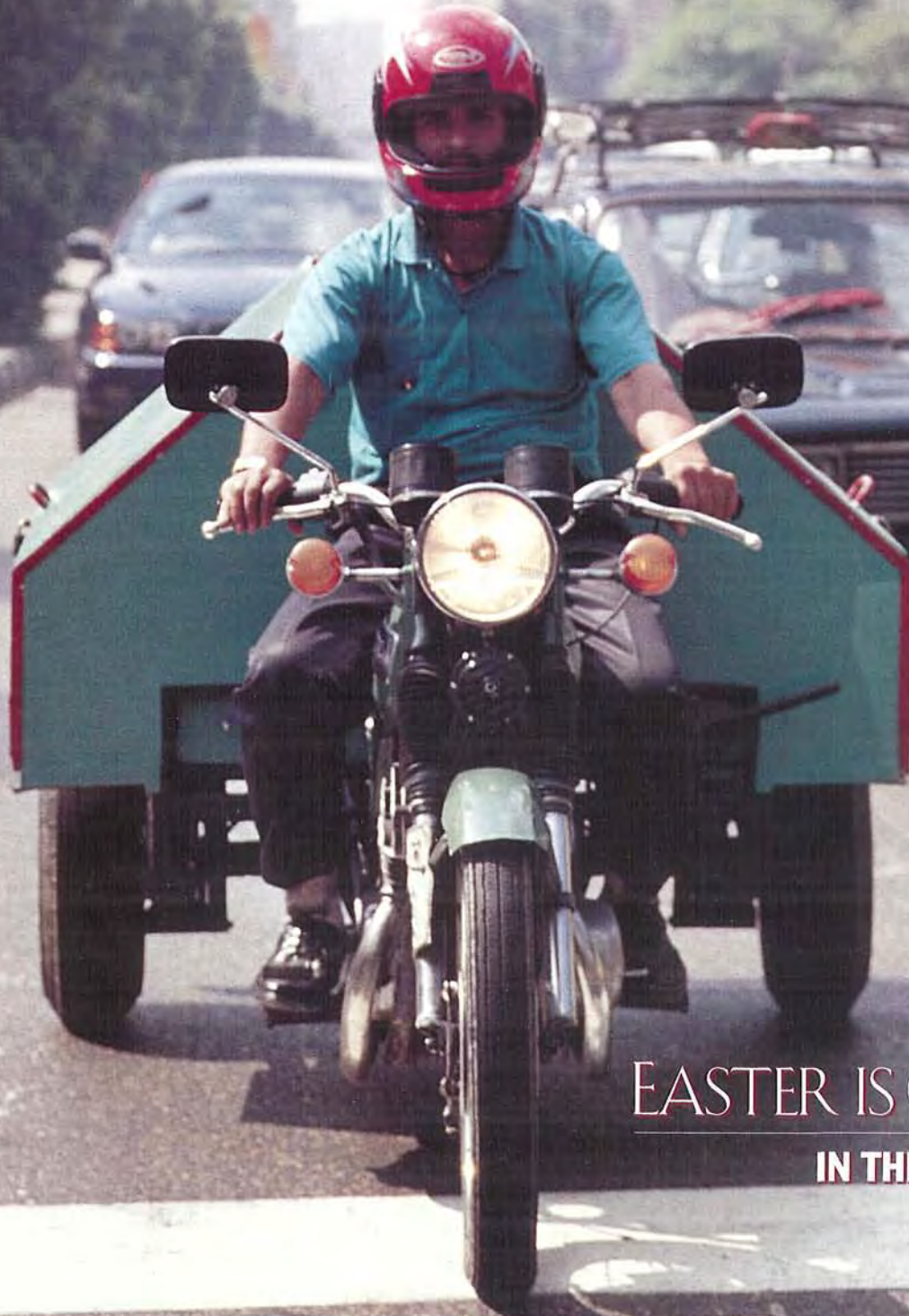


AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

RECORD

April | May 1999



EASTER IS COMING
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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e-mail

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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.

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Praying for Peace in Jerusalem

By faith he lived as a foreigner in the country that God had promised him. He lived in tents...

For Abraham was waiting for the city which God has designed and built, the city with permanent foundations. Hebrews 11:9,10 (TEV)

When describing what he wanted from the renovated Bible House in Jerusalem, Doron Even Ari, General Secretary of the Bible Society of Israel, said, "I don't want people to see just a bookshop, I want them to have an experience." That fittingly describes my response on a recent pilgrimage to Israel with ABS supporters.

You don't just observe sights and sounds and smells in Israel—you experience them. To sit on a boat in the Sea of Galilee and ponder, as Jesus' disciples did, who is this man that commands the waves? Or see the places in Nazareth where Jesus hung out as a kid, brings the Gospel story into 3-D relief. But this Bible-land experience is only one side of the Israel I experienced.

A mood of desperation marks the other. Within the city walls of old Jerusalem, a setting sacred to the three great monotheistic religions, segregated communities of Christians, Jews, and Muslims live side by side in a combustible microcosm of distrust.



Our visit took place at the end of the Islamic holy week of Ramadan, when 250,000 worshippers crowded into the courtyard of the Dome of the Rock, Islam's third holiest sight. Only ten feet away, on the other side of a divide, stands the Western Wall, the remains of Herod's temple and the most holy place in all of Judaism.

Just a short distance up the hill lies the Christian sector. And everywhere in this fractious city, armed Israeli soldiers patrol the narrow cobblestone streets.

This situation brought home to me the words of Psalm 122: "Jerusalem, we pray that you will have peace... May there be peace inside your city walls and in your palaces..."

When Jesus caught sight of Jerusalem for the last time, the Scriptures say, "...he wept over it, saying 'If you only knew today what is needed for peace! But now you cannot see it!'" (Luke 19:41,42 TEV)

When peace finally comes to Jerusalem, it will have worldwide impact. I pray that the people of Jerusalem will catch sight of what is needed for peace. 🕊

Eugene B. Habecker

RECORD

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ON THE COVER: Ebrahim Greenman winds his way through the streets of Cairo, Egypt, home-delivering Scriptures. This is an example of how creative, culturally sensitive ministry is opening up the Middle East to the Easter message.

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We encourage you to send your letters to:
Editor, *American Bible Society Record*, 1865
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EASTER IS COMING

**“SO IT SHALL BE ON THE DAY WHEN YOU SHALL CROSS THE JORDAN TO THE LAND WHICH THE LORD YOUR GOD GIVES YOU... A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY, AS THE LORD, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, PROMISED YOU.”
DEUTERONOMY 27.2-3
(NAS)**

IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Motorcyclist Ebrahim Greenman home-delivers a Bible ordered by phone. The Bible Society will get up to 80 phone orders a day following the placement of a newspaper ad for Scriptures.

Any crossing of the Jordan River today is a sobering encounter with a divided Middle East. Checkpoints, roadside inspections, everything hand-inspected and x-rayed,



transfers between buses (most vehicles are not permitted to cross the border), either coming or going, from Jordan or Israel, takes hours. Even with these inconvenient precautions, Jordan, unlike its Arab neighbors, at least makes overland access into Israel possible. An Israeli stamp in your passport will keep you out of most other Arab countries.

But what of Christianity in this setting

where Christianity began? When many Christians think of Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and the other Bible-land countries, they imagine Old Testament sagas about Moses and the Promised Land, or gospel accounts of Jesus' life among fishermen and Pharisees. Events of the early church—the Acts of the Apostles, and even the resurrection—seem but a passing eye-blink in the vast panorama of Bible-land history.

But it is only resurrection history that can bring peace in the Middle East today and point to a Promised Land for tomorrow. A diversity of churches throughout the region, serviced by Bible societies in Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and the West Bank, nurture and nourish this



S T O R Y A N D P H O T O G R A P H Y B Y D A V I D S I N G E R



resurrection hope. The Bible societies of Lebanon and Jordan also serve Christian communities in Syria, Iraq, and the Gulf States.

Although the Middle East is predominantly Muslim or Jewish, courageous Christian communities are finding new ways to live out the love, forgiveness, and new life of God's Word among their neighbors. In an arid landscape fragmented by ethnic acrimony, Bible societies, supported by the American Bible Society and the fellowship of United Bible Societies, are a principal source for living water. "We present the Bible as the book of love and light," says Labib Madanat, executive secretary for the Bible society for the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza, perhaps the people most in need of resurrection hope.

Lucian Accad, general secretary of the Bible Society of Lebanon, contends that, though people in the Middle East may not always be willing to discuss religion, "They are always interested in solving daily problems of life. If the Bible has something to bring to those problems, then they are willing to learn what the Bible has to say."

Both he and Labib agree that the Bible societies in the Middle East have critical roles: support the existing Christian community with affordable Scriptures and introduce the majority populations to the light of God's Word.

In Egypt, where Christians represent only 10 percent of the population, Ramez Atallah, general secretary of the Bible Society, speaks of their new vision. "We've been around for 117 years, but since the early '90s, a freer market economy has made it possible to do things we couldn't dream of doing when Egypt was a socialist state."

Lucian Accad says that, in Lebanon, too, Bible distribution has expanded far beyond expectations. He explains that, following the civil war, as part of rebuilding its support of the churches, the Bible Society published a common text Bible for use by the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches. Lucian says widespread use of this common text and efforts to get Bibles to the people have gotten churches of differing traditions working together as never before.

During a Sunday Service at a Coptic church in Cairo, the priest blesses the Host. Although the largest Christian community in Egypt, the Coptic Church represents about 5 percent of the population.



Bible Society Scriptures are crucial to all the Christian faith communities in Egypt. Below, a Sunday school teacher distributes communion bread at a Coptic church service.



Another tangible sign that the Christian community in the Middle East is coming together around God's Word and the work of the Bible societies was exhibited with the dedication of a permanent Bible society facility in Muscat, Oman. Four hundred Christians, representing 68 congregations from different nationalities and traditions, including Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant,

gathered in the Christian compound, one of several provided by the government in different cities, for the dedication of the new two-story facility. It includes a bookshop, warehouse, office, and conference room.

Oman, a sultanate clinging to the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, until very recently was a country kept isolated by its rulers. Officially

the only Christians in Oman are foreign guest workers. But with the opening of Oman to the outside world, this population has grown to number nearly half of Oman's 2 million people. The government is allowing them new religious freedoms.

Until now, the main source for Scriptures has been a Bible society trailer that traveled to the different compounds. The new Bible house, which sits surrounded by churches representing the main faith traditions, symbolizes the central, unifying role of the Bible society in the Christian community. A sign designating the location of the "Bible Center," in English and Arabic, is visible from two main highways running through Muscat.

According to Lucian Accad, the new Bible bookshop, "has one of the widest varieties of Scriptures and books that can be found in any of the world Bible societies. And the number of languages available is something else."

"Some of the limitations of what we can do in the Middle East as Christians," says Ramez, "can be very frustrating. But thinking creatively within these restrictions, we find we can do far more than our limited resources allows.

"For example, in Egypt we cannot sell Scriptures except in our Christian bookshops. Our only shop in Cairo [a city of 14 million people] is on a very crowded street where it's impossible to find parking. So, if someone can't find a Bible in their local church bookshop, it takes a lot of initiative to pick up a copy of the Scriptures.

"Yet you can have a McDonald's or Kentucky Fried Chicken home delivered—in Cairo everything is home delivered," says Ramez. "So the Bible Society began home delivery of Scriptures. It fits the culture and provides anonymity for people who don't want to come to our bookshop."

But home delivery required another change—advertising. Now they use television, radio, and newspapers, not only to promote home delivery, but to let people know about the growing diversity of formats available from the Bible Society.

With a literacy rate of just over 50 percent,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►

CHANGE FROM THE INSIDE OUT



The people of Garbage Village, a former shantytown in Cairo, know first-hand the transforming power of the gospel. In some ways, they remain outcasts. Garbage collection is never a lofty trade. But a law passed 30 years ago mandates that the garbage collectors of Cairo live with the garbage they collect—or at least in the dumps where they sort it.

Each morning collectors fan out across Cairo on assigned routes, bringing the garbage back to the dumps in donkey carts. The rest of the day is spent sorting—almost everything gets recycled. Residents of better city neighborhoods—routes prized for their valuable garbage, did not want the collectors living anywhere nearby. As a result, the collectors were forced to live in the dumps. Whole families lived—27,000 people in the biggest dump—without sanitation, education, running water, or roads—no public services of any kind.

In 1982 Samia Aziz, a devout lay Copt (the largest church in Egypt), was moved to help these people do something about their squalid existence. He believed that, if they changed on the inside, the outside would change too.

He moved to the dump and began to tell the people there how beautiful they looked to God—that God loved them enough to send his son, Jesus. He built churches. The Coptic Church ordained him for ministry to the village. And he

gave out Bibles from the Bible Society.

Today 80 percent of village residents are Christian. There are seven churches and a 10,000-seat amphitheater-style “cathedral” which, during the summer, fills up for the Thursday evening service. The villagers began to reflect the beauty God saw in them. And Father Aziz taught them how to reflect that in their surroundings.

They built real homes—two and three story houses—so they could live above the garbage they sorted and the animals they raised. Father Aziz campaigned for, and got, city services such as running water, sewage, and paved roads. The church opened schools to teach carpentry, leather working, and other trades. Because the older children collect garbage each morning, state schooling is not an option. So the church teaches grades 6-9. It also runs health care clinics. (Ramez’s wife, Rebecca, volunteers as a teacher and does home health care visits.)

The church attracts people from outside the village. A drive through the dump to attend services is exhilarating—thousands of people, whole families, walking well-dressed and groomed, some singing hymns, traverse a garbage dump surrounded by dogs, pigs, goats, and chickens. The “cathedral” itself is majestic, nestled under an outcropping of rock a hundred feet high. The scene confirms that the Bible truly is a Word that transforms lives. ■

Thousands attend services at the outdoor “cathedral” in Garbage Village, a church which provides refuge and new life for thousands.



A “villager” with his load of garbage.



DETROIT EVANGELIST

Reaching America's Arabs on the Air

STORY AND
PHOTOGRAPHS
BY PETER FEUERHERD

It's afternoon drive time, prime time for radio, in the Motor City. Listeners to WNZK, whose AM signal can be heard not only in the Detroit metro area but into Ohio, Indiana, and parts of Canada, hear the words of John 3:16: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son."

But they are not hearing the famous Scripture in the King James Version. They are not even hearing it in the English cadences of middle industrial America. Through the voice of Christian evangelist Monthir Abdullatif, 51, a native Iraqi who was born a Muslim, they are hearing the gospel in Arabic, the language of the Qur'an.

Monthir's aim is a simple, yet powerful, one: "to use the freedom of this country to promote the gospel to Muslims." He came here in 1982, and revels in an atmosphere which allows him to promote his Christian beliefs in the

grand tradition of American religious freedom.

To do that, he needs Bibles, he told the *Record* in a recent interview before taping his weekly program in WNZK's Southfield, Mich., studios, located just north of Detroit. He has a cold and a nasal condition aggravated by the harsh Michigan winter. But he continues to preach in his studio on the 11th floor, which offers a panoramic view of the Detroit region, an area he frequently traverses in a van filled with Arabic literature promoting the gospel.

He is a grateful recipient of American Bible Society materials, including thousands of Arabic-language Bibles, books not easily available in the United States. The Arabic Bible is also not easily obtained in some Arabic countries, such as Saudi Arabia, in which Islam reigns supreme.

"The only source for the Bibles I can get is the ABS," he said. The Bibles are used as a promotion—he sends them out free-of-charge to radio listeners who ask for one—and he also distributes them in home visitations to Arabic-speaking households as part of his ministry. He leads small congregations in Royal Oak and Dearborn Heights, two Detroit suburbs, and in Flint, a few hours drive north. He also ministers to Arab-speaking prisoners. The entire work falls under the aegis of "The Light of Life Ministry."

While Monthir preaches from an evangelical



Protestant perspective, the Arabic Bibles he distributes are also read by Coptic Christians (whose roots are in Egypt), Orthodox, and Catholics, groups which are all well represented among Arabs.

There are an estimated 300,000 Arabic speakers in the Detroit area, many coming from Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan. Most are from Christian backgrounds, including those who have fled religious persecution in the Middle East. About a quarter are Muslims.

Monthir wants to reach Muslims but he also wants to educate Arab-speaking Christians who need gospel education. His preaching style is basic and accessible, deliberately so.

"We try to find an easy language. There's a lot of people without much education in Arabic. I need to put it in a simple way."

The Bible promotion helps. Many Arabs, he said, "want to read the Bible. They've never heard it or seen it."

The former Iraqi police officer eventually lost his job and the support of much of his Muslim family when he committed himself to Jesus after visiting Bible House in Baghdad in 1970.

The radio program features preaching for about 10 minutes, followed by familiar hymns such as "Oh How Jesus Loves Me" in Arabic. There is also a question-and-answer session in which Monthir fields inquiries from both Christians and Muslims sent in via fax and telephone. "We try to answer them with wisdom," he said.

He steers away from the often volatile political controversies which plague the Middle East. But there are times when he will be topical. For example, the program offered solace to Jordanian-Americans when King Hussein died in February.

"We try to concentrate on the Christian message. We talk about salvation, the implication of the cross and why Jesus died for us."

Ironically, he came to Christianity because he took the Qur'an seriously as a young Muslim.

The Qur'an gives Jesus an exalted position as a prophet. Muslims, he said, "respect Jesus. He is mentioned in the Qur'an some 90 times."

That early exposure to the story of Jesus, filtered through Islam, "affected my heart," re-

called Monthir. He wanted to find out more. He visited Bible House in Baghdad, read and studied the Scriptures, and when he attended an evangelical revival in Iraq, he was prepared to accept Jesus.

"When I read the Bible, I found that Jesus Christ said he was the way," recalled Monthir. He found himself attracted to Christianity for its assuredness about the forgiveness of sins and its view that eternal life was available to those who accepted Jesus. After two years working on a mission in Germany, he came to the United States 17 years ago. He lives with his wife, Sohad Najem, and their two children, Irfan and Eman.

Since coming to this country, he studied at a Bible College in North Carolina and has gradually built his ministry with the support of American Christians—he lectures frequently about Arab Christians—and groups such as ABS.

A brochure printed by his ministry claims that Monthir's commitment to Christianity resulted in "hard persecution, mistreatment, and deprivation."

But the brochure also includes the words which inspire this evangelist to spread the Word to the people of the Middle East who have made their way to the American Midwest: "His Word is in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Jeremiah 20.9). And the brochure concludes with a statement from St. Paul, another preacher from the Middle East: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel." (1 Corinthians 9.16).

(Information about Monthir Abdullatif's ministry can be obtained by writing to him at PO Box 283, Hazel Park, MI 48030 or by calling 313-868-4294). ■



Monthir Abdullatif

"Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was nailed to a cross. God has raised him to life, and he isn't here."

Mark 16.6, *Contemporary English Version*

REVISITING FIVE
BIBLE ACCOUNTS

BY PETER FEUERHERD

This time of year, Christians commemorate the most striking aspect of their faith: the belief that an itinerant preacher in Palestine more than 2,000 years ago ran afoul of civil authorities, was executed in a most humiliating manner, only to be raised from the dead just three days later.

The first written account we have of the Resurrection is not in the gospels. Dr. David Burke, director of the Department of Translations for the American Bible Society, noted that St. Paul, in his testimony of Christian faith recounted in 1 Corinthians 15.3-8, wrote the earliest account of the Resurrection which survives to this day.

Mark's Gospel, probably the first written of the four gospels, is directed to an audience well aware of the risen Jesus. "It is a very simple and direct telling of the story," said Dr. Burke, who holds a doctorate in Biblical languages from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

In Mark's Resurrection account, the emphasis is on the fear of the women who came to the tomb.

Mark, noted Dr. Burke, focuses on a suffering Messiah, "to get people to come to grips with false expectations" that following Jesus would be easy.

Matthew's Gospel goes to great lengths to

Christ is Risen

Noel Coypel, *The Resurrection*
Musee des Beaux-Arts, Rennes, France
Giraudon/Art Resource, NY



emphasize Jesus' roots as a Jewish Messiah. At the end of the Gospel, the risen Jesus is on a mountaintop in Galilee, like a new Moses, urging his disciples to take his message to the ends of the earth.

In Luke's Gospel, the story ends in Jerusalem, a prelude to the Acts of the Apostles, the story of how Christian faith spread from there to most of the known world.

While there are differences, there are continuities in all the accounts, emphasized Dr. Burke. All feature the significance of the empty tomb and all stress God as the power who raised Jesus from death.

And, except for Paul's account which does not mention them, Jesus first appears to a group of women.

"It seems that women have important roles in the early Christian community," said Dr. Burke. "In the gospel accounts, it appears that the male disciples are huddled away out of fear during the time between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, while it's the women who are going about business as usual."

For believing Christians, emphasized Dr. Burke, all the accounts point to the uniqueness of what happened that first Easter.

A belief in a bodily resurrection, he said, "is new thinking," common to the Pharisees of Jesus' time but rejected by other

religious authorities, particularly the Sadducees. (Acts 23.6-8)

Paul addressed those early Christians who questioned the bodily resurrection:

If Jesus was not raised, he said, "our message is worthless, and so is your faith." (1 Corinthians 15.14-15 *CEV*). Paul continued, "If the dead won't be raised to life, we have told lies about God by saying that he raised Christ to life." He affirmed that "a seed must die before it can sprout from the ground," a statement in the belief that Christians will also share in the bodily resurrection.

Early Christians such as Paul truly believed in the bodily resurrection, not simply a belief that the spirit of Jesus lived on in some vague way. "Otherwise it becomes too easily unverifiable, if it is seen to be just a spiritual presence of some kind," said Dr. Burke.

In the Scripture accounts, said Dr. Burke, the risen Jesus "is clearly viewed as bodily." Post-Resurrection accounts include those in which Jesus eats (Luke 24.42,43) and can be touched (John 20.24-29). "He is not just a phantom," noted Dr. Burke.

That experience inspired the early Christians and continues in the faith of their successors some two millennia later. ■

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Translating the BIBLE



Dr. Martin E. Marty, Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus at the University of Chicago, and author of the three-volume *Modern American Religion*, served as moderator for the discussions.

When a person reads the Bible 50 years from now, what will that Bible look like—and what will the reader look like? On February 6, an impressive group of scholars gathered at Bible House in New York to grapple with such questions. ■ The Research Center for Scripture and Media of ABS and the Public

Religion Project sponsored the conference, titled “Futuring the Scriptures: The Bible for Tomorrow’s Publics.”

Martin Marty, director of the Public Religion Project and a leading authority on religion in America, led the discussion, which included 14 other scholars. Dr. Robert Hodgson, the Director of the ABS Research Center for Scripture and Media, and Edith L. Blumhofer, the associate director of the Public Religion Project, organized the conference.

ABS at the Leading Edge

At the opening of the daylong conference, ABS President Eugene B. Habecker welcomed the speakers and guests, stressing the Society’s “commitment to scholarship and translation.”

“At every turn, we have tried to be at the leading edge of technology and its application to our mission,” Dr. Habecker said. He cited the awards won by ABS’ “The Visit” and “A Father and Two Sons” in both video and CD-ROM format. The establishment of our Research Center for Scripture and Media, Dr. Habecker said, re-

flects “our intention to be one of the leading players” in the world.

Speaking of the conference, Dr. Habecker said ABS was “very pleased to host such distinguished guests.” He added, “We welcome the opportunity to be learners.”

Dr. Marty, author of more than 50 books, started by describing the conference as a conversation, a discussion “guided by the question,” as opposed to an argument, which is “guided by an answer.” Throughout the day, Dr. Marty proposed topics for consideration by the participants, such as the emerging importance of audiences in the Third World, and factors involved in translating the Bible into new forms, including CD-ROMs.

A number of the panelists spoke of their experiences living or teaching in the Third World, and how people in those countries encountered the Scriptures. Olga Villa Parra, who has worked extensively with disadvantaged people in Latin America, spoke of building bridges between people and the Scriptures.

BY THOMAS D. SULLIVAN

for Tomorrow's Culture

Professor Choan-Seng Song of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Calif., discussed his experiences with indigenous people in Taiwan and stressed how the Bible must be presented in ways that respect native cultures. This is important, Dr. Song said, because, "If you deny your own culture, you deny yourself."

The conference offered participants an opportunity to address a wide range of issues related to the

Bible and the future. Professor Lamin Sanneh of Yale University drew attention to the impact of Bible societies' efforts around the world.

Professor Sanneh said, "the 20th century has been a century of violence," citing wars, the Holocaust, and colonialism. The reason for this violence, he said, was because people believed that the national secular state is "the ultimate arbiter of human fulfillment and moral meaning." The work of Bible societies has always challenged that notion—sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly, Dr. Sanneh said.

Translation and New Technology

Dr. Marty summed up the issue of technology and the Bible this way: In previous times, ABS has been concerned with translating from one language to another. But with new technol-



ogy, "the great challenge and breakthrough now is: how you translate it from one medium to another, from one expression to another?"

Gregor Goethals, professor emeritus at the Rhode Island School of Design, raised matters that related to both translating for other cultures and using new technologies: "As we look to the future, to other cultures, and different ways of expressing things...we

have to ask first a philosophical question." That question is: What's lasting, what's passing?

Dr. Goethals, who works as a consultant with ABS on new media translations, describes the issues she deals with in terms of creating visual material for new audiences in new ways: "In order to deal with the...multicultural world, how in the world can we then develop images that retain something of the universal, but nevertheless, have to embody concrete human experiences, which are often diverse—diverse in color and diverse in language?"

Emmy-winning television journalist Bill Moyers spoke on

Journalist and commentator Bill Moyers was a central participant in the discussions.

Below, Dr. Gregor Goethals has authored *TV Ritual: Worship at the Video Altar* and *The Electronic Golden Calf*.



Discussions took place in the refurbished ABS Board Room.



100 YEARS AGO

Hazards and Rewards of Bible Work

“S

uddenly, without a moment's warning, a huge bloodhound sprang from the hedge straight at my throat.” Luckily for the Rev. H.F. Schwartz, the dog's owner restrained it before bloodshed ensued—then bought two Bibles from him.

Schwartz was making the rounds of northern Delaware with a wagon full of ABS Bibles, offering Scriptures door-to-door.

On their journey, Schwartz and his colleague U.S. Schaul aimed to ensure that every family they visited had a copy of the Bible.

Their travels brought them to the home of a woman, mourning her daughter Mary, who had died at the age of six. Schwartz offered her a Bible, telling her, “This book tells you all about where Mary is now, and how you can go there too, and how you can live together forever.”

50 YEARS AGO

From Bombs to Bibles

O

n April 18, 1942, Jacob DeShazer made his first trip to Japan—as part of Jimmy Doolittle's bombing raid. Captured after his mission, DeShazer spent 40 months as a prisoner of war.

A Japanese guard gave DeShazer the Bible in English, and it sparked a transformation in the prisoner of war. He was liberated in August 1945, and within two months started training as a missionary, to bring Christ to the Japanese.

On Dec. 14, 1948, DeShazer, his wife and their baby boy set sail for Japan, to help spread the Good News—with Scriptures provided by the American Bible Society. ■



The DeShazers set sail for Japan.

a number of issues regarding religion, culture, and the use of technology to communicate about faith. Mr. Moyers stressed the importance of listening, which he says is undervalued in our society, where “everyone has something to say, but nobody wants to listen.”

As for talking about faith, Mr. Moyers thinks that many people in our culture are looking for meaning in their lives. But he is uneasy about the prospects for serious spiritual discussion: “I sense a coarsening of public culture, of pop culture in particular, which is going to make it difficult for the public...to be engaged in a religious discourse. Pop culture is driving out almost anything that has a sense of depth or transcendence to it.”

As an example of the coarsening of culture, Mr. Moyers pointed to the growing number of acts of violence depicted on television shows. TV dramas portray these misdeeds without any sign of “shame, guilt, or repentance, or any redemptive effort to incorporate the violence in a deeper human experience,” he said.

Mr. Moyers said that this vulgarization of culture works against “the effort to get through revelation and through discourse at the real experience, the inner life of people and the connection to God.” This discussion about faith and God “is going to be increasingly isolated among the caring and committed communities that want to carry on this discourse,” Mr. Moyers said.

Speaking of new media, Mr. Moyers said that he is “skeptical about the ability of new technology to open us to spiritual fulfillment.” He said, “I think that most of technology is about publicity, not transformation.”

Mr. Moyers added that religious people might find new ways to continue their discussions about faith in the future. Continuing those conversations, he said, “is absolutely essential for whatever kind of culture we face in the 21st century.”

No Substitute for Personal Contact

Other participants took a more hopeful view of the use of new technology to bring the Bible to new audiences. At the dinner that concluded the conference, Dr. Marty summed up most participants' attitudes: While there are problems with new ways of presenting the Bible via technology, Dr. Marty said, “there is a good chance that in the proper hands, a great deal of translating through these media could be of use.”

And while there have been “tremendous breakthroughs in the technological side” regarding the Bible, Dr. Marty said that the big question is: “Who hands somebody the Testament?” As he put it, “There's no substitute for the personal.” ■

◀ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

non-print formats are crucial in Egypt. Dramatized audio Scripture tapes have dramatically increased Bible distribution—and provide the word of God in the heart language of Egyptians. Ramez explains, “The Arabic that Egyptians speak is a world away from the Arabic they read or hear in the media. Formal Arabic is as different from colloquial, spoken Arabic, as Chaucer’s English



A choir representing a wide variety of nationalities and faith traditions celebrates the opening of the Bible Center bookshop in Muscat, Oman. Below, customers flock to the bookshop opening at the Bible Center. The Center is used by 68 different congregations in services held in its buildings throughout the day each Thursday and Friday.

is from American English.

“Egyptians do not readily understand nor do they respond with their heart to the formal language of Bible translation. Yet a written colloquial style is not accepted in our society. So we translated the Bible into colloquial audio tapes. The demand for these has been astronomical.

“At Cairo’s recent book fair [one of the largest in the Middle East], we distributed 270,000 cassette tapes, videos, and Bibles during the 28 days of the fair. We averaged 953 Scripture sales per hour. It shows that people desperately want God’s Word and, when it’s in their heart language, they want it even more.”



Ramez also wants the Bible Society to increase its presence at some of Egypt’s big Christian festivals, usually held in memory of a Coptic saint, where up to a million Christians will gather. Twenty-five of these festivals are held each year at monasteries or ancient Christian sites throughout Egypt. He says, “We have been attending some of these but a bit half-heartedly. We’re hoping to vastly increase Scripture distribution at these festivals.”

Another part of the new vision for Egypt includes Scripture videos. Ramez says, “VCRs and color television are now considered an essential part of any home. We have much greater demand for our videos than we have supply.”

To help meet the demand, the Bible Society, in cooperation with other Christian agencies, has produced a few of its own videos—one about the Prodigal Son and another on the parables in Luke. Anticipating sales of 500 or 1,000 copies each year, Bible Society leaders were amazed when sales surpassed 18,000 videos the first year.

A second solution to meet demand is to dub existing Western videos, such as the Story Keeper series from “Focus on the Family,” into Arabic. A film about Jesus distributed around the world has also proven popular among both Christians and Muslims.

But more sales increase the Bible Society’s need for outside support. “Some people think that by selling more, we can reduce subsidy,” says Ramez. “But to offer Bibles at a price people can afford, we can only use sales to cover about half our costs. For every dollar in sales, we need an additional dollar in donations.” About one-third of donations comes from Egyptians. The other two-thirds must come from outside of Egypt, even though local fund raising increased from \$9,000 in 1990 to \$300,000 in 1998.

Other vistas on the Bible Society’s horizon include opening two new Bible shops in Upper Egypt to expand Scripture distribution through the mail, and consolidating Bible House facilities in Cairo under one roof. ■

In the next issue of the *Record*, David Singer will explore Bible Society work in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and Israel.

VOLUNTEER AWARD OF MERIT

Offering the Scriptures to others is easy, according to Ruth Besel. "I'm sold on the product," said Ruth, who with her husband Art shares a commitment to share the Scriptures.

Ruth and Art first learned of the American Bible Society at an Informational Conference in

Glorieta, N.M., in 1983. Since then, they have become active Volunteers, serving as Local Church Volunteers at St. John's Lutheran Church in Fort Collins, Colo., where they distribute ABS Scriptures through their Bible Sunday efforts. Art and Ruth have been instrumental in encouraging their pastor to promote the *Promise Edition* New Testament reading program.

When the success of their Volunteer efforts became evident, Art and Ruth took on additional responsibilities as Area Coordinators. They organize and attend meetings for current and potential volunteers in a community of more than 200,000 people.

Ruth spoke with affection for the people she encounters in her Scripture work. She recalls a trucker clad in overalls who would visit the Besels every other year, buying two cases of paperback Bibles. "It's so exciting to give away Bibles," the man told Ruth.

For their work, Ruth and Art have been honored with the Volunteer Award of Merit. Congratulations to Ruth and Art for their contributions to the Bible cause. 📖



ART & RUTH BESEL

A Learning Experience

Asked about his experiences as an ABS Board member, Billy A. Melvin commented that he has "thoroughly enjoyed it."

First, Dr. Melvin, who's been on our Board since 1980, cites two reasons for his joy in participating: First, "I'm totally committed to the mission of the American Bible Society, namely, to translate the Scriptures, to produce those scriptures as broadly as possible to people." Second, "It's been a learning experience in many ways for me."

Dr. Melvin has learned a great deal at Board meetings because they are "an opportunity to work with a large number of people and to be involved in what is really a worldwide ministry that has been stimulating and challenging personally."

A graduate of Taylor University and Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, Dr. Melvin serves on our Development and Church Relations & Volunteer Activities committees.

Church relations are a special strength of Dr. Melvin, who was the executive director of the National Association of Evangelicals for 28 years, working with denominational leaders and pastors across the United States. He is glad to have the opportunity to make suggestions about how ABS could better serve churches.

Dr. Melvin welcomes the opportunity for working with the Development Committee: "I've always been interested in how we could challenge and stimulate people in the work of the church, and it seems to me that Bible translation and distribution is a large part of that."

Development work brings Dr. Melvin back to duties he had in his former position with the National Association of Evangelicals—since he was involved with fund-raising there, he finds it's "fascinating to be a part of that effort at ABS as well." 📖



DR. BILLY A. MELVIN

NATIONAL NEWS

■ NEW YORK

The Gallery at the American Bible Society headquarters in New York is establishing a niche in the city's cultural scene only a year after its opening.

The Gallery, dedicated to displaying art inspired by the Bible, is the city's only exhibition space devoted to that single purpose. This spring (March 18-May 31), it is showcasing an exhibit of the Stations of the Cross by artists Eric Gill and Don Justin Meserve. This summer and early fall (June 30-Oct.2), the Gallery will provide an exhibition on "Holy Art of Imperial Russia."

Previous exhibits focused on the dome restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, a history of the American Bible Society, and stained glass artistry in American churches.

The stained glass exhibit was praised in the *New York Times*, which called it "a shimmering

Stained glass conservator Melville Greenland and a group of Metropolitan Museum of Art volunteers tour The Gallery.



and enlightening show." Other exhibits were critically praised in the *Wall Street Journal* and *Newsday*, among other publications.

The Gallery is located at 1865 Broadway (at 61st Street), between city landmarks Columbus Circle and Lincoln Center. Further information about the Gallery exhibits can be obtained by calling 212-408-1500.

■ PENNSYLVANIA

Church leaders throughout North America are singing the praises of the Houses of Worship (HOW) website, a project of the Pittsburgh-based Ekklesia, Inc., a partnership of the American Bible Society, the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, and OnTV Pittsburgh.

The project provides a spot on the Internet for churches that want to advertise their programs to the community. HOW supplies Christian churches with four free Web pages and advice for both the computer-literate and -illiterate. Webmaster Alan Freed directs this project.

Church leaders who have established websites credit the site for offering an opportunity for evangelization via cyberspace.

"The HOW pages are great and far more user-friendly than I feared," noted one pastor. Another added that HOW provides "a strategy to reach out and tap into all those young church people out there who are into the computer scene."

Bob Beyer, a webmaster for the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, wrote that HOW provides an opportunity to spread the gospel to cyberspace users. "I am a big believer in using the technology of our day to see those seeking God, just as St. Paul used whatever means he had available to do the same in his time."

Pat Donahoe, a reference librarian at Loyola

University in Chicago, commented, "what a wonderful service to offer small churches and those without computer gurus."

The HOW website can be accessed through the ABS website at www.americanbible.org by clicking the "related sites" icon.

■ FLORIDA

The scheduled main speaker for the ABS-sponsored Extreme Faith Youth Rally Concert April 3 in Miami is Nicky Cruz. The concert will combine live salsa music with preaching the gospel. Scriptures will also be distributed.

Nicky, a former gang leader in New York City, is the inspiration for Nicky Cruz Outreach, a ministry to urban young people. Nicky's story from youth criminal to Christian evangelist was profiled in *The Cross and the Switchblade*, a book by street preacher the Rev. David Wilkerson.

Nicky is now promoting TRUCE (To Reach Urban Children Everywhere), a program of rallies in troubled urban neighborhoods across America. At the rallies, ABS Scripture is distributed. TRUCE'S motto—"It Takes Guts to Make a Change"—is a call to conversion.

A security guard at a Chicago public high school which endured three gang killings in a single school year praised Nicky's evangelism as a potential solution to youth crime.

"The truth that he has is the truth of Jesus Christ," said the guard after Nicky spoke at the school in an effort to discourage violence.

Nicky told an audience of ABS staff members in New York that he can relate to many of today's troubled youth because he also experienced feelings of rage and anger as a child. He was raised, he said, in an abusive atmosphere which he escaped by participating in gang life.

After his best friend died in his arms, the

result of gang violence, Nicky related that at the time he felt "cold and desperate." Only after converting to Christ through the efforts of Mr. Wilkerson did he find a way out of his drastic situation.

"The greatest testimony you can give is your life," said Nicky, who added, "The answer (to gang violence) is Jesus Christ, if we can take the gospel to youth."

■ ARKANSAS

After a killer tornado whipped through Arkansas Jan. 28, a van from the Arkansas Rice Depot, a church-sponsored emergency relief agency, was quickly dispatched through hard-hit sections of Little Rock and other communities.

The van was full of provisions for those estimated 1,200 families who lost their homes as a result of the tornado. Relief workers drove through neighborhoods, asking people what they needed.

"Many people first requested that they needed a Bible," said Laura Rhea, chief executive officer of Arkansas Rice Depot. She quickly put through a call to the American Bible Society, which dispatched 200 Bibles and 500 *God is Our Shelter and Strength* Scripture Portions.

Residents of rural Sardis were hit by the tornado just two years after being struck by a similar storm. Laura noted that the people there, experienced in surviving disaster, were also quick to request Scriptures.

"Thank God, it was so wonderful," Laura described the ABS response in a recent interview with the *Record*. She added, "If there is anytime to distribute Bibles, this is it."

ABS also provided 1,000 Bibles and 2,000 *God Is Our Shelter and Our Strength* Portions to the Salvation Army in Little Rock. ■



Nicky Cruz, gang leader turned evangelist.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

PHILIPPINES

Pornography is being turned into Scripture thanks to modern recycling methods employed by the Philippine Bible Society. Last year the Trust International Paper Corporation (TIPCO), in cooperation with the Bureau of Customs (BOC), turned over a consignment of newsprint made from recycled pornographic magazines to the Bible Society for printing Scripture materials. More than 3,000 confiscated magazines, weighing about 1,826 pounds, were transformed into two rolls of high quality newsprint.

The material came from pornography confiscated by BOC officials from passengers at Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Normally such materials are burned. However, Guillermo Parayano, customs commissioner, decided to recycle the materials for the use of the Bible Society.

Willy Chua, TIPCO manager, said the move to recycle the materials was consistent with Jesus' actions. "He called a batch of uneducated fishermen to turn the world upside down, and social outcasts to do great things for him. We are able to learn a thing or two from these examples."

Dr. Medarlo Rivera, general secretary of the Philippine Bible Society, left, shakes hands with Mr. Willy Chua, Resident Manager of the Trust International Paper Corporation (TIPCO), at the formal handover of 500 kilos of paper recycled by TIPCO from pornographic material which the Bible Society will use to produce Scriptures.



Seized pornographic material is destroyed by representatives of TIPCO and the Philippine Bible Society in Pampagna, Philippines.

Dr. Medarlo B. Rivera, general secretary for the Philippine Bible Society, said he hoped that the recycling project will help put an end to the proliferation of pornography in Asia's only majority Christian nation. While the amount of paper donated so far is a relatively small amount, he noted, "great things have small beginnings."

IRAQ

Christians in Iraq received support from Bible societies in Lebanon and Jordan before their country was hit by American air strikes around Christmas. A total of 10,000 Bibles and 221,000 New Testaments were delivered.

Jamal Hashweh, executive secretary of the Bible Society in Jordan, said that the bombings and sanctions against Iraq have created a situation in which "the humanitarian aspects are beyond our imagination. It cannot be justifiable to cause innocent people, especially women and children, to suffer."

Bible Society representatives in Iraq report that there has been an increase in Christian activity in the country in the past few years.



■ **UNITED NATIONS**

ABS has distributed more than a million copies of its Scripture Portion called "Life in All Its Fullness: The Word of God and Human Rights." The distribution was timed to mark the 50th anniversary of the United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

The Scripture Portion is divided into 12 sections, each dealing with essential human rights. The overall theme is that all persons should be valued because they were created in the image of God.

The Scripture Portion was distributed to, among other groups, members of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; Roman Catholic parishes and agencies, and educational institutions, including parochial schools and Bible colleges.

■ **TOGO**

It's been more than a year since the Kabiye New Testament was launched in the town of Kara, in northeast Togo. One woman reported that the new translation, the first of its kind, provides an opportunity for worship and study. She said, "It's as if Jesus is there talking to me."

■ **ZIMBABWE**

The United Bible Societies was a major participant at the Eighth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998. Every person attending the conference received a Scripture Portion in one of the five official languages of the Assembly (English, French, German, Russian and Spanish).

Included in an exhibition operated by UBS at the University of Zimbabwe was a continuously playing video with samples of Bible Soci-

ety videos from around the world. Also on display were samples of printed Bible materials. A program presented at the assembly highlighted the work of UBS in promoting literacy around the world.

The event provided an opportunity to nurture relationships between the Bible societies and the various churches represented at the General Assembly.

■ **COLOMBIA**

The Colombian Bible Society has been active in distributing Scriptures since a devastating earthquake struck the country Jan. 25. An estimated 200,000 people were made homeless and another 1,000 were killed by the quake, which struck the cities of Armenia and Pereira and surrounding areas.

"People are still in shock, but they need more than food, blankets, and a place to stay," said Antonio Lara, UBS regional secretary for South America. "They need help and hope, something to look forward to beyond the disaster and their great losses." ■



Young people in traditional dress lead procession in celebration of the launch of the Gari Bible in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.



WORLD BIBLE DISTRIBUTION

Bible production follows the growth of the Christian Church throughout the world. The Church is currently growing in most of the Southern Hemisphere and is beginning to expand in Asia. The leading countries in Bible distribution are:

BRAZIL
3.045 MILLION

U.S.A.
3.006 MILLION

CHINA
2.158 MILLION

KOREA
1.12 MILLION



Marie and Andrew
Rojas

Mission to Mexicans

ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER

Determined Christian evangelist Andrew Rojas wanted to preach God's Word in Mexico in the 1940s. So he sent in his application for an entry card.

When he entered "missionary" as his occupation, the Mexican government, which had a long history of troubled relations with Christians, refused him entry. But it didn't curtail Andrew's determination.

"The Lord brought the Mexicans to us," he explained in a recent phone interview with the *Record* from his home in Pharr, Texas, near the Mexican border. For decades, Andrew, with help from his wife Marie, preached the gospel and distributed Bibles to Mexican farm workers.

He described the movement of Mexicans across the border as "a great movement of the Lord."

Andrew, 80, was raised in Sioux City, Iowa, where he said he became a Christian when, as a young man, a friend gave him a Bible. He devoured the New Testament passages, in particular the accounts of Jesus' suffering and death, which inspired him to pray for forgiveness for his sins.

After graduating from Asbury College Seminary in Kentucky, he and his new bride Marie worked for the Salvation Army there and in Ohio. In 1946, they moved to San Antonio to begin their ministry. When Andrew, a Spanish speaker with Mexican ancestry, heard about the large influx of Mexican workers then entering the U.S., the couple decided to move closer to the border.

Andrew did eventually make it to Mexico,

where he worked establishing some 30 Christian congregations among the native people in the southern Oaxaca state. But he remembered most vividly his experience with Mexican farm workers on the U.S. side of the border.

From morning to night, he would travel through the camps of the *braceros*, those Mexicans, mostly men, who were legally allowed to work temporarily in the U.S. through the 1960s. He recalled that in some camps there would be 5,000 men.

"Give me one of those," the men would shout to get at the front of the line when Andrew distributed selections from the Spanish-language Scriptures which were provided by ABS. He estimated that he and Marie distributed more than one million Spanish Bibles and New Testaments through the years.

The couple traveled extensively and relocated regularly. They consciously decided not to have children so they could give all to their ministry. But, recalled Andrew, "the Lord blessed and gave us spiritual children" among the tens of thousands they preached to and, in particular, five children they had a direct hand in raising.

Although advancing in years and fighting Parkinson's Disease, Andrew still performs weddings, finds time to pray and read the Bible, and distributes Scriptures to area pastors. He remains a generous supporter of ABS because he sees its work as instrumental in evangelization.

"The Bible," he said, "is the greatest thing that will convert people."

One way to support ABS' Scripture distribution work is through our annuitant program. For more information, contact the ABS Planned Giving toll-free number at 1-800-820-6227. ■

MISSIONARIES MURDERED

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE IN INDIA LEADS TO FIERY DEATHS

Christians in India continue to feel uneasy in wake of the killing of Australian missionary Graham Staines. Dr. Staines and his two young sons died when the vehicle in which they were sleeping was set on fire by a militant anti-Christian mob. The attack came in the early hours of Jan. 23.

Dr. Staines, 58, and his sons were asleep in their jeep parked in front of the village church. He had been helping to run a "Jungle camp"—an annual Bible teaching camp—at Manoharpur, a remote tribal village.

Dr. Staines had his two sons, Philip, aged 9, and Timothy, 6, with him. He had left behind his wife Gladys and daughter Esther in the nearby town of Baripada because there was no room for them in the jeep. He was planning to return to Baripada that morning.

According to villagers, an angry mob of some 50 armed militants descended on Manoharpur looking for Dr. Staines. They barricaded other Christians in their homes and formed a chanting circle around the burning jeep to prevent anyone from rescuing Dr. Staines and his sons.

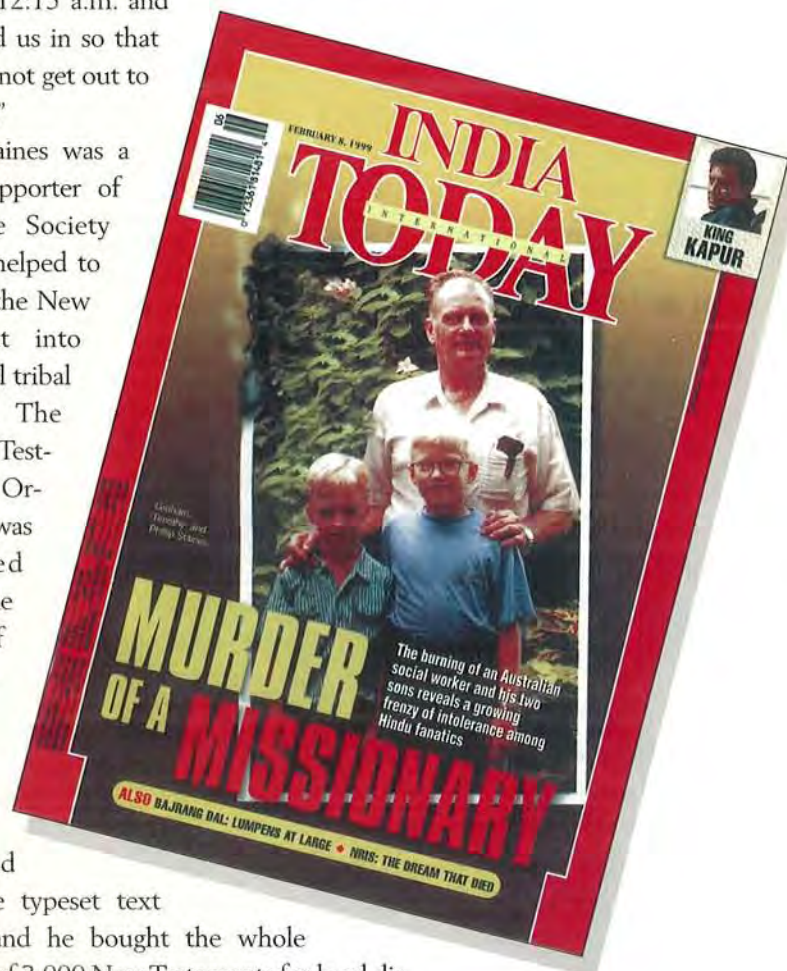
The powerless onlookers included Professor Subhankar Ghosh, former Bible Society Executive Committee member, who watched the episode from his room beside the church. He said that the mob was chanting "Bajrang Kali"—a reference to a Hindu goddess.

"It seems that it was all very well planned," Dr. Ghosh explained. "They stormed the village at about 12:15 a.m. and barricaded us in so that we could not get out to help him."

Dr. Staines was a strong supporter of the Bible Society and had helped to translate the New Testament into Ho, a local tribal language. The Ho New Testament in Oriya script was published by the Bible Society of India in 1997.

Dr. Staines had proofread the entire typeset text himself, and he bought the whole print run of 3,000 New Testaments for local distribution. He was hoping to start work on the translation of the Old Testament.

"Dr. Staines was a personal friend of mine," said Dr. B.K. Pramanik, general secretary of the



Dr. Graham Stewart Staines with his two sons, Phillip and Timothy.



“Through his work Dr. Staines expressed his love of God. He did not have to try to convert people—just let them see the work of God’s Word in his exemplary life.”

MISSIONARY ZEAL:
Gladys and Esther Staines are determined to continue Dr. Staines’ work. Photo by Bhaskar Paul/*India Today*.

Bible Society of India, who himself comes from Orissa. “I have admired his simple living style, philanthropic service and missionary zeal. The Bible Society and I have lost a great friend and a chosen vessel of God.”

Dr. Staines and his two sons were buried in Baripada on Jan. 24. Mrs. Staines remained resolute and calm, refusing to be angered by the people who caused the death of her husband and children.

“I have the strength of the Lord with me, otherwise I would not be able to keep on smiling,” she said. “I am sorry that these people could do this, but I am not angry. This is how my husband would have wanted to die. I feel proud that he dedicated his life to the people and to the leprosy work here.”

That same day in Bhubaneswar, hundreds of Christians observed a minute of silence in memory of Dr. Staines and his boys. Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik, who was laying the foundation stone at the Loyola High School development, suggested that everyone should spare a thought for the martyred missionaries.

The chief minister assured the Christian community that the culprits would be severely punished for such a barbaric act.

The director general of police in Orissa, B.B. Panda, told journalists that he had visited the village of Manoharpur personally and talked with residents who had witnessed the incident.

“My blood boils when I think of this incident,” he said. “I will do everything to bring the culprits to book.”

The authorities have since arrested and charged five

Hindu extremists belonging to the Bajrang Dal—the militant youth wing of India’s ruling Bharadya Janet Party—and more than 40 other activists.

Dr. Staines had worked in the tribal area of northern Orissa for more than 30 years and was a well-liked figure, running the local Mayurbhanj Leprosy Home, which he had helped to establish, and working to eradicate leprosy in the region.

“Through his work Dr. Staines expressed his love of God,” said Suram Mahat, one of Graham Staines’s longtime friends. “He did not have to try to convert people—just let them see the work of God’s Word in his exemplary life.”

The death of Dr. Staines and his two sons was the culmination of numerous acts of violence and destruction carried out by Hindu extremists against Christians in the previous eight months.

In July last year, it was reported in the press that in western Gujurat, the body of a deceased Christian was dug out of his grave and dumped outside a church. Two months later, an armed group of Hindu activists were said to have beaten and gang-raped a group of nuns in a church-run kindergarten in Madhya Pradesh, in central India.

Rahul Bedi, reporting for a major Australian newspaper, said that what upsets the community even more is the reaction of some Hindu leaders condoning such acts as “punishment” against the missionaries.

The Evangelical Fellowship of India reports that more than 90 violent incidents were documented in 1998.

A delegation of Christians presented Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee with a petition and secured a promise from him to condemn such violence publicly and to take firm action to stop it. ■



Never Too Old to Learn

When the Jinshanqiao Protestant Church in Xuzhou, China, began literacy classes, the first to sign-up was 80-year-old Qin Deying. According to a report from United Bible Societies (UBS), some of her neighbors wondered why. What purpose, they asked, did a literacy class serve for a woman apparently nearing the end of her life?

Her answer was direct: "The Lord has allowed that my ears and eyes have not failed me in my old age," she replied. "So I want to use these gifts to learn as many words as I can, read some of the Bible for myself, and understand the Lord's paths better while I still have time."

Mrs. Qin was one of nearly 200 in the 500-

member church who were illiterate. They owned Bibles and hymnals but were frustrated because they could not use them. But with the help of the class, which uses as its text a reader developed by the China Christian Council with the assistance of UBS, Mrs. Qin and her classmates are making rapid progress.

The literacy class has generated enthusiasm in the congregation, as class members have thrown themselves into church work in thanksgiving for the opportunity.

As for Mrs. Qin, the rewards are clear. After one year of classes, she has learned more than 800 words and can read the Bible and sing hymns unaided. ■

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

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

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

Join the Bible-a-Month Club today! Simply fill out the coupon below. Or call toll free 1-800-52-BIBLE (1-800-322-4253) for more information.

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

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

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

4299RECO



Knowledge, comfort, strength, and understanding come from the regular, disciplined reading of the Bible. So here's something to help you on your journey. We hope you will use this guide in your daily study of the Bible, and that you will write to tell us what you think of this feature and how you use it.

PLEASE PRAY

Political leaders— May our political leaders seek a renewed vision based on Biblical values of justice and human dignity as they seek to bring our country together during these turbulent times.

Holy Land— Pray that the risen Jesus may, during this Easter season, assist the search for peace and justice among Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the land where he walked, preached, and healed.

Texas— As a new ABS office opens in Houston, ask God that it may become a center for inspiration, reflection, and study on the Word. May this new ABS outreach prove to be a boon for Christian evangelization in the Southwest.

Catholic youth— May the new ABS program of Scripture-based retreats for Catholic young people spark an interest in the Bible and strengthen the Christian faith of those who will provide the future leadership for the largest Church body in the U.S.

ABS Gallery— Pray that the religious art displayed at ABS' headquarters continue to increase the faith of those who visit and offer a Christian cultural presence in New York City.

Dropparna— May this Scandinavian youth Christian outreach, named for the "drops of rain and dew" used as a metaphor for the spreading of God's Word in Deuteronomy 32, succeed in spreading the Gospel message throughout Europe. ■

MAY 1999

1 John 3.1-21

SUNDAY

- 2 John 3.22-36
- 3 John 14.1-14
- 4 John 14.15-31
- 5 John 15.18—16.4a
- 6 John 16.4b-15
- 7 John 16.16-33
- 8 2 Corinthians 3.1-18

SUNDAY

- 9 2 Corinthians 4.1-15
- 10 2 Corinthians 4.16—5.10
- 11 2 Corinthians 5.11—6.13
- 12 Psalm 47

ASCENSION DAY

- 13 Acts 1.1-11
- 14 Acts 1.12-26
- 15 Galatians 5.16—6.10

SUNDAY

- 16 Ephesians 5.1-20
- 17 Ephesians 6.10-20
- 18 Romans 8.1-17
- 19 Romans 8.18-39
- 20 Ezekiel 36.1-15
- 21 Ezekiel 36.16-38
- 22 Joel 2.28—3.8

PENTECOST

SUNDAY

- 23 Acts 2.1-13
- 24 Acts 2.14-36
- 25 Acts 2.37-47
- 26 Acts 11.1-18
- 27 Acts 17.1-15
- 28 Acts 17.16-34
- 29 Acts 18.1-17

SUNDAY

- 30 Acts 18.18-28
- 31 Romans 12.1-21

Orthodox Christians will observe Ascension Day on May 20, 1999, and Pentecost Sunday on May 30, 1999.

JUNE 1999

- 1 Psalm 25
- 2 Psalm 32
- 3 Psalm 51
- 4 Psalm 57
- 5 Exodus 33.12-23

SUNDAY

- 6 Exodus 34.1-9
- 7 2 Samuel 19.8b-23
- 8 Isaiah 30.8-26
- 9 Isaiah 40.1-17
- 10 Isaiah 40.18-31
- 11 Isaiah 55.1-13
- 12 Jeremiah 31.1-22

SUNDAY

- 13 Lamentations 3.19-33
- 14 Ezekiel 39.21-29
- 15 Daniel 9.1-19
- 16 Joel 2.1-17
- 17 Joel 2.18-27
- 18 Jonah 3.1-10
- 19 Jonah 4.1-11

SUNDAY

- 20 Micah 7.8-20
- 21 Romans 9.1-18
- 22 Romans 9.19—10.4
- 23 Romans 10.5-21
- 24 Romans 11.1-12
- 25 Romans 11.13-24
- 26 Romans 11.25-36

SUNDAY

- 27 Philemon
- 28 1 Peter 2.1-10
- 29 Psalm 103
- 30 Psalm 123

I N M E M O R I A M

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

MYRTLE LEE ADKINS
Given by: Mr. Frank S. Adkins

MY PARENTS, MR. & MRS. W. F. BASSETT, MY SISTER, MISS HATTIE FORD BASSETT, MY SISTER & BROTHER-IN-LAW, DR. & MRS. RAMSAY H. MOORE AND MY HUSBAND, DR. ROBERT S. SPARKMAN
Given by: Mrs. Willie Ford Bassett Sparkman

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MRS. LAURETTA YOUNGBERG
Given by: Ingrid & Daniel Yang

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Given by: Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Wagner

OUR PARENTS
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