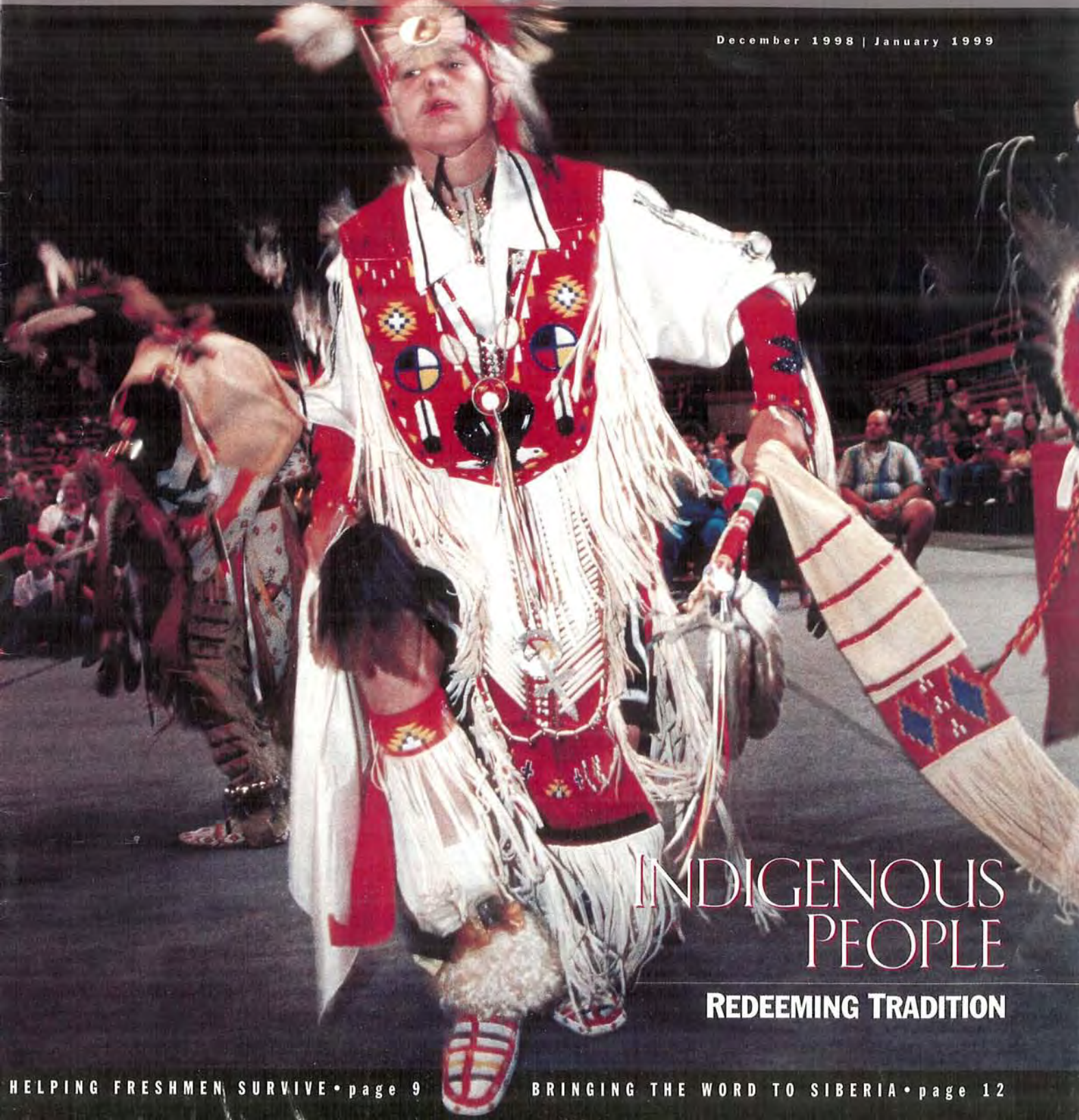


AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

# RECORD

December 1998 | January 1999



INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLE

REDEEMING TRADITION

## One Message That Fits All

***"There is one God who is the Father of all people. Not only is God above all others, but he works by using all of us, and he lives in all of us."* (Ephesians 4.6 CEV)**

The gospel message is not limited to any ethnic group, class, or generation—the Good News is for all peoples. This is why the American Bible Society, from its very beginnings, has made translating and distributing the Scriptures to specific groups a priority—to tailor the hope of salvation to every individual. That mission began in 1818 with ABS's first translation effort—to provide the Scriptures to the Delaware Indians in their own language.

Our cover story features ABS's ongoing commitment to make God's Word available to all indigenous peoples. At a conference held in Rapid City, South Dakota, the World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People, with representatives from 136 indigenous groups around the world, came to embrace Christ and to transform elements of their cultures into new and unique expressions of Christian praise and worship.


ABS partnered with conference organizers to provide 10,000 special imprints of the *CEV* New Testament. The WCGIP logo, printed on the cover, affirms the appropriateness of the Christian message for these indigenous peoples. Conference organizers chose the *CEV* as an ideal



translation for attendees, many of whom use English as a second language. More importantly, by distributing the Scriptures, the WCGIP intentionally emphasized its Word-centered focus.

Through partnering with Campus Crusade for Christ, ABS reached out this fall to another indigenous group, of sorts—college students. As many as 200,000 special *CEV* New Testaments, with "answers to the top five questions college students would ask God," were enclosed in Campus Crusade for Christ "Freshman Survival Kits" and distributed at hundreds of campuses across the country [see story on pages 9 and 10].

Through yet another partnership, this one with a coalition of inner-city Hispanic churches, ABS co-sponsored a Christian salsa concert in the South Bronx, New York, where thousands of New Testaments, in Spanish and English, were handed out.

In each of these partnerships, ABS helps fulfill the desire of all those who want to see God's Word reach to the ends of the earth. By finding and using language that speaks to the heart, ABS is able to say, "This Word is especially for you." 

*Eugene B. Habecker*

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### e-mail

[absrecord@americanbible.org](mailto:absrecord@americanbible.org)

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

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. (ISSN 0006-801)

# RECORD

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**ON THE COVER:** Steven Yellowhawk, of the Lakota tribe, has learned to celebrate his Christian faith in the time-honored tradition that his forefathers might have used. His father and grandfather joined with him in honoring both Christ and their Native American heritage at the second World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People held in his home town of Rapid City, South Dakota.

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

## Bringing in the New Millennium in Southern Missouri

A steering committee has been established to bring the *1999: Year of the Bible* celebration to the 15 counties comprising southern Missouri. Its goal: to show the people of the "Show Me" state how reading the New Testament can ready them spiritually for the opportunities of the new millennium.



*The steering committee for the "1999: Year of the Bible" celebration for southern Missouri makes plans to spread the Word.*

That message has already gone out to nearly 600 churches and Christian service agencies in the Springfield area. Jean Newman, American Bible Society Scripture Resource Volunteer, reports that the steering committee—composed of seven area church leaders—plans to reach 2,000 churches in the entire region by the end of the year.

Rev. Noel Chase, Operations Director of the Council of Churches of the Ozarks, is serving as treasurer for funds raised through the campaign. The committee will spread the Word-focused program via pastors' kits, "Five Minutes

a Day" buttons, and the distribution of 13,000 Bible Society envelopes which are stamped in large, bold letters, "1999: Year of the Bible."

Jean Newman and steering committee chairman Michael Olmsted, have asked the *Springfield News-Leader* to print the daily Scripture selections. Several area television and radio stations have agreed to highlight the program and interview members of the steering committee. The media campaign is designed to encourage as much participation in the *Year of the Bible* campaign as possible.

"Each of our committee members has agreed to pray and speak about the *Year of the Bible* at every available opportunity," said Jean.

The committee began by phoning hundreds of pastors and directors of agencies to learn how much support could be generated before mailing the pastors' kits. The first response was enthusiastic: 900 pastors and social service directors requested letters of information.

Scriptures will be made available at drop-off locations at a dozen public places in Springfield where they will be displayed and distributed free of charge. A total of 12,000 New Testaments have been ordered for that purpose. The committee is currently seeking ways to fund this project designed to reach those sectors of the public who might normally not encounter the Scriptures on a regular basis.

In outreach targeted to youth, Springfield's First Baptist Church has agreed to present each sorority and fraternity student attending Southwest Missouri State University with a New Testament and Daily Readers' Chart to encourage them to participate in the *Year of the Bible* reading program. ■

## VOLUNTEER AWARD OF MERIT

**D**iane Burkholder was always interested in the work of Bible societies, and when, 10 years ago, she saw an ad for an ABS Informational Conference, she couldn't wait to hear the story of the American Bible Society. After sharing the information with her husband, Gary, they decided to become ABS Local Church Volunteers to provide people in need with the Holy Scriptures.



GARY AND DIANE BURKHOLDER

In the past 10 years, the Burkholders have been Local Church Volunteers and Scripture Sharers for Fisk Memorial Baptist Church in Fort Mill, South Carolina. They also have dedicated three months

of their time each year to launch Bible Sunday, present ABS Scripture Resources, and make products available to all the members in their church.

The Burkholders embarked on an outreach to other churches in the Fort Mill area by setting up displays and participating in area meetings with State Coordinator Nellie Bicksler.

Diane says that kids love to get the Children's *Contemporary English Version*. And she loves to give God's Word to them—as well as offering the Bible in other languages to new members of her community. Recently, with the help of ABS, Diane gave Scriptures in Vietnamese to a new family in her church. 📖

**CORRECTION:** We mistakenly published a photograph of Diane Burkholder with the Volunteer Award of Merit profile of Thelma McPherson in our previous issue. We apologize for the error.

## Mission Responsibility

**“M**ission is the great thing” about ABS, says Paul A. Steiner, a member of the Board of Trustees since 1976. Being part of that mission is “a great privilege and a responsibility,” he adds.

Mr. Steiner, a member of the Evangelical Mennonite Church, brings considerable professional experience to his many stewardship responsibilities. He is the Chairman of the Board of the Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company, where he served as President from 1971 to 1994.

Mr. Steiner's business expertise is a welcome asset in his work on the Audit and Development committees. Recently, he worked on the Endowment Task Force, which made a report to the Board establishing a Board-sanctioned formula for how to use investment funds.

Through his service on the National and International Partnerships and Grants Committee, Mr. Steiner has gained insight on the way ABS is able to improve Bible distribution worldwide: “By working with various Bible societies throughout the world, we're able to make a tremendous impact.”

Mr. Steiner appreciates how ABS spreads the Word, through Bible distribution, as well as by “using new technology to get to the hearts of people.” He says that the new means of presenting God's Word show how ABS looks to the future, reaching young people who are “captivated by stories and the visual presentations” on video and computers.

What Mr. Steiner says about his work on the Board applies to the world at large, too: “The Bible will bring people together in a way that nothing else will. We have a common ground through Christ and the Bible. And it's the answer to the world's problems.” 📖



PAUL A. STEINER

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLE REDEEMING



Suuqiina, an Alaskan Inuit, beats out a dance cadence on his Eskimo drum in celebration of indigenous styles of Christian worship.

STORY AND  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
DAVID SINGER

War whoops punctuated the soft throb of First Nation drums as a hundred Native Americans, adorned in eagle feathers and rawhide tassels, wound through the hall. The soft rustle of wampum beads and rattles whispered in time to the rhythmic padding of moccasined feet. Brilliant reds, yellows, and whites flashed from their ceremonial regalia as these Indians

# TRADITION

danced the traditional strut-stepped choreography reminiscent of a bygone era on the Great Plains.

The North American contingent, hosts of the World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People (WCGIP), held September 5-13, had taken their turn to claim their heritage for Jesus Christ. The shrill cry of spine-chilling war whoops declared they were ready to engage in spiritual battle for Christ's Kingdom on the floor of the civic arena in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Celebrating from the bleachers were representatives of another 80 indigenous groups from 18 countries—3,400 in all. This second biannual gathering of indigenous peoples was part of a growing worldwide movement to claim their cultures for Christ.

Like the first WCGIP gathering in 1996, hosted by the Maori people of Aoteroa, New Zealand, this gathering drew from a broad spectrum of church traditions. For some of the delegates, it was the first time that they had used their tribal dances and songs for worship, affirming the God-given distinctiveness of tribal people.

Terry LeBlanc, who claims his father's heritage as a Mi'kmaq Indian from Quebec, explains that missionaries, working among indigenous peoples, have often forced them to choose between their traditions and Christianity. This, he says, is not what the Bible teaches. "It's a matter of wanting to esteem who God made me to be. Yes, I'm of mixed ancestry. I want to esteem who God made me to be—both parts."

Terry points out that many Christian traditions—Easter and Christmas, for example—began as pagan rituals that were redeemed by the church and given new meaning as a way to cele-

brate Christ. Terry says indigenous people should not have to reject the richness of their culture—deny who they are as a people—in order to affirm Christ.

Richard Twiss, a Rosebud Lakota/Sioux from Vancouver, Washington, says, "For a number of years Terry and I, this year's Gathering co-chairmen, have been trying to find more effective ways to reach indigenous people with the Good News. When we saw how powerfully God moved through the various cultural expressions of Christ and His Kingdom—through music, dance, language, dress—at the inaugural Gathering, we felt, yes, God was very much in this thing."

Working behind the scenes as a co-sponsor for this year's Gathering, the American Bible Society used a Scripture grant to provide 10,000 special imprints of the CEV New Testament, which featured the WCGIP logo on the cover. By using this logo, which links aboriginal and Christian symbols, ABS affirmed that the gospel message was for indigenous peoples, too.

Says Richard, "It's saying that we are important the way God made us. We feel our God-given cultural identities are affirmed through these Scriptures."

From its beginnings, ABS has shown a concern for indigenous people. As early as 1818, ABS published the Epistles of



**Maori people from Aoteroa, New Zealand (below), perform a traditional Haka War Dance in Christian worship at the World Christian Gathering. Photo by Karmen Palumbo.**





**Richard Twiss (above left) and Terry LeBlanc, co-chairs of the WCGIP, admire a special imprint CEV New Testament presented by ABS regional representative David Gowen (center). The 10,000 Testaments, given as an ABS grant, feature the WCGIP logo (below) on the cover. The hand on the right signifies indigenous people; the hand on the left, God the Father and Holy Spirit. The hands are unified by the Cross of Jesus Christ.**



John in the Delaware tongue and a few years later translated most of the New Testament and Isaiah into the Mohawk language. ABS staff member David Gowen, whose father had worked with Natives on behalf of ABS for many years, played a key role in making this Scripture grant possible.

Says Richard, "The American Bible Society has a real desire to equip people with the Word of God, and, with such an international scope of participants, it seemed like a good match. We were really honored that ABS went to the effort and expense to produce a special New Testament just for the Gathering."

"There are several reasons why we asked for the *Contemporary English Version* (CEV) New Testament," says Terry. "One was to demonstrate to people who would be watching the Gathering from some distance that the Word of God is central. In our native Christian community, there are people who disagree with the focus of the Gathering—with the cultural revitalization, restoration, and redemption of our traditions as a part of our Christian worship. They feel that this is engaging in compromise. So, in a very tangible way, we wanted to say, 'The Word of God is central to us,' and it truly is.

"We also wanted to provide the representatives here from around the world—many of whom use English as a second language—a very readable translation that is simple, easy to follow, yet able to contain with integrity what it is

that God has been saying."

A dignified Maori elder named Monte Ohia, founder of the World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People, has brought these people together to discuss their cultural identities and how to incorporate them into new forms of Christian worship and evangelism.

"What excites me about the conference," says Terry, "is that, as indigenous people, we're going to learn how to bring a worldview and a spiritual perspective into the church that will help balance the church."

He explains, "The thread of the spirituality of aboriginal people is the thread of connectedness to natural creation. And so when we tend toward idolatry, we tend toward Baal worship—the worship of the created things—worshiping creation as opposed to the Creator.

"On the other hand, in the Western world there is a different thread of spirituality—it's the thread of materialism. Instead of creation, the focus is on that which we can create, that which can be manipulated, increased, transformed, changed, grown, produced.

"This spirituality is woven throughout the church and throughout the life of Western people in the church. When that culture tends toward idolatry, it tends toward materialism or Mammon worship."

Monte Ohia, Gathering founder, has a vision of threes—three Maori, three Native North Americans, three Anglos, three Blacks, and three Asians, and so on—teaming and going into mission. "What an impact that could have—where the multicultural rainbow that God has created could give the church a new, balanced understanding of God's Word."

Assessing the results from this Gathering, Richard says, "There was a real liberating effect. Native people who have been Christians for many years, for the first time experienced affirmation from the Lord that He had created them in His image as Native people, and had given them the liberty and freedom to express their love to Christ through their God-given cultural identities. There was a lot of rejoicing, a lot of weeping, a lot of people breaking free from old bondages—from bad theology and poor missionary examples." ■



# HELPING FRESHMEN SURVIVE

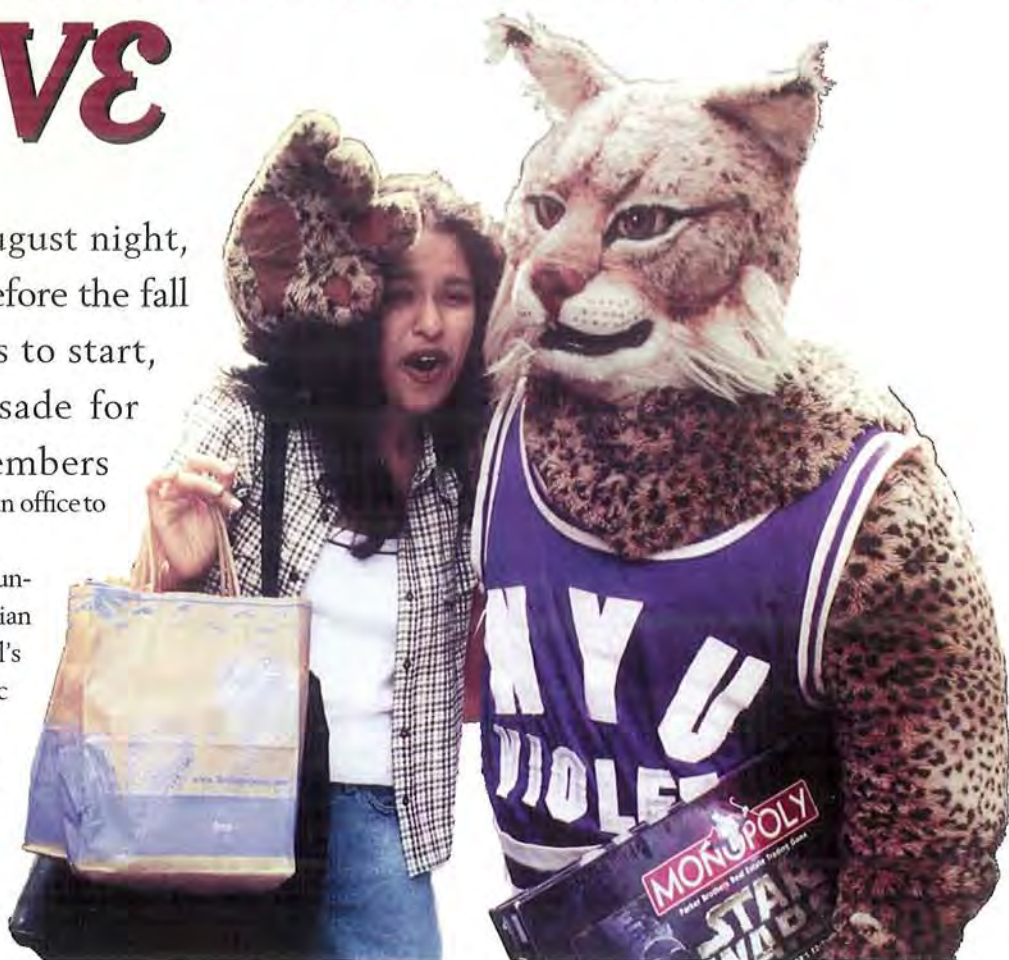
**O**n a muggy August night, only weeks before the fall semester was to start, Campus Crusade for Christ staff members and volunteers gathered in a Manhattan office to assemble "Freshman Survival Kits."

The young men and women filled hundreds of small paper bags with Christian music CDs; copies of Josh McDowell's book, *More Than a Carpenter*; a plastic spring "Slinky" toy—and a Bible.

These Bibles, designed specifically to appeal to collegians, are the result of a year-old partnership between the American Bible Society and Campus Crusade for Christ. The "collegiate" design was commissioned by Campus Crusade; ABS provided the translation and published the Bibles. Kits would be assembled at hundreds of other locations near college campuses throughout the country.

A few weeks later, as part of freshman orientation at huge New York University, the All Club Fair sprung to life. A diverse array of student activity group banners and displays made their pitch for student membership—board game clubs, the crew team, singing and drama groups of every description, numerous religious clubs, and publications. Campus Crusade joined the fray, offering the Freshman Survival Kits to the steady flow of students. Although kits were free for the taking, students were encouraged to put their names on a sign-up sheet and fill out "The Easy Survey."

The survey asked a few multiple-choice questions: What year are you in? What's your religious background? How



**THE BOBCAT, NYU'S MASCOT, TOOK A STUDENT AND A "SURVIVAL KIT" FOR A SHORT, JAUNTY STROLL.**

important is your spiritual life? How open would you be to discuss spiritual issues in a small group setting? Would you like to know how you can know God personally?

The young people dropping by the table reflected the wide diversity of the NYU student

body—many could trace their roots to Europe, Africa, Asia, or seemingly anywhere else.

The Freshman Survival Kits became a hot item—and a good number of the students taking them took time to fill out the Easy Surveys.

In just under two hours, all 400 survival kits were gone—the most Campus Crusade had given out at any school in the New York area. Larry Christensen, Campus Metro Director for Campus Crusade for Christ in New York, was very pleased. He said, "There are unbelievable distractions and

attractions for students in this city." The kit "puts in their hands something attractive that helps them consider Christ." It "presents the Gospel as a little bit more credible, attractive, and relevant to them."

Sharon Denney, the development coordinator for the Freshman Survival Kit team at Campus Crusade's national office, said, "The event at NYU today was just exciting!" She added, "It's a tough place to expose people to the claims of Christ," but the distribution of the kit "is a start."

Earlier, Sharon had spoken about the larger partnership with ABS...how thankful they were for the 75,000 Bibles distributed on campuses last year...anticipating the 200,000 they expect to distribute this year at 250 colleges and universities.

Speaking about the kits' impact, NYU sophomore and Campus Crusade volunteer Clara Lee, said: "There are a lot of...jaded people who don't want to get anywhere near Christianity. That's sort of to be expected at NYU." However, she thinks the kits worked—"people were interested" in a gesture that was "generous and demonstrative." She added, "Some people who walked by were genuinely interested and want-



**OFFERING "SURVIVAL KITS" TO STUDENTS AT NYU'S ALL CLUB FAIR.**

ed to know more of what we were about."

In the heart of the biggest American city, where many attractions and temptations pull at students, the kits offer a way to create an opening to Christ. The total design of the kit—both Campus Crusade's special imprint of the Scriptures and everything that comes with it—helps to draw students to the Word.

Larry Christensen speaks of the kits as a way to "find interested seekers who are willing to talk about the gospel." Clara Lee's experience bears this out: A classmate who

picked up a Survival Kit looked at the Bible and said, "Wow, this is really nice." Clara added that she doesn't think her fellow student is a Christian.

Larry Christensen is eager to get funding for more Survival Kits. The distribution has made an impact, says Elizabeth Printki, who works for Campus Crusade in New York. Campus Crusade is now getting more students to its Tuesday night Bible study, thanks to our high-profile presence at the All Club Fair. She says, "I am sure that God is using the Bible and the other materials in ways we may never be aware of this side of heaven." ■



## LOCK OUT THE MARKET!

Adding an American Bible Society Gift Annuity to your retirement plans can help you avoid the unpredictable behavior of our global economy. No matter what stock markets are doing, an ABS Gift Annuity will provide you with secure, fixed-income payments for your life or for the life of a beneficiary or beneficiaries you designate. Your gift annuity will ultimately benefit the Bible cause, so you gain the satisfaction of knowing you've helped bring the Word of God to deserving people all over the world.

- YES!** I want to learn more about ABS Gift Annuities. Please send me my free copy of *Bringing Good Things to You*.
- Please have an ABS Representative contact me.
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We have created a free brochure, *Bringing Good Things to You*, which explains how an ABS Gift Annuity can help you and help to share the Good News with others. Simply complete and mail the form at left or call us toll-free at

**1-800-820-6227**

# Bringing the Word to the Ends of the Earth

Scriptures to Sustain a Deeper Spirituality in Siberia

THE SIBERIAN BRANCH OF THE RUSSIAN BIBLE SOCIETY WORKS TO PROVIDE THE SCRIPTURES TO NATIVE PEOPLE, SUCH AS THIS NENET FAMILY

**T**he Siberian branch of the Russian Bible Society, created in 1994 to distribute the Scriptures in a sparsely populated region larger than the continental U.S., focuses much of its work on abused and neglected children.



ionable in a nation where it had been suppressed for decades under official atheism. The result was the opening of new churches throughout

Russia and renewed growth among the historical churches.

Now fewer new churches are opening and fewer people are joining the already existing churches. But those who join now are true believers—they come because they feel a need for spiritual growth and support.

Olga Bulatova, fundraising officer for the Siberian branch, reports that the group has a special outreach to children living in private and government orphanages, many there as a result of parental drug abuse and alcoholism.

“We know that these ‘unwanted’ children are loved by God and need to hear of His love for them. So our specific goal is to see that every one of these children receives the Scriptures in a form that they can understand, to tell them of Christ’s sacrifice for each of us.”

Another special outreach is to the visually impaired. Scripture materials with extra-large print and in Braille have been distributed, generally to the elderly living in nursing homes.

A program to reach the poorest of the poor is also supported by the Bible Society. On Saturdays, volunteers go to a city garbage dump frequented by the poor who make a living by recycling discarded materials. The volunteers

P H O T O S B Y A L E X E I B U L A T O V ,



gather the children of these families together for a religious education program and a meal.

The group is also planning a program to reach many people in isolated villages in a region encompassing 1,500 miles from east to west, and another 1,500 miles from north to south.

Working in cooperation with the Russian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and various Protestant churches, the Siberian branch of the Russian Bible Society has distributed 80,000 Bibles, 70,000 Children's Bibles, and 35,000 New Testaments among Siberia's 25 million inhabitants. A Scripture study program titled "To the Ends of the Earth" is planned for the next three years in conjunction with year 2000 observances.

Olga notes that in Siberia there are many small native groups who, literally, live at the "end of the earth" in a wide belt running across the north of Russia, along the Arctic Circle. Among the 160,000 people who live in that area, there are 40 groups, each with its own history, language, and culture. Many live a nomadic life, hunting, reindeer-shepherding, and fishing, which makes evangelizing there difficult. Many practice shamanism; it is estimated that fewer than one percent of the people living near the Arctic Circle in Siberia are Christians. 📖

S T . P E T E R S B U R G

FOR THE RECORD

100 YEARS AGO

## The Best of Old and New

In the January 1899 *Record*, John Fox and William I. Haven, the new secretaries of ABS, addressed an open letter to the members and friends of the Society. As ABS now seeks to spread the Word through technologies such as audiotapes, videotapes, and CD-ROMs, we can see that their insights apply to our times as well as theirs:

"Principles never change; forms and methods must... How to seize and employ for the high purposes to which this society is consecrated the best available methods and forces of the modern world, and so to do this as to conserve the old and glorious foundation and superstructure which it is our happiness to inherit—this is the problem that now confronts us."

50 YEARS AGO

## A Sailor's Gift

The December 1948 *Record* tells the story of Pedro "Pete" Yleto, who sailed all over the world in the U.S. Merchant Marine. When he arrived in foreign ports, he changed his pay into local currency. Often when he left port, he found that he still had some of the foreign money. As he traveled, he amassed a good number of bills and coins from various lands.

When Pete heard of the crying need for Scriptures all around the world, he put the money into a box and sent it to ABS. The article concludes: "Pete was a 'world traveler.' Now he is seeking to help the people of all these lands he so recently visited, by sending them the Scriptures. Now Pete has become a 'world citizen' whose life is bound together with his brethren throughout the earth." 📖



Pedro "Pete" Yleto's coins were turned into Bibles.



**Edwin and Ruth Messerschmidt have ministered together in over 50 countries.**

# The Calling of a Lifetime

SUPPORTING THE WORK OF THE LORD

**D**uring the Cold War, in Krakow, Poland, missionaries Edwin Messerschmidt and his wife, Ruth, were leading an underground Christian fellowship meeting.

Under the threat of a raid by the communist authorities, this gathering was prayerful and alive with the spirit of God. During the meeting, the Messerschmidts' interpreter looked at Edwin carefully and asked, "Have you ever been in Argentina?"

Startled, Edwin said yes, that he had indeed spoken at the Slavic Gospel Institute in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

"I was in that meeting," the interpreter said. "That's where I devoted my life to the Lord."

This is but one story from two lives devoted to serving God's will.

Ruth, a talented musician, has ministered alongside her husband for the past 36 years in response to God's calling.

Edwin's calling from God has taken him to Argentina, Austria, Poland, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Japan, and China. Together, the Messerschmidts have ministered in more than 50 countries, working with missionary organizations as guests, assisting in Bible schools, speaking to pastors and Christian workers, working in missionary children's schools and at church evangelistic crusades.

Edwin's response to the Lord's call is living proof of the power of God's Word. It started when he was a high schooler, in a small Methodist church in Dover, Minnesota. After the service, Edwin received a pocket version of the Gospel of John. That night, he read the Gospel of John and his life was changed forever. Since then he has never doubted or ques-

tioned his calling to serve the Lord. Nor has he questioned the power of God's Word to transform lives. He wrote a testimony about his experience, which reads, in part: "It was a Gospel of John with footnotes—given to me after I heard that Christ died for me—that became the instrument God used to change my life forever.

"As I read Jesus' instruction to Nicodemus that one must be 'born again' to enter God's Kingdom, it became the means the Holy Spirit used to bring me into a personal and vital relationship with Jesus, the Christ..."

"To all who may read this, I want to encourage, yes even stronger, to challenge you to daily read a portion of God's Word that will guide, comfort, and sustain you in your life's journey."

Edwin, who is 80, now says, "I'm not ready for retirement." The chaplain at the Messerschmidts' retirement home in Alabama is 100 years old, and Edwin and Ruth help him to minister to a parish that includes people in wheelchairs and those with debilitating diseases. Ruth inspires the group with her musical skills and Edwin shares the Word of God, continuing the calling he received in his youth.

As ABS annuitants, the Messerschmidts are grateful for the payments they receive from their ABS Gift Annuity. "Establishing Christian annuities is something I've done deliberately," Edwin says. "As long as we're here, we receive payments. When we're gone, the money goes to support God's work."

The American Bible Society is honored to have supporters like Edwin and Ruth Messerschmidt. If you would like information on becoming an ABS annuitant, please check the box on the reply form on page 10 or call the Planned Giving toll-free number at 1-800-820-6227.

**NATIONAL NEWS**

■ **NEW YORK**

The best of Christian salsa pounded through the South Bronx's St. Mary's Park late this summer, courtesy of the American Bible Society and the New York Hispanic Clergy Organization. The concert event attracted some 6,000 music lovers. But it was about more than music: a total of 15,000 New Testaments were distributed, many to curious passers-by.



**"Salsa King" Richie Ray, on keyboard, performs for concertgoers at a South Bronx event co-sponsored by the American Bible Society and the New York Hispanic Clergy Organization.**

The concert's big draw was "Salsa King" Richie Ray.

José Ruiz, assistant director of Volunteer Programs for ABS, said that the goal of the concert was threefold: to build a relationship between the South Bronx clergy and ABS; to distribute the Scriptures; and to establish a volunteer network for ABS among the more than 200 participating churches. All three happened, said José.

As the concert came to a close, the mostly youthful crowd rushed the stage to have their New Testaments autographed by Richie Ray, who began performing salsa music before many in his South Bronx audience were born.

José is confident that those autographed New Testaments, held as keepsakes by young salsa fans, will also be a source of inspiration that will help evangelize the Hispanic community of the South Bronx.


■ **NEW YORK**

On a decidedly cool afternoon, thousands of Catholic youth warmed the atmosphere of St. Joseph's Seminary with a breath of the Spirit. ABS fanned that flame of faith by distributing 10,000 special copies of John's Gospel—7,000 in English and 3,000 in Spanish.

Seven volunteers joined Jeanette Russo, director of Catholic Ministries at ABS, to distribute the Portions. The choice of John's Gospel was particularly appropriate for the rally, whose theme was "Come and see" (the words that drew the first disciples to Jesus).

Jeanette and the volunteers handed out the Portions to interested youths before and after a Mass celebrated by Cardinal John O'Connor. Speaking to the enthusiastic teens, Cardinal O'Connor urged them to reject the slavery of conformity to the world's ways and to embrace the freedom found in Christ.

This distribution was an ABS first in the New York region. Many Catholics know little about the Society and its work, and events such as these give ABS a chance to tell others of its work—and to spread the Good News.

This ABS initiative was warmly received by the Archdiocese of New York. Monsignor Francis E. Oliverio wrote to Jeanette: "It is with a heart full of gratitude that I extend you my thanks for having provided...the Gospel of St. John...in such large and sufficient numbers... That Sacred Word, so formative, will affect the lives of those who read it." 



**ABS GRANTS:  
 FISCAL YEAR  
 1997-1998**

**BIBLES  
 320,276**

**NEW TESTAMENTS  
 1,676,610**

**BIBLE PORTIONS  
 AND SELECTIONS  
 37,801,369**

**TOTAL SCRIPTURE  
 GRANTS  
 39,798,255**

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

■ SURINAME

The Suriname Bible Society, serving a country of 350,000 people located on the northeastern coast of South America, is raising funds to provide Scriptures to children who have been sexually abused.

The Bible Society took up the children's cause after a series of articles in the local newspaper detailed the problems faced by children who have been sexually abused and the lack of support institutions which care for them. A special fundraising project was launched with the purpose of purchasing Scriptures for these children.

At one institution, the Foundation for Children, the Bible Society provided Bibles and Scriptural pamphlets to the children during a presentation marking Bible Month.

Prior to the presentation, the Rev. Earle Deira, general secretary of the Suriname Bible Society, was greeted by a little boy who came up to him and asked, "Are those books you have about Jesus?"

When told that they were, "his little eyes lit up and sparkled with joy," said Rev. Deira. Following the presentation, a local church

offered to donate three bags of rice per month to the care center so that the children would have physical as well as spiritual food.

■ PHILIPPINES

A shopping mall food court in Quezon City was the site for the final round of the Metro Manila Bible Quiz, sponsored by the Philippine Bible Society. The Society would like to expand the four-month long competition, which begins each November at Manila area high schools, into a national contest.

Many of the questions probe student's factual knowledge of the Scriptures. But some also challenge them with situational dilemmas such as: "A classmate tells you that he wants to leave home because of frequent quarrels with his parents. What advice and supporting Bible verse would you give him?"

The purpose of such questions, say competition organizers, is to show the audience—many of whom are weekend shoppers strolling through the mall—how the Bible can provide answers to everyday problems.

This year's second-place winner, Bonnalyn Evangelista, donated all her prizes to the Sisters of Mary School, where she is a student. Her donated prizes included cash, a washing machine, a gift certificate from Proctor & Gamble, a cassette recorder, a computer scholarship grant, a trophy and a plaque. The Sisters of Mary School is a resident school providing free education to poor children. ☛

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**THE PURPOSE OF SUCH QUESTIONS IS TO SHOW HOW THE BIBLE CAN PROVIDE ANSWERS TO EVERYDAY PROBLEMS.**

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**In another outreach sponsored by the Suriname Bible Society, a boy at a Moravian primary school receives a Bible Reading Guide.**



## Casting Out Voodoo for Jesus

**A**ntonia Carrasco, 64, worked 12 hours a day in a Havana pizza parlor to earn enough money to live. But much of that money went to buy dolls, chains, and the other paraphernalia of her pagan religion.

Antonia is now a joyous Christian, deep into Bible study and enjoying her new Study Bible. But her spiritual journey was not an easy one.

Antonia was a follower of Santeria, the native Cuban religion that mixes African spirit worship with veneration of Roman Catholic saints.

To protect her home from evil spirits, Antonia filled glasses of water and placed them on special shelves in her living room. She also

placed flowers and cigarettes on shelves in strategic locations.

Despite her devotion to Santeria, Antonia found no peace. Then one day, unable to sleep, her life was changed forever when she passed by a church. She went inside, where Deacon Angel Alvarez was leading a Scripture study. Antonia began reading the Bible.

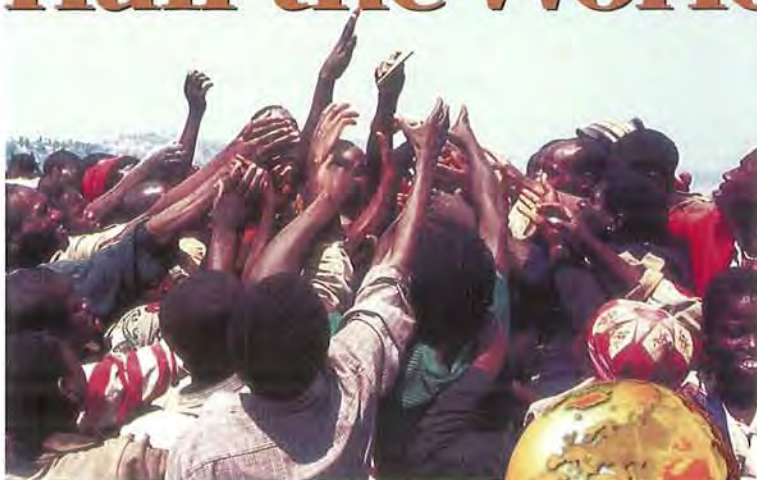
"As I began to understand the Bible, I realized that Santeria was wrong," she said. "I realized that in our house we had glasses on shelves to ward away the evil spirits but we didn't have any glasses to drink from. So we took them down, washed them out, and began using them." ■

*Your December gift will provide Bibles to people in Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Paraguay, and a January gift will assist believers in Egypt.*

*To find out more about joining the Bible-a-Month Club, fill out the reply form below, or write:*

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

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

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

8212RECO





*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

**Honduras**— Please pray for the people here and in neighboring Nicaragua, who suffered the fury of Hurricane Mitch. Ask the Lord to bring swift comfort to the tens of thousands of victims, and to help the Bible Society rebuild the Bible House in Honduras, which was completely destroyed.

**Native peoples**— As the ministry to indigenous people flourishes, please pray that God's Word will bear rich fruit. Ask that the special imprint New Testaments distributed at the World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People inspire all who read it.

**Armenia**— Ask our Lord to help the new Bible Society team now in place. Pray that local churches will support the work of the Society, which includes two major revisions of the Bible.

**Students, hospital patients, seniors, and prisoners**— Pray that God give them encouragement and solace at Christmas through the seasonal ABS leaflets distributed at schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and correctional facilities.

**Tanzania**— Please ask for God's blessings upon numerous translation projects, and give thanks for the completed translations, including the launch of Luke and Acts in Common Language Swahili. Pray for continued good relations with the churches for translation projects.

**Travelers**— Pray that God protect all those who will journey to join their families to celebrate Christmas. Ask that these gatherings be times of renewal and harmony, and that travelers return home safely. 📖

**JANUARY 1999**

- 1 Ephesians 1.1-14
- 2 Ephesians 1.15-23

SUNDAY

- 3 Ephesians 2.1-10
- 4 Ephesians 2.11-22
- 5 1 John 1.1-10

EPIPHANY

- 6 Matthew 2.1-12
- 7 Matthew 2.13-23
- 8 Matthew 3.1-17
- 9 Matthew 4.1-11

SUNDAY

- 10 Matthew 4.12-25
- 11 Matthew 10.26-42
- 12 Matthew 12.15-32
- 13 Ephesians 3.1-13
- 14 Ephesians 3.14-21
- 15 Ephesians 4.1-16
- 16 Ephesians 4.17-32

SUNDAY

- 17 1 Peter 3.8-22

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY BEGINS

- 18 Matthew 16.13-28
- 19 Matthew 17.1-13
- 20 Matthew 18.1-9
- 21 Matthew 18.10-20
- 22 Matthew 19.13-30
- 23 Matthew 20.17-28

CHRISTIAN UNITY SUNDAY

- 24 John 17.1-26
- 25 Acts 9.1-25
- 26 Acts 9.26-43
- 27 Acts 10.1-33
- 28 Acts 10.34-48
- 29 1 Corinthians 1.1-9
- 30 1 Corinthians 12.1-11

SUNDAY

- 31 1 Corinthians 12.12-31

**FEBRUARY 1999**

- 1 1 John 3.1-10
- 2 1 John 3.11-24
- 3 1 John 4.7-21
- 4 1 John 5.1-5
- 5 2 John
- 6 3 John

SUNDAY

- 7 Matthew 8.1-17
- 8 Matthew 9.1-13
- 9 Matthew 9.14-26
- 10 Matthew 9.27-38
- 11 Matthew 10.1-15
- 12 Matthew 15.29-39
- 13 Psalm 136

SUNDAY

- 14 1 Corinthians 13.1-13
- 15 Galatians 5.1-15
- 16 Matthew 5.38-48

ASH WEDNESDAY

- 17 Matthew 6.1-4, 16-21
- 18 John 13.1-20
- 19 John 13.21-35
- 20 John 15.1-17

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

- 21 Psalm 91
- 22 Hosea 1.1—2.1
- 23 Hosea 2.2-23
- 24 Hosea 3.1-5
- 25 Hosea 11.1-11
- 26 Hosea 14.1-9
- 27 Deuteronomy 6.1-9

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

- 28 Matthew 22.23-40

# I N M E M O R I A M

M E M O R I A L I Z E A L O V E D O N E B Y H E L P I N G T O P R O V I D E  
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