

 AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

RECORD

SPRING 2004

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Perspective on *The Passion*

*"It was only right that God . . . should make Jesus perfect through suffering, in order to bring many children to share his glory."
(Hebrews 2.10b GNT)*

What an Easter season it has been! Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* opened on Ash Wednesday, invigorating a discussion about the gospel message such as hasn't been heard in the public square for decades. This film, at the top of the chart for weeks, confounded the critics.

Although powerfully moving, it's not a film to like; it has tender moments but mostly serves up relentless suffering. Yet, in the end, it mimics the season of Lent; it is the prelude of pain that leads to renewed life. *The Passion* brings home the mystery and wonder of God's love; it celebrates the victory of Christ's suffering — the final blood sacrifice that frees us from an eternity of pain and separation.

The Passion of the Christ was scrutinized for its level of violence and its potential for generating anti-Semitic passions. These are legitimate concerns. But, according to Mr. Gibson, the film was intended to take us to a different place — to show the cosmic drama occurring behind the scenes and, at the same time, expose the root cause — the evil — behind what takes place on the screen.

Criticism directed at Mr. Gibson reminds us of the disconnect between the church, the secular media and much of popular culture, especially Hollywood. It is only natural that when the essence of life is reduced to what is on the surface — to only what can be touched, smelled, tasted or seen — an unbreachable chasm emerges between this *stuff* of reality and the spiritual domain that holds the secret of why and how anything exists.

In *The Cross of Christ*, Anglican theologian John Stott writes, ". . . the cup from which [Christ] drank . . . symbolized neither the physical pain of being flogged and crucified, nor the mental distress of being despised and rejected even by his own people, but rather the spiritual agony of bearing the sins of the world, in other words, of enduring the divine judgment which those sins deserved."

In this sense, *The Passion* is an ugly film in that it exposes the horror of humanity at war with God. Mel Gibson said it all on the *Passion Outreach* Web site, "My hope is that this movie will affect people on a very profound level and reach them with a message of faith, hope, love and forgiveness." Whether or not people liked the film, they apparently affirmed that it pointed us out of the darkness and toward Easter and Resurrection life.



RECORD

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Chief Communications Officer

Denise London

Director, Publications & Executive Editor

David Singer

Managing Editor

Francine Lange

Design and Production

Journey Group, Inc.

e-mail

absrecord@americanbible.org

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ON THE COVER:
Children in
Tanzania will
benefit from
reading the
Scriptures trans-
lated into their
native language.

(Photograph by
Maurice Harvey/UBS)



RECORD

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

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IN MEMORIAM

Our loved ones remembered

PLEASE PRAY



A GUIDE TO PRAYER

CROATIA — Pray for completion of the Croatian version of the French *Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible* Study Bible. Pray also for our plans to produce an inexpensive New Testament for young people and those who do not attend church. Give thanks for the success of our work amidst many economic and political challenges.

GHANA — Praise God for our *Youth Impact* project and pray that children's lives are changed. Give thanks for the completion of the Ga New Bible (to be

launched this year), the Esahie New Testament and the Dagbani Bible.

TOGO — Please pray as we raise funds for work among people with HIV/AIDS, the illiterate and street children, which we will carry out with the churches. Remember our Ewe, Mina, Bassar and Lamba translation projects, and pray for our plans to launch the Mina New Testament this year.

SOUTH ATLANTIC ISLANDS — The Bible Society of South Africa — at the request of the islands' church denomina-

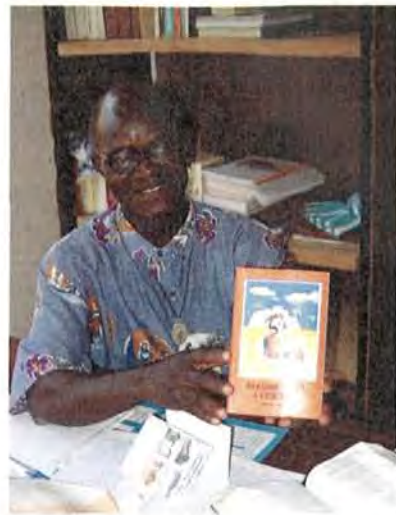
tional offices in that country — supply Bibles to the small islands of Ascension, St. Helena and Tristan da Cunha. Give thanks for this cooperation and ask God to ensure that the Bible needs of the islanders will continue to be met.

ITALY — Ask God to guide the ongoing revision of the interconfessional Common Language Old Testament. Pray as we publish the new ecumenical translation of Mark's Gospel and for new opportunities for cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church. ■



We encourage you to send your letters to: Editor, American Bible Society Record, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023-7505. Telephone: 212-408-8754. Note: For questions for the American Bible Society not related to the Record, please call 212-408-1200. www.americanbible.org.

Reaching for the SOUL One Language at a



GEORGE STAMP/UBS

How long does it take to translate the Bible? A lifetime, says Dr. Phillip Noss, translation services coordinator for the United Bible Societies. While that may seem overstated, a project — from inception to the day the new translation is placed into someone's hands — can actually stretch into decades.

After many centuries of translating at least some portion of the Scriptures into more than 2,500 languages, 3,000 language groups around the world still don't have any Scriptures in the language they best understand. The American Bible Society's and United Bible Societies' (UBS) commitment to provide these Scriptures keeps their translation work alive and active.

"We're 'midwives,'" says Dr. Noss about the men and

women involved in the work. "The baby [the translated Scripture] never belongs to us." That Scripture, which has been meticulously transformed by teams of dedicated workers — word by word, verse by verse, paragraph by paragraph — then appears as a selection, an Old or New Testament or as the complete Bible.

THE WORD OF LIFE — UNDERSTOOD

Dr. Noss tells of the tremendous gratitude people feel when they are able to read the Bible in their mother tongue for the first time — how reading God's Word in a language that speaks more directly to the heart brings the reality of God's love so much closer. When reading the Scriptures in the Gbaya language, an elderly woman in Cameroon who received a Bible said, "God speaks to me and tells me what to do, and he tells me what not to do." A young pastor said, "Now we have the sweet core of the plant."

In Nairobi, a church took in street girls who did not speak Swahili, the national language, but communicated in Sheng, a mixture of Swahili, Kikuyu, English and several other languages. Congregants organized literacy classes, teaching with Bible Society *New Reader* books — Bible stories developed into a series of graded reading levels that



Dr. Phil Noss, standing at left, works with translators in central Africa. Translation Coordinator Father Jean de la Croix Hien, above, works with a team translating the New Testament in Dagara, one of the languages spoken in Burkina Faso.

Three thousand language groups still don't have any Scriptures in the language they best understand.

TIME



DAVID THORNE/ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER

help students improve their reading.

Nearly all the children, ages 6 to 13, were able to read in Swahili by the end of the class. Then, using the text from the series, they performed a Christmas pageant that aired on television across Kenya. "It was a national testimony of God's work among the street children of the nation's capital," says Dr. Noss.

OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE

These results come thanks to the many national Bible Societies that work with the UBS to train indigenous translators — a strategy introduced by Eugene A. Nida, former executive translation secretary for the American Bible Society. Dr. Nida also pioneered *functional equivalence*, which focuses on translating thoughts rather than individual words. As an example, explains Dr. Noss, the word "grace," an unknown word in many languages, including Gbaya, was translated "by using an expression meaning 'God's love because of himself,' that is, God loves us and gives us his gifts because of himself." Indigenous translators and functional equivalence are now used by all major translation organizations.

UBS also acquires computer equipment, arranges for alternate venues when a country is deemed unsafe because of war or environmental catastrophes (floods, earthquakes) and finds solutions for the many other problems that could derail a long-term translation project.

The United Bible Societies has translation projects underway worldwide in more than 500 languages at any

time. In the West African country of Togo, for example, where currently only one of its 42 languages has a complete Bible, translations in six other languages have reached various stages of completion: Ntcham (Bassar), Kabyié, Lama (Lamba), Éwé, Gen-Gbe (Mina) and Moba.

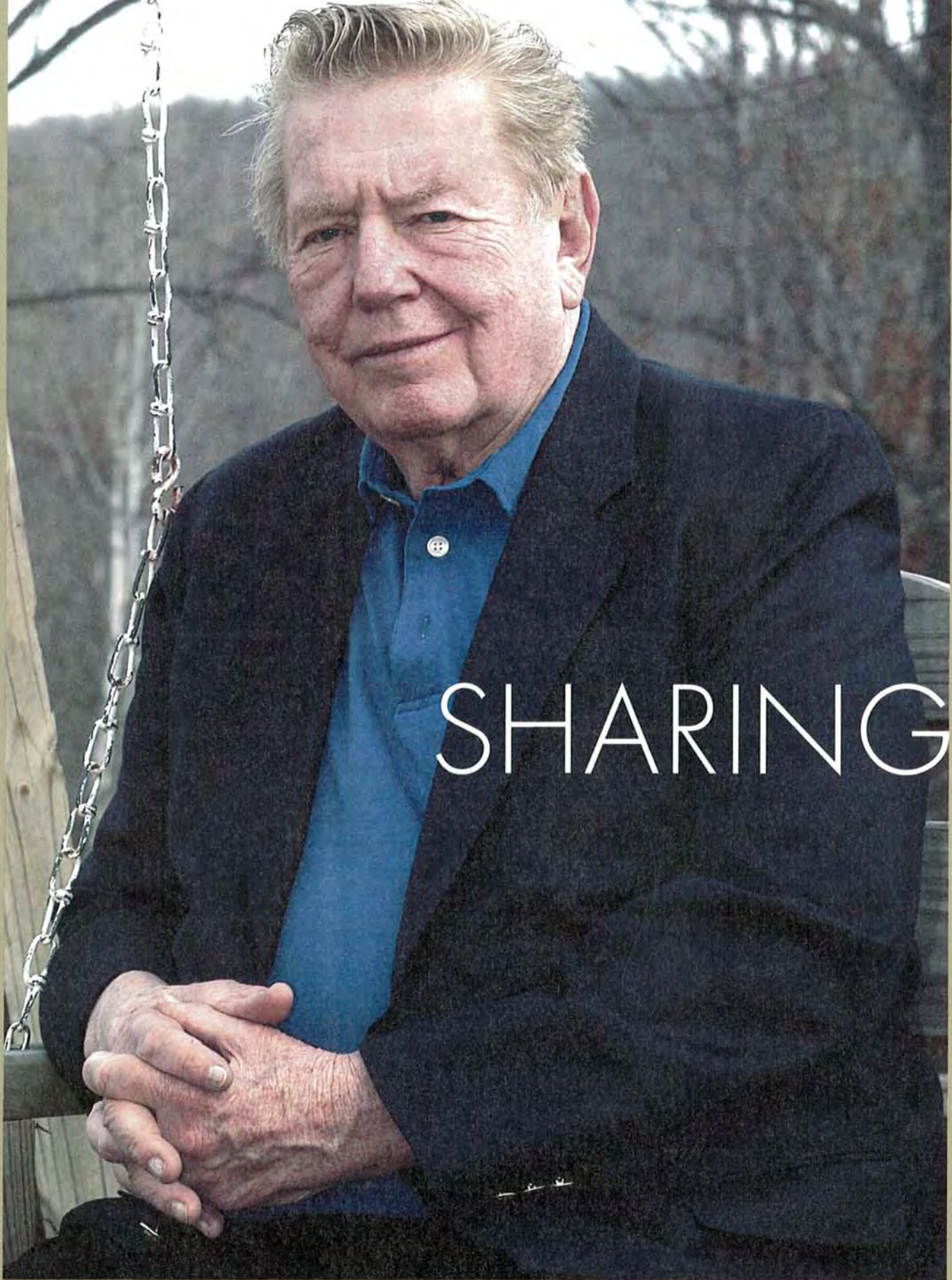
The Bible Society of Togo (BST), along with the Summer Institute of Linguistics, officially called SIL, is translating the Old Testament into Bassar, which 100,000 people in Togo and 50,000 in Ghana speak. (UBS also partners with Wycliffe International Bible translators on many projects.)

One translator is spending six months studying Hebrew in Jerusalem, while his colleague drafts Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The team needs a third member, but work has been disrupted because the BST has run short of funds to pay for an entire team. Translation of the Old Testament into Kabyié, spoken by around 700,000 people in Togo, is also stymied because church partners have been unable to meet their funding commitments.

These snapshots of translation work highlight the financial and educational requirements translators face. A global economic downturn has constrained many projects.

Despite these challenges the work will continue, thanks to support from faithful donors. And not until every tongue confesses "that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2.11) can the task of translating God's Word be complete. ■

To read more about Bible translation, visit www.americanbible.org.



SHARING

DAVID SINGER

When Bud Suhl gives directions on how to get to The Lord's Ranch, you can almost picture the winding, up and down journey. He says, "You know you're here when the pavement ends." The ranch's remoteness is some of what makes it a safe haven "where we give hope to the hopeless," says Bud. He and his wife Shirley opened the ranch in Warm Springs, Ark., as a ministry to troubled youth in 1976. The road to its success, especially in the beginning, was not always smooth or straight. But the Suhls have never veered from the path the Lord had set them on.

The ranch seems to be both a therapy and a hope for each child who arrives — Bud experiences a little of his own "homecoming" with the arrival of each new child to this 1,100-acre retreat in the Ozark foothills. His prayer is always that each of the 85 or more children he and the ranch staff of 120 work with at any given time will come to know the Father he didn't find until middle age.

A VOW TO MAKE IT ON HIS OWN

His mother was just 16 when Bud was born; he never knew his natural father. Bounced from one foster home to another in the ghettos of southeast Los Angeles, Bud says that by age seven he'd developed the attitude "Poor little me," and determined that he'd look out for himself by making money — lots of money.

His entrepreneurial aggressiveness served him well. Following the Watts race riots in 1965, California Governor Pat Brown called for more jobs for minorities. Bud, who was working as an aerospace engineer for Aerojet General, responded by designing profiling templates that enabled unskilled laborers to machine precise aircraft parts for McDonnell Douglas, and got a contract that employed 500 minority workers.

But even while living the high life in Beverly Hills, Bud knew he hadn't found what he was looking for. In fact, life in the fast lane was taking its toll on his health.

GOD'S

Bud and Shirley Suhl have spent much of their fortune providing God's Word to forgotten people in hidden places. It is Bud's way of honoring the only Father he's ever known.

BY DAVID SINGER

TREASURE

A ROMANCE OF FAITH

Then Bud met Shirley. She worked at a brokerage firm in Beverly Hills that owed Bud some money. When he opened the door to the cashier's office to pick up his check, Shirley greeted Bud with a "May I help you?" that warmed him all over.

Shirley was a serious Christian girl, says Bud. And he quickly discovered he would have to make changes if he were ever to court her. Up to that point, he says, "I was all about living for me." Sure enough, his first invitations were rebuffed. "You need to go to church," she would tell him. Eventually Bud agreed to go if Shirley was willing to go with him.

With Shirley's encouragement, Bud started reading the

Bible every day. A year later, at a Sunday night church service, Bud Suhl turned his life over to Jesus. He had come home to the Father he'd been searching for all his life. And he's been encouraging others to do the same ever since.

Bud shares that after turning to Jesus, people thought he'd gone crazy because he began giving away Bibles to everyone he knew. And one place he got those Bibles from was the American Bible Society.

He began taking Bibles into the Los Angeles County Jail and the Juvenile Detention Center. Although Bud had come a long way both spiritually and financially, he didn't forget where he'd come from and to whom he now belonged. And he had a passion for sharing his good news with others whose lives were still broken. He says, "The Bible is the mind of God. When you read it, God is fixing his mind in you. God has blessed me with an understanding of his Word."

He has traveled to prisons on several continents, from Russia to Argentina to the Philippines to Thailand, providing Bible Society Scriptures. He says he loves going into prisons because



Bud and Shirley Suhl do God's work on The Lord's Ranch.

a father. We try to provide a homelike environment for the kids."

No more than 12 children live in any one of 10 spacious houses on the ranch. The homes are immaculately kept, homey, but not fancy. Stacks of videos with titles such as *The Prince of Egypt* and *Beauty and the Beast* sit under the TVs in the common rooms. A sign on the wall reads, "In Jesus there's peace."

A privately accredited school on the main campus enables students to graduate with high school diplomas or earn their GEDs.

The ranch includes 16 horses, acres of woods, lakes and fields and an interschool athletic program, where children compete for sportsmanship trophies as ardently as for championship trophies. And Bud recruits professional athletes to his staff — models that the kids can look up to and learn from. Gary Jackson, an all-American football player who has been coming each off-season since 1995, says, "God is in this place. We let the kids know there is always a high-

"The Bible is the mind of God. When you read it, God is fixing his mind in you." —Bud Suhl

"it's the one place you can be real — prisoners can't give you anything." But when you go in Christ's name, "when you feed his sheep," he adds, "God does something for you."

BUILDING A HAVEN OF HOPE

After Shirley's ailing father died, the Suhls married and eventually returned to Shirley's home in Arkansas with a vision to build The Lord's Ranch. The million dollars they paid for the land and facilities was exactly what Bud had earned when he sold a business in California.

At first the Suhls' vision for ministry ran into opposition. Local residents were alarmed when Bud brought a van filled with prison inmates to the ranch for church services. His hiring of a racially diverse staff brought more opposition. But soon neighbors warmed to what was being done in God's name.

Today, The Lord's Ranch provides behavioral treatment and psychiatric care to meet the children's needs. Some are referred to this full-time residential program by their families, others by outpatient counseling services or boards of education, and for some, their stay is court-mandated. One staff member shared, "A majority of our children come from homes without

er authority — we teach them love and forgiveness; we let them know that Jesus Christ is real. Here they see men, black, white and Hispanic, that love Jesus; they see that Jesus Christ is not a punk."

Quarterbacks Tyree Davis and Stan Jackson (no relation to Gary) play in the Canadian Football League. Stan says that he and his wife are back for their fourth year — they have found working with the kids addictive.

A female advisor attests that Christianity is not forced on the kids, but it does permeate the ranch atmosphere. She says that for many of their children, The Lord's Ranch is a solution of last resort — if they don't make it here they will likely end up in prison.

Photographs of federal penitentiaries in Leavenworth, Kan., and Atlanta, Ga., and the Correctional Facility in Milan, Mo., hang on the walls in the administration building as a reminder of Bud's passion for showing everyone, but especially the countless prisoners he has visited and the hundreds of children who have found shelter at The Lord's Ranch, that the way to freedom is in Christ. ■

Visit www.americanbible.org for more changed life stories.

update

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

■ GHANA

"I am a boy of 13 years, and I have taken God as my personal savior. Please, I don't have a Bible." This is only one of the 16,000-plus letters the Bible Society of Ghana (BSG) receives from children every year. The children, many as young as nine years old, express a heartfelt longing to have their own copy of the Word of God — something most parents cannot provide in a country with an



GEOFFREY STAMP/UBS

▲ Children in Ghana want their own Bibles.

annual per capita income of just \$340.

Faced with this great need, the BSG, with support from the United Bible Societies, has implemented the *Youth Impact* project, a series of free correspondence Bible study lessons.

The Bible Society of Ghana hopes to help equip a new generation of young Ghanaian Christians with a solid knowledge of and love for God's Word.

The Rev. Miller Milloy, recently appointed the acting general secretary of the United Bible Societies (UBS), recalls what ignited his interest in sharing the Scriptures.

■ ENGLAND

The Scottish native and his wife, Morag, had moved to Carlisle in

Scotland following his promotion to department head in a school in South Lancashire. Members from the local church invited the couple to attend a home Bible study. The group included a retired farmer, a social work student, a doctor and a housewife.

"For the first time," he said, "I met ordinary people for whom the Bible was central to their life. I found this absolutely exciting." That discovery has fueled the direction of his life, taking him to ministry as parish priest at Pathhead Church in Kirkcaldy and service as a regional adviser in mission and evangelism with the Church of Scotland.

In 1997, Rev. Milloy joined UBS as regional secretary for the Europe-Middle East area where he oversaw 56 Bible Societies, 23 of which came into existence in Eastern Europe following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. He credits the American Bible Society (ABS) vision to provide funds when the window for Bible work opened there.

As UBS Acting General Secretary, Rev. Milloy is positioning the UBS to take on the challenges of the 21st century. This is echoed in the theme for this year's triennial UBS World Assembly, "God's unchanging Word for a changing world." (The Assembly will be celebrating the 200-year anniversary of the Bible Society movement, which began with the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London in 1804.)

The explosive growth of non-

denominational Christian churches worldwide, from only a few hundred in 1900 to 34,000 different confessions today, makes the UBS commitment to serve all Christian churches that much more demanding.

A tighter global economic environment has caused Bible Societies capable of providing funding to curtail their support of international work and the support of Bible Societies needing outside assistance.

Through all of this, said Rev. Milloy, the American Bible Society has been a welcome ally. The hugely successful *Opportunity 21* program spearheaded by ABS, for example, which funded 375 projects in 74 countries, "was an amazing achievement for projects that would not otherwise have taken place."

The American Bible Society is also helping with another major UBS challenge — to engage immigrant communities in countries such as the United States, with Bible ministry to their country of origin.

The general secretary from the homeland country's Bible Society can come and challenge immigrant congregations to adopt or sponsor particular Bible projects that will help their people back home.

"We at the UBS are quite grateful for ABS' ongoing participation and strong support," said Rev. Milloy. ■



DAVID SINGER

▲ The Rev. Miller Milloy, the new UBS acting general secretary.

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update

NATIONAL

■ KIDSGAMES

The Bible will figure prominently in a youth outreach program this summer as the American Bible Society (ABS) teams up with churches in the United States to



COURTESY OF KIDSGAMES

▲ KidsGames inspired Argentine children in 2002 and 2003.

implement the U.S. KidsGames.

This program functions as a global sports and games initiative run on a local basis across cities or regions, providing Scripture instruction combined with sporting events for children ages 6 to 14.

This integration of community-focused activities with evangelization originated in Spain in 1985, and has been used effectively in hundreds of countries reaching more than 800,000 children and youth.

Last year in Argentina, for example, KidsGames ran seven days in Guaymallen, Mendoza, and according to Marcelo Figueroa, the general secretary of the Argentine Bible Society (ArBS), 146 of the 300 children who attended "manifested their decision for Christ." Each participating child received a special

Scripture portion from the ArBS.

For events in U.S. cities, including Birmingham, Ala., Orlando, Fla., and San Diego, Calif., ABS will provide New Testaments in the easy-to-read *Contemporary English Version*, Scripture coloring books and medals inscribed with 1 Corinthians 9:24-25, "... Athletes work hard to win a crown that cannot last, but we do it for a crown that will last forever."

The Bible Society also plans to develop a Web site with additional KidsGames materials that any

church and youth ministry can download for free.

"Through our partnership with the KidsGames network across the United States, we are committed to reaching children with God's Word in a way that brings them to faith," said Davyd Hepburn, International Sports Programs manager. ■

For more information about this outreach, please contact Davyd Hepburn toll free at 877-553-2837 or e-mail Dhepburn@americanbible.org.

■ THREADS OF FAITH

The latest exhibition at *The Gallery at the American Bible Society*, *Threads of Faith: Recent Works from the Women of Color Quilters Network*, has proven to be the most popular show in *The Gallery's* star-studded history. More than 7,500 visitors toured the exhibit during its three-month run, and it has received extensive media recognition.

This vibrant display of contemporary African American quilts was inspired by faith, the Bible, American Christian traditions and an activist spirit. The 53 quilts on view, produced by 33 members of the Women of Color Quilters Network, testify to the continuing expressive nature of this traditional craft.

Dr. Ena Heller, director of *The Gallery*, said, "While other museum exhibitions have celebrated the forms of African American quilt making that grow directly out of the southern tradition, in this exhibition *The Gallery* aimed to give voice to the image makers themselves."

Threads of Faith was co-curated by Dr. Patricia Pon-gracz, curator at *The Gallery*, and Dr. Carolyn Mazloomi, quilter, quilt historian, author and founder of the Women of Color Quilters Network.

For more information, call (212) 408-1500 or visit www.americanbible.org. ■



▲ Cynthia H. Catlin, *Pray in the Spirit*, 2003



Finding Hope in Chernobyl

The Bible Society of the Republic of Belarus works hard to bring God's Word to the people of Chernobyl, whose lives were devastated when a nuclear reactor exploded there in 1986. More than 70 percent of the radioactive fallout from that disaster settled on Belarus, and today two million people (including half a million children) still live in contaminated areas.

Even 18 years later, many in this community suffer from related illnesses, depression, anxiety and a sense of helplessness. To minister to this group, Bible Society staff members carry Scriptures into this region. On one such trip, they visited a hospital that treats children for endocrine disorders, a direct result of the polluting radiation. The head doctor urged Bible Society staffers to bring new materials as often as possible, explaining that many patients wish to take their Bibles home when discharged.

The Bible Society also stopped in a nearby village that was mostly evacuated and gave Maria Avramenko a large-print copy of the Psalms. "I have poor eyes," she said, "so this book is a great present to me. There is no one to speak to, and there is no church nearby. Reading the Psalms will help me."

The team then delivered Bibles and special biblical selections to a senior home. Many of the 300 residents live alone because their children have moved away from the contaminated region, and they welcomed the Scriptures.

Everywhere the Bible Society staff visited they found people eager to hear the Good News and greatly comforted by God's Word.

Your **June** gift will support Bible work in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. Your **July** gift will bring Bibles to the United States. Your **August** offering will provide Scriptures to China. Your **September** offering will bring the Word of God to Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. 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@
americanbible.org

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In the midst of the media buzz surrounding the opening of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* in New York City, the American Bible Society saw a unique opportunity to reach out to people not normally engaged in the Scriptures. The Bible Society provided 8,500 tickets to churches and other ministries in an effort to have congregants invite nonchurchgoing friends to see the film.

The Bible Society also distributed Scripture resources aimed at generating discussion about the film; a Scripture portion titled *The Life of Christ* featured the Gospel of Luke. A reading plan, review questions, background articles and other aids, such as a pamphlet, *Why?*, were also made available. Bible Society volunteers and staff passed out these materials at advance screenings and they can be downloaded free from the Bible Society's corporate Web site, www.americanbible.org (in "Bible Resource Center"). The Bible Society also created a number of other online resources such as a synoptic presentation of all four Passion and Resurrection narratives from the New Testament. These will help viewers unravel the film's blending of the four Gospels and fill in the Resurrection story that follows Passion week, and are also available on the Bible Society Web site, as are links to six other sites

that support discussion about *The Passion*.

Positive response from moviegoers and near-record attendance at theaters showed that the story of Christ remains the greatest ever told — that the telling of Christ's Passion still captures the hearts of millions, even in the 21st century.

In fact, the public's reaction to Mr. Gibson's film was frequently at odds with the many critical reviews.

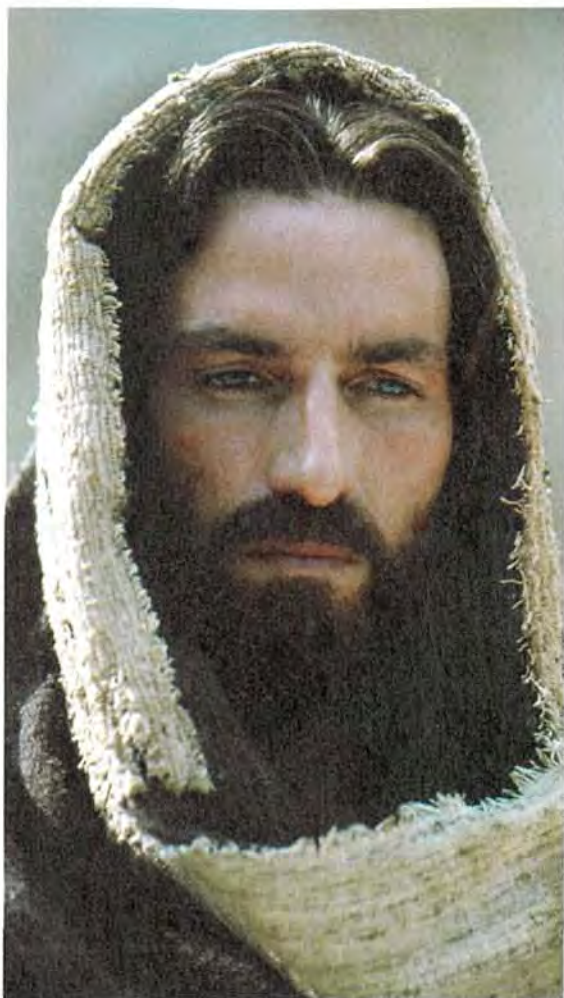
Letters to the editor rebuffing a critical review in *The New Yorker* were typical. One pastor wrote, "... a major theme of Gibson's film is that God's grace and forgiveness go deeper than the lowest depths that humanity can reach." Another reader wrote, "Gibson is showing the suffering of Christ as he took the sins of the world upon himself. It is not a pretty film, it is not a perfect film, but it is a film that makes you think about who Christ is and what he did and why."

Before voicing public support for the film,

The Passion



BY DAVID SINGER



American Bible Society scholars from the Eugene A. Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship scrutinized Mel Gibson's interpretation of the Bible events he portrayed for any anti-Jewish undercurrents — a charge leveled by some. In its own *Good News Translation* Bible, which was used verbatim in another recently released film, *The Gospel of John*, the American Bible Society identifies the elements urging Jesus' crucifixion as "Jewish authorities," rather than "Jews" generally, to accurately distinguish those responsible from the community at large.

"We encouraged people to see this landmark film, which we believe has the power to change lives," said Dr. Eugene Habecker, president of the American Bible Society. "I encourage people to encounter for themselves a powerful retelling of this timeless story."

"*The Passion of the Christ* enabled me to encounter Scripture and the life of Jesus in palpable new ways," Dr. Habecker continued. "We at the American Bible Society believe in the power of Scripture to enrich and change people — this film and *The Gospel of John* are powerful tools that open the Bible to a modern, visually oriented audience."

Dr. Barclay Newman, the American Bible Society senior translation officer, joined a special committee formed by Mel Gibson's Icon Productions that will oversee the subtitling of *The Passion of the Christ* into other languages for international release.

The Bible Society *Elementz of Life*[™] program, as part of its work with young people, invited Latin Kings and Latin Queens gang members to view the film and then engaged them in discussion about its meaning.

"Waters," a Latin Queen, said the court scene reminded her of when she had been falsely accused of assault. The court offered her a plea bargain, but she refused and told the judge, "I'm going with God." The jury found her innocent of all charges. Another gang member, Roxy, remarked, "It makes you want to go home and read the Bible."

continued on page 18 >>

Strikes a Spiritual Chord



A HEART FOR CHINA

BY JAMES WALKER



Esther Dysart, second from right, traveled on the Yangtze River with university students in 1948.

ESTHER DYSART HAS TRAVELED TO DISTANT LANDS AND risked her life for her faith — all to share the Scriptures with those who have never heard the Good News.

Shortly after World War II, Esther traveled to the Sichuan province in western China as a member of a missionary team with World Gospel Mission. Her training included learning Mandarin Chinese, which she accomplished in six months, so that she could share the gospel in the language of the people she was ministering to.

As a nurse she often traveled to remote villages, providing free health care to poor families. And, she adds, "I was concerned about small towns that could not get the Word of God." The larger, urban areas along the eastern coast had the opportunity to receive the Scriptures, but very few mission groups and churches were able to go to the more isolated western quarters.

As they traveled from one area to another, Esther's mission group would set up their base camp just outside each village they visited. But one time, Esther recalls, during a field trip to the western highlands, a family invited her into their home overnight. She says, "It was just a simple brick house,

no electricity and the windows were very small."

Esther told her hosts about the love God has for all people. It was the first time they had heard the gospel, and they all gladly received Christ. Even though Esther never saw the family again, she knew that the witness she gave that night would stay with them forever.

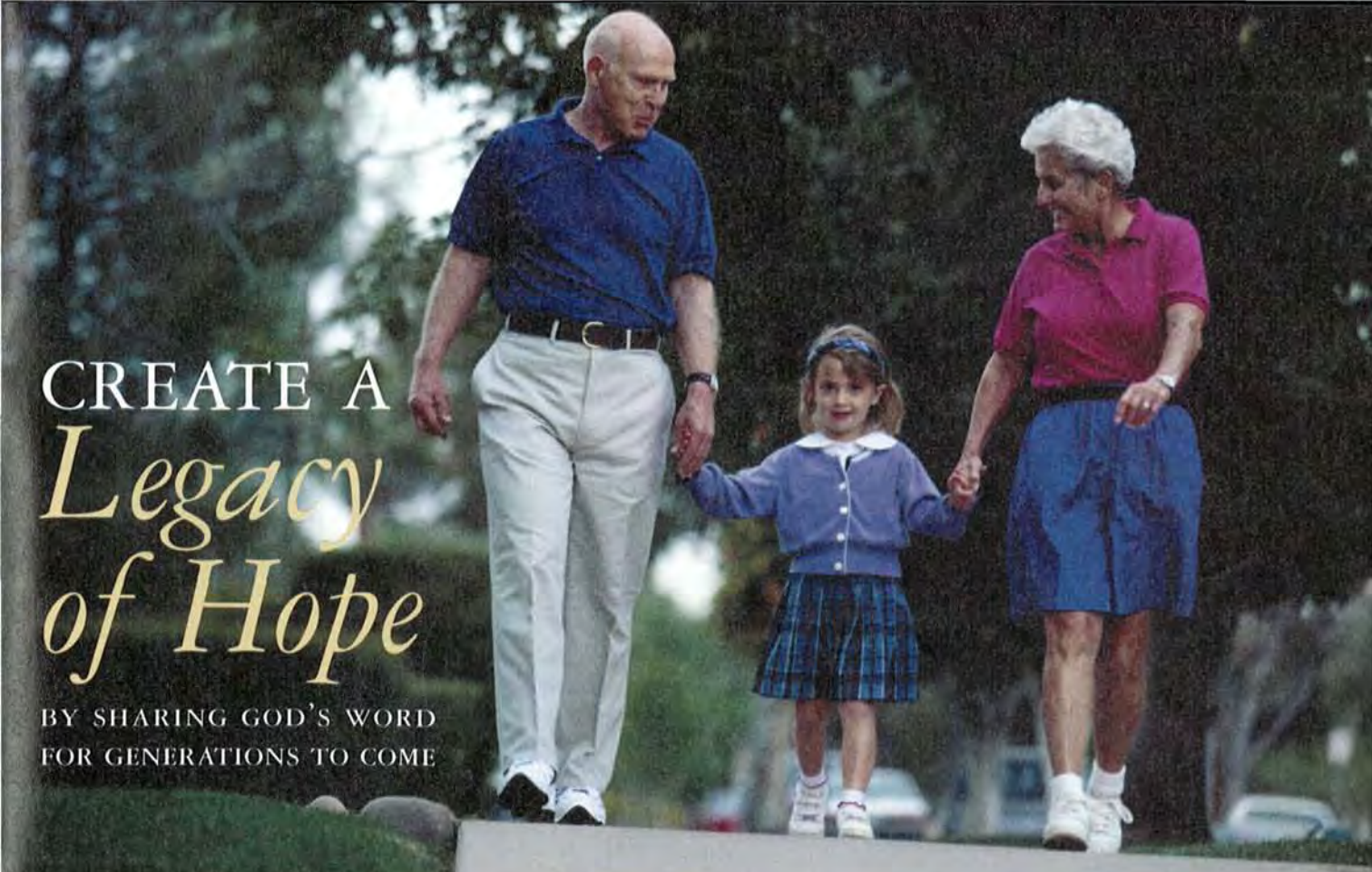
By 1949, missionary work became very dangerous. The Communists were expanding their authority in the country. Often, they would send scouts into cities and villages, identify "collaborators" and then set up tribunals where people, even those who had lived and worked together for generations, would denounce each other. This often led to imprisonment and sometimes death. That summer, as the Red Army neared the village where Esther's team was stationed, the residents became fearful. She knew it was time to leave.

"By that time our camp was very small, many people had left and there were only a few of us left — just a family and two single women remained," recounts Esther. "We couldn't go east since that was now under the control of the Communist government, so we had to go west." They traveled over mountains into India, where Esther stayed for two years. She returned to the United States only after becoming ill.

Today, Esther still loves China and its people. "There still is a need," she explains, "to get the Bible into people's hands in China." Now, more than 50 years later, through her American Bible Society *Gift Annuity*, she is able to help meet that need. Thanks to contributors like Esther, the Bible Society can provide Scriptures to people all over the world, including China and India.

In this way, Esther Dysart is *still* sharing the Good News. ■

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



CREATE A *Legacy* *of Hope*

BY SHARING GOD'S WORD
FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

You can continue to share God's Word even after you're gone!

And be remembered for your love of God's Word! The American Bible Society offers several easy ways that you can achieve your goal of setting up a legacy of hope . . . a heritage of love . . . for the Bible cause.

HERE ARE FOUR WAYS TO CREATE A LEGACY OF HOPE:

1. Establish an Endowment by underwriting Bible-sharing projects for a specific country
2. Leave a Bequest as your heritage by:
 - (A) Creating a Will bequest for our ministry
 - (B) Naming our ministry as your Life Insurance or IRA Beneficiary
 - (C) Naming our ministry as a Payable on Death Beneficiary (CDs or bank accounts)
3. Create a lifetime income plan using an American Bible Society Charitable Gift Annuity or a Charitable Trust (using appreciated property such as real estate)
4. Create a Memorial for a loved one

Yes! I want to create a legacy of hope to continue my support of the Bible cause. Send me more information on how to do this.

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PHONE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

- I am interested in creating an endowment that underwrites future Scripture distribution. (REC504A)
 I am interested in leaving a bequest as my heritage using my Will or a beneficiary change. (REC504B)
 I am interested in looking at a lifetime income plan. Please send me a Free Illustration. (REC504C)

I prefer the following type of plan: One-Life Two-Life

Amount of annuity: \$5,000 \$10,000 \$25,000 \$100,000 \$ _____

Date of birth of second person for Two-Life Annuity _____

Gift would be: Cash Appreciated property

- I want to create a memorial for someone. Please send me information. (REC504D)



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Major and Planned Gift Programs, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023
1-800-820-6227 www.americanbible.org

REC504

quiet time

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

MAY

Filled with Hope and Trusting in God's Mercy

- 1 Luke 7.1-17
- SUNDAY**
- 2 Luke 7.36-8.3
- 3 Luke 15.1-10
- 4 Luke 15.11-32
- 5 Luke 19.1-10
- NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER**
- 6 Psalm 67
- 7 Numbers 11.1-15
- 8 Numbers 11.16-35
- SUNDAY**
- 9 Ezekiel 33.10-20
- 10 Ezekiel 34.1-16
- 11 Ezekiel 34.17-31
- 12 Ezekiel 36.1-15
- 13 Ezekiel 36.16-38
- 14 Micah 7.8-20
- 15 Job 42.1-17
- SUNDAY**
- 16 Psalm 23
- 17 Psalm 32
- 18 Psalm 36
- 19 Psalm 103
- ASCENSION DAY**
- 20 Acts 1.1-11
- 21 Acts 1.12-26
- 22 Jeremiah 30.1-11
- SUNDAY**
- 23 Jeremiah 30.12-24
- 24 Jeremiah 31.1-14
- 25 Jeremiah 31.15-30
- 26 Jeremiah 31.31-40
- 27 Jeremiah 33.1-13
- 28 Jeremiah 33.14-26
- 29 Joel 2.28-3.8
- PENTECOST SUNDAY**
- 30 Acts 2.1-13
- 31 John 3.1-21

JUNE

Filled with Hope and Empowered by the Holy Spirit

- 1 Acts 2.14-28
- 2 Acts 2.29-47
- 3 John 15.18-16.4
- 4 John 16.5-15
- 5 John 16.16-33
- SUNDAY**
- 6 Matthew 28.16-20
- 7 Acts 11.1-18
- 8 Acts 11.19-30
- 9 Acts 12.1-19
- 10 Acts 13.1-12
- 11 Acts 13.13-31
- 12 Acts 13.32-52
- SUNDAY**
- 13 Acts 16.1-15
- 14 Acts 16.16-40
- 15 Acts 17.1-15
- 16 Acts 17.16-34
- 17 Acts 18.1-17
- 18 Acts 18.18-28
- 19 Acts 19.1-20
- SUNDAY**
- 20 Romans 8.1-17
- 21 Romans 8.18-30
- 22 Romans 15.1-13
- 23 Romans 15.14-33
- 24 1 Corinthians 12.1-11
- 25 1 Corinthians 12.12-31
- 26 Galatians 5.16-25
- SUNDAY**
- 27 Ephesians 6.10-20
- 28 2 Timothy 1.1-18
- 29 1 Peter 1.1-12
- 30 1 Peter 1.13-25

JULY

Filled with Hope and Building up the Body of Christ

- 1 Romans 12.1-8
- 2 2 Corinthians 1.1-11
- 3 2 Corinthians 2.5-17
- SUNDAY**
- 4 2 Corinthians 4.16-5.10
- 5 2 Corinthians 5.11-21
- 6 2 Corinthians 6.1-13
- 7 Philippians 1.12-30
- 8 Philippians 2.1-18
- 9 1 Thessalonians 1.1-10
- 10 1 Thessalonians 2.1-16
- SUNDAY**
- 11 1 Thessalonians 2.17-3.13
- 12 1 Thessalonians 4.1-12
- 13 1 Thessalonians 4.13-5.11
- 14 1 Thessalonians 5.12-28
- 15 1 Timothy 1.1-11
- 16 1 Timothy 1.12-20
- 17 1 Timothy 2.1-15
- SUNDAY**
- 18 1 Timothy 3.1-16
- 19 1 Timothy 4.1-16
- 20 1 Timothy 5.1-16
- 21 1 Timothy 5.17-6.2
- 22 1 Timothy 6.3-21
- 23 2 Timothy 2.1-13
- 24 2 Timothy 2.14-26
- SUNDAY**
- 25 2 Timothy 3.1-17
- 26 2 Timothy 4.1-22
- 27 Titus 1.1-16
- 28 Titus 2.1-15
- 29 Titus 3.1-15
- 30 Hebrews 13.1-25
- 31 2 Peter 1.1-15

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

Memorials of \$500 or more for one individual or family unit will be published in the American Bible Society Record. For further details about the memorial program, please write to: Donor Relations, American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY, 10023-7505.

AUGUST

*Filled with Hope and
Surrounded by Faithful Witnesses*

SUNDAY

- 1 Hebrews 11.1-22
- 2 Hebrews 11.23-40
- 3 Hebrews 12.1-13
- 4 Hebrews 12.14-29
- 5 Genesis 4.1-26
- 6 Genesis 6.1-22
- 7 Genesis 12.1-20

SUNDAY

- 8 Genesis 13.1-18
- 9 Genesis 15.1-21
- 10 Genesis 16.1-16
- 11 Genesis 17.1-27
- 12 Genesis 18.1-15
- 13 Genesis 21.1-21
- 14 Genesis 22.1-19

SUNDAY

- 15 Genesis 25.1-18
- 16 Genesis 25.19-34
- 17 Genesis 27.1-29
- 18 Genesis 27.30-46
- 19 Genesis 28.1-22
- 20 Genesis 37.1-11
- 21 Genesis 37.12-36

SUNDAY

- 22 Genesis 41.37-57
- 23 Exodus 1.1-22
- 24 Exodus 2.1-10
- 25 Exodus 2.11-25
- 26 Exodus 3.1-12
- 27 Exodus 3.13-22
- 28 Exodus 4.1-17

SUNDAY

- 29 Joshua 1.1-18
- 30 Judges 4.1-24
- 31 Ruth 1.1-22

SEPTEMBER

*Filled with Hope and
Growing in God's Wisdom*

- 1 Luke 6.17-36
- 2 Luke 6.37-49
- 3 Luke 8.4-18
- 4 Luke 11.14-36

SUNDAY

- 5 Luke 12.1-12
- 6 Luke 12.13-34
- 7 Luke 12.35-59
- 8 Luke 13.18-30
- 9 Luke 14.7-24
- 10 Luke 14.25-35
- 11 Ecclesiastes 2.12-26

SUNDAY

- 12 Psalm 1
- 13 Psalm 19
- 14 1 Corinthians 1.18-31
- 15 1 Corinthians 2.1-16
- 16 1 Corinthians 3.1-23
- 17 James 1.1-27
- 18 James 2.1-13

SUNDAY

- 19 James 2.14-26
- 20 James 3.1-18
- 21 James 4.1-17
- 22 James 5.1-20
- 23 Proverbs 3.1-18
- 24 Proverbs 3.19-35
- 25 Proverbs 10.1-16

SUNDAY

- 26 Proverbs 10.17-32
- 27 Proverbs 11.1-14
- 28 Proverbs 11.15-31
- 29 Proverbs 15.1-17
- 30 Proverbs 15.18-33

In memory of my beloved husband,
Lonnie F. "Joe" Allen
*Given by: the Estate of his wife,
Marion T. Allen*

In memory of my beloved sister,
Louise Doris Bechlein
*Given by: the Trust of her beloved brother,
Harry E. Bechlein*

Rev. Robert C. Cartwright
Given by: Frank P. Ames, Jr.

Allie Criswell
Given by: Earlene J. Sharp

Lucy Denham
Given by: Margaret B. Montalvo

My mother, **Almeda Ham**
My husband, **George Kelley**
Given by: Helen P. Kelley

Harry T. Johnson
Given by: Joe A. Barton

Daisy Matthew
Helen Piat
Rev. C.E. "Coach" Wilson
Given by: Keith P. Robinson

My wife, **Sonia S. Meissner**
Given by: Douglas Meissner

My father, **Arnold T. Olson**
Given by: Madelyn E. Olson

My daughter, **Cheryl Pappas**
Given by: Carol Ann Buchholz

In memory of my beloved parents,
Oscar and Elin Pearson,
my brothers, **John and Reynold Pearson**
and my grand uncle, **Nils Peter Johnson**
*Given by: the Reverend Sidney A. Pearson
Memorial Fund*

John R. Pentz
Given by: Norma J. Kough

Steve E. Sluka
Given by: Milan Sluka

My husband, **Hans Schafft**
Given by: Lillian R. Schafft

Our mother, **Mary Merrick Goodwin Storrs**
Given by: Charles L. Storrs & Betty L. Storrs

Emelia L. Weitkamp
Given by: Harvey M. Weitkamp

Mr. & Mrs. John A. Wolfe
Given by: The Rev. & Mrs. Roy W. Wolfe

My mother-in-law, **Florence L. Zepp**
Given by: Robert B. Woodworth



<< continued from page 13

"I wouldn't die for people I don't know and that's what he did; he died for me, he died for people that he didn't even know," said Luis.

Churches such as All Angels' Episcopal Church on Manhattan's Upper West Side, which received 150 tickets from the Bible Society and then purchased additional tickets on their own, invited moviegoers back to the church for a question and answer session moderated by the rector, the Rev. Milind Sojwal.

One viewer said, "I came away numb; as a New Yorker I can say this is not an easy city to live in. There are things to tick you off every day. It's easy to lose sight of being God's child."

Another commented, "I'm glad that character of Satan was included — otherwise Jesus was just another innocent man; the people persecuting Jesus were not just doing it for no reason. Jesus was continually taunted by this cosmic enemy."

Other ministries, such as The Navigators, gave tickets to university students and then followed up with discussion groups using Bible Society support materials.

AND NOW FOR THE REST OF THE STORY

For those viewers of *The Passion* who are wanting the rest of the story, two years ago the American Bible Society filmed — in a contemporary setting — the Resurrection narrative, as told in John, chapter 20, using the same actor who played Jesus in *The Passion*, Jim Caviezel. *Resurrection* can be viewed at www.americanbible.org and purchased with a discussion guide at our online bookstore (click on the bibles.com icon). *The Gospel of John* is also available for purchase on the site. ■

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Holy Hip-Hop: Another Translation

BY FRANCINE LANGE

Can anything good come from hip-hop? Yes, say the American Bible Society *Elementz of Life™* youth program organizers. Their proof — the recent launch of the *Elementz* CD, *The Time Has Come*, that showcased a talented list of gospel hip-hop artists featured on a CD "rapping" the liberating message of Christ. Hip-hop culture uses the elements of rap, break dancing, and graffiti art to express the raw energy from the "streets," and the Bible Society takes these elements into Christ-centered programs, working side by side with churches and youth ministries to teach the biblical message and social life skills to young people immersed in the hip-hop culture.

Edgardo "Javell" Encarnacion, a member of the Soul Majestics break-dance troupe that performed at the CD release party, says, "Even though the [hip-hop] culture is from the streets, something good can come from this."

The event, held at the popular New York City Club Float last December, included performances by well-known gospel rappers and dancers, a break-dancing competition called "The Game of Rep" and an art exhibit by *Elementz* graphic artist Ron Pichardo.

Javell says he saw smiles and tears on the faces of those who gave their hearts to Christ when Peter "Bam Bam" Arizmendi, the director of Soul Majestics, shared a simple message between sets.

"Evangelizing can take all forms," Javell explains. "We can do it with our feet." He serves as a youth minister at Guiding Light Church in Waterbury, Conn., and saw one of his friends, a fellow dancer, become a Christian that night. The young man, who had seen the negative side of the culture and marveled at the uplifting atmosphere, told Javell, "If God can do this, I don't mind [dancing] for God."

More than 15,000 CDs have already been distributed, providing the gospel in a format that can be understood by many young people for whom the in language is hip-hop. ■

To contribute to or learn more about *Elementz of Life™*, e-mail info@elementzoflife.com, call toll free 888-596-6296, ext. 8759 or send your inquiry to *Elementz of Life™*, P.O. Box 234040, New York, N.Y. 10023.



CEL GARAY



CEL GARAY

American Bible Society's Liana Roa and "Bam Bam," at top, from Soul Majestics thank performers and guests for sharing the *Elementz of Life™* vision. Pettidee, above, uses the "elements" of rap to reach a hip-hop generation.

Words to touch the heart and heal the soul!

“Today the light has come to us!”

expressed the excitement of the Turkana people of Kenya when they finally received the first translation of the Bible in their “heart,” or native language. As they sang “Nearer, My God, to Thee,” they felt that this hymn of hope was finally a reality.

Thanks to the prayers and generous support of our faithful partners, the American Bible Society has provided God’s Word in heart languages the world over. There are now more than 2,000 languages in which at least one book of the Bible has been translated. Millions of people can embrace the message of God’s Word for the first time.

However, a complete Bible is still only available in 414 languages. That means 380 million people do not have any Scripture in their own language ... like the Yao people in Malawi, who are waiting for the Bible to be translated into Chiyao. Life is difficult for the Yao people,

where life expectancy is just 38 years. Yet few are turning to Christ because the most essential tool for evangelization — the Bible in Chiyao — remains an unfulfilled dream.



Would you please join us in helping the Yao people and millions of others around the globe receive the hope and promise of God’s Word in their heart language?

Yes! I want to help with the vital work of Bible translation so that more people like the Yao people of Malawi will know the power of God’s Word.

Enclosed is my gift of: \$ _____

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