

THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING GOD'S WORD SO PEOPLE MEET JESUS!



BULGARIA (Crystal, MN)

Every month, Project Philip coordinators present materials to two new churches in their region, which have not worked with them before. If there are people interested, the coordinator trains them and gives them materials for the first stage of the project. A Bible study group of new believers is formed and when they finish, they receive a New Testament. If they continue with the second and third stage of the project, because of you, they receive a whole Bible and then a Study Bible.

CHINA (Memphis, TN)

A former kung fu fighter, who once served time in jail, today is on fire for Christ. After receiving his very own Bible, he said, "I was amazed when I started reading the Bible daily and my life changed." When that happened, God gave him a vision calling the new believer to serve Him. "I was holding two fishes and five loaves," he said describing his dream. "God was telling me to feed thousands of people with the Word of God! Since then, there's been no turning back. Only His Word can satisfy people's spiritual hunger."

COLOMBIA (Highland, IN)

James has only been a Christian for a few years, but this man is passionate about discipling others in the Word of God. Using Bibles and study materials you helped provide, he began leading two small group Bible studies at his local church. "I am constantly amazed at the growth I am seeing in the people in my groups," he says. "The more they study the Bible, the more they grow."

ECUADOR (Jenison, MI)

Andrés, native from the jungle tribe called Shuar, graduated from Church Planting. His father, who previously threatened to kill the first pastor to enter the indigenous zone, was considered the witch doctor of the tribe. After studying the Gospel, he willingly built a church for his tribe. Now his son also graduated as a Church Planter, and has impacted his community in such a way that the whole tribe is now following Christ Jesus. Andrés has opened two new churches in less than six months.



HAITI (Orange City, IA)

God has shown us many miracles," says Samuel Pierre. This Haitian pastor notes the power of God's Word in a country infamous for voodoo and witchcraft. "Even voodoo priests are surrendering their lives to the Lord!" he laughs, remembering some of their attempts to harm Christians. "These priests try to inflict their spells on us. But, praise God, many get caught up in their own trap and come to know Jesus as Savior!"

KENYA (Worthington, MN)

Nanga Centre reaches out to orphans and widows from all backgrounds. The center empowers members socially, economically, and spiritually. John, the spiritual counselor of the group, said, "The group was so vulnerable I thought it would be difficult to penetrate their souls, but through the formation of cell groups, God's Word transformed many



MEXICO (Battle Creek, Grand Rapids/SE, Holland/Douglas & Lincoln, MI)

For Fernando, adolescence was a turbulent time. "Since I was 13, I was addicted to drugs," he admits. "My family split apart, so I went to live with a girlfriend. By the time I was 16, we had four children. I fell deep into addictions and served a sentence in prison." But thanks to gifts of God's Word, Fernando began reading the Gospel in prison. "Every night, I called out to the Lord that if He would show me mercy, I would serve Him with my life." Upon his release, Fernando is using Bibles he receives from Bible League International while leading a prison ministry.



PHILIPPINES (Orland Park, IL)

Daniel was brought up in a Christian family, but indulged in worldly living. "I felt emptiness deep in my heart," he recalls today. He married young hoping for happiness. "But nothing really satisfied me," Daniel states. Thanks to the Spirit's movement, Daniel remembered his first love. "I recommitted my life to Jesus and went back to church. That became the best moment of my life." Daniel learned that a relationship with the Lord is not inherited, and he is now planting churches in Danao and Manila.

EASTERN EUROPE (Pella, IA)

Trained as a school teacher for the fifth-grade, Ljudmila works in five different locations in an hour and a half radius of Ukraine's capital city, Kiev. She teaches life skills and Christian ethics to orphaned and endangered children. Trained in 1999 by a Bible League Project Philip master trainer, Ljudmila is now the coordinator for Project Life, a ministry dedicated to reaching young people at risk. "Something about these materials is very attractive because both the adults and children are affected by the Christian ethics materials and the Project Philip booklets."



UKRAINE (Grand Rapids/NW, MI)

Gesturing towards a map of Ukraine, the smiling school teacher revealed, "We currently have eight evangelistic projects underway and 20 camps planned for this summer. Another 100 projects for children and adults are being planned with a systematic follow up, and we use the Bible League's Project Philip materials to do it. Your materials are the best we can find!" she grinned. She described outreach efforts to Muslims and remote regions, revitalizing old efforts, and training sessions to produce more believers. "We have no budget for materials," she admitted. "If it wasn't for Bible League, we would not have the materials and Bibles we need."

lives. People were so hungry for the Word that 46 surrendered their lives to Christ, 27 joined churches, and 86 received Bibles after completion of the study."



PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW

Last month we held our annual National Board meeting at Bible League Headquarters in Crete, Illinois. We had the largest group of Thrift Center Volunteers ever. All the Centers were represented except two, and in total, we had 31 people in attendance. Late in the morning after finishing most of the required formal corporate matters, I was able to report that in 2012, our ministry had been once again incredibly blessed, and we were used by God to raise just over \$2.4 Million dollars for His kingdom. (An increase of \$247,000 over 2011!) I didn't know what was going on in the minds of the people in that room, but in my mind, I was hearing the old doxology, "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow" being sung.



After hearing more of the detailed financial blessings from our Treasurer, we broke for a delicious lunch and some fellowship in the Bible League cafeteria. After that short 45 minute break, we returned to hear from Bible League International Global

Development Officer, Dr. Raveendran Rao (Ravi for short) about the new and exciting strategies and plans that the Bible League has for bringing more people into fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church in the coming five years.

Saving the best for last, the final session of our annual National Board Meeting included Thrift Center Volunteers sharing the exciting activities and new ideas happening in each of their Centers with the group. As always, that time went far too fast, and this year especially with the larger group, we clearly did not schedule enough time for the valuable sharing that was taking place. I made a note to myself to schedule more time next year when we hope to have even more Volunteers participate in the meeting.

It was a great day of fellowship, praise, and counting of blessings. And it was all made possible by all of you who worked so faithfully throughout the year to glorify our God by raising funds to find and witness to His lost children around the world. I cannot thank you enough for your tireless efforts, even though I know you do not do it for the praise of men. You are doing it out of your love for our God and Savior, and for the crown of glory that He has for you at the end of this race!



May God richly bless each of you in this life and in the life to come,
Dan Rinzema
President
Bibles for Missions Thrift Centers

BIBLES FOR MISSIONS
THRIFT CENTERS

IN SUPPORT OF  Bible League
INTERNATIONAL

VitaLink is published by Bible for Missions Thrift Centers to inform Volunteers of the results their efforts accomplish through Bible League International. For more information, please contact John Scafe, 3386 Central Blvd., Hudsonville, MI 49426, 616-662-3663, or email JScafe@BibleLeague.org. **Please visit our website at www.biblesformissions.org!**

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH BECAUSE OF YOU

I hope you have survived another winter and are looking forward to the spring and summer months. I want to give a report on my maiden venture in seeing first-hand how our financial donations affect Bible League International and the countries we support.

This past March, I had the wonderful opportunity to visit two countries we support, namely Ecuador and Colombia. I traveled with a small Bible League contingency led by Connie Reitsma, our Liaison to Bible League International. She heads up the Bible League Volunteers who work in their local churches around the country. We had a total of five who traveled, and our mission was to gather stories and testimonies in Christian circles of how the Scriptures are being used and the impact in these countries.

Our first visit was to Guayaquil, Ecuador and surrounding areas. We traveled with Milton Bustos, who coordinates all activity in Ecuador, and our interpreter, Jorge Dussan, the Regional Operations Director for South America for Bible League. The two men set up a wonderful array of churches to visit with every one of them growing. We visited the poor and other communities that were doing quite well. EVERY church using Project Philip materials was seeing growth! Not some, but ALL. They loved the simplicity of the reading for the children and adults including the process of coming to know Jesus Christ. Everyone greeted us with open arms and opened the doors of their churches so we could see where they come to meet with each other and with Jesus. We visited their warehouse and prayed over their inventory. We were able to meet in a few homes where they studied the Bible, and saw the church planters in action helping the local congregants grow in the body of Christ. Seeing the faces of the "Philips" show off their group that had completed the course or about to start a new segment was priceless. Hearing their testimonies about how Jesus had come into their lives was heart touching. Knowing our Savior had come in a special way to open their eyes and ears and to show what He did on the cross just for them, especially from the children's point of view, was awesome! But beyond that, to hear each of them testify how they are reaching out to their families and nothing was going to stop them was so very refreshing. I can share with you that your efforts in the Centers is having a HUGE impact in the kingdom work! And this work isn't easy for the workers in the field that have many challenges in reaching the people, especially during the rainy seasons during the time we were there. Their dirt with their rain equals dirt that literally sticks to your shoes. This proved to be a problem several times while visiting people and getting stuck with a vehicle. Probably the most exciting adventure was taking a two-hour boat ride to Puna Island. We headed through the flooded river dodging vegetation, logs, and debris to see a village that basically has very little. It was here we saw over 60 young people receive their certificate for completing Project Philip. On our two-hour ride back, we were stopped by police to bring others back to the big city and stopped again by masked and heavily armed border patrol to verify boat credentials. The trip was heart stumping, especially when the downpour of rain



required us to use a heavy tarp pulled over our heads to keep off the rain. Just another typical Bible League adventure!

Ecuador was such a welcoming place but as we left, we were excited about hearing the stories in Colombia as well. Everything we did was around Bogota, just a small town with over 8.5 million people! You never went anywhere fast. As in Ecuador, small cars and motorcycles were everywhere. Unlike Ecuador with lots of heat and humidity, Colombia was like a wonderful springtime to us. Locals thought it would snow any time. The food was fabulous on the entire trip.

Colombia's coordinators, Danilo and Hans, gave us quite a variety of looks into the Bogota churches, schools, and ministries that are using Bible League materials and Bibles. First of all and one of the most dramatic was seeing a former Satanist on fire for God helping less fortunate men get free of addictions and find Jesus Christ. His eyes lit up with joy as we surveyed his building that housed about 17 men and has a small chapel. Several men testified how this man and facility saved their lives physically, as well as their very souls spiritually finding the Lord! This little haven, in just over a year, has seen over a 1,000 men come through its' doors! We saw a very monetarily poor area, having a couple start a church with only a few, then starting Project Philip, and seeing up to 40 people attend church. We visited a Christian school in the mountains that is on fire using the Project Philip materials with their fifth graders. It's gone so well in building their understanding of Jesus, they want to move it into other grades and use in three other schools in their organization.

So to sum up the trip in three words, we found out that **Project Philip Works!**...bottom line. Everyone using the materials was seeing **exponential** growth. They are easy to read, easy to understand, and apply to one's life! Everyone mentioned their thankfulness, especially the pastors, for receiving the materials and please, please, please send more. They want to help others meet Jesus Christ!

This is what I saw in just two countries; I have to believe these results are being seen in all the countries you represent. God's Word does NOT come back void. When you get to heaven, you will actually see the results of those lives you have helped in making an eternal difference. YOUR TIME and TALENT is MAKING an IMPACT and showing up as TREASURE for those seeking God's Word! Thank you for everything you are putting your hand to on behalf of Bibles for Missions Thrift Centers and the Lord!

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National Director
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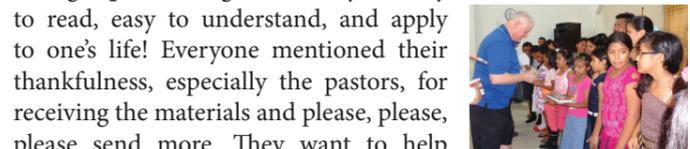


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JENISON CENTER EXPANSION

Besides lowering the monthly occupancy cost, the recent purchase of the Jenison Thrift Center building has allowed for the expansion of its furniture department. The additional 3,000 square feet now available allows Jenison to have their own furniture store, plus expanded storage and sorting areas!

Big-ticket furniture items help several of our Centers put their monthly sales over the top, so this seemed like a golden opportunity to our Jenison Volunteers. Immediately after the purchase, the crew went to work on moving a wall and moving out the other tenant who was also the previous building owner.



Moving the furniture to the new area freed up space to enlarge a previously very crowded ladies section and will allow for additional clothing and racks in the future. Customers love the new look, and the Volunteers are very excited about the additional sorting and storage room for bulk items. It was a win-win for everyone.

In addition to all the changes inside the building, an anonymous donor graciously provided funding for a full-color 54,000 LED electronic messaging board out on the front sign pole next to the heavily trafficked M-21 highway. It's an exciting new way of making sure that the large numbers of travelers driving by the Center are aware of our great monthly and daily specials. So, if you ever find yourself on M-21 in the Jenison, Michigan area, take a look at the bright, constantly changing sign. Please stop in and see what God has enabled us to do to enlarge His kingdom by getting more of His Word into the hands of His children in Ecuador!



SIX REASONS TO GIVE OUR TIME, TALENTS, AND TREASURE

the **impact** of the organization's work

the **efficiency** with which the organization uses donated funds

the presence of a **compelling cause**

donor's **relationship** with the organization

the **personal** benefit the donor receives by giving

the **urgency** of the need

—As determined by Berna Research Group

CELEBRATION OF LIFE AT GRAND RAPIDS SOUTHEAST

The crew at Grand Rapids Southeast Thrift Center helped celebrate Hilda Rozema's 94th birthday! She has been a Volunteer at the Center since its inception 16 years ago. She loves her work and continues to volunteer two mornings a week! Her son asked her what she wanted for her birthday, and she stated she wanted the whole Thursday crew to receive lunch. So, he arranged for Subway to come with lunch, cake, and ice cream for everyone there that day. At her own family birthday gathering, the son was blessed to hear how she thanked God for all these wonderful years of volunteering and the friendships she has established. Several of the existing Volunteers even volunteer more by giving Hilda a ride to the Center each of the days she works. Praise the Lord for people like Hilda who love to fulfill the call of God!



You're invited!

What: A Community Picnic Celebration

Why: Bible League International's 75th Anniversary

Who: The whole family

When: Saturday July 27, 2013
11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

LUNCH 11:30 TO 1:30

CONCERT 1:30 AND 2:30

PONY RIDES NOON TO 3:00

SHINE FM LIVE BROADCAST NOON TO 3:00

Where: Bible League International International Operations Center
3801 Eagle Nest Drive, Crete IL 60417
(Highway 394 and Richton Road)

Cost: All Free—Come Join Us!

You are providing God's Word to a lost and needy world. Thank you for striving to end the global Bible Famine. If you're in the Chicagoland area on July 27, we'd love to have you stop in for the Steve Green concert, world market, or lots of fun stuff for your grandkids!



Steve Green concert, world market, or lots of fun stuff for your grandkids!

Planting God's Word with you,
Connie Reitsma
Director of Volunteer Development
Bible League International
Liaison for Bibles for Missions Thrift Centers