

#### HAITI (Orange City, IA)

"One of my biggest concerns is that so many people in the church lack the proper materials to study Jesus' teachings. Now, thanks to Bible League, we freely receive the proper materials to study the Word of God. We praise the Lord and pray for new tools, like the *Easy-to-Read™* version of the New Testament [now being translated]. This is so important for the ministry, as we help people understand the Word of God and share our faith."



#### EASTERN EUROPE (Pella, IA)

"Sincere thanks for the donation of *Easy-to-Read* Croatian New Testaments. Every week, we've been placing them among the inmates in the prison in Glina. We never have any difficulties bringing them in. The New Testaments are very heartily received by the inmates, and they even find their way into the hands of the prison staff. We are so thankful for the opportunity to freely spread the Word of God in this environment. This translation is very well received and accepted, and the users are recommending it to others."



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#### UKRAINE (Grand Rapids/NW, MI)

Bible League's Project Philip program, *Choose Life*, is in great demand in the Ukraine and is highly respected among evangelical Christians. It has helped thousands of unbelievers to encounter the Gospel in the Holy Scriptures you provide. For a large

number of churches in Ukraine, *Choose Life* is the door through which many unbelievers are able to enter into the family of believers—and get their first Bible ever. Because of you, many Ukrainians have had the opportunity to choose new life in Jesus Christ!



#### VENEZUELA (Battle Creek, MI)

Eskyu Vasquez, pastor of the Showers of Grace Church, thanks God and Bible League International for the Project Philip program materials that are a great support to their ministry to children and adults. Eskyu's sister works in a community of critical

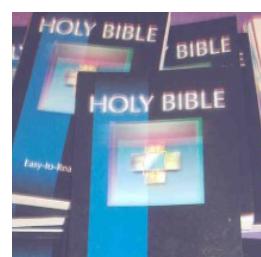
poverty and social risk, and shares, "In the four months I have worked with Philip Project, we have reached 100 people, including children and teenagers, for Christ. I invited a 15-year-old boy who was part of a group of criminals (stealing, consuming drugs, and drug trafficking) to participate in a study group. This teenager received Christ as his personal Savior, and now works to bring children in the community to hear the Word of God through study groups using Philip Project.



you for the skills. It really works, especially when it comes to application. It is relevant and easy. God bless you indeed, Bible League International!"



"Thank you! The materials and the resources we have received today through our fellow Christians are a true blessing—not only for those of us working in the ministry, but also for many families. It really has transformed our community. We've reached a lot of people that were enslaved to drugs, alcoholism, prostitution, vandalism, and theft. I want to thank the donors with all my heart, and I know that our God is going to reward them for all the support they have given us."



The last Sunday of March marked the fourth month of worshipping God under scraps of a tent for Tacloban Church in Manila, without any Bibles. When Typhoon Yolanda hit, the church was destroyed and everything was lost. But the people's hope was not dampened by the disaster. Says pastor Ven Padriquez, "Our love for God and compassion for people never declined." During

#### CENTER COMMUNICATION CORNER

**GRAND RAPIDS NW** is expanding. Due to limited space and dampness in the basement, Larry Vermeire and Daniel Brink have built an expansion to the building to accommodate all the logged inventory for the Amazon project. They now have a better receiving area, as well as a central space for storing all the books, CDs, DVDs, etc. that have been entered into the Amazon system. It also frees up space for pre-season items to be placed on the floor with the regular store inventory. Thank you Larry and Daniel for taking it to another level for our online sales system! With Crystal and this Grand Rapids Center, along with the added product from additional Centers, it equals another Center in revenue—over \$158,000 in sales and profits exceeding \$100,000 towards Scriptures and Bibles! Awesome efforts!

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# MITALINK

BIBLES FOR MISSIONS THRIFT CENTERS

## ANNUAL BOARD MEETING UPDATES

Hope this finds you well. Just wanted to give you an overview of our annual meeting held every year in May. As you might have heard, we changed the meeting format to be more Thrift Center friendly and not so much board meeting. So far the comments have been very favorable, and we will continue to refine the process for the future.

We started out with a greeting from our President, Dan Rinzema, and introductions for the whole group to see and hear who was attending and the Center they were representing. We then brought the "world to the Centers." Connie Reitsma, our Liaison at Bible League, coordinated our speaker contingency for the morning portion of our day. First, we were introduced to the Eastern Europe group. We had Katya Markova give us a report on Ukraine (supported by Grand Rapids NW), and then Anton de Vreugd who covered several countries in Eastern Europe (supported by Pella). We continue to hear how God prepares people, through the Holy Spirit, to hear about Jesus Christ and have their entire world and lives changed! Praise the Lord!

Dan Obinger was introduced next, and he is part of the Crete Bible League staff and heads up U.S. Ministry. He thanked us for how the world is being changed by Christ through receiving God's Word through the giving of our Centers as we generate Scriptures and Bibles. He also shared that Bible League needs to be more proactive in letting our country know more about Bible League International efforts around the world, and how we can serve churches. His team is doing whatever they can to meet with churches in our existing markets as well as new

territories. If you would like them to make a presentation at your church, please let me know.

Our last presenters were Rafael Serrano and Israel Islas representing Mexico, Haiti, Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador. Again many, many testimonies were shared of lives changed, baptisms, and churches planted. The old is gone and with the new has come transformations of lives in villages and cities!



They were very encouraged by knowing what our Volunteers do, day in day out, to make those contributions happen. For the many years of commitment to Mexico and the country the first stores represented, they presented those Centers with a plaque as a memento and reminder of their gratefulness for all the years served.

Dan Rinzema and Ken Jipping, our Vice President of the Board, gave us some additional updates on the "State of the Centers" report. Dan emphasized his gratefulness to all of you for what you do in your Centers, your commitment for the betterment of the chain by purchasing buildings to put us in an improved financial position for the future, and your continued focus on finding additional opportunities around the country.

## BIBLES FOR MISSIONS THRIFT CENTERS

IN SUPPORT OF BibleLeague  
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](mailto:JScafe@BibleLeague.org). Please visit our website at [www.biblesformissions.org!](http://www.biblesformissions.org/)

Ken gave us an update on our new partnership with World Missions ministry. They strategically place solar-powered electronic Bibles through their associates in countries of unreached, uneducated, illiterate people groups in their heart language. It's no bigger than a hand-held unit and recharges for over 3,000 hours. World Mission is currently finding additional Volunteers for Kentwood Center (formerly Grand Rapids SE) as this location is helping sponsor their efforts, along with still reaching Mexico through Bible League.

During lunch time, I asked everyone to sit with someone from another Center for an additional meet and greet time. I also asked everyone to discuss three subjects that are near and dear to us all: *How do you currently recruit for volunteers? How do you get quality donations? How do you handle pricing issues among your Volunteers?* We wanted this to be a productive time for people who were attending! Also during the lunch period, the official Bibles for Missions Thrift Center Board met in a separate room to conduct the yearly meeting that has to be performed while the rest of us reconvened in our meeting room to discuss the conversations from lunch time. We had a very good interchange of information.

Finally, I called the time in the afternoon "bringing the Centers to the world" by allowing additional time for the Centers to give their reports for all to hear. We had many intriguing comments. Internet sales reached over \$158,000 through our Amazon.com scanning efforts, let alone many additional dollars coming from

the Centers doing additional eBay and Craigslist selling. Many were interested to hear that one of our Centers has a whole evening Volunteer crew of over 40 members handling different nights throughout the week. We also saw how recently changing location by one of the stores promoted a sales increase over 40% on a monthly basis. Many other encouraging comments of how staff are performing, picking up the slack for difficult schedule needs, and encouragement and prayer when someone is in need were shared.

We wanted this day to be one of encouragement, information, and provide facts and evidence for good idea "take-aways" that your representative could bring back to your location. Everyone realized that many situations are not specific to only one Center, but are happening across the board. Ask to see portions of the video of this meeting, provided to each Center by Bible League.

So, it was a good day, and I appreciate all your hearts and hard work. You ARE making kingdom impact! Please continue to share our story with others and invite them into the process in a SMALL way while praying for BIG results. Hope your summer is good, because God is good, and He's on the throne!

Hope to see you soon,  
John Scafe  
National Director  
Bibles for Missions Thrift Centers



## IF WE TREATED OUR BIBLES LIKE OUR PHONES

A staggering 455.6 million cell phones were sold in just the last fiscal quarter. That's right, in one quarter! Everyone wants a cell phone, and why not? They are incredibly handy and helpful. We use them all the time. Life is much more convenient with them. But this spawns an interesting thought: What would our world be like if we treated our Bibles like we do our cell phones?



Imagine if everyone was desperate to have one.  
Imagine if people waited in long lines just to get the newest, updated version.  
Imagine if so many people wanted one, there was often a massive back-order.  
Imagine if people were willing to pay hundreds of dollars just to have one.  
Imagine if people bought insurance for it, just in case the unthinkable happened.  
Imagine if we enthusiastically wanted to show it off to others and tell them about it.  
Imagine if we never left home without it or turned back if we forgot it.  
Imagine if we always carried it with us in our pockets and purses.  
Imagine if we frantically searched for it when we lost it.  
Imagine if we used it at the game, at work, at the gym, and at home.  
Imagine if we always wanted it around in case of an emergency and felt uncomfortable without it.  
Imagine if our children constantly begged to use it and were kept occupied by it.  
Imagine if it was the #1 item on our teens' Christmas lists.  
Imagine if we were always spending time with it, even when we traveled.  
Imagine if we constantly used it to search for answers and information.

If people treated their Bibles like they do their cell phones, this world would be a much, much better place (Psalm 119:11). Cell phones aren't bad, but this is a reminder to spend time with the most important item in our possession. Our Bibles are a precious gift from God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Let's treasure them while providing them for others!

## HELP PROMOTE BIBLE LEAGUE SUNDAY AND RETREATS



So, did your church participate in Bible League Sunday?

Together, we have a goal to provide 50,000 Bibles. That means, we must raise \$250,000! "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." —2 Timothy 3:16-17 (HCSB) Now is the time to engage people in God's Word and make disciples of all nations. Your church can still register at [BibleLeague.org/BLSunday14](http://BibleLeague.org/BLSunday14) and receive bulletin inserts, announcements, and a DVD. All materials are provided free of charge. If you have questions, please call Connie at 866-825-4636 (toll free), extension 8595.

**Brochures for the 2014 Bible League Retreats** have been forwarded to Thrift Centers where retreats are taking place this fall in the Midwest area. You might be interested in putting the retreats on your calendar and bringing along a group for the day. Brochures can also be downloaded at [www.BibleLeague.org/retreat14](http://www.BibleLeague.org/retreat14).

Here's what's in store:

**September 9** – Minniakota Retreat at First Reformed Church in Sioux Center, Iowa with Gracia Burnham as speaker and The Brown Family in concert.

**September 11** – Central Iowa Retreat at Third Reformed Church in Pella, Iowa with Valerie Elliot Sheppard speaking and the Gospel Singers Male Chorus in concert.

**September 16** – Wisconsin Retreat at Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, Wisconsin with Miriam Neff as speaker.

**September 19** – Illiana Retreat at Cedar Lake Conference Grounds in Cedar Lake, Indiana with Valerie Elliot Sheppard speaking and Sarah Van Drunen in concert.

**September 23** – Michigan Retreat at Prince Conference Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan with Adelle Dickie speaking and The Metropolitan Choir of Praise in concert.

We welcome all to come and enjoy a retreat with a reason...you are refreshed while you refresh those in South America with your offering of Bibles. It's definitely a wonderful day for whomever you invite. Plan now to attend!

Hoping to see you there,  
Connie Reitsma  
Bible League International  
Director of Volunteer Relations  
Liaison for Bibles for Missions Thrift Centers



## HERE'S WHAT YOUR EFFORTS ARE ACCOMPLISHING AROUND THE WORLD!



### CHINA

(Memphis, TN)

"When I open my new Study Bible, I find the strength to win and continue to the end of this battle. You have planted seeds of faith in the people's hearts, and you will have a big harvest." Bible League International provided 5,000 desperately needed Study Bibles to rural Chinese pastors. These church leaders received instruction in how to use the Study Bible to train others. "As we began the year, it was our expectation we would be operating our training sessions among small groups of pastors," notes our partner, who has deep roots in China. "We had no idea that doors of opportunity would swing so widely open to us, and that several of our audiences would be so large."



### COLOMBIA

(Highland, IN)

"The Word of God has been so very important in my life—and especially now through this translation, the *Easy-to-Read* version. My faith has grown thanks to our Bible studies. I have come to understand that the tool we have to know our Lord is the Scripture. The PDT [*Easy-to-Read* Version in Spanish] is an essential tool for everyone, not only because of its simple language, but because it makes it easy for us to understand the Lord we serve. As time goes by, we have been studying, studying, and studying the Word of God. Our God has become more real through His Word. I definitely think that the Word of God is a pillar in my life."



### ECUADOR

(Jenison, MI)

"Several of our church groups are meeting in homes, but we are now able to focus more on opening churches. God has given us the opportunity and privilege of opening 14 churches inside the city of Guayaquil and in its surrounding areas. And Project Philip has been the cornerstone of our ministry. Praise the Lord that we were able to find Bible League and they have been able to help us with the materials that we so much need for our ministry. They have been a huge blessing for us. It has been an honor for us to receive. May God bless Bible League International!"

*Continued on page 4*

