

MINISTRY UPDATES

Why You Do What You Do...

BULGARIA

Hari, a Bible League-trained worker, is reaching Muslim communities scattered across the southeast part of his country with the Good News of Jesus Christ. He recently led three Muslim women and an 11-year-old girl through Bible study, and they accepted Christ. Pray for Hari as he works to introduce Muslims in Bulgaria to Jesus' love.

CHINA

You're making an eternal difference in the lives of people like Wang, a businesswoman in China. Despite her success, Wang's life was empty and directionless. When someone gave her a Bible, she began searching for God—and found Him. "I am a changed person," she says. "I no longer look to money and position to satisfy." Instead, as a Bible League-trained Christian, she's now serving God full time. She's using the Scriptures you provide to lead friends in Bible study so they can meet Jesus, too.

COLOMBIA

Wilson, a former military man in Colombia, describes himself as once being "cold and insensitive." Then a woman invited him to a Bible study and prayed for him for more than two years. As he studied God's Word, the Lord warmed his once-cold heart and changed his life. Today, Wilson and his wife—the woman who led him to the Lord—are sharing God's Word with more people, using Scriptures you provide through your gifts. "I want everyone to know the One who changed my life," he says.



ECUADOR

Lili is a Bible League-trained worker who's planting God's Word in a village where few venture. She first began by sowing the seeds of the Gospel in the hearts of a handful of children. Now, many kids gather each week—and she's

helping seven women in the community to study the Bible, too.

HAITI

Before implementing the Bible League program, Alexandre's church consisted of about 120 believers. Today his church has grown to 220 believers—and about 60% of them now have Bibles. Before, only 30% had God's Word. Your partnership is critical in helping to end the Bible famine in Haiti—and around the world.

Thank you for providing God's Word so people meet Jesus!

KENYA

David, a Bible League-trained Christian in Kenya, is planting God's Word in the hearts and lives of children in schools and inmates in prisons throughout Nairobi. He relies on his partnership with Bible League International for help. "God knew what I needed to do my work well. He introduced me to Bible League, which has provided me with the training, Bibles, and Bible study materials I need to reach more people for the Lord." Praise God! David reports that thousands have accepted Jesus Christ.

MEXICO

Heriberto had a dangerous reputation in his community. But his life was revitalized when he learned of Jesus' love for him. After hearing stories from God's Word in his own language for the first time, he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. Today, Heriberto is a well-respected leader in his home, church, and community. He's left behind his old ways and is leading Bible study groups and planting churches. You make a tremendous impact in communities through your gifts and prayers. Thank you!

PHILIPPINES

It's exciting to see the Holy Spirit working in people's lives as they study God's Word. God's Church in the Philippines is growing—and people like Rosie are among its newest members. Because of the Bible study, Rosie now personally knows Jesus Christ as her Savior. "He's cleansed me and saved me," she says. "I've learned to commit everything to God. He is really faithful to those who believe in Him!"

ROMANIA

Neculai grew up in an Orthodox family, so he was surprised when he was home on leave to learn they all had begun attending an evangelical church. When he went to the church to find out what they were talking about, he encountered God's Word for the first time in his life. The more he read and studied the Bible with help from a Bible League-trained worker, the more he understood it. "I realized my life had no meaning without God in it," he says. "I want to make God the priority in my life and to share my faith."

UKRAINE

A Bible League-trained church planter recently met a woman in distress who shared a dream with him. "She dreamed she was standing on a cliff. Smoke and fire were below her, and behind her was a church with a padlocked door. She knew that she needed the Savior," he reports. "I showed her from the Bible how to receive Christ's forgiveness, and she came to faith. I thank God for Bible League International's training, because it helps me to share the Savior with people like this."



20 YEARS OF BLESSINGS!

Yes, it's true! Bibles for Missions Thrift Centers are now 20 years old! It was back in 1992 when we opened our very first Thrift Center in Holland, Michigan. At that time, they were called Bibles for Mexico. Today, 13 Thrift Centers in 6 states support the work of planting God's Word so people meet Jesus in 10 countries.

Who would have ever predicted that over these past 20 years God would use thousands of dedicated Thrift Center Volunteers like you to raise \$24,088,414 to reach millions of people for Christ? But that is exactly what He's done! In fact, by His grace and through your efforts, the Thrift Centers contributed nearly \$2 million in 2011 to spread the Good News—the largest annual contribution ever!

You may sometimes feel you play only a small or unimportant role by volunteering a few hours each week or month. But that's not how God sees it. God has

accomplished a mighty work through you because you were willing to say "yes" to His call. Your sacrifice of time and your willingness to use your talent has been multiplied many times over. God is using your efforts for the salvation of people you have never even met!

We may not know it, but our Lord has plans for Bibles for Missions Thrift Centers in the next 20 years and beyond. And He will work through His people to accomplish His plan. What a blessing and honor it is to be part of the great work God is doing. May our Father bless you richly in the coming year for the critical role that you play in spreading His glorious name throughout the earth.



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, or email JScafe@BibleLeague.org. Please visit our website at www.biblesformissions.org.

Enjoy reading these updates from the Centers promoting their stores in some not-so-common ways—and getting some wonderful results.

PRODUCT SCANNING MOVING FORWARD

Scanned any books lately? Well, **Crystal Thrift Center** in Minnesota is still going strong on scanning books, CDs, and DVDs—and even several unusual items. And it's paying off. Crystal scans an item and, if the computer software verifies its value, it can be sold on Amazon.com for a significant increase in revenue versus in the store. They then sell the item online. All other items go on the shelves. They have logged in more than \$40,000 worth of items since this began a little more than one year ago. This process began in a Volunteer's home, **and is now yielding over \$4,000 in sales each month!** Just before this newsletter went to press, they received \$4,000 in just two weeks! The book "department" is now their number two income generator, right behind furniture.

We are now in the process of book scanning in the **Grand Rapids NW Center** in Michigan. Daniel Brink (Project Leader) and John have gone to Crystal to review their

methods and get training on how it all works. The Minneapolis-based software company, NeatOScan, has been very supportive in helping us learn and implement the scanning in some of the other Thrift Centers.

We are now up-and-running. Products have been scanned, inventoried, and sent out to buyers who have made online purchases. Daniel and John, like Crystal, will be recruiting others who are familiar with media, computer, and web, love to read, and have a willingness to learn more.

Keep us in your prayers to stay focused on the task. We are hoping and praying to add another couple of Centers to this in the next few months as all goes well. Many thanks go to Bible League International for the donation of laptops to make this happen. All the praise goes to our Lord as we partner together to make new processes work!

GETTING THE WORD OUT

The Volunteers at our new **Grand Rapids NW Thrift Center** in Michigan had been hanging in there with good sales, but no record-breakers. They've had five new thrift stores open around them in a three-to-five mile radius since they opened a little over a year ago. They needed to be more aggressive, but advertising rates in a major metro area are not cheap.



So they decided to take a teamwork approach. They ended up teaming with two other local Christian Thrift Stores to run an ad in the *Grand Rapids Press* during the time of a popular annual art event. What they could barely afford for an eighth of a page size ad ended up being a half page. Each Thrift Store agreed on a coupon offer of 25% off of a one-time shopping spree during that month, and it couldn't have been better timing. After the event, we raised our daily average sales by over \$100 each day. Usually Centers see 10 coupon offers redeemed; this time more than 75 were redeemed! The two other stores in the community are hoping God will give us other opportunities to advertise together, but you can be sure we'll do so during this annual art sale again!

Sharing the load, **Jenison, Grand Rapids SE, and Grand Rapids NW Thrift Centers** in Michigan advertised together with a coupon insert for February. Once again, teaming up and first time advertising in a local paper helps to drive costs down. By doing this, they'll all reach the whole area at a cost of doing only one zone by themselves. They feel this will put them in a good position to raise sales in an off peak period, plus get more regional shoppers, other than regulars who are just down the street.



The **Memphis Thrift Center** in Tennessee looked to their city's strong Hispanic community as it started exploring other avenues to help get the Word out. Committee member Marilyn Brewer and John contacted *LaPrenza*, the local Hispanic newspaper. Not only did we get a nice ad in their paper, they also ran a story about how we are reaching China with God's Word. The story was an added bonus that didn't cost us anything!

On November 21, 2011, Dale Hiemstra, Local Committee Chairperson, addressed a crowd of over 85 Volunteers and spouses assembled for their annual banquet. Jessica Bruinsma, Regional Coordinator, presented Ken Jipping, National Board Member, with a check that represented the final building payment for the purchase of the **Orange City Thrift Center**. Ken Jipping later shared a video and details from his trip to Haiti. The Orange City Thrift Center is blessed to be able to send even more Bibles to waiting hearts in Haiti and even more blessed to have been able to hear firsthand about how God is touching the lives of Haitians!



Sioux County Capital Democrat, November 24, 2011

The **Orange City, Iowa Thrift Center** held a 48-mile round-trip tractor drive on November 19 for Bible for Missions to help raise awareness and support. Almost 20 tractor drivers, some with passengers, braved icy weather in a thanksgiving benefit ride from Orange City to Sheldon and back again. Now that's being creative!

Our **Orland Park, Illinois Center** was highlighted in the *Chicago Tribune's* December 14 online Local Digest, thanks to a media blast by Bible League International. The *Tribune* got hold of the story of Orland surpassing the \$5 million mark of profits going towards Scriptures for the Philippines and called Bible League's Connie Reitsma. Henry Kamp, one of our charter committee members for Orland and National Board Representative, talked to a *Tribune* reporter that very

same day. Henry shared our story—and was even able to have the reporter talk to a couple of long-time customers who were in the Center. Christian author Lynn Austin, who endorses Bible League International, was among those interviewed. It is amazing how God boosts each of our Centers. Good job Orland! God is faithful. (Read the story at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/health/ct-x-1214-s-triblocal-digest-20111214,0,5594695.story>)

Let these examples inspire you as you work to raise awareness, drive more product and volunteers to your location, and move product out the door. Some have also tied in the need for Volunteers and donated product to their ads. So think outside the box as far as who your competitor is—or who could be an ally now. Consider what we have done on our own versus teaming up with others. Together, we'll give God the glory as we watch His Church grow!



John Scafe
National Director
Bibles for Missions
Thrift Centers

New 2011 Ministry Maps have been forwarded to each Center. Please use these as bag stuffers with each customer. It's all about getting the Word out!

\$1,130,000 since September 2011 for Scripture throughout the world! Thank you from the believers who received a Bible because of YOU!

Have you checked the letter hanging in your break room from the Board of Bible League International? Many thanks from many names signed on this letter were sent to thank you for all the time, talents, and treasures you individually provide to make your Thrift Center run smoothly. Without YOU, Bibles for Missions Thrift Centers would not have been able to provide



Connie Reitsma
Director of Volunteer Development
Bible League International