

Action!



Teaching the Word.
Reaching the World!

Volume 73, Number 2

March 2009

YAHOO TO YAHWEH



Look at your hands. Are they open or closed? Are they grasping for self, or extended to help others?

For too many, church is about me—focus on me, serve my kids, keep me comfortable. These are attitudes that feed into *Christian Chronicle's* February headline, “Church in America marked by decline.” I concur with the quote that

says, “Assuming the numbers are right, our lack of evangelism and the departure of many of our children are finally being revealed. This should be a wakeup call... to share our faith more actively.”

In other words, let's open our eyes, and our hands! Get excited about what we have to share, and pass it on! To whom? How about starting with the thousands who *find us* and *ask us* for spiritual answers?

Let's open our eyes, and our hands! Get excited about what we have to share, and pass it on!

God's mighty hand is opening unprecedented doors for the Lord's church. Worldwide, 1.4 billion already have access to the Internet. The United States is the most connected (74% of the population, as compared with 43% in Europe). As reported in January's *Action!*, the USA leads dramatically in enrollments for World Bible School studies. In 2008, the USA registered 20,566 WBS enrollments via Internet—more than the next three countries combined.

These are souls *coming to us* in the tens of thousands—with clear potential for many multiples more—seeking biblical answers. At WBS, we call the phenomenon “Yahoo to Yahweh.”

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**A Man
of
Impact
Goes
Home
See p. 6**

WBS' Goal

5 year goal: to increase new student enrollments 18% annually, to exceed 2,000,000 new student recruits each year.

Currently, from 800,000 to 1,000,000 new students are recruited each year for World Bible School courses, as measured by Introduction Lessons in English bought from WBS' office in Cedar Park, Texas. We use this count for its convenience, but it is very conservative because WBS also uses other media and other languages. Still, the postal count is exciting, and last year was the best yet. In December 2008, Ron Pottberg, WBS Vice President for student recruiting, sent this inter-departmental memo:

Great job! Congratulations to [our hardworking staff] for breaking the "Million Barrier" on sales of Introductory lessons. This is the first time in WBS history that we can officially say that we sold/taught more than one million students in one year from American churches reaching out. Oh, you say, what about three years ago?... That year we did it, but the true number was not WBS sold, but WBS distributed that year. Let's pray that the trend continues.... Thanks for everyone's hard work and dedication to the task of reaching a lost world.

Indeed, with the Lord's blessing, we aim for the trend to increase. WBS' recent Strategic Planning calls for student enrollments to double by 2013. The economic downturn says otherwise. But we believe in God more than in earthly fluctuations. He is in charge, and He is opening the doors for many more lives to be changed. In trust, we follow Him and plan accordingly. Will you pray also, and join us in reaching a goal that seeks to be worthy of our Lord's great heart for those He died to save?



OPEN HANDS

Continuing page 1's thought...

Surprisingly, a significant portion of enrollees who find us by Internet request to receive their Bible courses by mail. Far from detracting from postal World Bible School, technology is finding us more and more students, especially in the USA. In January's *Action!*, did you notice the 2008 chart for postal enrollments? The USA had jumped to the number 4 position out of some 200 in the world—for 'snail-mail' courses! That was largely due to Americans finding WBS via the Internet and then enrolling for postal delivery. Evidently, many of us still want to receive a booklet we can hold in our hands.

The only reason more are not enrolled via Internet relates to open hands. Here's why. Interested people find WBS on Internet primarily through search engines like Google and Yahoo. We pay these companies to position WBS to be found. Internet advertising has the advantage that WBS is charged only when a person expresses interest by clicking through to the WBS site. WBS is not charged every time the ad is seen. The average cost is about \$1.50 per student that enrolls. When enrollments have used up our month's budget, we lose our easy-to-find positioning. The

number of seekers never comes close to being exhausted. It is just that we exhaust our meager funding too soon. Hundreds of thousands more would enroll if we had the open hands that keep us "findable" online, and then the open hands to serve as online friends to seekers who enroll, and later follow-up friends.

With God's blessing, the solution to "church decline" begins that simply: open hearts and open hands. Hence WBS' *Impact Sunday* that opens our hearts to the urgent need and to this unique opportunity. Open hands will keep the doors open for souls already seeking. Visit www.impactssunday.net and see the attractive DVD. Request your *Impact Sunday* package. Ask the leaders of your congregation to participate. Draw attention to this *Action!* Share the challenge with your class or small group. Make a family project of it. Join in personally.

Will you lend a hand to turn those negative headlines up-side-down? A powerful start is already at your fingertips. Seekers by the thousands are lining up for Bible studies from churches of Christ. Will we close them out through indifference? Or will we welcome them in? The answer is in your hands.





Meet You at *myWBS!*

by WBS Internet Team

What's new with technology and ministry? Around here, all the buzz is about *myWBS 2.0*.

Have you heard of a website called "Facebook"? Facebook is a five-year-old social utility that helps people communicate with their friends, family and coworkers. Facebook technologies facilitate information sharing through real-world social connections. Anyone can sign up for Facebook and interact with the people they know in a trusted environment.

"Information sharing...through social connections"? This sounds like a perfect plan for telling about Jesus—like some-

thing from Acts. WBS is keenly aware of the opportunity for sharing the Good News through social network sites like Facebook, YouTube and MySpace. For more than two years, WBS has been developing a new system to capture the positive elements of this type of communication and apply them to teaching the Gospel. When people converge on the Web to learn, share, discuss and recommend—like a marketplace at the crossroads—the environment is ripe for evangelism.

In 2009, WBS is releasing a series of modules that contain new tools to provide you and your students new ways of sharing your common interest in learning about Christ. These tools are part of the new *myWBS*, "Version 2.0." It brings all



WBS users—email and postal teachers, students using email, mail and the Web, follow up workers, churches and staff—into one social network for the purpose of growing in respect to salvation.

WBS aims to join evangelism and social networking as never before. According to the chief technology consultant for WBS, Lance Tolar, "WBS uses technology as the middle-ware between Christ and those who seek Him. We use technology to deliver information, to educate and to interface with students. However, it is the Christian Study Helper

continued on page 6



Above & Beyond
by Kevin Rhodes

WBS is technology-driven.

You can't be serious, you may be thinking. *Isn't WBS just a little ol' ministry that sends out some Bible correspondence courses?* Uh, no. Actually, WBS is a large, thriving, international ministry. It takes significant resources to teach **two million students** at a time, and to involve some **ten thousand volunteer Christians**, almost a **thousand churches**, and **untold numbers** of faithful Christians around the globe.

And it happens to take a lot of technology to fulfill our mission and to do it cost-effectively. Besides, we've been providing interactive, online Bible studies for over thirteen years—as one of the first ministries to use the Internet effectively for world evangelism. As we move into using technology more and more, we have to be more creative and more, well...*technological*. Because in just an instant, people around the globe communicate, build relationships, and seek and share information. And every soul on earth is searching for answers, for true meaning in life. WBS will be there, too, providing *the answer*—Jesus Christ.

You'll hear more about how WBS is using technology to reach the lost with the Good News of Jesus—from *Yahoo to Yahweh*, we like to say. As you do, consider how you could give generously to help us. We need you to make it all happen. Still, just one dollar lets one soul study the Bible. With technology, *we'll teach even more for less.*



Action!

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YAHOO
YOUTUBE
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FACEBOOK
GOOGLE
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YAHWEH

Behold, The Way, the Web and World Bible School.

WBS and today's technology are instantly bringing people to God.

Just point and click and you're with us in Asia, Africa or the Americas, reaching and teaching more than ever before with the Good News. The possibilities are astounding.

1.4 billion people. WBS has always gone where people and the mail systems go.

Today, the world is going to the Internet. Everyday.

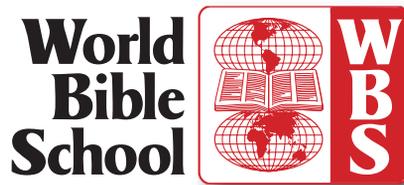
We'll be there, with your support. Join us for Impact Sunday 2009.

World Bible School and the World Wide Web are on the move. God Speed.

Calling Families, Bible Classes, and Small Groups:

1. Encourage your church to participate with a gift to WBS on *Impact Sunday*.
2. Also make it a special project in March and April. Have your group collect funds in the weeks leading up to May 3.
3. Remember: for every dollar, one soul will study the Bible with WBS.

Now that's *impact!*



Reaching Tomorrow. Today

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Jake, Man of Impact

As we were finalizing this *Action!*, word came of the February 3 passing of Jake Coppinger, truly a “man of impact.” I flew out for the funeral, held in Tulare, California, February 10. Paul Renganathan had flown in from India. The Coppinger family graciously included Paul and me in the service, with others who added their testimony. The worldwide scope of Jake’s influence amazed all in that packed church building. I was particularly impressed with the many levels of Jake’s impact: all the way from

large campaigns that converted thousands, to neighbors reached in Jake’s Joy Buses, to adoring descendants, and more.

Jake was born as Joel P. Coppinger, Sr., May 25, 1918. He married Wilma Moore in 1936—a marriage blessed with 72 years! Their oldest son is Joel Coppinger, Jr., who continues to work with World Bible School with his wife Pat of Visalia. Other children are Jimmie Coppinger of Fresno, Dennis Stout of Visalia, and one daughter, Pat Vice and husband Claude of Tulare. See Joel’s article below, which we

had already placed before the news about his father. We also asked Joel to add more about his father for the next issue of *Action!*

Jake’s 90 years of dynamic living resonate into eternity. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them” (Revelation 14:13). *By J. Reese*



Coppinger Report: 162 Baptized in Ghana Campaign



By Joel Coppinger

Five of us went to Ghana, West Africa for a three week campaign.

Pat and I worked with Rusty Bolton, retired preacher/elder from Visalia, Cal., Ken Heflin, WBS leader from Phoenix, Ariz., and Ralph Weinhold, preacher from Dardanelle, Ark.

Pat worked in ten high schools where we enrolled over 1,000 as World Bible School students. Over 40 students were baptized. At one school we handed out WBS Introductions as the students walked home. Most of our teaching was in villages where church members brought their friends and neighbors to a central location. The local brethren took converts to a stream or pond nearby for baptism.

Altogether 162 precious souls were baptized into Christ. One young man

handed a knife to Bismark Nortey, a WBS follow-up worker, and said, “I won’t need this anymore.” When the villagers heard who was baptized they rejoiced. They knew that he had been responsible for many thefts in the village. They said, “If we can convert him, we can convert anybody in the village.” The young man was in rags so church members gathered clothing for him. He was at worship the very next Sunday.

Ralph Weinhold worked with follow-up worker Francis Gyamra to establish a new congregation. The attendance was 21 for the first Sunday and 22 for the mid-week worship. Arrangements were made for a preacher student to carry on the work.

Ralph Weinhold and Rusty Bolton were invited to speak on the radio in two different locations. At one village the local radio station made several announcements giving the location of our meeting place. The announcement was broadcast over loud



Ghana campaigners (Pat and Joel at right)

speakers throughout the busy market place.

We were pleased to visit some of the congregations where we worked in 2007 and see last year’s new converts busy in the work of the church. New converts are nurtured to spiritual maturity by caring congregations. As a result, they stay faithful. We saw growth and progress on every hand. The church in Ghana continues to grow through evangelism and benevolence.

MEET YOU AT *myWBS* from page 3

who communicates the love of Christ.”

The first module to be released in March will be the automated WBS courses—the Master Series. WBS has found Google advertising an effective tool for student recruiting around the world. The automated courses allow students the option to study at their own pace, any time of the day or night until they have a question and request a Study Helper.

Since multiple choice questions are auto-graded, WBS Study Helpers are freer

to use their resources wisely to focus on building relationships for Christ. Students also receive encouragement through fresh articles, WBS news and devotionals.

On-line social interactions with WBS Study Helpers will provide an arena for nurturing faith-centered relationships. The follow-up system integrated into the new *myWBS* will continue to bring students and follow up workers in contact more quickly than ever before.

J.T. Martin, in Lampasas, Texas,

reported, “In less than 48 hours after my email to him, Jacob Sesay in Sierra Leone responded with the news of my student’s baptism. To God be the glory!”

The new automated follow up database system, with 24/7 access, should greatly advance time-saving as it relates to soul-saving. For our special DVD on WBS technology visit www.impactssunday.net, or phone 1-800-311-2006. Join WBS as we continue to blaze the trail at *God Speed*.

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Carmon & Doris Grant

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Debora Robbins

Olin Saylors

</

did you know?

A continuing series of WBS facts...

1,009,874
Introductions in 2008!

That's a new record for *The Way*, the introduction into World Bible School's *Master Series* of Bible courses. Providing 1,009,874 copies of *The Way* heralds the enrollment of 1,009,874 more seekers to study the Bible through WBS. And that many "Intros" in English is only the start. Tens of thousands more study via the Internet or in other languages. Each



new student learns the Gospel of Christ from God's Word, presented in lessons that are clear, attractive, persuasive... and **free of charge**.

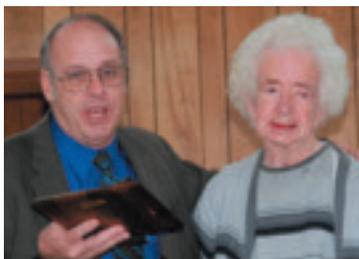


That's right. Every WBS lesson is a *free* blessing to every student. Churches and WBS teachers pay for the course materials so students don't have to. That's also a blessing for WBS—but it only provides for about one-fifth of our ministry costs. That's why we ask churches and individuals throughout the brotherhood to help WBS, their most prolific and cost-effective tool for worldwide evangelism. Please encourage your church to participate in our annual WBS *Impact Sunday*, the first Sunday in May. Learn more at www.impactSunday.net. Your support for WBS will empower 10,000 volunteer WBS teachers to continue teaching the Word and reaching the world. There are at least 1,009,874 good reasons to get involved!



Upcoming with WBS...

Honor one another...



We honored long-time WBS teacher Emily Benton in Prescott, Arkansas.

Who should be honored at your congregation? Send stories and photos for the May Action!



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