

Action!



Teaching the Word.
Reaching the World!

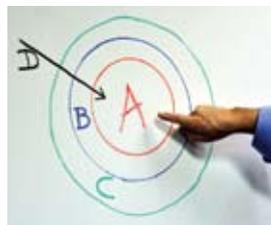
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Let's face it: Many American churches of Christ are in decline. The latest "official" figure shows a decline of -1.5% since 1980. Sadly, that decline is framed by plenty of opportunity as America's population has grown 35% in the same period. Whether we track trends or not, the evidence seems obvious: few baptisms from outside, many grey heads, losing college kids, programs closing and so on. A careworn elder said it eloquently by pointing his finger down and moving it in a spiraling motion. This is not to paint all congregations with the same brush. Some are growing well. Others that claim "growth" turn out to be swelling from member transfers. But when the ups and downs are taken cumulatively, the overall trend appears to be down.

The causes of decline are myriad. Perhaps the most comprehensive list of causes has been compiled by Don Petty (email Don at dosyl56@aol.com with "Decline" in subject line). Causes should be understood in order to discover corresponding solutions. At a recent think-tank, the question arose about how congregations could break their downward spirals. Without hesitation my reply was, "God will use the core for the solution." If a



congregation has any life left, it has a core of spiritual, active members. Even the dead congregation at Sardis had a remnant, a core with whom Jesus could work. "You have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with Me, dressed in white, for they are worthy" (Revelation 3:4). That living core (A) is surrounded by those who can still be influenced (B). They particularly need to "Wake up! Strengthen what remains! Obey! Repent!" (as in Revelation 3:2-3).

Then there is an outer circle (C) of members who remain unresponsive. Don't look to dead wood for growth. Look to the core where the spiritual sap still flows. Inspire, train and equip these "reliable" members (2 Timothy 2:2). Their enthusiasm for outreach can spread to members open to influence. God will answer their specific

prayers. He will bless their outreach with new additions (D) who don't know better than to rejoice and share their new-found faith. New converts often open up fresh networks of friends, relatives and neighbors. Also, nothing improves the culture of an old congregation like "new blood." In other words, let the core

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USA Atlantic Tour



USA Atlantic Tour

By John Reese

Many young Americans learn the history of their nation's birth. Some, like my wife Beth, made memorable pilgrimages to patriotic sites. Born and raised in Africa, I missed those early opportunities. My first visit to America was at age 18, for college. Travels included Campaigns North East with Owen Olbricht. Many and fruitful were the demands, but few were the chances for tourism.

This was true for our recent tour for WBS. On the move for two weeks, our co-workers Rick and Mary Shur set a fast-paced agenda. Amid continual appointments, there were a number of firsts for me, including exposures to Washington, D.C., Jamestown and Gettysburg. These glimpses were impressive introductions to the foundations of a monumental nation.

More impressive were the hearts of the Christians along the way. Many share a special pioneering spirit in fields where the sense of

mission remains strong, even after many years. Their persistence and sacrifice are spiritual equivalents of the formative struggles of the U.S. This is the same nation that WBS is targeting for 2011, particularly through "WBS Connect." We launch this *Action!* with a tribute to America's core disciples—as exemplified here.

This issue also focuses the WBS spotlight on one of the world's largest mission fields, the United States of America.

Simpsonville, SC We started at Holland Park church of Christ because Mary Beth Christy moved here and brought WBS with her. Shepherd Bob Davis and his wife Leah hosted us.

Statesville, NC Shepherds George Stevenson and Hubert Bellumy welcomed us to this predominantly African-American congregation that serves and wins many in the community and supports WBS.

Cary and Raleigh, NC Attempted to see and thank donors to WBS.

Colonial Heights, VA A coastal hurricane detoured us to visit my wife's aunt. Rose Marie Paden [on right, 1] and her late husband Lowell moved here in the late 40s specifically to establish the church. The Lord blessed their many years as vocational missionaries.

Jamestown, VA A bald eagle [2] greeted us at the 1607 Jamestown Settlement [3] on the way to Elizabeth City, NC, to visit my brother Robert Reese and his wife Marie-Etta [4]. Christian perspectives dominated early settlements [5].

Virginia Beach, VA Meeting and lunch with Baytown church's mission and WBS coordinator Tim Miller and his wife Faith.

Warrenton, VA After encouraging the congregation in missions and lunch with the Sterritts and other WBS friends, Paul and Lorna Reiman of the Manassas church hosted. Paul [6] is a wealth of knowledge about using WBS.

Alexandria, VA At evening service we met Nigerian-American Chidi Ugwunna [7]. He benefited from WBS and is now a WBS teacher of students in Nigeria. Beth and I took the opportunity for my first glimpse of Washington, D.C. [8,9].

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To Kenya with Love



Barry and Sandra Murray

By Barry Murray
Six years ago, Sandra began as a World Bible School study helper. One of her first students was John Ombae Ombati from Kisii District in Kenya East

Africa. John began sharing his lessons with other people. The group of eight declared themselves a Pentecostal church. Sandra continued to send courses, Bible tracts and teaching materials. She located two WBS follow-up workers, David Marube and Simeon Ongiri Atanga, who

studied the Bible personally with first these eight, then 13, every other week. Thus, the "Kenya Church of Christ at Kiamabundu" was born. The church grew rapidly, as did the number of WBS students.

The Kiamabundu church lost the cattle barn they were meeting in and worshipped God under His trees. John Ombae donated land and a mud building was erected. The church was renamed "Kenya Church of Christ at Riochanda" and grew to well over 100. John has developed into a dynamic preacher of the Gospel. He and Simeon travel to share God's grace with many more.

As the church and its daughter churches have grown, so has its project OVER THE RAINBOW-Kenya. Kenyans have been fed spiritually and physically. Bibles and over 100 children's Bible story books have been shipped. We also provided school supplies, Bible class materials, medical assistance, help for five evangelists, maize to feed 70 families and laying hens.

In December of 2008, Sandra and I lived the dream of meeting 25 of her over 100 Kenyan students. Fourteen were baptized as the men spoke at several congregations. The hungry were fed spiritually and physically. We visited an orphanage run by Thomas Alwala, a WBS worker in Sondu and fell in love with the Kenyan people...all these things because of one WBS student and his hunger for God's Word!





Notice to a Local Church

By Sid Womack

Robin Cannon of World Bible School will be coming Sunday morning [for a combined class and for the sermon during worship service].

Rex [McDaniel] and I were inspired by the WBS presentations by Robin Cannon, John Reese and others at Pleasant Valley [Little Rock] last Thursday night. WBS is reaching the lost through its mail program, its email program and a new web-based program on Internet. Between 25,000 and 30,000 souls per year request baptism through WBS. It is the least

expensive means of international evangelism. It may very well be the most accessible mission effort for people like us who would like to do



WBS honors long-time WBS teachers Rita Anderson (shown) and Brenda Tipton.

mission work but will still be in the work force for a few more years. (For me, I have watched my retirement age move from 62 to possibly 68 in just the past year, given

recent developments. This is affecting my “go yonder” mission plans.)

Where is WBS focusing for 2011? Myanmar? Tanzania? Madagascar? Some other far-way place?

No. The U. S. They are focusing on evangelism by email and web-based WBS particularly in the United States

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Robin Cannon speaks at Pleasant Valley

American Response

Ray Dutton, World Bible School coordinator at University church in Montgomery, Ala., recently wrote this note commending one of his teachers and passing along to WBS an unexpected check.

Ray wrote, “One of our students [Juanita] has been so pleased with WBS’s lessons that she wrote wanting to make a contribution. Although we explained that we do not solicit contributions from our students, she was insistent that she make a contribution and thus sent us this check [enclosed]. Her study helper at our church is Augustine Cheatham. Augustine does a wonderful job of building rapport with her students. Thanks from all of us here at the University church for the great work you all are doing.”

Doesn’t that warm your heart? Here is a teacher who knows that WBS is all about the

loving touch of Jesus. Here is a student who has caught the New Testament spirit of generosity. “The one who is taught the Word is to share all good things with the one who teaches” (Galatians 6:6). No, WBS has never charged students for its services. But we are touched and encouraged by this gift’s significance. Like Paul we rejoice, not so much in the donation itself, but in Juanita’s spiritual progress (cf. Philippians 4:17). We rejoice also to see that Juanita lives in South Carolina.

How our teachers enjoy their American students! Postal and electronic connections are so much securer. Returns are so much faster. And every person influenced for Christ and His Christianity helps the Lord’s church in America. The number of students in North America keeps

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Action!

Editor: John Reese

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Congratulations, Mary Ann Farmer!

By Bill Atnip

Congratulations to Mrs. Mary Ann Farmer for serving as a Bible correspondence/World Bible School teacher for over 62 years! When the Bible correspondence/WBS program began at the Hillsboro Church of Christ in Nashville, Tenn., in 1948, Mrs. Farmer was one of the first teachers. She worked unselfishly and untiringly with WBS, teaching hundreds of students. Not only has she been a very effective teacher but she also had the privilege of visiting some of her students in their villages in Africa. Although she is no longer able to teach in the program, she is dearly missed by her students and fellow WBS teachers. We want to thank you, Mrs. Farmer, for your dedication and the marvelous work you have done for World Bible School as we strive together to answer the Lord's calling to carry out His Great Commission.



Mary Ann Farmer

Editor's Note: I have taken the liberty of adding the term "Bible correspondence" twice in Bill's article. The reason is that the name World Bible School first appeared in 1973. In effect, Jimmie Lovell applied that name to ongoing Bible correspondence, which in Mary Ann's case went back to 1948. Mary Ann befriended my wife and I in 1988 when Hillsboro sent a group led by Mark McInteer for our WBS campaign in South Africa.



Wanita White

89 and Still Going Strong

By Bren White

My mother Wanita White was born in Oilton, Okla., and got her Masters degree in mathematics in Stillwater at Oklahoma A&M (now OSU). She now lives in Lafayette, Ind., and attends the Elmwood church of Christ. She has been an instructor for WBS since Jimmie Lovell first started the effort. Before that she graded French and English Bible correspondence courses for J.C. Bailey of Canada. I estimate she has had over 150,000 students since the 1960s. She currently has detailed files on over 40,000 students.

Thousands of her students from all over Africa were baptized into Christ. Many became outstanding Gospel preachers. She stays in contact with a number of them. She actually helped to start churches of Christ in places like Mauritius and Madagascar without ever traveling there. She has devoted herself to doing whatever she can to spread the Gospel to all the world. Even at 89 years old, she is focused on teaching WBS students and teaching ladies' classes at church and in her home.

Editor's note: Bren and Cheryl work tirelessly in Operation French World (see www.laurelchurch.net then click on missions). He recently wrote to me, "Almost every time I preach or train in the USA, I mention WBS as leading the way (the best example) in reaching souls around the world with the Good News! And I encourage people to get involved with WBS directly. I praise God for all you are doing!" Doyle and Barbara Key of Geneva, Switzerland, also focus on French evangelism. Their opening newsletter for 2011 says, "The challenge is great with 220 million people speaking French around the world. French is the third language on the Internet (ahead of Spanish). By 2050, it is estimated there will be between 700 and 750 million people who will speak French, with 500 million of those in Africa. We pray that the Lord of harvest prepare and send more workers for the field of missions." May the example of Wanita White inspire many more to be a significant part of the Lord's answer to this fervent prayer.



CORE Solutions (from page 1)

start an upward spiral. Let small successes breed greater successes.

World Bible School has many years of experience with core members and successful evangelism—even in North America.

- WBS Internet's leading nation for student enrollments is... **the United States of America!**
- Postal WBS' fourth or fifth leading nation is... **the United States of America!**

In 2011, WBS and *Action!* focus in a special way on America. Let *Action!* inspire your members and prepare them practically. Give to your core the tools that have proved so useful worldwide and are now being honed especially for America. Feed new local contacts into your evangelistic efforts through "WBS Connect." It's time to supply and equip more of the core! It's time to bring WBS home!



Notice to a Local Church (from page 3)

because frankly our country needs it. Wouldn't you agree?

WBS needs teachers who can help teach, using everyday electronic resources such as email or being able to click on already-made links on web pages. Let's hear Robin's message. This could be a way we could do the Great Commission without having to deal with some of the other logistical, political and travel hindrances that hinder other missions.



American Response (from page 3)

growing through WBS. This method has been effective worldwide. Now it's time to bring WBS home to America more decisively than ever. Using the form on page 3, add your own contribution to that of Juanita's. It's not about the gift itself. It's about our spiritual priorities and our desire to reach those for whom Jesus died—including our own countrymen. We feel about them as Paul felt about his own. "My heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation" (Romans 10:1).



An Oxford Education (from page 6)

without fanfare but with nation-shaping results by supporting the all-important WBS Service Centers. WBS now has connections to about 500,000 Zimbabwean students. If you would like to help fund the Avondale, Harare, WBS Service Center, which processes some 2,000 returns per week for WBS teachers and receives some 50 follow up requests per week, please contact John Reese at 512-345-8190 or john@worldbibleschool.net. Emails are so plentiful that it is important to identify your reason for writing in the subject line.



Tips for Teachers!

Remember that Code Number!

By Gale Scott

Teachers, please remember the significance of writing your WBS code number on mail you are sending to students. This code is usually assigned to your congregation, and typically has an abbreviation for the state followed by three numbers (e.g. AR942).

When we receive a completed lesson without a code number at the WBS office, we try as hard as we can to find that student's teacher. We are



This much mail can arrive in one day.

not always as successful as the recent discovery by our resourceful Sorting and Mail Coordinator, Mary Nell Kemper.

She received four lessons from students for a teacher named Will Ann Watkins. If the mail had shown Will Ann's WBS code number, sending the mail on to Will Ann would have been routine. Unfortunately, there was no code number on the answers returned by students. Since the teacher's name was unusual, Mary Nell decided she would attempt to find a match on such websites as Yahoo and People Search.

When these attempts failed, she decided to try Facebook. She found a picture of a lady named Will Ann Watkins who, in Mary Nell's practiced view, simply "looked like a WBS teacher." So Mary Nell wrote an entry on her Facebook page with the following message, "If you are a WBS teacher, please call the WBS office at 1-800-331-2006." To her delight, Will



Mary Nell could do well as a detective!

Ann from the DeGaulle Drive church of Christ in New Orleans called us and claimed her students' lessons!

Perhaps you have not been aware of the need for a code number. If so, or if you just want more information, call us at that same 800 number. We want to keep you and your students connected. Think of the WBS code number as a life-line. It is just that important. 

An Oxford Education

By Doug Shields, Sr.

The Oxford, Miss., church has partnered with John and Beth Reese in spreading the Gospel ever since the year they graduated from college and moved to Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe). Because of the civil war in Rhodesia, John and Beth moved to Johannesburg, South Africa, and soon began using World Bible School literature in their work there. Quite naturally they recruited members of the Oxford church to serve as WBS teachers for students they would enroll through advertisements in local papers. This work has continued through the years and recently has expanded in a remarkable way.

Much to the delight of John and Beth, their thwarted dream as newlyweds of carrying the Gospel to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) is now being fulfilled in a big way with WBS. As a part of this WBS effort, Oxford church is sending thousands of WBS lessons to Zimbabwe students each year. The work has mushroomed because of referrals sent in by students completing the Introductory Lesson. The answer sheet for this Introductory Lesson contains space for



Nathan Murray, Cora Beal Shields, Elza Dahl, Amy Hutson, Tommie Waters, Margaret Orf, Renée Russell, Mike Williams, Doug Shields

the names of ten friends to whom the respondent would like to have lessons sent. Most of these returns contain eight or ten referrals.

Another factor that has led to this explosion of students is a practice learned from the Starkville, Miss., congregation. Tragic inflation and unemployment rates have produced widespread poverty that keep students from affording the postage to return their WBS answers, even to an address within Zimbabwe. Starkville helped to develop the now current practice of sending a postage paid return envelope with each WBS course. This Business Reply Mail

is addressed to the WBS office in Avondale, Harare, where Alice Mhlanga and Si Muraicho process it for returning to American teachers. Alice and Si send returned answers in bundles to Cedar Park where they are sorted and sent to the various churches with students in Zimbabwe.

The biggest job of such massive mail-outs is addressing the envelopes. Four of the Oxford members, Tommie Waters, Elza Dahl, Renée Russell and Amy Lauderdale, devote several hours a week to this job. Pictured are some of the Oxford church WBS workers and 400 pounds of lessons (about a three month effort) ready to be shipped. The lessons are shipped to Europe in bulk and from there are mailed to the individual students in Zimbabwe.

Editor's note: Faithful—nearly life-time—partnerships are so special. I personally appreciate the close ties developed for many years with Oxford, Starkville, Ennis, Pocahontas, Ravenden Springs and Waxahachie. Oxford also has partnered with the Avondale church of Christ and Alice Mhlanga to make the return mail service available to all WBS teachers. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Oxford and similar congregations who serve the rest of us

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Meet Shahid and a New Congregation in Pakistan

by Roy McKinney, Chattanooga, Tenn.

We rejoice in this good news of a new church of our Lord in Hyderabad, Pakistan. Shahid traveled 600 miles by train to be baptized at Sahiwal Bible College after studies through WBS and one of the East Ridge church of Christ Internet teachers. His wife, also a WBS student, was baptized a month later. He is a document translator, and she is an English teacher in the public school.

Evangelism in Pakistan is both arduous but dangerous. It seems unworkable for many Westerners to preach or teach in this country, and local preachers (possibly as many as 50 throughout Pakistan) endure great hardships. With these conditions in mind, it is apparent that WBS is an excellent way to teach Pakistanis interested in studying the Bible. In fact, with independent sign-ups and referrals, Shahid's teacher now has a total of five active Internet students in that country. After being baptized, Shahid wrote this e-mail message to his teacher:

"Let me tell you the journey toward the truth of the Gospel. I was born in Toba Tek, Singh Punjab, in 1975 in a Roman Catholic family. I have three sisters and seven brothers; three of the brothers died in their childhood. One sister died two years back leaving a daughter and four sons to her husband. My parents were strict Roman Catholics and asked us to attend and pray regularly in the church.

As I was grew in the faith, I became stronger in my beliefs and more mature in my thoughts.



East Ridge church recently hosted a WBS Dinner where Kevin Rhodes and Paul Manyok spoke.



Members sharing the Lord's Supper

One of my father's cousins became the priest in the Roman Catholic church, and this made me look closer into the lives of priests of that church. I became completely discouraged and disappointed when I looked at the bad and corrupt deeds of Catholic priests of Toba Tek. My father also came to know about this, and then he also never encouraged us to go to the church.

Still I had thirst in my mind and heart to know more about the true Gospel.

In the meantime, Jennifer's cousin, who is Pentecostal, asked us to join their church. Slowly and gradually Jennifer's family and I started [going] toward Pentecostal and forgot the Roman Catholic church. But, still I had thirst in my mind and heart to know more about the true Gospel which was not delivered in the messages of Pentecostal. Their focus was only on speaking the tongues. I never agreed with such practice of tongues and could not understand why people talk in such languages which they themselves cannot understand.

Once when we were attending Pentecostal church prayer, everyone was crying and shouting aloud which scared our boy. He started crying bitterly. In another service, there was one of the pastors who came and wanted me to fall on the ground just to show the power of Holy Spirit, and he was continuously pushing me by keeping his hand on my forehead. This thing really made me think, was it a prayer or something else? I had never experienced such situation and it really made me embarrassed.

[After experiments with various groups, we concluded:] By the beginning of this year, it seemed that in everything and everywhere there was something missing and we stopped going to any other church, but we would simply pray

to God at our own home with the people who would like to listen to the word of God in its true sense without adding or deleting anything in the given verses.

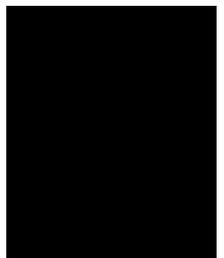
In April, when I was browsing, I found this [World Bible School] website and registered myself with the belief that somehow I would study from the Bible to increase my knowledge of being a Christian. The early course inspired me and I gradually got a lot of answers regarding [the] Holy Spirit, baptism and the church. The best thing which influenced me is the truth of Gospel for which I had longed for more than ten years of my life.

This was the time when I realized and told Jennifer that we should go for [take] this course as we will not only increase our knowledge of the Bible, but that we could also become true Christians who only follow the teachings of Christ, and [whose] focus is always Christ. Here I would also thank God that He provided us with such an encouraging study helper who clarified all the questions in our minds, and the love and dedication for the work of Christ is visible through her correspondence and e-mails."

Since this letter was written, several have been worshipping in Shahid's home. There have been more than 12 baptisms to date. Their baptistry is an inflatable swimming pool purchased with funds donated by a WBS teacher and her husband. Due to recent floods, many have lost their homes and are in danger of serious diseases in Pakistan.

Funds were sent by an East Ridge couple to rebuild the tiny house of a Christian family in Hyderabad which collapsed in the monsoon rains. With the end of the rain, the dwelling has been restored. Shahid concluded his letter with these words,

"Now the Lord's Church in this part of Hyderabad is in its initial stage of establishment. People show their thirst of hearing the word of God exactly as it is written in the Gospel. They welcome us and show their affection toward us as we read the Gospel in front of them. It is the result of our constant prayers to God, thirst for the true Gospel, sincerity and commitment, and the blessings of God that He made us capable and filled our hearts with His love and grace. May the Lord bless us all who are in the Lord's family on this earth."



Shahid preaching





USA Atlantic Tour from page 2

Hyattsville, MD We thanked University church for participation in Impact Sunday, and discussed evangelistic strategies with shepherd Dave Spradlin. In D.C. we rushed through a part of the Smithsonian [10] and toured the Capitol [11] assisted by the staff of Congressman Brett Guthrie. We also visited Rose Marie's son Danny with his wife Debbie [12]. The Paden influence for church growth remains strong.

New York City, NY The Big Apple [13] epitomizes America's need. Teeming millions live within view of the Statue of Liberty [14] and Ellis Island [15], yet know little of Freedom in Christ and Citizenship in Heaven. Churches like Manhattan [16] seem minuscule in the population. Unless the Word is spread better, the disaster will be far greater than the tragedy of 9/11, commemorated [17] just after our visit.

For me this came full circle: We Dutch-German Reeses reputedly arrived at Manhattan under Peter Stuyvesant (Governor, 1647-1664).

White Plains, NY We had a grand reunion with Dick and Sharon Boyd of White Plains, and her father Joe Lyon [18] of Huntington Mills, PA. All three were missionaries to Zimbabwe during my childhood there. Upon their returns from Africa they continued mission work—right here in the American North East.

Albany, NY We were similarly encouraged by the work of Kerry and Alice Morris whom we had known as missionaries in South Africa. On the way back south we swung by Gettysburg [19]. If Lincoln [20] and others were willing to suffer so much for their earthly nation, how much more should we sacrifice for the Kingdom of Heaven?

King of Prussia, PA Bob Brown used to

teach at North Eastern Christian College (now Ohio Valley Christian University). Bob and his team [21] have long used WBS effectively in prison ministry. Bob and Jesse hosted us, and he took us on a whirlwind tour of Valley Forge [22].

Shelby, NC Sunday services at Shelby where Danny Davis has coordinated WBS for 20 years. What an inspiration to all who know him!

Fort Mill, SC That same evening I preached at Gold Hill Road. This congregation is one of the fastest growing in the region and has a dynamic WBS team of 25 teachers [23]. Barry and Sandra Murray [24] shared the story of her Kenyan student, that appears in this issue. Much more could be said, but this travelogue helps to spotlight the evangelistic needs of America and the faithful core whom God uses to meet those needs.



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