

Action!



Teaching the Word. Reaching the World!

Volume 77, Number 3

May 2013

Honoring Heroes

By John Reese

My wife Beth recently hosted 90 friends for a dinner to celebrate World Bible School's 40th Anniversary and, especially, how God blesses our ministry. (See the amazing story of 101 baptisms at right.)

Tex Williams was one of a distinguished line of speakers. To Tex, WBS is about God using ordinary Christians in extraordinary ways. As long-time editor of *Action!*, Tex wrote, "I have always said that the real heroes of this program are WBS teachers... those who are in the trenches every day." This issue honors such heroes. These stories represent many thousands more. You know the unsung heroes in your congregation. You know how well Romans 12:10 applies: "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves" (also rendered "showing eagerness in honoring one another"). For leaders eager to honor members, this anniversary affords an ideal occasion to express love and appreciation.

Heroes who have earned their stripes



have also earned the right to set us straight. Of the 30th Anniversary mark, pioneer WBS teacher and good friend Chuck Cromwell wrote, "Folks at Cedar Park think WBS is only 30 years old." His personal experience is so compelling that

it features on page 2 with

Patsie Trowbridge's landmark commentary. Thank you, Patsie and Chuck!

To Chuck's point, readers need reminders that 2013 marks the 40th Anniversary, not of the method, but of it receiving the name "World Bible School." Under that name, its teachers have touched over 25,000,000 souls worldwide. We commemorate that start, and trust that God will multiply His impact even more. To that end, God is providing WBS new generations of teachers and the latest cutting-edge tools. This is the new WBS—inspired afresh by devoted heroes who thrust us into the 21st century with powerful momentum. We honor them best by imitating their sacrificial faith (Hebrews 13:7).



Tex Williams addresses WBS celebrants.



Baptism 101

By Alice Mhlanga
Harare, Zimbabwe

The Lord God is good! Yes, He is so very good!

We were so excited that 51 female inmates had been given permission to be baptized at the maximum security prison in Chikurubi on March 2nd. Most of them are WBS students. We were so disappointed when the event was postponed without explanation. But at the last minute late the night before, a call was received by Stanley Shereni, our preacher at the Avondale church of Christ and a prison minister. The baptisms would go ahead after all at 8:00 sharp the next morning! Stanley called me and we arranged to meet for the event.



101 souls are baptized—praise God!

Early Saturday morning I braved torrential rains seeking transportation to Chikurubi, but could find none whatsoever. Stanley and his wife Esnath were able to get there. After two and half hours, Stanley called to tell me that in actuality, **101 female inmates had been baptized** and added to the church. Again, most are WBS students. (Outsiders cannot take photos, but an officer had a camera and was kind enough to share this photo.) May God be glorified! We appreciate all your efforts in bringing all peoples of all walks of life to know Jesus with WBS.



What Is Most Important?



Patsie Trowbridge

By Patsie Lovell Trowbridge

Dedicated purpose and prayer led to the inspiration for the name World Bible School some 40 years ago. Obviously, the individual who thought

of that title did not think small; in fact, Jimmie Lovell frequently challenged what he perceived to be limited thinking by many Christians. The lives of visionaries have direction as was the case in the life of the founder of WBS and the hundreds of dedicated people who subsequently became involved. For 80 years, devoted Christians from all walks of life have extended the Great Commission worldwide through WBS. As the daughter of the founder, I have been involved from its inception (and before), so I take pleasure in sharing insights and lessons learned along the way.

Working with people who continually put God above everything else in their lives has been a constant encouragement

and sometimes a transforming experience leading to a re-evaluation of priorities. My father frequently ended letters with the admonition, “Hold fast to the Lord because nothing else much matters.” The dedication of many involved in WBS brings back fond memories of his statement and I’m “holding fast.”

Prayer has always been a constant companion for the board of WBS and

WBS teachers remain the backbone of the ministry.

the staff. I have been able to find the direction I needed (although not always on my timetable, but God’s) in assisting with the work over the years. God blessed WBS and my family by aligning our lives with successful people from a variety of vocations. From them my husband and I were continually reminded that an organization does not have the leeway of coasting along. WBS is in the business of changing the world one life at a time by saving souls. The administrative philosophy

has always been to plan ahead and in times of difficulty to continually witness to one another that God is in charge. This conviction has led the board to take some calculated risks rather than being becalmed by indecision. Fortunately, the choices made have met with continued success.

I’ve come to deeply appreciate and depend upon thousands of people I’ve never personally met. WBS teachers worldwide remain the backbone of the ministry. They come from all walks of life, many ethnic groups, young and old, but with a common mission. Through them I have learned to trust and to believe in miracles.

Anniversaries are often times for celebration and renewed commitment. Through difficult times in my life I have learned to seek the significant issues and to give my energy and talent to them. The focus of WBS remains a global outreach because the fields are ripe for harvest. We are now also blessed with methods to communicate as never before which have opened many new doors for sharing the message of salvation. The goal of WBS remains to be as a shining city on a hill for the world to see.



Recollections



Ruth and Chuck Cromwell

By Chuck Cromwell
Back in 2004, I wrote, “Folks at Cedar Park think World Bible School is only 30 years old.” However, Tex Williams told the story about Jimmie

Lovell’s first correspondence teaching. He said Jimmie wrote a correspondence course for all his family in 1937 to “ease his own conscience.” In 1942, when I was 16, Jimmie Lovell taught us boys Sunday School class at Vermont Ave. church near the Pepperdine, CA, campus.

Jimmie grew up in East Tennessee. He was a frequent visitor to his home area. He stopped by Lawrence Ave. church of Christ in Nashville, TN, one Sunday in



George Pepperdine, friend of Jimmie and Chuck

1942. Seeing Gordon Turner’s written correspondence course, Jimmie wrote a check for \$2,000 and asked the church at Lawrence Ave. to send the course to “all the boys in Service”!

By 1944, while in Navy training, I attended Cornell Ave. church of Christ in

Chicago. I took the Lawrence Ave. course, beginning in Chicago and finishing on Long Island during amphibious exercises. My certificate was lost during an assignment to Majuro Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

In 1947 Ruth and I married. The Lovells and Pepperdines attended the wedding. That same year, Jimmie had a dozen young preachers develop the correspondence materials that became WBS later. As Jimmie faced his life expectancy, he arranged for Reuel Lemmons of Austin, TX, to become manager. Later, Tex Williams was Reuel’s replacement, followed by John Reese.

In 1948 Lawrence Ave. members went to Germany for door-knocking. One man called at a commercial correspondence school, and left his card. That contact information was sent to C.A.O. Essien in Nigeria when he wrote across the bottom of his business course answers, “I would like to study the



Above & Beyond

by Kevin Rhodes

What does giving firstfruits mean?

Are you a city dweller like me? Then perhaps the term “firstfruits” wouldn’t mean the same to us as it would to a West Texas cotton farmer or rancher. Or to an Old Testament Israelite.

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops (Proverbs 3:9).

That’s an appropriate verse in this issue of *Action!* in which we are honoring others—God first and foremost. In fact, *firstfruits* reflect a biblical sense of priority. In Israel, the following were uniquely set aside for

God: the firstborn male, the initial produce of seasonal crops and foods and the first offspring of domestic animals. By giving the firstfruit, the worshiper acknowledged “up front”—*first and foremost*—God as the source and owner of that portion and of all else. As David said, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (Psalm 24:1).



By giving the very best, the Jewish worshiper acknowledged God as worthy of the highest honor. This is the context for Malachi’s quote of God’s penetrating question: “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?” says the Lord Almighty” (Malachi 1:6). Sure, the people gave, but what they gave was poor compared with their resources. No earthly governor would have accepted such pathetic gifts. How insulting, then, to offer inferior gifts to the King of kings!

These principles resonate through the New Testament. Timothy had many duties as an “evangelist”—a proclaimer of Good News. One duty may surprise us. It had to do with fund-raising.

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so

uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

Whether rich or not, we all benefit from God’s generosity. He blesses us so that we can bless others. We honor God by sharing generously for His cause. Join us in spreading the Good News! Your gifts are reaching truthseekers everywhere. 

Action!

Editor: John Reese

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Memorial Gifts and Honor Gifts are ideal ways to pay tribute to a loved one's legacy or special occasions. At the same time, your gift will be used to "teach the Word and reach the world" with WBS.

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Honoring Jaxie Palmer

By Beth Reese

Jaxie Palmer (95) went to live with Jesus on March 23, 2013. In 1998, I was privileged to review the lives of Roy and Jaxie Palmer. My paper began, "In every person's life there are a few people that have a greater impact than most others—often we call them heroes. Two of our heroes are Roy and Jaxie Palmer."

Jaxie was born in San Antonio, Texas, in 1917. While attending Abilene Christian, she married Roy V. Palmer, Feb. 23, 1940. In 1947 they and the Otis Gatewood family became the first U.S. missionaries to war-ravaged Germany. The women and children stayed in Switzerland for seven months awaiting military permission to join their husbands in Germany. (Jaxie recalls crying every day they were apart.) They initiated large programs for benevolence and preacher training.

They returned for Roy to teach at ACC in 1955, but their hearts were in missions. Jaxie enjoyed being settled, but all those "going" songs kept calling her. So on October 31, 1957, the Palmer family—now six children with one about to be born—arrived in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to serve as the Principal of



Jaxie (2011 with her living children: Becky Michaud, Jerry Palmer, Chuck Palmer, Rick Palmer, Carroll Duval, Phil Palmer and Mary Etta Hobbs

Nhowe Mission schools for seven years. (During this time Philip was born. See page 6 for more about Philip's work with WBS.) All eight children eventually graduated from ACU.

Christian hired him as Academic Dean. But Africa's call was stronger. The Palmer family returned to Rhodesia from 1968 through 1977. During Rhodesia's war, they fearlessly worked at Nhowe until the day insurgents came to execute them. That night the Palmers came to our house in Salisbury.

After preaching in Columbus, Texas, Roy retired. Abilene became their base for extended missions to Tanzania, India and Zimbabwe. Back home, Roy and Jaxie served through benevolence, generous missions support and WBS. After Roy's death (2004), Jaxie continued to teach thousands of Zimbabwean students. Accordingly, the family requests that memorials benefit World Bible School, P.O. Box 2169, Cedar Park, TX 78630. Loy Mitchell officiated at Jaxie's funeral with Philip, Jerry Hayes and John Reese (who completed high school while living with the Palmers).



Jaxie Palmer honored at WBS Breakfast, with Beth Reese

In 1964, while Roy completed his doctorate, Michigan

WBS

Editor's note: Each year the International Health Care Foundation presents the "International Christian Service Award." Ruth Orr received this award at the Medical Missions Seminar. She and her team are known for their benevolence. They also teach over 20,000 WBS students in over a dozen nations, confirming over 2,000 baptisms each year. Here is a summary of Ruth's response:

They Stand for Eternity

By Ruth Orr

The work and opportunities God has blessed me with these past years could not have been carried out without the help of my family, my children, my church family, the elders and WBS workers at Church St. in Lewisburg, TN, and faithful friends the world over. I am so grateful for them all, including my daughter Mary Beth Smith here tonight.



Louisa Duke of IHCF with Ruth and Mary Beth

Also with us tonight are David and Marion Tyree. When my husband died in 1998, I thought my life was over. The Tyrees asked me to accompany them to Poland. I'd never been overseas and had no desire to go. But after prayerful consideration and gentle prodding, I gave it a try. It was the turning point in my life. I cannot thank them enough. We made many more trips to Poland and saw many converted to Christ.

God also opened doors for travel to the Philippines, Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi and Zambia. Over the past 14 years, I have made 47 trips abroad, sharing the Gospel with thousands of WBS students, seeing them come to Christ and keep growing. Ron Pottberg of WBS has traveled as my "body guard" as he puts it. God has taken care of us through predicaments in which we had to depend totally on Him.

Jimmie Lovell introduced my husband and me to WBS 41 plus years ago. Since my husband's death, I have been blessed to work with leaders like Tex Williams, John Reese, Ron and the entire WBS team at Cedar Park who mean so much to me.

The world honors leaders of great armies and wealth. But their accomplishments are temporary. The truly great accomplishments are those of ordinary people like you who are led by God to do extraordinary things that will stand for eternity.



Welcome! Spencer Hamm

By Jonathan Towell

It is my privilege to welcome Spencer Hamm to the WBS team. Spencer started with WBS in February of 2013. His title for WBS is "Interactive Designer"—a fancy way of saying he'll help to make our Internet tools even easier to use.

Spencer has already made some key contributions to our website. WBS first hired Spencer as a freelancer before he

graduated from Harding University in the Spring of 2012. We were so impressed with Spencer's attitude and work quality that we knew we needed him.

Spencer worships with the Prestoncrest church of Christ in Dallas. He is engaged to Christine Miller. They plan to marry in July. Please pray a blessing on them in their new roles. You can contact Spencer at spencer@worldbibleschool.net.

As you can see on page 8, God has done amazing things with WBS in the past year. Stay tuned for more exciting announcements this year. We have only scratched the surface.



Spencer Hamm and Christine Miller



Welcome! Phil Palmer



Phil Palmer

By John Reese

Philip Palmer was born in Southern Rhodesia to missionaries Roy and Jaxie Palmer. The youngest of the Palmers' eight children, Phil grew up in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). He then attended ACU (1976-1979) and earned a BA and MA in Biblical studies. After serving as a two year missionary apprentice in Nairobi, Kenya, he travelled with Mark Berryman for a year researching missions in Uganda, Tanzania, Zaire and the Ivory Coast.

In 1989, Phil married Elaine Franklin of Clyde, TX. Their children are Aubrey, Hannah and Evan. The family served as missionaries in Tanzania and Uganda. Back in America, Phil stayed connected through summer missions assisting Ken Bolden in Tanzania. Fluent in Swahili, Phil translated WBS' *Introduction, God Has Spoken, Born of Water and Spirit and Knowing Jesus*. These were printed in Moshi and used in East Africa.

In Abilene Phil runs his own tree business while coordinating international student ministries. His Swahili and French have served many refugees from Central and East Africa. Phil now joins WBS part time to lay groundwork for 2014's major student recruiting drive in East Africa. Two mission trips are planned. Please contact Phil at phil@worldbibleschool.net for information on Swahili WBS and the "God Bless East Africa" drive.



40th Anniversary Dinner

John and Beth Reese hosted a 40th Anniversary Dinner on March 21, 2013, at Highland Village church's annex in Austin, TX. After a delicious meal cooked and served by Beth and friends, the 90 participants worshiped and enjoyed lively memoirs, visionary projections and photo ops. The groups below: 1) present WBS staff 2) past WBS staff, and 3) past and present WBS board members. Our thanks and praise rise to God who hears the prayers of His servants.



New Notice to Zimbabwe Students: Recent election news has caused WBS seminars in Zimbabwe to change from June to August. For new details please phone the Avondale WBS office: 04-793984 or mobile numbers 0773-080-205 and 0778-165-295.





Thank You, Nigeria!

To our dear brothers and sisters in Nigeria:

We bring you loving greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2013 marks the 40th anniversary of the name “World Bible School.” As you know, thousands of Christians in North America serve as WBS teachers, and much of their impact has been in Nigeria. I am writing on their behalf to thank you for helping to make WBS what it is. Many of you have been powerful instruments in God’s hand for WBS’ growth and success. This celebration of the 40th anniversary is your celebration also! The heart-felt congratulations include each of you! As always, the praise belongs to God!

The man who gave the name “World Bible School” was Jimmie Lovell of California. He did not consider himself a preacher. He supported himself by working for the DuPont chemical company selling explosives. Jimmie’s highest

pursuit, however, had to do with the dynamite of the Gospel. Among Jimmie’s many projects was one that helped send Bible courses to soldiers during World War II. By God’s grace, these courses reached C.A.O. Essien in Nigeria. He had nearly given up on Christianity because of churches he had visited. But these Nashville courses matched what he read in the Bible. They confirmed for Essien that biblical Christianity was possible, and he immediately taught many others. Reports spurred Nashville leaders to ask Eldred Echols and my father Boyd Reese to investigate, which they did in 1950.

Nigeria’s example inspired Jimmie and others to intensify their efforts to promote the method of correspondence. WBS has come a long way since its early activity, and its naming in 1973. We salute you and we thank you, especially when we consider the very difficult circumstances under which you labor. May God continue to bless our



Nigerian church leaders

worldwide partnership that will result in His praise from the redeemed of every nation, tribe, people and language!

Your partner in the greatest mission on earth,

John Reese
WBS president

Editor’s note: With the help of Doug Wheeler and Richard Okosun, the full version of this letter was presented at Nigeria’s “Great Workshop 2013” along with a special video message.



Honoring Volunteers

Volunteers are the heart and soul of World Bible School. Each year we at the Cedar Park home base host a dinner program to express appreciation to area volunteers. While about 70 enjoyed this year’s fellowship, food and messages, we emphasized that those present represented many more who make up WBS and who should be thanked.

From the beginning, WBS has been a volunteer movement. Jimmie and Vivian Lovell gave their lives in many sacrificial ways to launch WBS, along with their daughter Patsie and son-in-law Doug, and early co-workers. When Doug and Patsie were in Africa last year, this was the emphasis of their message: Whether in America or Africa, WBS is all about volunteerism—a labor of love, a free-willing offering that springs from our own heartfelt gratitude to God.

Psalm 110:3 describes the Messiah’s followers in this way: “Your people will volunteer freely in the day of



Enjoying our annual Volunteer Dinner

Your power” (NAS). That spirit characterizes so many involved in WBS. They include student recruiters, teachers and their assistants, WBS coordinators, the *Action!* mailing team, facilitating staff, regional representatives, follow up workers, campaigners, donors, Board members, translators and many more. Please know the sincerity of our hearts in honoring and thanking you today.



Recollections (from page 2) _____

Bible by correspondence.” That started the fast-growing Nigerian work regularly documented by Wendell Broom.

From the early 1980s, we were involved in vigorous WBS programs at Green Lawn and Monterey in Lubbock. About 1989, I became ‘deacon for WBS.’ Monterey’s Spanish WBS has been dynamic. Since 1992, I have made five trips to El Salvador and one to Guyana. Currently, we have students in Zimbabwe.

Editor’s note: Like Patsie, Chuck’s WBS roots with Jimmie run deep. His perspective contributes uniquely to the overall WBS timeline that we plan to publish in the next Action! Be looking for that. If you don’t receive Action! at home, please send us your address so that there is no chance of missing a vital issue.



What Can Happen in Just One Month



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By Jonathan Towell

Every week, thousands of students login to the WBS website from all over the world. To illustrate, take a look at the map below. During a recent 30 day period, 14,602 students from 185 countries logged in to the WBS website.



To be fair, this isn't typical. The reality is that the Internet program is growing faster every day. The second chart shows the growth of students actively using the website to study the Bible. In February of 2012, 397 people used the website to study the Bible. In March of 2013, 6,923 people used the website to study, an increase of over 17 times in only 14 months.

Active Web Students



Christians are responding to the call. On average, the number of Christians actively teaching on the website increases by 10% every month. Last month, over 730 Christians taught somebody the Bible on the WBS website. Christians enjoy sharing their faith with this simple, effective tool.

Growth in English speaking teachers has far outpaced that of Spanish and Portuguese. Yet WBS recruits about eight Latino students for the same expense as recruiting one English speaking student. Please pass along the message: WBS urgently needs more Spanish and Portuguese speaking Web teachers.

These aren't just numbers. These are people whom God wants as His children. I believe that God is telling a story of faith and hope through these people. Would you dare to believe with me? Would you dare to allow God to write you into this story?

Please consider teaching the Bible to somebody. Please consider investing in World Bible School.

Find us at www.worldbibleschool.net to learn how you can be a part of the excitement.



Upcoming with WBS...

