



## FREE

Freedom is dearest to those who have lost it.

**W**ho long for relief more than the oppressed? Who value health and mobility more than the sick? Who look forward to release more than prisoners?

Experiences in the wider world heighten my gratitude for the relative order, stability and lofty values of the United States. At the same time, the inspired Word (and personal observation) inform me that “the land of the free” is not so free after all. This fallen world has many forms of slavery, and America is no exception. Jesus underscored this basic spiritual fact:

*Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin (John 8:34).*



News media parade daily stories of corruption, addiction,

**John Reese with Dimpo Mutimele of Gospel Chariot**

## INDEED

violence and immorality—sensational glimpses into a much larger societal picture. Saddest of all are the spiritually blind who hardly notice themselves sinking into quagmires of their own making.

**The first step toward spiritual freedom is to recognize sin and its enslaving grip.**

Happiest are those whose complacency is shattered—even if it takes the harsh slam of a prison door to jerk them awake. The first step toward spiritual freedom is to recognize sin and its enslaving grip. That realization may come to those in literal prisons and jails more readily than to others. Therefore, as we saturate America with Gospel opportunities, we must be there for prisoners especially. Having known so much bad news, many of them are ready to hear the Good News that sets them free!

*You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.... If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (John 8:32,36).*



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# Perspectives on Prison Ministry

Bill Lewis — STERLING, Colorado

**“T**wo worlds in collision”—that’s how a dear brother of mine describes sharing Jesus with those who are considered by polite society as the most degraded.

“Two worlds in collision” is one believer with a worn out New Testament in his hand kneeling in front of a 3” thick steel door, while holding the hand through the food tray slot of a serial murderer and praying with him. After all his vile deeds, what could these two possibly have in common?

God only knows the percentages, but perhaps most of the incarcerated never reach the point of sorrow for their crimes. Even there in their pitiful life like a caged animal they still cherish the mindset that drove them to their crimes. Each day, they bitterly resent their arrest and sentence, and would even do it all over again.

It is also a fact that many have come face to face with the reality of the horrors they have inflicted upon their victims. With deep remorse for their deeds, they become reconciled to serving the time of their sentence. They daily vow a reformed life despite menacing pressures—and all this with no direct influence from Christianity.

And what are we to think of those who, by a wholesome and heartfelt reception of the Gospel, become convicted of their crime committed against society as a sin against the Almighty God? I am speaking of what we call repentance just as surely as those of us on the outside who commit more ‘respectable sins’ and also come to repentance. What are we talking about here? Is it that the power of the

Gospel is greater than any punitive system devised by mankind? Is it again “two worlds in collision?” Should we also forgive them?

Over and over again I am brought up short by the fact that my best prospects for conversion are not those 200 I preach to in the church service on Sunday morning. They are already sure they know the Gospel better than this old man. No, my eager prospects are those locked away by themselves in the maximum security cells, never leaving their cell without a full set of restraints and two escorts at their side. It started with Nicholas who was willing to visit with me one day and now has completed all World Bible School courses. Now he has the man in the cell next to him starting the studies, too. I will never convert 200, but I will convert one or two by the grace and power of God.

Beit Bridge WBS campaign group with Gospel Chariot truck



## Experiencing Partnership

John Reese — CEDAR PARK, Texas

**M**y wife and I, with our granddaughter, Hannah, and five other Americans—two Jones from Ennis, TX, two Husseys from Austin, TX, and Tony Hopper from Montgomery, AL—recently returned from three weeks in Zimbabwe, Africa. We were privileged to participate in fruitful partnerships that included many Christians and many peoples: Shona, Ndebele, Tonga, etc., from Zimbabwe; Zulu, Venda, Tswana, etc., from South Africa, other Americans from OK, and George Funk who now lives in Australia. World Bible School and Gospel Chariot continued to prove the soul-saving impact of their long-standing partnership. We were pleased to witness the 12<sup>th</sup> Gospel Chariot making its way from South Africa, where it was built, to Kenya via Zimbabwe.

The WBS follow up seminar in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, resulted in 14 baptisms. The combined WBS/GC seminar in Beit Bridge resulted in 17 baptisms, with at least four more following. This past year, the Zimbabwe WBS/GC team established eight new congregations, while enhancing the outreach of many others. Much of this result relates to the fact that Zimbabwe has 1,000,000 recent or current WBS students.

While travelling many miles with WBS follow up coordinator Chris Magadu, my interview with him resulted in the following story.



**George Funk,  
of Gospel Chariot  
Missions**

## Chaplains Convinced

Chris Magadu — NORTON, Zimbabwe

**S**ome of the most needy people in the world are criminals and others incarcerated in Zimbabwe’s prisons. Because they are seeking something better, large numbers are World Bible School students. This has brought WBS to the attention of prison chaplains. Having read the WBS courses for themselves, the chaplains are convinced of the integrity and benefit of WBS, and they approve prisoners studying the Bible through



**Machona Monyamane and Chris Magadu**

WBS. Through their own surveys of WBS courses, many chaplains have come to accept the importance of immersion. This means that they now view favorably baptism requests from WBS students. The chaplains also welcome preachers from churches of Christ who come to

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# Welcome Jim Crain!

More than ever...the world needs the Word.



This has been a thought-provoking year so far. Between presidential elections, violent attacks and relationships strained to the breaking point, we might be tempted to wonder where our reliance on God has gone. Let me reassure you, God is still present. We need Him more than ever. His promises to us are never more relevant than they are now. Additional workers in His vineyard are still needed as well. Speaking of new workers, I'm proud to announce the addition of Jim Crain to the World Bible School family.

Jim began with WBS Advancement in August and will be focused primarily in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. I met Jim around 10 years ago and knew then he would be the right kind of man for the job when the time was right. He, along with his wife Karen, have faithfully served God in many roles including senior pulpit minister, deacon, along with ministry efforts in Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. With a bachelors and masters from Abilene, he has answered God's call once again by joining the family at WBS.

Those of you in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area had a chance to meet Jim at either of the two WBS dinners in those cities where the "More



Than Ever" theme was put forth. We discussed why, more than ever, our world is in dire need of a savior and how God through WBS is responding to that need more than ever. God is relevant and so is His word. Together, we are making a real difference in the world.

I encourage north Texas to join me in welcoming Jim and be looking for a visit from him soon. The WBS family is excited to have Jim on the team. Finally, I encourage you all to become involved in the greatest mission on earth by sharing Jesus through your time, your gifts and your prayers!

*Pat Brown is always available to talk to friends of WBS—individuals and churches. Contact him at pat@worldbibleschool.net.*



**An important reminder:  
This is the last chance to participate in the 2016 Challenge!**

**We've reported that several donor families have committed \$250,000 in order to spur more giving across the board. They, like you, believe strongly in the vital role of WBS for sharing Jesus locally and globally. As a result, the impact of your gift will be doubled.**

**Help us meet the Challenge by:**

**1) giving for the first time; 2) increasing your giving over 2015; or 3) renewing your giving if you missed giving in 2015. The Challenge ends September 30. Please give by then!**



WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL

Action!

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512.345.8190 · 800.311.2006 · fax 512.401.8265  
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# 30<sup>th</sup> Red River Family Encampment

## A Tribute to a Man of God

Ron Pottberg — OLATHE, Colorado

**A**fter the war in Liberia ended, I was fortunate enough to be one of the first Americans to go back into the country on behalf of churches of Christ. During my first visit I had the privilege of meeting a number of dedicated brethren in Monrovia, Liberia. These men stayed in the country throughout the war to keep the church and the work going, and each of them had many stories to tell of their sufferings and the things they endured during the war. One of those men was Gabriel Chea. He had kept the work going in his area and also worked



**Gabriel Chea at the Monrovia WBS office**

with WBS once the war ended. He and a team of workers had set up an office in the heart of the city with help from Isaac Daye. They had hundreds of students studying

God's word in spite of the poverty and difficulties they faced in Liberia. Each of these men had their own work and churches they ministered to, but they also came to the office daily to study with students and grade WBS lessons.

Gabriel later became a national coordinator for WBS in Liberia and had served in that way for the past 12 years. With the help of his team and his graduates, we have been able to reach out and teach many thousands the Gospel of Christ throughout Liberia. Churches have been planted in every county with the exception of two, and plans are to go into them in 2017. After the war ended we could only count about 20 congregations in all of Liberia, but strategic teamwork has been blessed, and now there are over 135 congregations in Liberia.

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**H**arold and Sally Paden, passionate missionaries to Italy and America's Southwest, envisioned Christians boosting regional church growth through a Bible encampment in the majestic Sangre de Cristo mountains of New Mexico. Other early leaders who helped to make the dream come true included Dale Young, Gage Robertson, Lynn Camp, Dick Garrett and Vernon Robinett (all of Amarillo, Texas), Paul Methvin (of Yosemite and Tahoe encampments), Richard Jones, Brent Adams, Edwin White and Jerry Lawlis (director from the beginning). The first RRFE began in 1987 with 400 gathered in Red River, NM. Jerry has consistently brought in world-class speakers and teachers who have refreshed, re-focused and energized many thousands for serving Christ. 2016's RRFE attracted over 2,000 campers.



**Edwin White congratulates RRFE Director, Jerry Lawlis.**

The 2016 theme was "Where the Spirit of the Lord Is" based on 2 Corinthians 3 and Jim McGuiggan's book by that name. 2017's RRFE will focus on sharing Jesus more collaboratively and impactfully. Partners like WBS will share new tools for reaching new generations—beginning with our own nation.

Set aside June 24-28, 2017. Plan to attend the 31<sup>st</sup> RRFE to be inspired and equipped for saturating America with Gospel opportunities!

### Chaplains Convinced from page 2

visit at the prisons, and they cooperate in supplying follow up information.

Baptisms require special arrangements in prisons, and depend on the timing approved by prison authorities. There is often a back-log of requests by the time permission is given for a certain date. In May, for example, 39 WBS students were baptized at Whawha Prison in Gweru. In June, 177 were baptized at Mutimurefu Prison in Masvingo. So many were being baptized that the warden assisted. I baptized on one side of the tank, while the warden baptized on the other side.

One WBS student had belonged to a dark cult. He and three other cell-mates had made plans to murder victims and to use their blood in satanic rituals. At first he did not want anything to do with WBS. But he happened to read the Introduction Lesson, *The Way to Life*, which changed his mind. His evil reputation was such that the chaplain was afraid to touch him. There seemed to be a fear that the water itself might somehow transmit his evil. So, of the 177, he was the last to be baptized.

*Editor's Note: With so many prisoners studying and responding, there is a great need for Bibles and other supplies. If you would like to know more about these needs, please write to [john@worldbibleschool.net](mailto:john@worldbibleschool.net).*

## First Impressions of Africa

Julie Jones — ENNIS, Texas

**I**n July God gave me a precious gift: the opportunity to visit Zimbabwe with the Reeses for a three week WBS campaign. We travelled from Victoria Falls in the north to Beitbridge in the south. We worked with local churches and evangelists, signed up countless WBS students, followed up, met brethren from Zimbabwe, South Africa, and America, and visited schools and missions.

Creation's beauty is breathtakingly evident in Zimbabwe. From elephants running at sunset



**Julie learns how to carry baby Kyle assisted by Kyle's mother, Onai Mashaba.**

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## Beware of Scams

While this *Action!* develops the theme of freedom from sin, we remember that some are still addicted to selfishness and greed. Predators work hard to separate good people from their cash. Christians often make an easier target for opportunists because they are soft-hearted and not wise to the ways of the world. As Jesus observes, “The sons of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.” He also commands us, “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs.”

God gives His stewards many ways to invest wisely and productively. But careless stewards allow God’s resources to be diverted from His intended purpose. There is more to this matter than waste. As Jesus says, pearls embolden pigs. They trample God’s gifts underfoot, then turn to attack. When we inadvertently reward scammers, they attack with bolder scams

Check out requests with local leaders and WBS.

and more victims. If their success comes from WBS teachers, they can corrupt the WBS process for entire regions. Indeed, many WBS teachers have dropped out feeling overwhelmed by the mercenary motives that filled letters they received. WBS works best when its Gospel focus is kept clear and simple.

If you learn of legitimate emergencies and want to help, then work through local church leaders and missionaries. Try to work anonymously so as not to confuse motives about the nature of WBS. Local leaders know the local situation and how best to help. We at Cedar Park have extensive networks of proven partners, and also files on questionable cases. Please don’t let such cases or concerns discourage you from taking students. You will do much good by using WBS for its intended purpose: *You. Sharing Jesus.*

## Endurance and Giving



Kevin Rhodes Cedar Park, Texas

There are many bad reasons to participate in a full Ironman triathlon. First and foremost, training for and completing 140.6 miles—2.4 swimming, 112 biking, 26.2 running—of nonstop activity is just plain silly. And time-consuming. And expensive. And narcissistic. And so on.

But there are good reasons, too.

1. The entire journey is “fun”—in an odd kind of way.
2. Endurance is a fundamental characteristic of Christian living—perhaps far more important than you’ve ever considered. For instance, when Paul wrote for Timothy six key ideals to pursue, he listed “righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness” (1 Tim 6:11ff). Who knew? (Also see 2 Pet 1:5-9; 2 Thess 3:5; Rom 5:3-5; and others.)
3. It’s another reason to raise funds for WBS to share Jesus with more souls! I’ve done prior endurance events to do that, too. Thankfully, I got through this one in May without dying. But the appeal is still open: please give to support WBS! Consider a gift in the name of “Kevin’s event”. Every dollar you give will be applied to finding new Bible students around the world. And with the challenge gift still in effect, the value of your gift will be effectively doubled.

As always, thank you for your support!

## 100 Inmates Reached

Danny Truitt — DECATUR, Alabama

Belmontline church’s WBS Connect campaigns began in October 2013. Our WBS teachers have now studied with 2,117 students through our campaigns, and also 2,225 students through other leads such as referrals and our benevolence program. Total WBS-related baptisms are now at 127.

In mid-2014, our jail outreach started with five inmate names sent to us by a sister congregation. Since then we have initiated WBS studies with 857. Currently 68 are studying, out of a total Morgan County Jail population of about 400—a typical ratio. In these first two years, 100 inmates have been baptized through WBS studies along with the diligent work, before and after conversion, of Rick Eichelberger. We have 45 active WBS teachers. (See “Seek” page 7.)

## Remembering a Man of God

from page 5

Gabriel also served as minister for the congregation in his home area, Brewerville. During the war their building was destroyed, but in recent years they were able to reconstruct the building and even began a school as part of their community outreach in that area. He is going to be missed by all of worked closely with him in the Brewerville community as well as our WBS co-workers and partners across the country.

Our sympathies go out to his wife Rebecca, their family and all who knew him. He truly was a servant and, while we know his reward is in heaven, we will sorely miss his impactful presence on earth. I count it a privilege to have worked, travelled and served with this great Man of God in Liberia.

## First Impressions of Africa

from page 5

to a Hwange watering hole to balancing rocks near Masvingo, this nation is filled with nature’s beauty. I was equally astounded by the beautiful people of Zimbabwe, who welcomed us with open arms. This experience opened my eyes to a land filled with resilient people, refreshingly open to and hunger for God’s Word. My heart was encouraged as we befriended brothers and sisters in Christ in this country far from home. Listening to these brethren preach boldly and without hesitation, knowing the difficulties they face every day, was humbling. As we taught the Good News and introduced people to WBS courses, we were met with a warm receptiveness that I’ve not felt in America.

I saw joy, struggle, extreme poverty, strength and magnificence, all of this wrapped up in an experience that left me hungering for more—more faith, more servanthood, more Africa. On our last day, I took off my sandals and stood on the red soil, asking God to take me back there, and to use me for His glory.

## Seek and You Will Find

Danny Truitt — DECATUR, Alabama

**T**he church office at Beltline received a letter from Jonathan, a jail inmate since 2013. They forwarded it to me, knowing our involvement with WBS at the jail. Jonathan had apparently our address from one of our WBS students. His amazing letter covered three handwritten legal pad pages. It described his search, and his need to be baptized and become a member of the church of Christ.

Jonathan stated that he began attending church services in jail. “... that was just confusing. Too many denominations. No unity. Everyone had different doctrines to teach. I knew that I could get absolutely nowhere this way. So I decided to simply read the Bible for myself, pray, and meditate.”



Jonathan baptizes Lewis

Jonathan says he read through the Bible twice. He observed, “*It became clear to me how [human] doctrines can continue on while being so very wrong. You can very well pull one verse out by itself and impose a teaching onto it that makes sense. Obviously, this doesn’t make it right.*”

“Then,” he says, “*I discovered the church of Christ.*” Fittingly Jonathan wrote on the envelope, “*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*” He was baptized on August 21st of last year. He had since been studying with his cell-mate, Lewis. On Wednesday, June 8, Jonathan baptized Lewis, who continues his studies through WBS with Charles Wilks.

What a wonderful thing that Rick Eichelberger’s portable baptistery is showing signs of wear and tear and may need to be replaced soon!

## Personally Meeting My Students

Sharon Gardner — AUSTIN, Texas

**I** have studied with thousands of WBS students in Tanzania. So when Phil Palmer, WBS East Africa Coordinator, invited me to come meet some of my Tanzanian students this summer, I jumped at the chance.



Kevin Rhodes and I traveled to Tanzania in July, where we joined Phil and his wife Elaine, with Tanzanian WBS Coordinator Bernard Kulanga. The highlight was Kifungilo Girls’ Secondary School. It is nestled high in the mountains near Lushoto, at the end of a winding, narrow, pot-holed dirt road. We were ushered into an auditorium where about 400 girls greeted us with loud applause. After Kevin’s brief talk about the “hope, joy, and love” found in the Bible, Phil asked those who have studied with me to stand up. 168 young ladies rose and

followed me out of the auditorium into one of the largest lecture halls on campus. I visited with my students for over two hours, comparing life in America and Tanzania, and discussing how the WBS process works and what we might do to make it work better. I found out that about one-third of the students had lost their lessons and about one-third had sent them back but I had not received them. While that was frustrating to me, what an encouragement it was to witness the fervor of all of the girls to continue learning the Bible with WBS, and I returned home with names of about 100 students that I had lost touch with!



Sharon with her high school students

Meanwhile, Phil had remained with the rest of the group and introduced them to WBS. 203 eager souls were enrolled and were given an Intro on the spot. Now, almost every student in this far-flung school in northern Tanzania is studying the Bible with me!

**Kevin’s perspective:** Swahili, the national language of Tanzania (51 million), was intended to be a unifying factor among multiple ethnic / tribal groups. To that end, it has been successful. WBS has adapted with ongoing Swahili translations of the WBS Master Series and student enrollment campaigns by national Christians. Historically, however, lack of English has proved a challenge in Tanzania’s struggle to emerge from the bottom third of the poorest African nations. Now Tanzanian youth take English classes during their primary school days. As they move on to secondary school, the teaching of all subjects abruptly shifts to English.

The Palmers and Bernard Kulanga prepared the way for our team. We met with administrative leaders of eight schools in order to secure subsequent presentations to the schools’ entire student bodies. Get that—presentations to up to 800 Tanzanian young people at their school about the Good News of Jesus and openly enrolling them as WBS students. Just as amazing, the young people are eager to learn more. This is consistent whether the school is public, private (usually Catholic or Lutheran) or majority Muslim. God continues to open doors in Africa as a whole, presenting *fursa*—“opportunity” in Swahili—for WBS to reach the next generation with Jesus.

**Phil’s perspective:** WBS is in many ways something new in Tanzania. Please pray that more congregations here will see it as a valuable tool in their evangelism, and that God will raise up champions to make full use of it. Perhaps 15% of Tanzanians could do the lessons in English—some 7.5 million people! Also, incremental steps are underway to make the Swahili lessons widely available also, and most of the churches are better equipped for using those. I believe that as in Corinth, the Lord “has many people” in this nation.



Sharon with yet more Tanzanian students

# Teaching U.S. Prisoners

Bill Colwell – CEDAR PARK, Texas

This summer I attended the 43<sup>rd</sup> annual National Jail and Prison Ministry Workshop in Corpus Christi, Texas. This event attracts Christians from across the country who minister to those incarcerated in state and federal prisons and county jails.

While at the workshop I sat down with Buck Griffith to learn more about how New Life Behavior Ministries can help World Bible School study helpers who have students behind bars. Buck is president of NLBM ([www.nlbm.org](http://www.nlbm.org)).



**Buck Griffith**

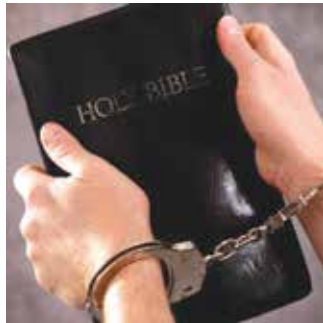
There are 14 NLBM courses available for use with prisoners. Most deal with specific life skills and positive behaviors (managing anger, parenting matters, attitudes and behaviors, etc.)—tremendous complements to WBS studies. NLBM offers a huge discount to WBS study helpers on the license to reproduce NLBM study materials. *Call 361-855-3372 to order and mention that you are a WBS study helper to get the discount.*

WBS study helpers working with incarcerated students sometimes face challenging rules, such as no staples, colored ink, hard-cover Bibles, etc. Buck recommended

**Be clear with your students that the focus of WBS is sharing the message of Jesus.**

contacting the facility's chaplain or searching the website for that state's Department of Corrections to learn what rules apply. Incarcerated students may be transferred or released. In order to stay in touch, ask early for their new or permanent address.

What if your student requests baptism? If you can't help them personally, email NLBM ([nlbcasa@yahoo.com](mailto:nlbcasa@yahoo.com)) and ask if they have a key person close to your facility who can help. Finally, Buck emphasized an important concept that WBS study helpers already know: be clear with your students up front that the focus of your ministry is sharing the message of Jesus, not sending money to their family or meeting other physical requests.



Prison/jail ministry requires a special breed of Christian to do it well. Thanks to all of you who have taken on this noble work. Use the resources NLBM has to offer, and try to attend

June 2017's Workshop to be sponsored by the Elysian Fields church of Christ in New Orleans.



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