

Action!



IMAGINATIVE INITIATIVES



two fish into the same large aquarium, but separated them by inserting a pane of glass

A story is told of a scientist experimenting with a hungry, aggressive barracuda and its natural prey, a Spanish mackerel. The scientist placed these

across the middle. Every time the barracuda made an attack, it smashed its nose painfully into the invisible barrier. The barracuda eventually gave up. The scientist then removed the pane. The tasty mackerel swam unharmed in its half of the tank. The hungry barracuda continued to circle just inches away. It never again made a move to attack or even to explore. The powerful predator

Mishap into Mission



hands and face. I was knocked unconscious

By Phil Palmer
On Labor Day, 2012, I was trimming the top branches of a hackberry tree when the limb I was on broke and I fell 40 feet onto my

briefly and lost all memory of the accident, but the only long-term injury was two broken wrists. By any standards, I should have been killed. I know God intervened to preserve my life. A possible reason why came to my door the day I got home from the hospital. John Reese, World Bible

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thought it could not succeed, so it no longer tried. It had been conditioned to accept limits that no longer existed.

What are our glass barriers, our imagined limits?

During my teen years I grew up at a congregation that seemed incapable of growth. The surrounding community appeared unreceptive, and members grew apathetic. I remember a mid-week service where the preacher literally wept with frustration. Eventually, he and others envisioned something daring—a large campaign such as had never been seen there previously. They invited Ivan Stewart's

**Old barriers no longer exist.
Now God empowers us to see
new possibilities!**

Campaign for Christ, which resulted in so many new conversions that the congregation's makeup and character changed. First, the campaign demolished the myth that our neighbors were unreceptive. Second, the new converts had not been conditioned to fail. They had enthusiasm and fresh ideas. They knew how they had been reached, so they continued door-knocking and won others.

Those memories often make me wonder, "What are we missing because we are trapped by our own limited

continued on page 2



Phil with East African church members

IMAGINATIVE Teamwork



By Charles Cheruiyot
Teamwork and collaboration can stir up nations with the message of hope. The recent case was when World Radio in Kenya and

World Bible School discussed how best to recruit more students in East Africa.

We had a wonderful meeting with the Postal Corporation of Kenya management where WBS was represented by Phil Palmer from U.S.A. and Maureen Mbuvi from Kenya while I represented World Radio.

The discussion was very fruitful. Our radio announcements can let students know

where to collect WBS teaching materials. Postal services were kind to consider a discount on postage and ideas about mail drops in post offices for students who want to correspond with teachers in the U.S.

The meeting with Phil was felt across East African nations since he held a series of meeting with leaders and preachers of churches of Christ within the region to lay strategies on how to enroll more students in schools and colleges for Bible studies. We also met with preachers in Nairobi for a retreat where we prayed for these initiatives and for the nation of Kenya. The Lord is doing marvelous work and using us to shed the light in our generation.



Imaginative Initiatives (from page 1)

thinking?" If the Bible's story teaches anything, it is this: All things are possible to God. Therefore, all things are possible "to you" His child. That remains true even when your faith is small.

If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you" (Matthew 17:20).

Old barriers no longer exist. Now God empowers us and commands: "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). "Be made new in the attitude of your minds" (Ephesians 4:23). Among other things, expand your thinking! Open your eyes to new possibilities! This issue's initiatives aim to ignite your imagination. Pray! Envision! Step out boldly in faith! Watch God accomplish more than all you can ask or imagine!



Chasing after Chariots

By Ron Pottberg

It all began about one year ago in a conversation with George Funk. We made him aware of the need for a Gospel Chariot truck for the work in war-torn Liberia. George heard our plea and promised to do what he could to help.

We envisioned a "mini Gospel Chariot"—a compact version of the big

trucks George has running across Southern Africa. The seed was planted and God blessed this dream. We had prayed that it would be ready in time for our November 2013 WBS campaign to the central region.

God gave an increase of over 73 souls, and many are studying the Bible with WBS.

Isaac Daye took possession of the new truck at the dealership on Saturday morning, November 2nd. He then picked me up from the airport.

The new mini Chariot was driven to the Smythe Road congregation on Sunday morning where the elders and members prayed over this future nationwide work. Everyone was impressed that

others believed in the work of Liberia enough to help in this way.

Early Monday we loaded equipment, sound system, projector, lighting and generator. So the new Chariot was put to work just two days after receiving it. I was privileged to be the designated driver for our maiden trip across Liberia. As we rolled through towns and villages, everyone stopped to stare. Many took down the information on the side of the truck advertising free WBS lessons. We were enrolling WBS students even while stuck in Monrovia's traffic. During three nights in Gbartala, we showed *The Passion of Christ* to crowds of 500 to 800.



Ron Pottberg and Isaac Daye

Many realized for the first time how Christ suffered to take away their sins. We did similar work in Salala, Flehla, Wheala and the wild mining town of Bong.

Driving back to the capital Monrovia, I reflected on the journey. We had strengthened Christian presence in five areas. God gave an increase of over 73 souls, and many are studying the Bible with WBS. Who would have imagined it? In Acts 8, Philip ran alongside an African's chariot to ask if he understood the Scriptures. Now, as we passed by, Africans ran alongside this new Chariot. And, once again, chasing chariots is all about understanding the Scriptures.



WBS graduates in Liberia



Above & Beyond

by Kevin Rhodes

Re-imagine! Envision! Innovate!

These are words one might see emblazoned across the pages of the latest pop-business best-seller. These concepts apply to World Bible School, too.

What? one might say. Isn't WBS just Bible lessons getting mailed all over the world? What does tired old snail-mail have to do with "innovation"?

Actually, WBS is quite innovative, as this issue of *Action!* helps to illustrate. Have you seen our teaching website? Check out the short video at www.worldbibleschool.net

and learning tools created by our WBS Internet team are pretty cool. They let many more everyday teachers share Jesus with many more truthseekers. These tools are web-based and functional on any mobile device.

Some people might think that WBS is

merely a small group huddled in a back room mailing out Bible lessons. Rather, they should envision a WBS Web Teacher using her iPad to interact with a Web student learning of Jesus on his smart phone during a long bus commute. And both can exchange auto-graded lessons with notes of encouragement in seconds.



Yeah, you can share your faith with WBS like this, too.

By the way, let's dispel of the notion that *printed Bible lessons using postal mail* is irrelevant in our world. The fact is, almost two-thirds of the world's population cannot access the Internet at all. *Four and a half billion souls are not irrelevant to our Lord.* Nor are the paper WBS lessons from

which they learn.

There are also a lot of innovative things going on to make WBS' stalwart postal teaching programs easier and more effective. Contact us to learn more.

That's why we ask you to give. Gifts of support from generous donors make is all happen. God—in a very real sense—uses those dollars to fuel our innovation and creativity. Without your generosity and His blessing, we can't innovate. Without adapting and improving on every single front, WBS stands still.

We don't want to just *stand still*. We happen to think that when Jesus says "Go into all the world," He means move forward in every positive way to reach more souls.



Action!

Editor: John Reese

Action! (ISSN 8750-1333) USPS 004380 is published bi-monthly by the non-profit ministry of World Bible School. WBS is a worldwide network of Christians teaching the Gospel with printed and Web-based Bible lessons.



Teaching the Word. Reaching the World!

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Lessons: 877-393-0211 · info@worldbibleschool.net

Ministry site: www.worldbibleschool.net

Student site: www.worldbibleschool.org

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Action!*

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Memorial & Honor Gifts

I have completed my personal information on the back of this form.

Memorial 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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Imaginative Faith at Work: Ben Fulks



“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

Jesus changes people, enabling them to do things beyond human imagination. Many trained missionaries have done well. Yet few can say they led an effort resulting in over 100 new churches and over 10,000 new Christians in a 16 year period of time... without academic preparation... without firm financial support... without living there... without language learning... without even a basic education.

Who dares to care enough for the lost to venture out “without” so much? Not many would choose Ben Fulks, but God did. Ben had no formal education; he didn’t learn to read until he was 43. Childhood polio left him with a limp. His Texas family background was rough. But he found his wonderful wife Betty. He found success as a diesel mechanic with his own business. Jesus worked on him for decades, even through devastating personal and business setbacks.

Ray Boatwright convinced Ben to go with him to Ghana. Ben took his two-week vacation each year thereafter for mission work in Ghana. He was moved by compassion for the destitute there. People were attracted to his unpretentious ways and his clear biblical messages about God’s love. He recruited World Bible School students and followed up on those already studying with American teachers.

As J. Fields notes, “Ben Fulks walks in wearing a cowboy hat with a [WBS] patch stuck under the band of his hat, and work boots. It is the same combination I’ve seen on countless occasions when he goes to work sharing the Gospel.”



Many attest to his loving determination: Stan Smith, Von Praul, Mac Thompson Gbeti, the leaders of the Daingerfield and Ore City churches of Christ, and more.

Ben and his coworkers set up long-term plans, leadership training, building projects, benevolence and a host of services for healing lives. WBS is a favorite tool. Ben employed it over and over again to benefit thousands. Ben’s inspirational book, *Me and My Awesome God*, can be ordered from Amazon. God sparked Ben’s imagination into faith-filled action, and part of the world was transformed.



Thank You, Mary Nell!

By John Reese, based on Lori Brady’s interview with Mary Nell Kemper

Mary Nell Kemper blesses and brightens WBS immensely. Her influence will continue to inspire us, even though Mary Nell is wrapping up nearly 12 years on the WBS team. We at the Cedar Park office will miss her dedicated, enthusiastic, caring presence, as will many WBS teachers whom Mary Nell served.

Mary Nell grew up in Kerrville, TX. She met Maurice Kemper at Tivy High School. They married in 1952 and have two children, Morris and Kim. After the Kempers returned from mission work in Mexico, Maurice became a high school coach and principal. Mary Nell was



an elementary school teacher for 26 years. After retiring from teaching, they lived in Wimberley and Luling where Maurice continued preaching. While at Wimberley, they started a local WBS program, and arranged support for us (Reeses), newly arrived in America to help Tex Williams with international WBS. In 1993 Maurice and Dr. Pedro Rivas founded Casa Sonrisa for orphans in Torreon, Mexico. The Kempers were early members at Westside church of Christ in Round Rock, TX, where, in the early 2000s, Mary Nell began coordinating the local WBS program—a role she continues today.

In 2001, Mary Nell came to WBS in Cedar Park as mail student coordinator. Her office resembles the inner workings of a post office. Two walls have slots for congregations receiving mail from overseas—a service that allows the poor to correspond with American WBS teachers. Mary Nell also assisted countless teachers with their needs. She has helped 16 congregations to launch WBS postal programs, one of her favorite activities. She still wants to fulfill this role from time to time.

After an eight year battle with Parkinson’s Disease, Maurice passed away September 30, 2013. Now Mary Nell feels it’s time to pursue a real retirement. Summing up her years at WBS, Mary Nell says, “I am so honored to be a part of WBS. When I think about all the lessons through the years, all those thousands upon thousands of precious souls...!”



Shorter Return Section

World Bible School continues to think imaginatively about cost-effectiveness, especially considering the impact of rising postal and shipping costs on budgets like yours. One way to cut weight/costs is to reduce the return section (student's answers) from two sheets to one sheet. We have adjusted to feedback, and are now in the next stage of reducing the grading section to 50 questions. (The 50 questions are 50 of the same questions as before.) This time the quiz questions and the answer bubbles are on the same page, similar to *This Is Good News*. Students should find it easier to send only one return page for each course. The next printing of *God Has Spoken* reflects this change, and other basic Master Series courses will be updated at their next scheduled printing. New grading keys will be issued, but the bubble arrangement fits the first 50 bubbles of old grading keys also—including plastic speed graders. Thanks for your guidance in making these improvements.



Dreams Come True



George and Ria Funk

By George Funk

Exactly 20 years ago I took a step of faith and travelled to the U.S. to raise funds to follow a dream of reaching Africa. It was a dream in which World Bible School teachers would do the teaching and I would do the reaching. Soon, I realized these dreams and goals needed a team. Most amazing is our

Heavenly Father who opens so many doors.

From 1994 to 2000 we concentrated on WBS follow up and planting congregations, especially starting Downtown Churches of Christ in big cities. We also pioneered church planting work in Namibia, Nelspruit and the Freestate. Then in 2000 we decided we needed Gospel Chariots—churches of Christ on wheels with baptistry, tent, PA system and sleep quarters for the evangelists—going into 11 countries.

God blessed our vision. By April 2014 we will have seven Gospel Chariots: three large chariots and four mini chariots, all used in similar ways. Lord willing, our goal is to have 20 mini chariots as soon as possible in order to take advantage of an amazingly receptive continent. By the grace of God, we have just managed to build one for Liberia—making the 12th country. Two are in the workshop being built for Zimbabwe and Malawi, and another is being bought for Togo.

Thousands have been baptized over the years, and millions of WBS lessons have been distributed. Many more will learn from those converted and the churches planted. This is evangelism at its best and I am so grateful to play a small part in it all.

All thanks goes to our Heavenly Father, and also to U.S. Christians who hold our hands high. What a blessing to have such an amazing team that shares the Gospel throughout the continent of Africa. To God be the glory!



Impact in East Africa!



WBS is gearing up to impact East Africa. Hundreds of thousands of WBS

students in English. WBS aims simultaneously to share the Gospel through Swahili, East Africa's *lingua franca*. Phil Palmer and East African partners have translated WBS courses into Swahili. These SBU courses are now ready for major printings. ("World Bible School" in Swahili is "Shule ya Biblia Ulimwenguni" or SBU.) Phil's recent East African travels proved again how hungry the churches are to use SBU.

Help us reach East Africa. Empower churches and missionaries there by sending contributions to WBS, earmarked "Swahili WBS." For more information, contact Phil Palmer at phil@worldbibleschool.net or 325-670-9688.



Local Outreach

By Cammy Hall

During the summer, the city of Montrose, CO, has a weekly street fair called "Main in Motion." The Montrose church of Christ sponsored a booth at the fair this past summer. Each Thursday evening they had games or face painting for the children while members visited with adults in the crowd. They handed out free ice water and passed out brochures for the church and WBS.



The Montrose Christians have reached out to many people in their community and have begun conversations about the Bible. Deb Dirks, one of the members, said, "With WBS, it's a gentle way to reach people. They appreciate that we just offer the lessons, give the option of online or by mail and that there's no cost. People are much more receptive when I reiterate that it is online and that we don't come to their house."

This is just another example of a church thinking outside the box to spread God's word. How can you reach out to your community?





Imagine This!

By Chris Swinford

Imagine that you are in a remote village in Africa. Without electricity, your day begins with sunrise and ends with sunset. Without literacy, knowledge is passed on orally. Visiting preachers pass through and read from the Bible. You meditate on these important words. At night, you pray for the opportunity to learn more.

Imagine that, in the still darkness, you hear the very words for which your heart yearns! Someone is reading the Bible and discussing its message. You run to that hut and see neighbors gathering around a little box with a green light. This amazing device was left by a preacher who received it from Sunset International Bible Institute (SIBI) in Lubbock, Texas. You listen to the Bible and also lessons from World Bible School and classes from Sunset instructors. Their messages pour new hope into your thirsty soul.

Next morning, you see the device sitting on a stone, soaking up sunshine that



WBS lessons in audio are featured on SIBI's solar powered devices.

powers it for many hours of playing. Lack of electricity means nothing. The little box doesn't need it. There will be more Bible teaching tonight. You can't wait.

You can stop imagining. The little box is now a reality. SIBI is raising funds to send thousands of these solar audio players to remote villages, and plans to send them throughout Africa and the world in key languages. Seven hundred and seventy-

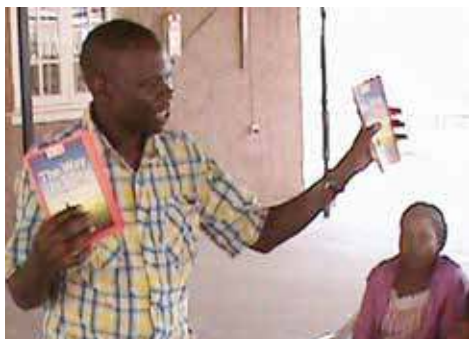
four million adults are illiterate. Even if given a Bible, they still could not read it. One and a half billion people cannot rely on electricity. With few preachers, what's the answer for them? Hand-held, solar-powered audio players with the Bible, Bible teaching and ministry helps! Just imagine what this will mean to those who hear the Gospel preached day after day in their village!



Mishap into Mission (from page 1)

School president and an old family friend, had just heard of my accident. He said, "While you're helpless, I've come to twist your arm. Since you can't get back to tree work for a while, why not prepare WBS for East Africa? That's the next target region for WBS student recruiting, according to our Five Year Strategic Plan. You know Swahili and you know the region."

So began my role in laying the foundation for God Bless East Africa (GBEA), a major WBS focus for 2014 and



East Africans are reaching East Africans.

2015. My nine years' experience in the three East African countries of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda had prepared me, and God's grace opened this door.

During the summer of 2013, I traveled in East Africa on behalf of WBS. My

Christians in every congregation in East Africa will enroll WBS students.

wife Elaine and son Evan worked from our base in Nairobi while I travelled to 19 meetings in 14 towns to meet with over 400 preachers and church leaders. I had been away ten years, and returning was every bit as fulfilling as I had hoped. Most exciting was the trip's purpose and potential.

There was genuine excitement about the proposed GBEA campaign, an eagerness to participate or even lead in it. It is our prayer that Christians in every congregation in East Africa will sign up



Nairobi Church of Christ

others as WBS students.

Editor's note: January 2014 sees Phil in Kenya for the launch of GBEA there. The aim then is to expand GBEA to Tanzania, Uganda and Southern Sudan in 2015. Please keep Phil, Elaine, the churches, and millions of potential students in your prayers. Also, note the related article by Charles Cheruiyot on page 2, and the "Impact" appeal for Swahili WBS on page 6.



Re-imagining Web Teaching



Teaching the **Word**. Reaching the **World**!
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By Jonathan Towell

I am overwhelmed with the beauty and functionality of the site.

Web teacher Daniel Truitt,
I absolutely love this new method of helping WBS students!

Web teacher Diane Robnett

This is huge.

Web teacher DJ Smith

The relationships that I'm building with the students are amazing."

Web teacher Jeremy Ross

In February 2012, exactly 78 teachers used the newly relaunched WBS teaching website to teach the Bible. In that same month, 397 students used the site to study the Bible. At last check, 1,102 teachers and 7,238 students are actively teaching and learning from God's word on the same website.

These improvements will help more Christians share their faith more completely with more seekers.

Despite all the growth and accolades, we thought we could do better. In September, we went back to the drawing board. We re-imagined every field, every font and every pixel.

The updated WBS teaching website introduces profile photos, allowing students and teachers to get to know a face, not just a name. It gives teachers easier access to follow up partners. It makes text much easier to read. It makes the site much easier to share with friends on Facebook and Twitter. It is much more consistent, predictable and intuitive.

We think these improvements (and many more not mentioned here) will help more Christians share their faith more completely with more seekers.

A mentor once told me, "The best designers are never satisfied. They are always rethinking, always working." I see God in this statement. God observed that His creation was good. Yet He was not done. He continued to work out His grand design in Jesus Christ. Today, God is still designing. Through His Spirit, He works in His church, transforming and designing His people.

So we pay homage to God when we re-imagine. We give glory to the ultimate designer when we ourselves design and build. We



show our trust when we believe in His power to do more.

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