

Action!

You. Sharing Jesus.

How do you describe in a nutshell something as broad and impactful as World Bible School?

How do you reduce such a large outreach to the fewest words possible? We're not talking about just any tagline or slogan. We're summing up our sacred mission. Here is the briefest description of our calling:

You. Sharing Jesus.

"You" is you...God's child, blessed to become a blessing...you, multiplied many times over as Christians by the thousands become involved.

"Sharing" is what Christians do. The Father shares generously, and His children imitate Him. Sharing is our way of life, and we have the ultimate Gift to share!

"Jesus" is the "incredible Gift." Sharing Jesus is the greatest mission on earth. Jesus is our Message—the Truth incarnate. He is the Lord—the Way to the Father. He is the Savior—the Life that transforms now and brightens all of the future. More than anything else, our world needs Him.

What a privilege to share Him! How fulfilling to watch Him rescue ruined lives, transforming what seemed beyond repair! What a joy to bring His hope to millions who were lost in hopelessness! This is World Bible School and it belongs to you.

New Birth

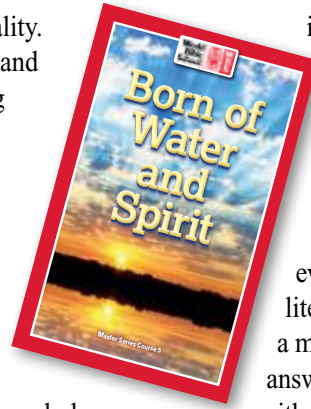
He holds a rank similar to a Supreme Court judge. His educational, judicial and social resume matches his high status. Unlike his colleagues, he resists political pressures. He wants to be strict but fair, to check the facts for himself. So, when a revolutionary character clashes with authorities, this judge makes time in his busy schedule to seek a personal interview. He goes at night. He takes the initiative, beginning with respectful compliments.

This revolutionary, however, is Jesus. The judge is Nicodemus, and his

compliments fall short of reality. Jesus is more than a “rabbi” and more than a miracle-working prophet. Jesus is the King introducing His Kingdom. Ignoring the compliments, the King drives straight at the nature of His Kingdom. Many like the judge expect an earthly empire. As heirs of Abraham, they think their birth-right guarantees an honored place with the King. But Jesus demolishes that notion.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Everything Jesus says is true and



important. So the double “truly” is His way of underlining core truth. If Nicodemus misses this lesson, he misses the Kingdom. So what is this new birth?

Whether as a query or an evasion, Nicodemus focuses on a literal womb and birth. “How can a man be born when he is old?” In answer, Jesus repeats the requirement with amplification.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

Whatever birth of water and Spirit means, it is absolutely essential. Jesus

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WBS Was My Springboard



By Kitt Swanson

I was baptized into the Lord on August 7, 1977. In 2002, the Air Force sent me to Korea where I was introduced to

World Bible School. I completed all the courses. My teacher was Helen York. As I worked the lessons, I brought two other Americans to the Lord: Teresa and James. Teresa had many questions. I studied to answer them and went into prayer and fasting for her soul. I learned during my furlough that she was baptized.

When I met James and mentioned the Lord’s church, he said, “You people think you are the only ones going to be

saved.” I didn’t argue. I just asked him to walk with me through the book of Acts. One morning at 4:30 a.m. James called me frantically in need of baptism. We had the hardest time finding a pool. The community church didn’t want to dirty the baptistery. We went to swimming pools in the area, but the owners didn’t want us to offend their customers. James was on

I can’t go another day without being baptized. I’m lost!

the war path. He stated, “I’ll dig up the flower bed and put water in it, but I can’t go another day without being baptized. I’m lost!” We prayed and returned to the pool, begging the owner and promising not to disturb his customers. He allowed it. When James went under the water and came up, the crowd clapped! They stood in awe of the sight they saw. After that one, we then had a standing place to baptize. The owner saw how the people responded so positively and didn’t object.

Years later, Helen hit a low spot in her life and I was there to encourage her. What a relationship! After I retired to the

States, my congregation let me do a new converts class for the ladies and girls. My class grew and became a strong influence. WBS was my springboard to where I am today. Now I am a teacher for others through WBS. It’s right up my alley. I love helping others to understand.

Rick [Shur], I really enjoyed your presentation at Northwest church of Christ in Tampa, FL. You light up like I do when I teach. Thank you, World Bible School, for my second foundation!

“New” Master Series

Internet users have noticed that World Bible School’s study site just underwent a major redesign. More slowly and quietly, we have also completed a major



Art by Ricky Colon

redesign of the first five courses of the printed Master Series. While the teaching content has not changed, we have improved the look and feel, with consistent artwork and layout standards.

The Way and *This is Good News* vary slightly from the others. That is because, in addition to correspondence, these two booklets can also serve general distribution (campaigns, mass mailings, etc.). Overall, teachers and students alike will find the booklets attractive and practical. Samples of the new art, drawn by Ricky Colon of Harding University, appear in this issue of *Action!* (See p. 6)

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Above & Beyond
by Kevin Rhodes

A Communion Thought

Editor's Note: This special communion thought touched me when I heard it recently. It was delivered by Larry Green at the White Station church of Christ in Memphis, TN.

Consider the miracle of human birth. Two people create a new person with traits that we recognize as family resemblance. Spiritual birth also results in family resemblance as 1 John 5 shows: "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey His commandments.... For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world."



Born into God's eternal family, we begin to look like God and act like Jesus. People who once rebelled against God now love like God loves. People who

lived in sin now strive to obey God's commandments. People who drowned in the world's darkness now overcome the world.

We begin to look like God and act like Jesus.

This new birth becomes possible through Jesus who came by water and the blood as 1 John 5:6 reveals. We too are born of water and blood—the water of baptism and the atoning blood of Jesus our Redeemer. Through Jesus and the Spirit, human beings are born into God's family and acquire a family resemblance. Who can but marvel at this miraculous birth?

* * * * *

I'm glad our brother Larry encouraged John with these words, and that John shared them with me to encourage you with them. What a great reminder: I'm born anew, growing in the image of God!

We at WBS are constantly grateful for God's people who know for certain that they're growing in God's image. It shows through their daily lives, in their thoughts, words and deeds. It shows in their generous giving, too, as God's love for the lost overflows in them. Thank you, family of God, for fulfilling the Great Commission through your support of World Bible School.



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.

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16110 Anderson Mill Road · Cedar Park, Texas 78613
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Ministry site: www.worldbibleschool.net
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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Action!*
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Celebrating a Follow Up Champion: Edmore Moyo

By Velaphi Mlangeni
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

We have had an extremely difficult time coming to terms with Edmore Moyo's passing on December 25, 2013. We had just completed a year-end meeting in which Edmore made excellent suggestions about 2014 goals for WBS seminars and Gospel meetings. He left a Bible in the WBS Office for us to deliver to a student in Zvishavane. So Edmore's sudden passing left us emotionally paralyzed.

But, we are celebrating the wonderful work he did for the Lord. He will continue to be an inspiration to all of us—preachers in Zimbabwe who dedicate ourselves tirelessly to follow up and winning the lost. Is it not wonderful for a servant of the Lord to be called home while busy in His vineyard for “his deeds shall follow him”? Steve Ellis requested that at Edmore's burial we should sing in our language, SiNdebele, “Singabahambayo Emhlabeni” which says, *We are all pilgrims on earth. Our permanent home is in heaven. While on this earth, we are surrounded by sadness, sickness and death. But it is not like that in heaven.* May his soul rest in peace!

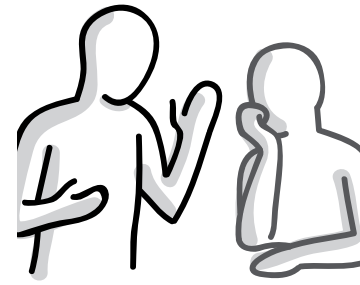
Edmore was like a busy doctor called to help with many new births.

We have selected and tasked a new WBS Follow Up Team in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Our brother Edmore Moyo was very effective in WBS follow up. Since his untimely passing, WBS teachers have had difficulties getting follow up. So please inform all our loving brothers and sisters in America that we now have a team of four to do this noble work, namely Christopher Ndlovu who leads this group, Siphonkala, Dumisani Mafu and Mthokozisi Sibanda. These are all trained, effective preachers who can be contacted through Christopher at ministercndlovu@yahoo.com. I can also be contacted at velaphihaileymlangeni@gmail.com. When we receive student names and addresses, we will make sure that follow up and feedback is done promptly.

Editor's Note: Moments ago, at this writing, I was on the phone with a Missions Committee member. He was not complaining, but mentioned that his leadership wondered if anything was happening at a mission point they had supported for many years. Along with other discussions, I suggested they bring WBS into their missions mix. First, through WBS, church members can participate directly in the mission target. Second, WBS reaches those who ask for Bible studies. Third, the resulting reports can be very encouraging. If you wish to know more about teaming up with very productive follow up workers, please contact me at john@worldbibleschool.net or 512-345-8190.



Edmore (left) sent this photo to Gale Scott showing the baptism of her student Pelagia.



elects to use the most emphatic wording: “unless” this condition is fulfilled one “cannot” enter God's Kingdom. In the

context, Jesus is saying, “Even you Nicodemus—with all of your Jewish credentials—even you are not an exception. God requires everyone—including Jewish rulers—to experience this second birth.”

What does the birth of water and Spirit mean? Our very lives depend on the answer. If the King is correct about His Kingdom, no other entry exists. “Cannot” declares the impossibility of other ways. Sadly, multitudes do not understand. Jesus shows this in another discourse about entering the Kingdom (Matthew 7). Jesus foresees the Judgment where “many” claim Him, but they discover He “never” knew them—a saving relationship never began. How can they fail in something so basic? By disobeying the Father's will for entering the Kingdom. They miss the new birth.

Knowing the vital importance of understanding John 3, World Bible School devotes an entire course to Jesus' conversation

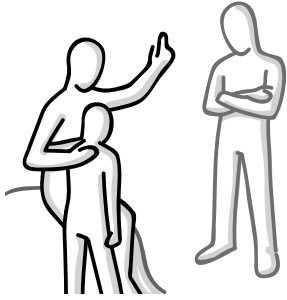


with Nicodemus. *Born of Water and Spirit* builds on the foundation of *God Has Spoken* and *Knowing Jesus* (which gives John's evidences). WBS teachers send these courses locally and worldwide. Each year they mail some 40,000 *Born* courses—a figure that should be multiplied many times over. Do you believe the King's conditions? Are you as concerned and emphatic as Jesus? Then share His neglected message with more and more seekers. The fate of multitudes hinges on John 3. Like Nicodemus, they need the King's message urgently. This issue includes excerpts from the course *Born of Water and Spirit*.



Another important shift is the number of questions per course. Of the five courses we have redesigned, *God Has Spoken*, *Knowing Jesus* and *Born of Water and Spirit* used to have 100 questions on two sheets. They now have 50 questions on one sheet.

This reduces the number of return pages that students mail to you, thus reducing the cost for them and you. The 50 questions were carefully and prayerfully selected to have the impact the courses are intended to have. Previously, we had tried



to reduce space by separating the answers section from the questions section. Much-appreciated feedback led us to correct that. Now questions and answers appear together on the return section.

On the technical side, we have converted original files to current industry-standard design programs. This makes us much more nimble and flexible in our continuing efforts to improve.

And lastly, check out our new Grading Keys. They are rebuilt for maximum efficiency, and look great, too!

Please let us know what you think of these changes. Keep on providing suggestions for further improvements. The better we communicate, the more people will come to newness of life in Jesus. That’s what it’s all about.



The Hand Behind the Artwork

You’ve seen several samples of line art in this issue of *Action!* It’s evident throughout our newly redesigned Master Series of lessons. The artwork is the creative handiwork of Enrique Colón, a 2004 Fine Arts graduate of and current graphic designer at Harding University. Enrique has partnered with WBS since 2011 to redesign our lessons, including the all-new line art, layout and cover designs.

Ricky says: “I’m very excited to see what God is doing through WBS to share the good news of Jesus across the globe. It is truly an honor to be part of such a dedicated team.”




Born of Water and Spirit

Each course in World Bible School’s Master Series plays a special role in sharing the Good News, and none more so than *Born of Water and Spirit*. The topic itself is vital. Today, as in Jesus’ time, the subject is controversial and many avoid it. But its pivotal nature—as highlighted in page 2’s editorial—makes a full study all the more important. As always, we seek to be balanced and accurate with Scripture, especially letting the biblical context bring out its own meaning. Lesson titles include “Nicodemus Meets Jesus”; “Flesh Gives Birth to Flesh”; “Spirit Gives Birth to Spirit”; “New Birth is by... Death”; “Grace”; “Faith”; “Repentance”; “Water”; “Spirit”. If you have not yet seen this course, it is well worth reviewing and using in your personal context. Forty thousand studied this course last year, and that number deserves to be more than doubled this year.



This page excerpt, from *Born of Water and Spirit*, illustrates our new print style.



7.1 NEW BIRTH IS BY WATER

Nicodemus hears “water” mentioned with the new birth. Like many today, he at first fails to see how it fits. What has water to do with a new life?

Later he has time to think about major events surrounding his visit with Jesus. Great crowds are flocking to see John. His strange name – “the Baptizer” – tells that water is central to his mission and message. John claims that God sent him “to baptize with water” (John 1:33).

John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River (Mark 1:4-5).

Jesus then enters this scene. What is His first priority?

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John (Matthew 3:13).


Jesus needs no forgiveness, and John resists. But Jesus insists, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). So Jesus goes into the water. God heartily approves, as shown by His voice from heaven and the Spirit’s arrival. Is baptism the “water” of the new birth?

7.2 JESUS USES WATER

One might think baptism in water ends when Jesus takes over. For John says, “I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:8). Yet, after talking with Nicodemus, Jesus goes on doing as John does.

After this, Jesus and His disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where He spent some time with them, and baptized. Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized.... [Some report to John,] “The One you testified about – well, He is baptizing, and everyone is going to Him” (John 3:22-23,26).

Now both are using water. Jesus soon has His followers dipping even more people



than John’s growing number (John 4:1-2). With each new person baptized, John and Jesus prove that water is important. All of this is at the very time when Jesus requires the new birth of water and the Spirit. How can Nicodemus fail to see which “water” is required?

The common people can see well enough. So many respond that reports state in a general way: “All the people were being baptized” (Luke 3:21). Only a few – mainly leaders of religion – see no importance in baptism. They reject the authority behind it (Luke 20:1-8).



A Good Tool

Tommy Holmes, John Hanson and the elders at Baker Heights in Abilene, TX, recently honored their World Bible School teachers with help from Kevin Rhodes and John Reese. They shared Mwanza's 2013 WBS report from their "East-Reach Zambia." The report



Mr. Banda, Tommy Holmes and Mr. Banda's two sons, Everson and Angel.

says in part, "The work of WBS continued to grow.... We encourage preachers to be involved in this great work; WBS is a good tool in converting people to Christ."

Seminars were held in Chadiza where 40 students attended and Chama where 90 attended. Overall, 1,194 lessons and visits were shared. Of the total 491 persons baptized into Christ in 2013, 50 were a direct result of WBS follow up. Tommy adds this story: One of our honorees, Don Ellis, converted Mr. Banda through WBS. Banda baptized all of his family and started a church of 35 in Manje. His son Angel went to Chipata Bible College and now preaches in Sinda.

Editor's note: We ask congregations to share their annual reports with us. Sharon Gardner coordinates WBS at Westover

Hills in Austin. Her 2013 report shows 64,623 lessons were sent. Nations include Zimbabwe (49,103), Ghana (7,816), Tanzania (6,497) and Malawi (818). Total requests for baptism were 450, with 16 confirmed. Sharon adds, "One recently confirmed baptism in Zimbabwe hasn't studied since 2005. Another's teacher was [the late] Leona Brannan. That surprised me, so I checked the date of that request and it was also around 10 years ago." Sharon and her husband Don also coordinate the mailing of Action! Many thanks, Don and Sharon!



Don and Sharon Gardner



Birthday Card from Prison

By Douglas Robbins

To whoever reads this story, I want you to know that God sees and knows about what we are doing. Charles is my World Bible School student in prison. All the lessons and all the time I spent were well worth this one person knowing that God cares. Our job is to teach about Jesus with love for all people. Some will want to obey God. This student has touched my heart. All I want to do is go to heaven but I want to take my students with me. I thought this might help other teachers to know that some

students do care and respond. I have enclosed Charles' letter and card:

I just hate that it took me five years in here to pick up a Bible. I've only got three years left, but I'm working hard to learn what I can about our Lord.

I wanted to thank y'all for sending me these Bible studies. It really gives me more faith knowing there are good people out there willing to help someone learn more about God. I've enclosed a picture of me and my daughter who has loved God and has taught me about His love. I wanted to



get y'all a nice card and it's not easy doing that here [in prison]. I

found this one but it was a birthday card. Sorry. I just wanted y'all to know how thankful I am. [The card has the birthday wish blacked out, but its greeting remains, reflecting Charles' gratitude: "You hold a place in my life and in my heart that no one else could ever fill." By the way, we editors think birthday cards fit the theme of John 3 just fine.]



Conversions in South Sudan



Isaac baptizing in South Sudan

Hello! Brother Kent [Chambers],

Peace to you. My wife and I are leaving Juba, the capital city, due to the insecurity prevailing in the nation. We plan to fly home to Ghana, then come back when the situation improves. This report is to let you know that ever since this people were introduced to the World Bible School, they did not play with the courses [i.e. they seriously pursued Bible studies]. Three of them were baptized as a result of the course. Among them one has been a Muslim for the past 15 years. The Muslim is the biggest [influence for good] among the three. He and his wife started coming to church about six weeks ago. To God be the glory. With kind regards and love, Isaac Adotey.



Saved for Saving

By Paula Leverett

The World Bible School program at Hillcrest in Abilene had a busy 2013. Many helpers prepared and sent 6,720 courses to Africa and 648 into prison. We had 45 requests for baptism. For the first time lessons were sent to Liberia, West Africa with good success. For example, of a mailing of 194 lessons to Liberia, over 180 replied; and we received 14 baptism requests in the last few weeks.

Augustine, a Liberian, deeply touched our hearts in reply to *Born of Water and Spirit*. The lesson asked if the student had already felt saved.

Augustine wrote, "I can remember... being saved during the war when 15 of us were chosen to be killed that day. All of a sudden I was taken out of line and was not killed. From that day I got to know that God loves me and saved me for a purpose."

We were humbled by the privilege of sharing the Good News of Jesus with Augustine. We rejoiced that he also requested baptism. We wrote and told him truly God had saved him so he could tell others about Christ.



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