

We Can

End Bible Poverty Now

By Loren Cunningham with Janice Rogers

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Scripture references are New International Version, unless otherwise noted.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to Madison, Kenna, and Liam, Darlene's and my grandchildren, and to their generation. May they see the greatest global spiritual awakening in all of history.

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Chapter One

Small Question, Big Challenge

A Woman in a Faded Red Dress

I'm living with a sense of great urgency. It's a growing passion that began long ago. When I wake up in the morning it's before me. When I go to bed at night it's there. My co-workers and I have already labored to get this going. But now I feel the Lord is pushing us to finish quickly. Other Christian leaders have been tackling this challenge too, some for decades. It's a job for all of us in the Body of Christ. For me, it started with a simple question.

In 1966, a team of young people and I were driving to Central America. One of the trailers in our convoy had a breakdown, so we stopped in a dusty Mexican town.

While a few of our guys looked for a mechanic, the rest of us went to every home in the town, delivering a Gospel of John and a booklet on how to receive Jesus. Another team held two open-air preaching services in the town plaza, one for adults and one for children.

Someone posed a haunting question that day—one that God used as the beginning of a huge challenge.

After our open-air meeting, a woman in a faded red dress came up to me. My Spanish wasn't very good but I understood her to say, "There's no Bible in my town, and there aren't any in the towns around here. Do you have a Bible in my language?"

I managed to find a Spanish Bible for her. She clutched it to her chest. “¡Muchísimas gracias, señor!”

As we drove away, the woman’s question lingered. *Do you have a Bible in my language?*

A picture formed before my eyes. It’s what the Bible calls a “vision.” I saw a truck about the size of a large moving van. A message painted inside a big circle on its side said, “*Solo los deshonestos temen la verdad. Santa Biblia, gratis.*”

I translated it slowly in my mind. “Only the dishonest fear the truth. Free Bibles.”

I marveled at the power of those few words. I had never heard the first sentence and my Spanish wasn’t good enough to imagine it. Then the vision continued. I saw young people standing in the back of the truck putting Bibles into eager hands as fast as possible.

I knew what the vision meant so we got started on the challenge right away. When we arrived in Mexico City I went to the Bible Society and found how many copies they had. Then I phoned friends and raised the money to buy fifty thousand New Testaments. Our teams distributed them on university campuses in the city. It was a beginning.

Black Rocks on the Moon

The idea of giving the Word of God to everyone started when I was about seven years of age. We lived in El Centro, California, near the Mexican border.

One night I lay in bed with my arms folded behind my head, studying the bright, full moon. What if we went to the moon and wrote the best Bible verse on it? We could find big black rocks up there to spell it out—black because they would stand out on the white moon. We

could arrange the rocks to form words big enough so that all the people on earth could read: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son....”

I stopped. The message had to be shorter. We could never find that many rocks. Maybe we should just write, “God is love”?

It was a childish fantasy. No one could reach the moon in the 1940s. And my message in rocks wouldn’t reach those who spoke a different language, or who couldn’t read at all. But I was thinking and imagining.

Just before I turned 21 the Lord gave me a dramatic “mental movie.” It wasn’t a daydream and it wasn’t a regular dream. I was wide awake. If I closed my eyes or opened them I saw it. I’ve described this experience in my first book, *Is That Really You, God?*

It played like a movie while I watched. I saw a living map of the continents of the world. Waves were crashing on all the shorelines. Each surge that followed went farther and farther across the continents until they covered the entire earth. As I watched, the waves became young people, taking the Word of God to everyone.

That vision formed the foundation for a tiny missionary group called Youth With A Mission, or YWAM. Today it is one of the largest missionary movements in the world.

The vision God gave after meeting the woman in the faded red dress was a follow-up to the mental movie showing waves of young people. Because the waves turned into youth *carrying the Word of God to the entire world.*

Ending Bible poverty is not some leader’s crazy plan. God birthed the idea. Every vision begins with God, but it is carried out by those who listen and obey.

Later I would find more people who were working on this goal.

Even the Hermit

Over the next few years during the 1960s and '70s, our YWAM workers delivered Bibles, New Testaments, and Gospels of John in various parts of the world.

In the Caribbean, we found Miss Armstrong, our “woman of peace.”¹ She opened doors for us in St. Thomas, including the chance to be on television. On camera I said, “We’re going to come to every home on this island to give you a free Gospel of John and a booklet on how to know Jesus personally.”

A virtual hermit lived high up on the mountain. When two YWAMers reached his home he said, “I heard on TV what you’re doing. I figured you’d never get to me. Yet here you are!”

Suphan Buri Province of Thailand was another example. In 1969, our first Around-the-World Team took Bibles across rice paddies to every home of the province, even to the hundreds of monks living in Buddhist centers.

Also, a few states of Mexico, the state of San Luis Potosi for example, we placed New Testaments in every home in scores of villages and towns.

Our movement has continued to spread Bibles during more than fifty years of ministry. But the vision connected with the woman in the faded red dress was not clear yet.

¹ Luke 10:6

Chapter Two

It's God's Idea

Sometimes a word from the Lord tells you what *not* to do.

In the fall of 1982 I was at a pastors conference at the Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ) headquarters in San Bernardino, California. Joy Dawson, Jack Hayford, Rick Howard, and I were the speakers. Three hundred pastors had gathered.

While I sat in the conference listening to Rick, I heard a still, small voice. *I don't want you to leave the Hawaiian Islands next year.*

Since I travel from 150 to 200 days a year, the message struck me as odd. Going into all the world is part of my calling. Staying home for a year would feel like sitting on the bench instead of playing with the team.

I waited for the reason but none came.

During the next break, Joy darted over.

“Loren! God just told me you're not supposed to leave the Hawaiian Islands next year.

Did you hear that?”

“Yes, I heard it. And I told God yes.”

“Did He say why?”

“No, but I said yes.”

Three Golden Opportunities

Soon I got three special invitations. Dr. Billy Graham invited me to speak at Amsterdam '83—an evangelism conference of thousands of leaders.

Then I got a letter from President Reagan. He asked if I would come to the White House. “I want to talk with you. I’ve invited ten other Christian leaders.” The meeting was planned for January, 1983.

Next I received a letter from the Vatican asking if I could meet with Pope John Paul II. The private audience would also be in 1983.

Three golden opportunities from three leaders I would love to meet. Yet if I accepted I would be disobeying God.

Years later I met with Dr. Graham in his home on several occasions. I became a member of one of the boards he chaired. But I never received another invitation from President Reagan or Pope John Paul II.

I began to understand why the Lord told me to stay home in 1983 when I got a phone call from my friend, Dr. Bill Bright, the founder of Cru. He told me Congress had declared 1983 the Year of the Bible and President Reagan signed it into law. Bill asked me to head up the effort in Hawai'i.

I saw this as the chance to take the Bible to every home in the populated islands.

Even the “Forbidden Island”

We started with research, using the US census for demographics. We included the primary language spoken in each area in our planning.

Many YWAM leaders stepped in. We needed to raise almost \$400,000 to pay for the Bibles, even though the Bible Societies and other groups helped us. One of our YWAM ministries, a Polynesian performance group called Island Breeze, performed luaus and brought in some of the funds.

Christians of various denominations joined in. I met with more than 600 pastors and leaders, both Protestant and Catholic, getting their blessing on the Year of the Bible Special Edition. The leading rabbi of the islands endorsed our copies of the Old Testament for Jewish homes. We were able to make Bibles available in each of the fifteen mother tongues of the 50th state.

Ni'ihau was a special case. Known as the Forbidden Island, its residents must be Hawaiian. Non-residents are not allowed to come ashore. They've done this to preserve the Hawaiian culture and language. There are only a few hundred Niihauans. So in order to get Bibles to them, we met with representatives who came by boat to a special event on nearby Kaua'i. I was given the opportunity to make a presentation to them. Afterwards they returned to their island with Hawaiian Bibles for every household.

Throughout the islands we alerted the public via television, radio, and in full-page ads in newspapers. We said we were coming to their home with a free Bible. We included quotes about how much the Bible meant to Presidents George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Ronald Reagan. We included stories of changed lives, marriages restored, nations reformed, and the Bible's impact on Hawai'i in the nineteenth century.

About six thousand people went door to door, offering Bibles to every home. A few refused to receive God's Word but most were quite receptive.

“You’ll Be the Only One”

One day I knocked on the door of a woman, the last house on a long street.

She peered out with suspicion. I smiled broadly and held out a Japanese Bible. She shook her head. “No. I don’t want Bible.”

I kept smiling and holding the book out. “Yes, you do. This book is special.”

“No, I’m Buddhist.”

“This book is specially for Buddhists.” I kept my smile on, still offering the book.

“No. Don’t want Bible.”

I tried another tactic. “I’m so sorry. Everyone else on your street has one.” I pointed down the long street. “You’ll be the only one without a Bible.”

“Give me Bible!”

It took us a year and a half but we reached our goal. Giving out those Bibles spread the seed of the Gospel all over Hawai’i. During the years following 1983, we watched as new congregations sprang up, some growing into megachurches.

It’s Coming!

Why do we call it “Bible poverty”? Most Christians know about world hunger and poverty. But many who worship in church every Sunday are not aware of the extreme need for

Bibles. Today there are between 165 and 180 million people² with no portion of the Word of God available in their mother tongue. Furthermore, as of February of 2015, nearly three billion had never heard of Jesus.³

The Lord prophesied that before the end comes, everyone will know about Him and be exposed to His Word.

Revelation 7:9 predicts a multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language will be wearing white robes, worshiping before the throne of Jesus.

Habakkuk 2:14 promises, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

The glory of God is first Jesus, then His followers.⁴ Notice the Word says everyone will *know* about the glory of God. This verse doesn’t promise all will *accept* Christ. But the knowledge of Him will be pervasive, covering the continents like giant waves.

Jesus said the gospel will be preached in the whole world, to all *nations* before His return.

⁵ The word for “nations” here is a plural Greek word, *ethnē*. It doesn’t mean countries recognized by the United Nations. The singular *ethnos* is a group united by kinship, culture, and common traditions. This includes their mother tongue.

² Statistics from “Scripture & Language Statistics 2015,” *Wycliffe Global Alliance*; available from <http://www.wycliffe.net/statistics>; accessed 29 June 2016.

³ John Simpson, “What are the countries where people have never heard of Jesus and the gospel of Christianity?” *Quora*; available from <https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-countries-where-people-have-never-heard-of-Jesus-and-the-gospel-of-Christianity#>; accessed 10 August 2016.

⁴ John 17:1-26

⁵ Matt. 24:14

By the Year 2020

I spoke at a Christian conference in Singapore in 2003. As happens sometimes when I preach, the Lord dropped a powerful idea into my mind. I spoke it out to the crowd. “God wants us to offer Scripture in their language to every household by the year 2020.”

Was this idea really from God? All you have to do is ask Him. If you’re willing to obey whatever He tells you to do, He will make it clear to you.

Later in this book I’ll explain how the Lord has been moving to help us reach this goal by 2020. YWAM is privileged to be a piece of the puzzle.

Much more is involved than arranging black rocks to spell out “God is love” on the moon. We must be fully committed. The Lord is speaking to others, in various parts of the Body of Christ, in many parts of the world. The mission is possible. God wants this to happen and He has chosen to work through us, His people.

We need to listen to the Holy Spirit and enter into God’s passionate desire. Everyone on earth needs the Bible in their mother tongue, the language of their heart. Because this is God’s idea.

Chapter Three

Why Should We End Bible Poverty?

The number one reason we should end Bible poverty is because God told us to do it. Jesus commanded His followers, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you....” (Matthew 28:19-20).

“Pickling” the Nations

The Bible is the most powerful teaching tool we have. In Matthew 28:19 we find the phrase, “baptizing them [the nations].” How can you baptize a nation?

My friend, David Hamilton is a Bible scholar in the original languages of the Old and New Testament. Recently while working on a project, David read the entire Bible through fourteen times in eighteen months.

I asked him to do a word study on “baptisms” in the Bible. He found many kinds—a baptism of repentance, a baptism of fire, and a baptism of the Holy Spirit, to name a few. But one Greek word for baptism stood out: *baptizo*. That is the Greek word the author used in Matthew 28:19 where the context is “nations” (corporate) not individuals.

Many modern translators consider *baptizo* and *bapto* as synonyms, therefore missing the intent of the writer in Matthew 28.

It's challenging to discern the meaning of a word used in the Bible two thousand years ago. Just think of the words "awesome" and "awful." They used to be synonyms, meaning "respectful fear." Now they're antonyms, meaning something wonderful and something terrible.

How can we know what the author meant by a particular word, in his day, his culture, and his region? We need to find that word used in other literature from the same era.

David searched through old documents looking for the earliest mentions of the Greek words for baptism: *bapto* and *baptizo*. Finally he found the word, but in a far different setting.

A writer from the early third century_{AD}, Athenaeus of Naucratis, quoted from Nicander of Colophon, a Greek cook who lived two hundred years before Christ. The cook described how you could pour vinegar and oil over a turnip--*bapto*--to make it tasty. But if you soaked it over a period of time in vinegar and spices--*baptizo*--it would be even more delicious.

The ancient chef was discussing a salad dressing, comparing it to a pickle. In both instances flavor is added, but the salad dressing is a superficial covering. The pickled turnip has a complete transformation. Plus, the pickle has staying power.

So Matthew 28:19 is telling us to "pickle" all the nations, soaking them in the Word of God, teaching them to observe everything Jesus taught us.

Changing the Way We Think

Evangelism groups have found if you lead people to the Lord but have no discipleship with Scripture afterward, most will not be living for the Lord a year later. Usually no more than 2 percent will still be Christians.⁶

⁶ Available from <http://www.renewoutreach.com/the-reach-strategy/>; Accessed 15 August 2016.

A group of missionaries decided to document whether adding audio Bibles and community “listening groups” would change this problem. They took a powerful, visual gospel presentation into 500 villages in India. They also brought along audio Bibles. Before they left, they found a person in each village willing to host a listening group for new believers.

They left behind listening groups in all 500 communities. A total of 6,150 gathered in those groups to listen to God’s Word every week. Other missionaries and local workers visited periodically over the next months to provide more discipleship. The 6,150 listeners grew to more than fifteen thousand. New Christians multiplied, resulting in 350 new churches.

The missionaries’ survey showed in black and white that God’s Word enables people to live for Christ.

Finally, Changed Lives

The Bible informs our conscience, awakening us to turn from behavior we’ve thought of as normal. Paul told the Roman Christians, “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by *changing the way you think*. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”⁷

The voice and face of Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH), Morgan Jackson, said Christians who read or listen to the Bible in their language usually stop doing immoral things. For instance, he told of a man in Guatemala who said he had been a Christian for a long time. But like other men in his church, he still beat his wife, cheated on her, and got drunk every weekend.

⁷ Rom. 12:2 NLT, emphasis added.

When his tribe received the Bible in their tongue, accepted behavior became unacceptable. After a while this man and others in the church stopped their violent, ungodly ways.

Morgan said this story from Guatemala has been repeated in many other parts of the world. Transformed hearts and minds should be enough motivation for us to take the Word to everyone. Yet there are other compelling reasons.

The Bible Transforms Society

Colonel Jim Ammerman came to pay his respects at my father's funeral in 2003. I first got to know him in the early '70s. Later, he often taught at our YWAM schools in Switzerland. Colonel EH Ammerman, or "Jim," was the head chaplain for the US Army's V Corp with eighty-three other chaplains under his leadership. They shared responsibility for the spiritual needs of fifty thousand GI's spread all over West Germany.

Following my dad's funeral I sat with Jim and his wife Charlene.

"Loren, you should hear the latest about the Bible distribution we did in 1972!"

I listened eagerly. That Bible distribution on the army bases was one of the most powerful examples of God's guidance and provision I'd ever witnessed.

During the 70's our Schools of Evangelism in Switzerland, we met daily to engage in intercessory prayer. This is different from other kinds of prayer, such as supplication--carrying our personal petitions to the Lord. Instead we wait to hear what God wants to say.

One Monday morning we asked Him, "What's on your heart? What do you want us to pray for?"

As we waited in silence, someone in the group said, "I think we're supposed to pray for the US military in Germany."

Someone else confirmed that impression. I thought to myself, This is interesting! I knew that because of the Cold War,⁸ thousands were spread out in US Army bases throughout West Germany. Our teams had been ministering at several of their locations. We knew there were problems with discipline, morale, and drug addiction. They really did need prayer.

“God Wants *Us* To Do It!”

We started praying first for many soldiers to receive the gospel. Then we prayed someone would provide Bibles for all the military. Another person spoke up. "I believe God wants someone to give 100 thousand Bibles to the soldiers!"

Now we had a real, tangible goal.

Our excitement increased as we continued to pray. We became convinced God wanted *us* to get involved.

The name Dr. Kenneth Taylor, editor of *The Living Bible*, popped into my mind. I thought my friend Brother Andrew might know him. Known as "God's Smuggler," Andrew had taken more than one million Bibles into communist nations and other restricted countries.

⁸ The Cold War started after World War II between communist Soviet Union and its allies, and democratic countries of the west. It was a time of tension and threats of nuclear war that continued until 1989 when the communist regimes suddenly collapsed.

After our prayer time ended, I phoned Andrew in the Netherlands and asked how to contact Dr. Taylor. He said, "Come over to my house! Dr. Taylor will be with us this Saturday."

However, Andrew called me back that afternoon. "Sorry Loren, Taylor has to return to Chicago on urgent business tomorrow."

He gave me Dr. Taylor's phone number in Athens, Greece. I called and we agreed to meet the next day in the Frankfurt Airport where he had a two-hour layover.

"How Did You Come Up With That Number?"

Remember, our prayer meeting in Switzerland happened on Monday. The next day I was meeting with Dr. Taylor.

I told him how God had led us to pray for the troops in Germany and the idea to give 100 thousand Bibles to the GI's.

"How did you come up with that number?" he asked.

I told him God put it in our minds.

After a few more questions Dr. Taylor said, "I just happen to have 100 thousand copies of *The Living Bible* left over from a Billy Graham Crusade." He said he would give them to us. But he added that it cost him six dollars to print each Bible.

We received a \$600,000 gift after ninety minutes of prayer, a couple of phone calls, and a hurried trip from Lausanne to Frankfurt.

Dr. Taylor said we would have to pay for shipping the Bibles from Chicago to Germany. I knew they were big, heavy ones. It would cost us a fortune. But I said, "Yes, of course." God had been with us so far and we would continue to trust Him.

On the same day I phoned Colonel Jim Ammerman who lived in Frankfurt. I shared my vision with him, told him about our prayer time in Lausanne, and the dramatic provision of God.

“We’ll Put Our Green Trucks to Use”

“Your timing is amazing, Loren!” Colonel Ammerman said. Tomorrow all the generals are meeting here in Frankfurt. They’ve asked me to give a devotional.”

He said none of the generals knew the Lord. Then he asked me to take his place speaking to them. "First, you tell them the gospel, Loren. Then tell them your vision of giving Bibles to all the troops.”

On Wednesday, two days after our prayer meeting, I preached to the generals. I ended with the plan to offer *The Living Bible* to the soldiers.

The top general agreed to help. "We’ll put our green trucks to use!"

Soon soldiers were picking up the hefty packages in Illinois and transporting them to ships and planes. The air force, navy, and army delivered the Bibles to all the US military bases in Germany.

Our YWAMers, no matter what nationality, were able to go onto the bases and give away 100 thousand Bibles.

It didn’t stop there. A Christian who coordinated public communication at the Pentagon ordered Scripture readings over the intercom of every base’s mess hall at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They did this for the entire time of the Bible distribution.

From Zero Believers to Many

Now thirty-one years later at my dad's funeral, Colonel Ammerman told how the Bible distribution led to changes in the military leadership. "When I first became head chaplain we sent out questionnaires across the world to all American officers, from majors to generals. We asked them, 'Do you know Jesus Christ personally?' Almost no officers professed a saving faith in Jesus. That was before 1972.

"We just sent out another questionnaire in 2002 to all majors, colonels, and generals. There was an amazing percentage of officers who said they had a personal saving knowledge of Jesus." Colonel Ammerman looked me in the eye. "Loren, when we followed up with those, the vast majority said they came to know Jesus in Germany in the '70s, when the Bibles were given out."

This can happen again, but in every sphere of society. We must pray, wait on God for His ideas, then take steps of faith.

Chapter Four

The Bible and Seismic Changes

In the summer of 2014, I stood outside a darkened Wartburg Castle in Germany. I was with a small group of YWAMers, including Suse Schmell, our leader in Bad Blankenburg. She pointed to a rampart with a single, lighted window. Suse said that was the tiny, cramped room where Martin Luther translated the Bible into German.

He had escaped to this castle because authorities were trying to kill him. During his confinement he suffered many dark days of depression. However, Luther said he, “fought the devil with ink.” He completed his translation of the New Testament in eleven weeks—record time!

His Bible in the language of the people changed Western Europe dramatically. Soon translators completed God’s Word in another nineteen European languages. According to Indian philosopher Vishal Mangalwadi, those Bibles shaped our world and created the soul of western civilization.⁹

I agree with my friend, Vishal.

Because Gutenberg had already invented the printing press in Europe, the price of Bibles fell.

⁹ “The Book That Made Your World,” *How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization Vishal Mangalwadi, Thomas Nelson*; available from <http://www.thomasnelson.com/the-book-that-made-your-world>; accessed 10 August 2016.

Because they distributed this new, cheaper version in the common languages, people wanted to learn to read.

Because of this demand, communities started schools.

Because of the increase of knowledge, individuals invented technologies that created a stronger base for commerce. New ideas and information spread to the masses, strengthening the middle class and opening further opportunities.

Nature and the Word of God

Many think science and faith in God cannot coexist. However, according to Vishal, pioneers of modern science depended on the two pillars of truth: nature and the Word of God.¹⁰ Most pioneers of science founded their lives upon the Word of God.

Sir Francis Bacon and Galileo Galilei, known as the fathers of modern science, were earnest believers. So were Nicholas Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, and Isaac Newton.¹¹ Scientist Rene Descartes, a French mathematician, scientist, and philosopher, sought to prove, “the near certainty of the existence of God--for only if God both exists and would not want us to be deceived by our experiences, can we trust our senses and logical thought processes.”¹²

¹⁰ Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization*, (Thomas Nelson, May 2011) 222.

¹¹ “Famous Scientists Who Believed in God,” *Evidence For God*; available from <http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/sciencefaith.html>; accessed 20 May, 2016, and Henry M. Morris, Ph.D., 1982 “Bible-Believing Scientists Of The Past,” *Acts & Facts. 11 (1) Institute for Creation Research*; available from <http://www.icr.org/article/bible-believing-scientists-past/>; accessed 12 August 2016.

¹² “Famous Scientists Who Believed in God” *Evidence For God*; available from <http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/sciencefaith.html>; Accessed 12 August 2016.)

Even today, a significant number of modern scientists believe the Bible. A recent survey showed two million out of twelve million American scientists call themselves “evangelical.”¹³

Biblical Faith Led to Great Art

The arts also flourished as more people read the Bible. Stories in God’s Word have inspired some of the most talented people the world has ever known. Whether you’re gazing up at Michelangelo’s ceiling in the Sistine Chapel, or at Rembrandt’s self-portrait of him helping to raise the cross of Christ, or studying the faces and posture of the disciples on Leonardo da Vinci’s *The Last Supper*, you are seeing the result of faith and devotion.

Scripture also led to great music. A devout composer, George Frideric Handel wrote *The Messiah* based entirely on Bible portions about Jesus. When Handel finished “The Hallelujah Chorus” he said, “I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God Himself.”¹⁴

Handel faced fierce opposition. Organized religion was outraged that the words of God were being spoken in a theater. He performed his sacred oratorio only once in a church—Bristol Cathedral. John Wesley attended that night, and said afterwards, “I doubt if that congregation was ever so serious at a sermon as they were during this performance.”¹⁵

¹³ Christine Herman, “2 Million U. S. Scientists Identify as Evangelical” *News, Christianity Today*; available from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2014/february-web-only/study-2-million-scientists-identify-as-evangelical.html>; accessed 12 August 2016.

¹⁴ “George Frideric Handel,” *Christian History, Christianity Today*; available from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/musiciansartistsandwriters/george-frideric-handel.html>; accessed 30 May 2016.

¹⁵ *ibid*

Johann Sebastian Bach was a deeply committed Christian. He signed each piece of music with S.D.G., meaning *Soli deo Gloria*--"For the glory of God alone."

Seismic Changes from "Priesthood of Believers"

Sweeping changes came because people read the Bible. The Reformers, starting with Luther, emphasized the "priesthood of all believers."¹⁶

Of course he found this teaching in several places in Scripture. God wanted His people to be a nation of priests.¹⁷ According to Luther, this meant everyone had a calling. There was no division between the sacred and secular. Whether full-time clergy or plowboys, everyone should consider their job sacred.

If God declared all Christians priests, then they should be able to read. Literacy increased and education grew in Western Europe--not just for the elite or special classes, but for everyone. That is the principal reason the West continues to lead the world in education today, 500 years later.

New creativity, excellence, and integrity in commerce grew out of this idea of doing work as unto the Lord. It birthed our modern economy, along with democratic governments. If we were equal before God and responsible to Him, we must hold our rulers accountable. No one is above the law. Everyone is valuable because we are all made in the image of God.

Some may point out that democracy began earlier. Yes, in ancient Greece some elite men of society were able to vote. This was true also when King John of England was forced to sign

¹⁶ Dr. Art Lindsley, "The Priesthood of All Believers, *Institute For Faith, Work & Economics*, October 15, 2013; available from <https://tifwe.org/resource/the-priesthood-of-all-believers/>; accessed 30 May 2016.

¹⁷ Ex. 19:6; Isa. 61:6; 1 Peter 2:5; Rev. 1:6

the Magna Carta. It only allowed the elite to vote. That event in 1215 was the first opening bud on the tree of liberty. After the Reformation it bloomed into full flower.

All from a Cramped Room in Wartburg Castle

I don't often feel like an American. YWAM's international ministry has staff living in 191 nations. My full-time co-workers come from more than 200 sovereign nations and countries. Working with this incredible team makes me feel more like a citizen of the world rather than an American.

Yet the United States was the nation of my birth. America stands out because of its beginnings. Its Founding Fathers deliberately grounded their new nation in Scripture.

Modern secularists and atheists have tried to erase America's Christian foundations.¹⁸ However at the end of the nineteenth century, the US Supreme Court commissioned a ten-year study of 500 documents of the nation's founders. They looked for the predominant philosophy behind the American Revolution. The Court declared "[America is] a Christian people, and the morality of the country is deeply engrafted upon Christianity."¹⁹

¹⁸ I first learned of the goals of secular humanism and their attack on America's Christian foundations from Dr. Francis Schaeffer when he taught at our school in Switzerland. For a quick overview on the humanist takeover of the educational system see, "John Loeffler, Paradigms, Preaching, and Politics: Worldview Wars," *Koinonia House*, available from <http://www.khouse.org/articles/2001/365/>; accessed 26 August 2016. Also see Francis A. Schaeffer, "The Abolition of Truth and Morality," *The Highway*, available from <http://www.the-highway.com/articleOct01.html>, accessed 26 August 2016.

¹⁹ P. Douglas Small, "Were the Roots of Our Country Based Upon the Bible?" *freedom house: Loving God - Loving People*; available from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/were-the-roots-of-our-country-based-upon-the-bible/>; accessed 12 August 2016.

A recent study of fifteen thousand documents of the fifty-five authors of the US Constitution, discovered 34 percent of their comments came straight from the Bible.

Another 60 percent of their writings showed they used the Bible to form their conclusions. Thus, 94 percent of the Founding Fathers' quotes were based directly or indirectly on Scripture.²⁰

The framers of the US Constitution absorbed the Word of God. Their ideas for democracy were based partly on Martin Luther's emphasis on the priesthood of the believers.

Were there flaws among the Founding Fathers? Yes. For instance, some of them were actively opposed to slavery. Abolitionists. Yet they compromised their convictions in order to bring southern colonies into the new country.

However, a few decades later Americans went to war over this omission. Roughly 2 percent of America—620 thousand—died in the conflict that gave slaves their freedom.²¹

America isn't the only example of a country experiencing the blessings of God. Examples abound of countries where a godly minority studied and obeyed the Word of God. These minorities brought social, political, and economic improvements to their nations.²²

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ "Civil War Casualties," *Civil War Trust*; available from <http://www.civilwar.org/education/civil-war-casualties.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>; accessed 23 August 2016. It was the only time in history that a country went to war to end slavery.

²² For more stirring accounts of various countries, read my book, *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country* (YWAM Publishing, 2007).

You could say all this transformation—science, economic development, education, art, music, and democracy—flowed from that cramped little room in Wartburg Castle. That’s where a priest in hiding translated the Bible into the language of the common people.

Chapter Five

We Can Do It

Taking the Good Book to every home on the planet presents a huge challenge. But we, the Body of Christ can do it. With God all things are possible. He has shown us in three ways that He is behind this effort, speeding us towards the goal. The first sign is unprecedented unity in the Body of Christ.

Two Popes and an Archbishop

The Body of Christ has been severely divided for nearly one thousand years following the schism between Orthodox and Catholic Christians.²³ It split again during the Reformation. I know some may find this hard to believe, because of the deep wounds, but today the Lord is mending division among His followers.

When we met with ten significant leaders in ten days, we saw some of the ways God is working to bring Christians together.

It began when I was praying about ending Bible poverty. John 10:1 came to mind. “He who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.”²⁴

²³ The Great Schism, divided Eastern Orthodox from Roman Catholic, 1054 AD.

²⁴ John 10:1 NASB

I took this as God’s instruction for our first steps to end Bible poverty. We should seek the blessing of Christian leaders on this effort, thus “going in by the sheep gate,” and not climbing over a wall.

David Hamilton, my wife Darlene, and I decided to seek appointments with leaders from the three segments of Christianity--Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholic. We knew we had significant links to each of these men through YWAM staff. We contacted our co-workers and within a day or two we had appointments with Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox, the oldest Christian tradition; with a Protestant, Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury and symbolic head of Anglicans and Episcopalians worldwide; and Pope Francis, leader of 1.2 billion Roman Catholics.

We also met with major evangelical leaders, such as the founders of Alpha Course, Nicky and Pippa Gumbel. We shared with the heads of various Bible societies, and pastors of megachurches, such as Rick Warren. In just ten days’ time we got appointments with ten significant leaders, seeking their blessing on the effort to end Bible poverty now.

I have continued ever since, seeking out heads of ministries to get their endorsement on ending Bible poverty.

Table 71

Decades ago God began stirring missionary groups to work together to complete the Great Commission. In 1974, Dr. Billy Graham gathered Christians for that purpose.²⁵

²⁵ The Great Commission is found in many parts of the Bible; most notably Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15; and Acts 1:8.

The first World Congress on Evangelization took place in Lausanne that year. I was privileged to speak at one of the breakout sessions.

Throughout the following years, the Billy Graham Association convened other gatherings, pulling together heads of large and small missions. Amsterdam 2000 was one of those times.

It drew more than ten thousand, from all over the world. Organizers of the conference invited several hundred to meet separately in a working group. They were to determine what it will take to finish the Great Commission. YWAMers were in this working group.

For several days, representatives of missionary movements sat at seventy-five small tables, discussing how to complete the job Jesus gave us. Members of some of the largest missions were sitting at Table 71.

On the third day, Paul Eshleman, founder of The JESUS Film Project, challenged everyone to take on the untargeted, unreached people groups.

Bruce Wilkinson, author of *Prayer of Jabez*, stood up. “The fact there are *untargeted* people groups means we’re not doing our job!” He went on to say that the leaders of the vast majority of Christian missionaries were in that room. “We can decide today if we want to do it.”

They Came Weeping

Mark Anderson was one of the YWAMers there. He says emotions were building around the tables. Particularly as they realized the Lord had already given them all they needed to finish evangelizing the world.

On the third day of the working group, Eshleman stood and urged them to find others from their contingent in the room. “Get together now and decide what the Lord wants you to do. Then come over here and shake my hand, telling me what groups you will adopt.” The number of untargeted, unreached ethnē with a population of 100 thousand or more was around 252.

People began coming up to Eshleman, choosing one, two, or three groups. The Holy Spirit was quietly stirring them. Some came weeping and embracing others. Something was breaking through in the heavenlies.

The total adopted people groups came to approximately 140—ethnē who were about to hear the name of Jesus for the first time!

Then people stopped coming forward.

The room grew quiet. Disappointment hung heavy in the air. Who would reach the remaining groups?

We Can Go In, But We Might Not Come Out

Mark Anderson was sitting at Table 71 along with Steve Douglass of Cru. Steve leaned over. “Why don’t our two organizations--YWAM and Cru--finish it?” It was a startling commitment. The remaining hundred groups lived in the world’s most dangerous places. You could go in, but you might not come out.

Still, the two groups agreed to adopt them.

All those at Table 71 began to strategize, deciding on the basic elements of evangelism--church planting, discipleship, Bible translation, and distribution. As they came to

each component, they thought of who should be at the table. They would need Bibles, so they called Roy Peterson over. He was head of Wycliffe at that time.

They must have church planters. That's why they asked Avery Willis from the Southern Baptists to join in.

Target: Zero

Finally, they wrote up a covenant to reach the number zero, meaning that someday soon there will be zero unreached people groups. If they searched all over the world, no one would be able to find a group that hadn't heard the gospel.

Each leader signed the covenant.

Those clustered there decided to call themselves "Table 71." As the meetings continued in Amsterdam, these veteran missionaries went into overtime. They met during breaks. They worked early and late. And they kept meeting after the conference finished.

Now Table 71 gets together several times a year to pray and plan. They've invited others to join them, those who are known for various components of the task. Table 71 is made up of seventeen missions, some from the largest missionary organizations, including YWAM. Our contribution is thousands of young recruits eager to be out on the frontlines.

I've been privileged to sit in with Table 71 on a number of occasions, especially when they meet at our U of N campus in Kona. They encourage each other, share data, give financially from one mission to another, and commit to various aspects of finishing the Great Commission.

Some have focused on research. They found the number of unreached, untargeted groups was 639, not 270.²⁶

They have worked steadily. During the first ten years, Table 71 spurred missions movements to plant churches. As of the publishing date of this book, YWAM and our sister movements have planted fourteen thousand new churches. Pastors have baptized more than 100 thousand. These congregations are now sending out their own missionaries, to other untargeted groups.

Table 71's team members have become dear friends, evidence of unity the Lord has brought about. The Holy Spirit is free to empower us when we are united.²⁷ He's giving us strength to accomplish the greatest job ever given.

Strategic ministries have joined the ranks of those committed to obeying Christ's last command. For example, more than twelve hundred leaders of missionary organizations and denominations are meeting at call2all conferences all over the world. Their purpose is to collaborate and focus on finishing the Great Commission.

²⁶ These numbers are constantly fluctuating as workers begin new translations and discover new languages.

²⁷ Ps. 133:1-2

Chapter Six

Technologies to Speed the Word

The second way God is helping us spread His Word is new technology. You might not be interested in technology, or it may intimidate you a bit. But we must all thank the Lord for these amazing developments and take part in using these tools. The internet has been used for horrific things like pornography, sex trafficking, and terrorism. But I am convinced the Lord allowed innovations to be developed because of their potential to spread the gospel worldwide.

Let me tell you a story from Nepal. One of our gifted leaders in that country is Dilli. He was a Brahmin, training to become a Hindu priest. But then he met Jesus and joined YWAM. A few years later when Dilli heard my message on ending Bible poverty, he went right to work. He made a plan to get God's Word to every home in his nation.

Dax Fears got wind of Dilli's plan, along with several other young people from our Kona campus. They started strategizing how they could end Bible poverty in Nepal, gathering there in September, 2015. By then, Dilli was leading Nepal's interdenominational ministers' alliance. These pastors heard about ending Bible poverty and also wanted to be a part of it.

Dilli and Jeremy assigned the team from YWAM Kona a certain area of Nepal (unnamed for security reasons). Dax and nine other young men flew to this distant region, high in the Himalayas, landing on a bumpy airfield. From there they trekked for days into the mountains.

They were headed into an impoverished region even the hardy Nepalis consider remote. The first village sat at an altitude of 12,000 feet (3,657 meters). Yet the team of ten carried more than 100 Bibles in each of their backpacks. Those were in addition to their gear and supplies. How could they do this while climbing in high altitudes? Because of technology.

These YWAMers carried microSD cards the size of the nail on your little finger. The cards fit inside smartphones and held *The JESUS Film* as well as an audio Bible in the Nepali language. The team also carried about forty printed Bibles for those who could read. Because of government surveys, plus the work of Dilli and the Nepali pastors, they knew the number of homes in their three target villages, as well as how many people were literate.

Smartphones at 12,000 Feet

In the first village, just over the summit of the mountain, a woman greeted them. Her face was leathery from a lifetime of harsh wind and cold, but her voice was warm and friendly. “*Jaimasi!*” she exclaimed.

The team instantly recognized her as a Christian since the usual greeting, *namaste* is a Hindu greeting.

Fortunately Jeremy²⁸ who spoke fluent Nepali, was with them. He told her something, then she grinned broadly and motioned them into her home.

The team crowded in. Dax looked around. Her wood stove stood with its door propped open. That explained the gray and black smoke stains coloring the walls and ceiling.

She stuffed more wood into the fire, then placed pots atop the stove to make dinner.

²⁸ Last name withheld for security reasons.

Later as they ate rice and beans, Jeremy asked if she had a Bible. She brought out an ancient copy, and handed it proudly to one of the team. Jeremy learned she was unable to read.

She said, “I only get to hear the Bible when my daughter visits. She can’t come that often because of her work in the city.”

The team member gave the woman a device containing an audio Bible. As she listened to God’s Word in her language her eyes grew wide, then filled with tears. It was the most precious gift they could give her.

On this test run the team covered three villages in four days. A small fraction of people turned them down. The majority eagerly received Bibles.

Cranking Out Thirty-one Bibles Every Three Minutes

Now many YWAM teams go to Nepal each year, including twenty or more teams from Kona. One of our teams trekked more than 100 miles round trip to reach a remote village.

These volunteers are working closely with Dilli and local pastors. They use recent government surveys to determine the literacy rate and the number of households in each area. Then they carefully track their progress.

In order to ensure a supply of audio Bibles, YWAM Kona bought a machine that copies data onto microSD cards. Each card contains the Bible and *The JESUS Film*. The machine produces these “tiny Bibles” at a rate of thirty-one every three minutes.

Innovations to Help End Bible Poverty

MicroSD cards are just one example of technology the Lord is using to speed up the task. There are many others.

- Via the internet, millions can download Bibles in closed nations.²⁹
- Norwegian YWAMers are working with an app designer on a device to track households and their response to the Bibles.
- Elon Musk, the founder of Tesla, is exploring the possibility of using 700 cheaper satellites to deliver wireless internet to the entire world.³⁰

Solar-Powered Projector + Bedsheet = Theater for 1,000

Believers such as David Palusky are also inventing new technologies. David is an electrical engineer. He and his wife Stephanie began Renew World Outreach to help missionaries use technology to get God's Word to remote people groups. Their IT (information technology) tools also help disciple these tribes.

The Paluskys made several mission trips to an unengaged people group on the banks of the Amazon in Peru. The tribal chief pleaded with them. "Can you help us? We have the Bible in our mother tongue, but no one knows how to read!"

²⁹ These countries cannot be named for security reasons.

³⁰ Rolf Winkler and Andy Pasztor, "Elon Musk's Next Mission: Internet Satellites," *The Wall Street Journal*, updated Nov. 7, 2014 6:35 p.m. ET; available from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/elon-musks-next-mission-internet-satellites-1415390062>; accessed 9 June 2016.

So David invented his first device, called the Vista. It's a sturdy, solar-powered projector system. It plays *The JESUS Film*, which is 80 percent of the Gospel of Luke, as well as other gospel films. It runs on a solar-charged battery, or by plugging it into an outlet. It projects the film on a wall, portable screen, or even a bedsheet. The sound can carry to one thousand people. Yet a single person can easily transport it and set it up.³¹

Renew World Outreach continues to create innovations to help end Bible poverty. Another of their technological tools is called the LightStream. It's a portable media distribution system that allows access to free audio and print Bibles on mobile devices. Think of it as a portable wifi hotspot. It transmits to fifteen people nearby, offering them audio and text Bibles, movies such as *The JESUS Film*, and other gospel literature and training materials. It's all in their language and done without internet or electricity.³²

What's more, those who receive this transmission can then share the Bibles and movies with their friends via email, bluetooth, or social media. Their friends can then share it with their friends, and their friends' friends.

What an amazing way to distribute Bibles!

Imagine yourself in a restricted access country, sitting in a mall or park, inviting people to stream free Bibles in their language. Without connecting to the internet! Distribution of printed Bibles in such countries or contact via the internet could mean imprisonment or death for

³¹ To see the Vista, go to <http://www.renewoutreach.com/equipment/>; accessed 16 August 2016.

³² "Equipment," *Renew*; available from <http://www.renewoutreach.com/>; accessed 10 July 2016.

the recipient. You could go to prison as well. But someone quietly downloading a Bible would have less chance of discovery.

Another mission focusing on high-tech is Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH). They have been putting audio Bibles into the hands of people around the globe for decades. They started with old-fashioned cassette players. Now they have an outstanding team of IT experts creating cutting-edge digital tools. They also have audio recordings of the Bible in more than one thousand languages. As of right now, forty-two national teams of FCBH are working in twenty-seven locations around the world, completing a new language recording every three days.

Ululations in Denny's

Faith Comes By Hearing developed a smartphone app called "Bible.is." It contains audio Bibles in 916 languages. The app also contains 1,029 translations of Bibles in text form, and *The JESUS Film* dubbed into more than one thousand languages. Users can search by version, language, or country to access the Scriptures.

One of Morgan Jackson's many remarkable stories involves this app. It shows how Bible distribution is not just about illiterate, unreached people groups high in the Himalayas or deep in the Amazon jungle. The unreached can be right in your hometown.

Morgan went to lunch at a Denny's restaurant in Pasadena, California. He noticed his waitress spoke English with a foreign accent. It was lunch hour and the place was packed. When he finished his meal, his waitress dashed over and dropped off the check with a "Bless you," then bolted to another table.

"Wait! Wait!" Morgan called after her.

“Anything wrong, sir?”

“I noticed your accent. Where are you from?”

“Ethiopia.”

Morgan opened his smartphone and selected the Bible.is app. He touched a button and the app revealed a choice of twenty-four Ethiopian languages. “What is your mother tongue?”

“Tigrinya.”

Not only did the app have an audio Bible in Tigrinya, but a small icon showed the device also contained *The JESUS Film* in her language. Morgan chose the audio Bible, then pressed “play” and handed the phone to his waitress.

She listened, then began ululating--a piercing wail of strong emotion. Startled customers looked their way.

She looked at the screen and cried again. And again.

Morgan asked what she was doing. She told him she was blessing him according to tribal tradition. “This is the happiest day of my life! If they fire me for doing this, it’s okay. My religion is more important.”

Morgan quickly explained that she didn’t have to lose her job. He asked for her mobile phone number, then hit “share” on Bible.is.

She was so excited that she pulled another waitress over. She was from Indonesia. He shared the app, giving her the Javanese audio and text Bibles plus *The JESUS Film*.

Morgan did all this--leaving both waitresses with the Bible app in their mother tongue--all before he paid for his meal.

Chapter Seven

The Greatest Spread of the Bible in History

Twenty-one percent of Americans speak a language other than English in their home. If you get Bible.is on your smartphone, you can offer God's Word to anyone with a foreign accent. In almost every instance, you will find people open and excited to have Scripture in the language of their heart. That's why FCBH has hundreds of millions of users over their digital platforms.

These stories come from only two of the missions using technology to spread God's Word. More than 140 Bible Societies, *The JESUS Film* people, Wycliffe, the Seed Company, SIL, YWAM, and many more are working to end Bible poverty. More become involved with technology every day.

There isn't time or space to tell all that is happening.

Time of Ignorance, Time of Hope

Despite the remarkable spread of the Bible into new languages, ignorance of what the Bible says is growing among the general public. Countries that have had the Bible for centuries now show a lack of biblical knowledge.

In Norway, YWAMers engaged in ending Bible poverty asked a polling service to do a survey. To our workers' surprise, the pollsters found 30 percent of Norwegians had no Bible in their home.

Every school in America used to have daily prayer and Bible reading. The US Supreme Court ended that practice by a ruling in 1962. Since then drugs, alcohol, gang violence, and shootings have replace God’s Word and prayer in the schools. Now, the education level of America among the nations has plummeted from the top ranking down to #30 worldwide. Twenty-nine countries do better at educating their children than the U.S.

Lack of Bible training in the general public has produced astounding results. Bible ignorance continues to worsen. The Supreme Court’s ruling in 1962 has been stretched to ridiculous measures. Educators and city officials now ban anything religious. They are frightened by militant atheists who seem to have unlimited money for lawsuits. The following story shows how extreme they have become.

“Someone Might Be Offended”

Christina Zavala, a Palmdale, California mother began enclosing an inspirational note along with a Bible verse each day in her seven-year-old son’s lunchbox. His friends read the notes and soon were clamoring for more. His teacher learned about the popularity of these notes and reprimanded the boy in front of his class. He came home in tears.

It escalated from there. The principal told Zavala the boy could only give out his Bible verses after school, off school property. Zavala complied and still the boy’s gospel notes grew in popularity. Students went out of their way to find him.

Then one day a Los Angeles Deputy Sheriff knocked on the Zavala’s door. He demanded the little boy stop sharing his notes altogether. He said, “Someone might be offended.”³³

³³ Bob Eschliman, “Liberty Counsel: School Violated Christian Student's Religious Freedom,” *Politics, Charisma News*: (3:00PM EDT 6/3/20); available from

No wonder ignorance of God's Word has grown. According to a Pew Survey, more than half of Americans cannot name the four Gospels in order. A troubling number of Christians doubt the Book of Genesis is true. The average churchgoer may not even know who Abraham or Moses were.³⁴

Many churches provide scant Bible training for their members. I preach in numerous services each year, in twenty to forty countries. I have noticed congregations spend as much as an hour in worship through singing but only have a twenty-minute sermon.

For the majority, that's the only Bible training they get all week. Small home groups have largely replaced adult Sunday school classes. But these groups can be limited, and are centered on fellowship, encouragement, and a discussion about a certain topic rather than the comprehensive Bible studies typical of traditional Sunday school classes.

The Great Contradiction

At the same time there is a growing hunger for the Word of God.

Jesus predicted this polarization. He said many will turn from the truth.³⁵ But the Word of God also says the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the earth like the oceans.³⁶ If we focus only on one side of this great contradiction, the one that fills us with dread, we will lose hope and

<http://www.charismanews.com/politics/issues/57607-liberty-counsel-school-violated-christian-student-s-religious-freedom>; accessed 21 June 16.

³⁴ Gary Bates and Lita Cosner, "Pew survey reveals basic ignorance of Christian belief," *Creation Ministries International*, 2 November 2010; available from <http://creation.com/religion-survey-reveals-ignorance-of-bible>; accessed 16 August 2016.

³⁵ Matt. 24:10

³⁶ Hab. 2:14

our faith will suffer. But if we look at how God is preparing people to receive His Word, our faith will mount up.

Two examples from the entertainment industry show the general public is open to the Bible. Scripture-based movies and television series were such a success in 2014 that Hollywood called it “The Year of the Bible.” Roma Downey and her husband Mark Burnett did a series for the History Channel called *Bible*. It drew the largest viewing audience on basic cable that year. In the next two years, Downey and Burnett followed with two other blockbusters: *Son of God*, and *AD, The Bible Continues*.

In 1995-1996, Svein Tindberg, a well known actor in Norway, memorized the Gospel of Mark. He did a three-hour, one-man stage performance with a chair and a desk as his only props. The response was huge. Seventy-five thousand attended the performances. That box office is even more significant when you consider the population of all of Norway is about the same as Singapore. Tindberg followed up his success in 2000 with a new show, reciting the Book of Acts. He packed out theaters wherever he performed.³⁷

First the Bible, then Revival

Our YWAM teams have encountered unprecedented openness in countless places, including America and other western countries. But they’ve also encountered outright hostility. This is to be expected. Several men and women of God have prophesied persecution is coming, but the greatest spiritual awakening the world has ever seen is also on its way.

³⁷ From correspondence with Runar Byberg, YWAM Norway.

As I have studied historical moves of God, I've found they are always preceded by immersion in the Bible. Someone sows the seed of God's Word beforehand.

However, one great exception puzzled me—the 1960s awakenings in West Timor, Indonesia. Two hundred thousand converted to Christianity in a Muslim country.³⁸

Yet a leading preacher in that move of God said there was no emphasis on Scripture.

Then I met a veteran Swiss-German missionary couple, the Germanides. They left West Timor two years before the awakening began. I asked them about what the preacher said, that there was no spreading of the Bible ahead of time.

Mr. Germanide replied, “No. That's not true. My wife and I spent twelve years going to every home in West Timor, giving out Bibles.”

Throughout history, spiritual awakenings have needed three things: exposure to Scripture, an active witness, and encounters with a living God.

English evangelist Smith Wigglesworth gave a dramatic prophecy in 1947. “When the Word and the Spirit come together, there will be the biggest movement of the Holy Spirit that [the UK], and indeed the world, has ever seen.”³⁹

We live in a time of unprecedented acceleration of Bible distribution to every country and every people group. Is it possible to reach every household in this generation? Yes! I believe it

³⁸ Geoff Waugh, “Revival Fire;” available from <http://www.evanwigg.com/revival/history/revfire.html>; accessed Aug 13, 2016.

³⁹ “Smith Wigglesworth's 1947 Prophetic Word,” *Pray For Scotland* available from <http://www.prayforscotland.org.uk/smith-wigglesworths-1947-prophetic-word/>; accessed 14 June 2016.

is. And it will prepare the way for the greatest spiritual awakening in history. We are going to see Habakkuk's vision become reality.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Hab. 2:14

Chapter Eight

How to End Bible Poverty

It Begins with Prayer

We've talked about electronic breakthroughs making it easier and faster to take God's Word to everyone. But the biggest means to end Bible poverty isn't new. It's thousands of years old. It's prayer, particularly the kind that listens for guidance from the Lord and obeys Him.

Jesus said He only did what He saw the Father doing.⁴¹ He lived this out from the beginning, praying and seeking the Father's guidance. The night before He chose the twelve disciples, He prayed all night. If Jesus needed to be in constant communication with God the Father, how much more do we need it?

He also told His disciples their prayers would change the world. He told them how to pray. "May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."⁴² He asks us to pray that same prayer today--not as a ritual but as an urgent plea. He wants His will to be done on earth and He asks us to intercede for that.

We must be vigilant. The god of this world hates God's Word. He fears it and the power of our prayers. He's determined to oppose us at every turn. He will use criticism, misunderstanding, division, ridicule, slander, lawsuits, financial repercussions, government

⁴¹John 5:19

⁴²Matt. 6:10 NLT

opposition, and physical attacks. We must not be ignorant of his devices but battle spiritual forces in Jesus' name until we defeat them.

This is why the first step in ending Bible poverty is continuous, Holy Spirit-led prayer. Our goal in YWAM is to rally at least one million to sign the pledge to pray every day for the End Bible Poverty Now project. We need people who will intercede, then obey whatever the Lord tells them to do.⁴³

“Knocking on the Sheep Gate”

Next, we must get the blessing of Christian leaders. As I said earlier, when we were asking the Lord where to begin, He spoke to me, “John 10.” Remember the first verse of that chapter says the true shepherd enters by the door. Anyone who climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber.

Jesus was talking about Himself as the Shepherd in this passage. But since the Lord gave me that reference, I knew He was using it to remind me of the Sheep Gate Principle. That means we should start by contacting Christian leaders.

I am continuing to “knock on the sheep gate” by introducing other leaders to this project. You can do this too, whether you give out Bibles in your town or your nation. Wherever possible, seek the blessing of your church leaders.

We also need endorsements from other authorities. We must call on believers in every sphere to help end Bible poverty.

⁴³ See appendices for how to sign commitment card online.

The Man or Woman of Peace

It's important to keep our goals simple. If our focus is on Jesus and the Bible, we'll find it easy to gain the blessing of the shepherds. We cannot allow ourselves to get involved with side issues or doctrines. It's only about Jesus. It's only about the Bible.

We accomplished this in Hawai'i in 1983. We took out ads, appeared on statewide television, sought interviews with local newspapers, and spoke in churches. We received endorsements from Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish leaders.

The more we enter through the sheep gate by seeking the blessing of leaders, the greater the public response will be as we distribute Bibles.

Besides the Sheep Gate Principle, Jesus gave another guideline for ministry, especially mobile ones. We are to seek out the man or woman of peace for a specific geographical area. This is based on a phrase taken from Luke 10:6, when Jesus sent seventy into "short-term missions." We've observed this principle since the earliest days of YWAM, relying on the Lord to lead us to such a person when going into unfamiliar places.

As you'll recall, the woman of peace in St. Thomas was Miss Zee Armstrong. She opened many doors for us in her community, including housing, ministry opportunities, and promotion through local media.

If you feel the Spirit calling you to end Bible poverty in your community, whether it's a city high-rise or a rural village, ask the Lord to lead you to the right people. Seek Him for the most effective approach.

Don't forget to communicate with us, so we can know of progress toward ending Bible poverty. Write to Dax Fears at the YWAM Kona Bible Office, konabibleoffice.com. Let us know

when you are starting, and what you are aiming to do. Give praise reports along the way, any stories you want to share, or prayer requests to pass along. And be sure to tell us when you finish your goal.

Make It a Christmas Gift, Have a Party

Ending Bible poverty isn't a one-size-fits-all project. There's room for Spirit-led creativity and initiative. Ask the Lord's guidance for each step. He has the most creativity of all, and He knows your community better than you do. He will give you just the right slant for them.

You might hand out gift-wrapped Bibles in your neighborhood at Christmas. Or you could give Bibles during the week before Easter.

Follow up your distribution with an open block party, perhaps on a Friday evening. Serve dessert and coffee and have more Bibles available for people to give to others. A short reading of a Bible passage can open things up for discussion. Then announce the opportunity for a regular group meeting, going through God's Word at your house, or during lunch time at your workplace, or school. Make it about personal relations, not about an institution.

We must be methodical, using government statistics and data to locate homes in specific target areas and where needed, to determine the mother tongue of each household. We did that in Hawai'i in 1983 and gave Bibles in the fifteen languages spoken in the islands to every home.

Not long before the writing of this book, several mission groups began to research, map, and plan together for distribution in countries such as Norway, Brazil, and Costa Rica, in the cities, in far-flung islands of the Pacific, and in high mountain villages.

The Omega Zones

One of the great implements for the mapping of missionary efforts is the “Omega Zones.” These are a framework of data arranged to break gigantic nations into smaller units, while also targeting tiny countries on the map. They call this collection of data and maps “4K” because the entire world is divided into approximately four thousand zones. Even something as huge as the task of world evangelization can be made more manageable by breaking it into small sections. Missionary movements, churches, and volunteer groups can use a strategic map like this to help fulfill the Great Commission.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, I challenged David Hamilton to create a new world map for missionary outreach. One that would help believers zero in on areas of great need.

Many joined him in this new challenge. His team included Jill Thornton, who brought her knowledge of research and cartography, as well as others with specialized skills in research, cartography, design, and web development. Together they put thousands of hours into this effort. I was honored to name these zones. I chose “Omega” because it is one of the names of Jesus. It also means to complete or finish the task.

The zones are based upon population and political boundaries. For instance, a country like China is broken into 857 Omega Zones, while Samoa and its 200 thousand people are one Omega Zone. The zones are also based on the availability of the gospel in a nation or province. Still another criteria of Omega Zones is hard to define. I call it the element of personal identity.

For example, if someone asks me where I’m from I say, “California.” If they press me further I say, “Los Angeles.” But where in Los Angeles? I’ll answer, “West LA.” Because those

are my roots. It's my early sense of belonging, an emotional thing. This element is also considered in the division of Omega Zones.

The 4K team is constantly researching and updating the Omega Zones to reflect the needs of people across the globe. Hundreds of other missions are now working with the 4K Omega Zones, sharing their map data so that all missionaries can have a clearer view of needs around the world. Those collaborating in this research include *The JESUS Film* team, Finishing the Task, SIL International, Wycliffe's Global Alliance, Cru, YWAM, and various others.

Above the Arctic Circle

YWAMers in Norway took up the task of ending Bible poverty and ran with it. Joakim Magnus said, "We heard Loren's vision, about the Bibles. That decided it for us. It was a vision from God. We needed to do this."

Their distribution started in Finnmark, an area of Norway above the Arctic Circle. I joined the teams for a couple of days as they walked from home to home. We visited houses scattered across the tundra in the sparsely populated zone. We offered Bibles in Norwegian or Scripture portions in Sami, the language of Laplanders. The latter expressed indifference to Norwegian Bibles but grabbed the Sami ones.

According to Hans Sandtorp, a leader in YWAM Norway, they are working on an app to track Bible distribution. It will pinpoint neighborhoods and homes that are unreached as well as the primary language of each household. When a group or individual commits to distributing Bibles, the app will show unreached neighborhoods. Finally, it records every home that has been contacted. As of the publication of this book, they are still working on this system.

Meanwhile, in Latvia

During the Cold War between western democracies and eastern communist nations, YWAM missionaries, Al and Carolyn Akimoff ministered behind “the Iron Curtain.”⁴⁴ People who lived under the thumb of Marxism could be imprisoned or worse if caught having an unregistered religious meeting. The same could happen to Western visitors trying to help them.

Nevertheless, the Akimoffs regularly went to Iron Curtain countries to hold secret Bible training in the forests. They taught crowds of young people about God’s nature and character, how to hear the voice of God more clearly, and how to trust Him for provision.

One of those whom Al and Carolyn trained was Latvian Pastor Petr Samoylich. In the mid-1990s, he began focusing on getting Bibles to schoolchildren and their families by first going to the teachers. Petr has been organizing public school teacher conferences ever since, teaching teachers from all over Latvia.

When I attended his conference recently, two outstanding principals from America came to teach 250 teachers. As I walked into the auditorium the first day I saw 250 boxes stacked in an odd configuration on the stage. Someone told me there were ten thousand Bibles in the boxes, and they were stacked to outline a map of Latvia.

Petr also invited the Latvian Catholic cardinal, the Lutheran bishop, and the leader of the Latvian Baptist Church to the conference. Together we blessed the Bibles, dedicating them for public schools and Sunday schools.

⁴⁴ The “Iron Curtain” was a metaphor for the political dividing line between the free world and the communist nations.

Afterward, each teacher took a few Bibles for themselves, their friends, and for principals of their schools. Petr took orders for hundreds of Bibles, depending on the size of their school. He tells me teachers are still receiving Bibles for their students. The teachers' dedication is inspiring. For instance, they slept on concrete floors in order to attend the conference. Since they had no way to carry boxes of Bibles home, Petr had a reason to go visit them and deliver the Bibles.

When he invited me into his office I saw his map on the wall. It had brightly colored pushpins scattered all over it, indicating where teachers are distributing Bibles. He says by 2020 every student and every home in Latvia will have been offered a Bible.

Six Ways to End Bible Poverty

Missionaries are already working to end Bible poverty in numbers of other nations: Germany, Netherlands, Costa Rica, Philippines, Brazil, Papua New Guinea, Cameroon, and the United States, to name a few. The key for finishing this challenge is to pray, then listen to the Lord. He has the most creative ways to do this. Then we must obey whatever He tells us to do.

Ending Bible poverty requires:

- **Prayer** - This is critical for every part of ending Bible poverty. God invites us to create with Him, to follow His lead, and lean forward in faith.
- **Translation or Verbal Recording** - Everyone has the right to God's Word in the language of their heart. It is a great injustice that multitudes have no Scripture at all. We must begin translation and have at least a portion of Scripture for every tongue by 2033, if not sooner.

- **Production** - Every person must have the Bible in the most accessible form possible, whether print, digital, audio, animation, or video.
- **Distribution** - We need to do whatever we can in groups or as individuals. Giving out Bibles or portions of it should be second nature to us. Now with apps, we can carry audio and text Bibles in hundreds of languages on our smartphones everywhere we go.
- **Education** - Using appropriate means for both oral and literate students, we must educate people so they can read, hear, understand, and apply the Scriptures.
- **Engagement** - With God's help we are called to motivate everyone, everywhere to engage regularly with God's Word. This will help bring a global spiritual awakening when the Word and the Spirit come together.

Jesus gave His people this mandate just before He ascended into heaven. It has been the responsibility of every generation since then. Now it is our assignment. Thanks to modern travel and a host of IT capabilities, it's easier and can happen quickly. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the worldwide Body of Christ can do this. Sign the commitment online, promising to pray and do everything He shows you to do. Recruit others to do the same. Gather people who will pray with you and follow the principles God has given for this project.

Choose something from this list of six. Perhaps you can pray and contribute financially to those distributing God's Word. You might pass out Bibles in your neighborhood or to those who have been forgotten in hospitals and prisons. Don't relegate this task to the most remote places.

People in your own country need Bibles. Offer another chance to those who have ignored God's Word or have never considered it.

The Lord may also lead you to the farthest parts of the earth, to an ethnos who has waited thousands of years for God's precious Word. Let the Lord lead you. You can be part of reaching the last, the least, and the lost.

Chapter Nine

God's Word in Their Heart Language

The Missionary Who Didn't Make It Back

His name was Opukahaia. His story shows how one individual's choices can change an entire country. It was one of the most dramatic instances in history of ending Bible poverty and it all started with a Hawaiian teenager.

King Kamehameha was building his kingdom, destroying his rivals in his final drive to unite the islands. Opukahaia and his family were unfortunate enough to be under the rule of one of his last opponents. Opukahaia was sixteen years old when he watched in horror as King Kamehameha's warriors slaughtered his parents. He put his baby brother on his back and tried to run to safety but a warrior threw his spear.

Opukahaia felt his brother's body go limp. He was gone, but the little one had spared the life of his big brother. For some reason, the warrior decided not to murder Opukahaia. Instead he took him captive.

All of this happened on what's now known as the "Big Island," the one named Hawai'i. Opukahaia was able to escape his captors later, swimming out to a merchant ship anchored in Kealakekua Bay. The crew took him on as a cabin boy and named him "Henry O," because they couldn't pronounce Opukahaia. During Henry O's two years on board the merchant ship, a Christian sailor began to teach him English, using the Bible as his primer.

Henry ultimately ended up in New Haven, Connecticut. After a few years there, he was sitting in dejection on the steps of Yale College. A minister came along and asked why he was sad. The young immigrant said, “No one give me learning!”

Emerging Heroes

The clergyman promised to find him a tutor. He asked his cousin, Timothy Dwight IV if he could take the Hawaiian into his family. That’s how Henry found himself living with Dwight, the President of Yale. Dwight was also one of the founders of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. As you can see, Yale was quite different than it is today.

Dwight taught the young man about Jesus, as well as all the subjects of public school. He discovered Henry was a gifted learner. Soon the young Hawaiian became proficient in several languages, and devised an alphabet for his people. He also began a Hawaiian grammar book, and translated the Book of Genesis. His goal was to return as a missionary with a gift of the Bible in his people’s heart language.⁴⁵

At the time, a missions movement was growing from the Second Great Awakening in the United States. Groups of young people met to pray fervently. They eagerly followed emerging heroes like Henry Opukahaia. He spoke in colleges and churches, urging young people to help him take the gospel to his homeland. The future looked bright for Henry.

Then Henry contracted typhus and died quickly. He was only twenty-six years old.

⁴⁵ Betty Fullard-Leo, “Henry Opukaha’ia: The Youth Who Changed Hawai’i” *Coffee Times*; available from <http://www.coffeetimes.com/henry.htm>; accessed 30 June 2016.

Before he died, Henry wrote his autobiography. That book and the news of his death spread all over New England, touching the hearts of young people. Seven missionary couples and four Hawaiian boys decided to take Henry's place and sail to Hawai'i.

The Small, Black Box

They brought with them a printing press, Henry's Hawaiian alphabet, grammar book, and his translation of the Book of Genesis.

They had to sail south from New England, all the way down the length of North and South America, around Cape Horn, then up the length of South America again, and nearly 6,800 miles across the Pacific to Hawai'i. It took them 164 days.

As they traveled, they had no idea the dramatic things God was doing to prepare the spiritual ground for them.

After King Kamehameha I died, his favorite wife, Ka'ahumanu, the high priest Hewahewa, and the new king, Kamehameha II, decided to abandon the Hawaiian religion and its cruel kapu laws.

One of their gods, Ku, was the god of warfare. His priests demanded many human sacrifices, even as wars and skirmishes soaked the islands with blood.

Although Ka'ahumanu, Hewahewa, and Kamehameha II did away with the old religion, tearing down the heiaus (temples), and demolishing the idols, they didn't replace the Hawaiian religion with anything. It was remarkable, maybe unique in history. As the little ship of missionaries sailed on their way, the Hawaiians created a spiritual vacuum waiting for something to fill it.

The high priest Hewahewa also received a vision, telling the people that a messenger of the “God of the rainbow” would come to their island, stepping onto a large boulder on the shore of what’s now called Kailua Kona. Hewahewa saw him carrying God’s message in “a black box.”

That’s exactly what happened when the missionaries arrived in 1820 aboard the brig *Thaddeus*. The first one to disembark stepped onto the boulder on the shores of Kona Bay. He carried his Bible, protected from the elements in a small, black box.

What happened in following years would have thrilled Henry Opukahaia. His people quickly embraced the new faith. Missionaries taught the people how to read, using Henry’s Hawaiian alphabet, and his dictionary/grammar book. They finished his translation of Scripture, then used the press to print thousands of Hawaiian Bibles.

Within a short time, 90 percent of Hawaiians could read—the highest percentage of literacy in the world at that time. More than 95 percent became followers of Jesus. They received the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives and read the Bible in their mother tongue.

Hawai’i’s Great Awakening

Following the spread of Bible knowledge, a great revival washed over the Hawaiian Islands in the 1830s and ‘40s. It centered on the Big Island.

Titus Coan came, part of a new wave of missionaries. He’d experienced America’s Second Great Awakening and studied under Charles Finney.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ “Titus Coan: God’s Servant,” *The GOSPEL TRUTH*, (Copyright 1999, 2000. Gospel Truth Ministries); available from http://www.gospeltruth.net/Hawai'i_revival.htm; accessed 30 June 2016.

Based in Hilo, Coan evangelized tirelessly, preaching six to ten times a day, counseling seekers until midnight, then starting again at dawn. He maintained this pace for almost fifty years. He marked off his parish in a radius of one hundred miles from the town. He taught the Bible in every household within that circle. Some homes, hidden away in the mountains and valleys surrounding Hilo, had no roads leading to them. He hacked his way through jungle, and climbed high, slippery paths several times a year to reach each one.⁴⁷

He followed up with all those residents, keeping a “spiritual census” in his notebook. Who had died? Who had moved away and where were they now? Who had not yet received the message? Who had backslidden? He sought those out repeatedly, calling them back to repentance. Who was following Christ faithfully? He made sure they received intensive training for months so they could join the church.

America’s First Megachurch

Titus Coan’s church soon became the largest in the world. When he died in 1882, he had added thirteen thousand members to his church in Hilo, plus many more through his evangelistic efforts on other islands.⁴⁸

The Hawaiian church began to send out its own missionaries in the 1850s. The spiritual descendants of Henry Opukahaia took the gospel to the Marquesas Islands, Micronesia, and the

⁴⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁸ *ibid*

Gilbert Islands. Cannibals killed some, but eventually even those islands received the God of the Bible.⁴⁹

The story of Hawai'i demonstrates how ending Bible poverty can transform an entire country.

- The fervor of a spiritual awakening led to missionary vision.
- A young convert decided to return to his homeland to give them Jesus and the Bible. But he died suddenly.
- Others went to Hawai'i in his place. They gave the Bible to the people.
- The Hawaiians learned how to read, soon having the highest rate of literacy per capita in the world.
- A missionary named Titus Coan went to great effort to distribute God's Word to every home, including the most remote. His Bible teaching changed lives.
- The Spirit and the Word of God came together in Hawai'i's Second Great Awakening, with multitudes repenting and filling the churches.
- Hawaiians themselves became missionaries, going to far reaches of the Pacific.

⁴⁹ Titus Coan, *Life in Hawai'i: An Autobiographical Sketch of Mission Life and Labors, 1835-1881* (Anson D.F. Randolph & Company, 1882), 154-158.

“Jesus Speaks My Language!”

The Hawaiian example is being repeated all over the world today. The ethnē, or nations, are experiencing transformation.⁵⁰

Morgan Jackson reports that when a people group, an ethnos finally gets the Word of God in their own language, they often say, “Now we’re a real people!”

Those who’ve never experienced the excitement of hearing Scripture for the first time in their native tongue don’t understand. They ask, “Why can’t they be satisfied to read a Bible in the majority language of their country? And why should we bother to translate into languages spoken only by a small group of people?”

When someone hears God’s Word in their mother tongue it touches them on a deep level. Perhaps it’s because language is part of our identity. Like many before him, a tribesman receiving a recording of the Bible in his mother tongue marveled, “Jesus speaks my language!”

The founder of Wycliffe, William Cameron Townsend said, “The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother tongue. It needs no furlough and is never considered a foreigner.”

It opens their hearts to the gospel. Christianity is no longer a foreigner’s religion.

Not Understanding a Word in Church

In numerous parts of the world, most of the people in a minority language group cannot speak the majority language of their country, whether it’s Hindi in India, Swahili in Kenya, or English in Papua New Guinea.

⁵⁰ For much more on this topic, see my *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country*, (YWAM Publishing, 2007).

A common example is a church in Peru. The people gather every Sunday to hear their pastor preach in Spanish, from a Spanish Bible. No one in the congregation understands a word. And they've been doing this for years.

While their devotion is commendable, often their behavior the rest of the week is not. Syncretism, or the mixing of Christian belief with witchcraft, along with immorality are pervasive in such situations.

How can you disciple people without a Bible? It's not just a problem in Peru. In many parts of the world warehouses are filled with Bibles and other Christian literature that the vast majority cannot read.

And what about the other objection? Is it a waste of time to translate the Bible into languages spoken by a very few people?

The answer is in the words of Jesus. The Lord told us to go to "every," to reach "all."⁵¹

He didn't say to just reach the majority either. John 3:16 doesn't say, "For God so loved the majority...." He loves the world. He doesn't want to leave anyone out.

Short-term Volunteers Helping Linguists

For years I had been thinking of how we could get Bibles into languages faster. I thought of how I preach through interpreters, in small crowds and large. I say a sentence, a concept, or a short paragraph. Then the translator tells them what I said.

I've asked why we couldn't do something similar to speed up Bible translation, producing verbally recorded Bibles?

⁵¹ Mark 16:15 KJV and Matt. 28:19, 20.

I've discovered others, such as Faith Comes By Hearing, who had the same idea. They have been doing many thousands of verbal recordings for years.

It was a privilege to visit with Anet Jackson, wife of FCBH's founder, Jerry Jackson. She told me story after story of their adventures reaching Bible-less people groups. She sometimes went on her own, climbing mountain trails in Papua New Guinea, living in remote villages, not coming back until she had another verbal recording of the Bible. She did language after language, forty in all, until she was in her mid-70s. Now she's in her 80s, and still finding ways to be part of ending Bible poverty.

When I meet people like the Jacksons, I feel that kindred spirit, trusting God for impossible things.

Verbal recordings of the Bible are more than a stopgap measure. They are giving the Word of God to the people. It's best if people learn to read and have the Word of God in a text version. However, in the meantime let's give them Bibles they can listen to.

The work of Bible translators will always be needed. They have been at the forefront of ending Bible poverty for one hundred years. They do a painstaking labor of love, taking years to learn a new language in the field with no one to teach them, identifying the grammar of that language, and devising written symbols.

We need both: those doing verbally recorded Bibles, and the highly-trained linguists who produce written copies of God's Word in the languages of the people. How wonderful that years of waiting for Bibles are being shortened as missionaries give their Bible recordings to the translators. This helps linguists produce quality, written translations much sooner.

The overall work is speeding up. Missionaries are quickly creating audio Bibles in new languages for hundreds of millions who can't read. People are downloading audio Bibles from the internet, and sharing them with one another on microSD cards. They can slip the Scriptures in their language into their mobile phones and handheld devices.

These are the ones from “every ethnos, tribe, people, and language” who will be standing before the Lamb in white robes, waving palm branches.

They are gathering.

Chapter Ten

The Clock is Racing

YWAMers have been helping with verbal recordings in a number of countries, including those of the vast “liquid continent,” islands in Pacifica—Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. The region covers 32 million square miles, stretching from Hawai’i in the northeast to New Zealand and Papua New Guinea in the southwest.

Some of these islands are unimaginably remote. Some are so difficult to access that supply and mailboats come only three times a year. Or even less. For some, supply boats never come.

People on these faraway islands endure hardships. Due to limited food choices, many suffer from illnesses such as diabetes. They can fish, raise taro and pigs, and cultivate a few fruit and vegetables, if conditions are right.

Education is spotty and medical care almost nonexistent. Unemployment is rampant. If given the opportunity, adult children emigrate to New Zealand, Australia, or the US. They send part of their salary back home to their family. But hopelessness plagues many.

However, nothing is too hard for God. He has plans for the islanders. We can’t leave them isolated. And we can’t leave them without Bibles in each language. Their development depends on it.

In Four Weeks, Eight New Languages

Pacifica has the greatest linguistic diversity found anywhere in the world. Of its 1,121 languages, 426 lack any portion of the Bible. Of those 426 untargeted languages, 321 are in one country of Pacifica: Papua New Guinea.⁵²

YWAM missionaries are working diligently to end Bible poverty in PNG. For example, some are assisting linguists and filmmakers produce *The JESUS Film* in new languages. Here's how that collaboration is working in PNG. First, Wycliffe does a translation of the Gospel of Luke in the target language. Then the people working with *The JESUS Film* produce a script adaptation. The third step is where YWAMers come in. They have been trained to record a speaker of the mother tongue narrating the script. It's then dubbed for the movie.

A New Zealand couple, Bernie and Sylvia Kay, are part of our YWAM Kona family. They've been working in PNG, helping *The JESUS Film* people record new languages for the film. Recently their collaborative team hosted five students from a Discipleship Training School in Kona, Hawai'i. In four weeks' time the students were able to help produce the narration of *The JESUS Film* in eight new languages.

Five hundred thousand people speak those eight languages. Think of it! Half a million are hearing and seeing the Word of God in their own language. And it only took four weeks for a handful of people to do the recording.

⁵² SIL Pacific Language Data 2015 Report. A private paper given at a conference 2015.

Verbal Bibles are an important way to help the 758 million on earth who cannot read.⁵³ And you can use local-to-local interpreters to produce them.⁵⁴

The recorded Word of God is also popular with lots of people. Even though they know how to read, some prefer to gain information through audio or visual methods—audio when they’re commuting, working out at the gym, gardening, or doing housework; films or videos when they’re relaxing.

Boots on the Ground

The method of verbal interpretations of Bibles is spreading. Linguists are training lay volunteers to assist them in the translation process. Bible linguists are dedicated missionaries, working to end Bible Poverty. One of these groups, Wycliffe Bible Translators, has been serving the Lord by putting His Word into eager hands for decades and decades. Now they are asking for help. They can translate Bibles faster if they can get volunteers, more “boots on the ground.”

There are so many ways to be part of Bible translation. You can locate speakers of minority languages to help create an audio version of the Bible. You can assist with audio recordings of The Jesus Film in new languages. Logistical help is always needed to help translators, provide transportation, childcare, or cook meals. You can spread the vision of ending

⁵³ Statistics from UNESCO Literacy data release 2016; available from <http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Pages/literacy-data-release-2016.aspx>; accessed 15 August 2016.

⁵⁴To watch a brief video demonstrating how local-to-local interpreters work, go to <https://vimeo.com/87866960>.

Bible poverty in your church and community. Or you can gather friends to pray regularly for the distribution of the Word of God.⁵⁵

What Are We Waiting For?

Robin Green of Faith Comes by Hearing developed an app in partnership with Pioneer Bible Translators and the Seed Company. It's called Render. They designed it so that illiterate people can easily make verbal recordings of the Bible for their tribe.⁵⁶

A local interpreter listens to the Bible in the majority language of his or her country, then creates a verbal recording in his mother tongue. Verbal recordings save local interpreters the work of learning to read, then creating an alphabet, teaching literacy to the community, and writing down the translated Bible. It also saves an outsider from having to learn the new language, study its grammar, and create written symbols, all before they can begin translation. If you begin instead with verbal recordings, you can offer them recorded Bibles quickly.

New technology and new methods are making digital recording and distribution easy. We can now reach the most isolated places. Considering all this, we must ask ourselves, "What are we waiting for?"

⁵⁵ Getting it Done, available from <http://endbiblepovertynow.com/vision.cfm?gid>; accessed 16 August 2016.

⁵⁶ Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra, "The Unwritten Word of God: Bible Translation Goes Mouth to Mouth," *Christianity Today*, 24 April 2016; available from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2016/may/unwritten-word-god-bible-translation-oral-render-software.html>; accessed 9 August 2016.

Why Did It Take You So Long?

A few years ago I heard about a leading missionary linguist who said it would take 150 years to begin Bible translation for the last language.

Now that date has been moved to 2025. I want to see it happen with verbal recordings even sooner—by December 25, 2020. I think we should also aim to have a written translation of the entire New Testament in every language by 2033. That year is the 2,000th anniversary of Jesus giving us the Great Commission before He ascended into heaven.

We are privileged to be living in this time. We are going to see the fulfillment of dreams and visions. I may not be alive to see it, but I believe today's youth will experience the thrill of reaching everyone on the planet with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Will we do our part, praying and taking steps of faith to see God's will carried out on earth as it is in heaven? Or will we delay what He wants to do through us?

I heard a story from Kenya recently. Missionaries had just completed the translation of the Bible for a tribe. One man wasn't rejoicing with the rest. Instead he stood there, holding the precious book in his hands. Finally he asked one of the foreigners, "Why did it take you so long to give us a Bible in our language?"

That's a good question. Why did it take us so long to take Bibles to everyone? And what about now? What are we waiting for?

Chapter Eleven

Getting the Word Out

The Power of the Bible

The Bible is powerful because God the Father authorizes it. It's powerful because Jesus is the Word within the Word, and because the Holy Spirit, who anointed its writing, speaks to us as we read or hear it. If we take up the challenge of ending Bible poverty we will see its power.

We now have a variety of methods of producing digital and print copies of the Scriptures. During the Reformation they only had the printing press. How they maximized their one technological device amazes me.

One of my friends is Dr. Tom Bloomer, Provost of the University of the Nations. He has lived in Switzerland for many years. Besides his academic studies, he likes to investigate historic sites of the area. It's been gratifying to take historical walks with Tom to some of these places.

One site is a small chapel next to the cathedral in Geneva. That was where John Calvin preached every Sunday. Someone always sat on a front bench transcribing his sermons.

A side room off the chapel used to house one of Gutenberg's printing presses. As soon as Calvin finished a sermon, they would take the transcript, set the type, and begin printing copies. The ink was barely dry when they gave these copies to riders. They would mount their horses and take the papers to the east, west, north, and south of Europe. Within one week thousands of Europeans were reading his sermons.

If they could transform Western Europe 500 years ago with a printing press and fast horses, imagine what we can do now with the many innovations the Lord has given us.

Other developments internationally have set the stage for us. As God's people have prayed, He has moved sovereignly to open doors. For instance, it seemed impossible that communist China would ever change. Who could have predicted how quickly it would open up to the world?

Deng Xiaoping Didn't Fear the Bible

In April of 2014, I was in New Zealand talking with a YWAMer named Peter Dean. He was home on furlough from China. He reminded me that he used to be a printer in YWAM's castle in Hurlach, Germany.

Peter handed me a book. It was a Bible in Chinese. "Loren, we just printed the 100 millionth copy of the Bible in China. This is one from that printing."

I knew the story of the 100 million.

Deng Xiaoping invited a small group of westerners to teach the Chinese about the free market system. Deng was the de facto leader of China from the mid-1970s on. He wanted to set up a "socialist market economy" in China. The five businessmen he invited happened to be Christians.

After their talks ended, one of the men asked Deng through an interpreter, "Why are you communists afraid of the Bible?"

Deng threw back his head and laughed. "We don't fear the Bible! It's just a book."

“Then let us set up a printing press in China. Let us print one million Bibles for the Chinese people.”

Deng laughed again. “One million in China is nothing. Go ahead!”

The businessmen went home and raised the money. Others came to do the printing, including Peter and another YWAMer from Hurlach, Germany. They started printing in the very country where we had smuggled in multiplied thousands of Bibles in the past. Now Christians were printing them with Deng Xiaoping’s approval. Chinese Christians were then able to distribute them.

When Peter and his coworkers finished printing one million Bibles, they did another million. And another million, and another, and another. From 1976 to 2014, they printed one million Bibles at a time, all with the approval of the late Deng Xiaoping.

And there in New Zealand, I was holding one of the 100 million.

Peter said they had just gotten new equipment and were now producing a Bible every four seconds!

“Google-berg”

Despite this striking change in China, and the new super-fast printers, we could never print enough Bibles for everyone in the world. However, the Lord has allowed a solution for this time in history. The Reformers had the Gutenberg press. But as David Hamilton says, now we now have the “Google-berg.” You could even call it the Google-berg Revolution.

Free Bibles can be downloaded from the internet. According to certain ministries, unnamed for security reasons, hundreds of thousands of Arabic speakers are downloading print and audio versions of God's Word.

Those without access to the internet can still get audio, video, animated, and text versions of the Bibles. People in some of the most remote parts of the earth have mobile phones or tablets, even though they have no coverage. They use them to play music and movies.

Once downloaded from the internet, apps can be shared from one person's handheld to another, and another, possibly going viral. We can distribute SD or microSD cards with the Scriptures and *The JESUS Film* in the local language. In restricted access countries, we can set up mobile wifi hotspots, quietly offering free Bibles and *The JESUS Film* to anyone nearby with a handheld.

Missionary Techies

Chong Ho is a dear friend of mine. He's a YWAM leader, heading up a team of IT specialist missionaries. Before joining YWAM, he ran a private business as an Oracle database administrator. He consulted for the Department of Justice, the Department of Energy, and the Federal Aviation Administration. He also worked with several Fortune 500 companies, such as GE and IBM.

Now he's a missionary techie.

Chong Ho and I made several trips to South Korea in one year, speaking in large venues. We challenged anyone in the IT industry to help end Bible poverty by tithing their time, talent, and treasure. Giving 10 percent was not only for the CEOs. It was for their employees too. Their

companies could tithe the time and talent of their employees, and their treasure—a tenth of their profits. We asked them to create apps, devices, animated Bible stories, video games--anything God showed them to do.

The response throughout the IT industry of South Korea was immediate and significant.

On my fifth trip to Korea that year, Chong Ho and other YWAM IT specialists came along. We held our first IT Missions Conference on the U of N campus in Jeju. One thousand people attended.

There we met with CEOs of companies. They had already begun to tithe those three things--their time, talent, and treasure. They showed us what they had created for ending Bible poverty.

Key leaders committed to do even more, including producing an animated version for each new translation of the Bible. As of the writing of this book, there are already eighty IT companies in Korea working on projects to spread the Word of God.

Chong Ho and his team have recently made contact with Christians in Silicon Valley, in the Pacific Northwest, and in other places where leading US companies have their headquarters. He found small Bible study and prayer groups were happening in every one of the IT giants. The YWAM techies visited and challenged several of those prayer groups to join the cause.

The Internet--A Level Playing Field

Developers are working on ways to maximize God's Word on the internet. Some have been doing so for ten or twenty years. One of our other contacts, a Korean digital designer, has

developed apps for networking and Bible distribution online. One of his products has become quite successful in South Korea and in many other countries.

These solutions are perfect for David vs Goliath situations. “The internet is a level playing field,” says Chong Ho.

When I hear statements like that I see endless opportunities.

I heard from three sources in the digital industry on America’s West Coast. They were privy to the fact that leaders in the industry were aiming to give four billion handhelds so that everyone on earth could access the internet by 2020. Unfortunately the project was shelved. No one could figure out how to make the handhelds solar-powered. And many millions without the internet don’t have electricity either.

If the industry leaders had succeeded with solar-powered mobile phones, it would have coordinated perfectly with the satellite project initiated by Mr. Musk.

Let’s ask God to show someone how to create a handheld with built-in solar capability. It could be a Christian. Jesus has given His servants “downloads” of understanding before. Or He might even use a “Cyrus” to do His work.⁵⁷

We *can* get a Bible into every home on earth. Some of these technological advances could be part of the answer. However, we must have the empowerment of the Holy Spirit above all. “It’s not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the LORD Almighty.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷Isa. 44:23-45:8

⁵⁸Zech. 4:6b

Chapter Twelve

Spreading Seeds

A Bleak Future

It's one of the most inspiring stories. A young Norwegian named Hans Nielsen Hauge listened to the Lord, then worked tirelessly to end Bible poverty in his country. He changed the course of history as he distributed Bibles throughout his nation.

This happened at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Only the elite of the country had freedom. Most of the things God led Hauge to do were against the law, challenging the status quo.

His parents were godly people. They raised their son to fear the Lord. However, although Hans was devout he wasn't sure of his personal salvation.

On a spring day in 1796, Hauge received what he called his "spiritual baptism." He was singing a hymn as he worked in his father's field. Abruptly he felt his heart lifted to God. In a rush of assurance, he knew Jesus had accepted him. His sins were forgiven! In that minute Hans also knew God was calling him to take His Word to everyone in his nation.⁵⁹

The situation in his country looked impossible. Norwegians were poor and starving. Sometimes famine seized the land, and many perished from hunger.

⁵⁹Loren Cunningham, *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country* (YWAM Publishing, 2007), 67.

They had only a few schools and no university. A bleak future lay ahead, with the people eking out a living in small farms and fishing villages.

Defying the Law, Obeying the Call

Norway's neighbors had subjugated them for hundreds of years. Denmark, their conqueror at that time, made it illegal for them to travel or meet publicly. What's more, only ministers of the state church were allowed to preach. Anywhere.

Despite all that Hans had a calling from God. He defied the law and crisscrossed the country, preaching and distributing Bibles. Within eight years his ministry spread God's Word throughout Norway. To do this, he covered fifteen thousand kilometers (more than nine thousand miles) on foot or on skis.⁶⁰

Hans learned the Bible was a great source of practical education for himself and for working people. He wrote book after book giving biblically-based advice on many topics, including farming, educating children, creating new wealth by doing honest commerce, and of course, becoming a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. He became a bestselling author, with 200 thousand copies in print--remarkable in a country of only 900 thousand!⁶¹

He also created thirty businesses in various towns.⁶² At one site alone he built a paper mill, stamping mill, bone mill, flour mill, a tannery, and a foundry.⁶³ He helped his followers find

⁶⁰ "The Revival-Bringer: One Man's Initiative Regenerated Norway," *Making History Now*, 8 July 2015; available from <https://makinghistorynow.wordpress.com/2015/07/>; accessed 7 July 2016.

⁶¹ *ibid* p 69

⁶² "About Hans Nielsen Hauge," *Hauge Institute*, Available from <http://haugeinstitute.org/119/about-hans-nielsen-hauge>; Accessed 16 August 2016.

⁶³ Loren Cunningham, *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country*, YWAM Publishing, 2007.

job opportunities in other towns too. In these ways he transformed the economy of the entire country.

Hans could have become a wealthy man because of the many businesses he launched and the popularity of the books he'd written. But time after time, he gave away his money to help others.⁶⁴

The vast majority of Norwegians were illiterate. But they wanted to read the Bible and Hauge's many books. This created a demand for schools to teach them how to read and write. The literacy rate began to climb.

Languishing in Chains

Despite all these positive changes, the government and religious authorities were outraged. So were the upper classes. They resented the lower classes for not staying in their place. But Hauge and his followers continued, even though he was imprisoned fourteen times in seven years.⁶⁵

He formed one thousand home groups, cooperating with the state church. These groups prayed and studied the Bible together, holding one another accountable for behavior contrary to Scripture.

They dared to travel, meeting with other Hauge groups. His biblical teaching influenced all spheres. Leaders emerged, eventually becoming politically active. Families were strengthened

⁶⁴ Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Nielsen_Hauge; accessed 7 July 2016.

⁶⁵ *ibid*

and businesses flourished, helping to create a middle class. The common people learned to read, then encouraged by Hauge, explored all sorts of books.

The church came alive.

Even though the fruit of his ministry became apparent, Hans still languished in chains. His last imprisonment lasted nearly ten years and when he was released, his health was broken. He died when he was only 52.⁶⁶

He didn't live long enough to see the full impact of his ministry. He simply obeyed Jesus's command in Matthew 28:19-20, throwing his whole self into publishing Bibles, distributing them, and educating his followers in how the Word of God applies to every area of life. His small groups helped one another and the churches to engage with Scripture on a daily basis. And they bathed all their efforts with prayer.

Hauge's work played a major part in creating a free Norway. After his death, three of his followers were part of the group who created the first constitution.

His life also shows that we may pay a high price to end Bible poverty. However, we will bring eternal reward to millions of people.

⁶⁶ Loren Cunningham, *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country*, (YWAM Publishing, 2007), 65-71. See also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Nielsen_Hauge; Accessed 16 August 2016.

Chapter Thirteen

Ships, Partner Ships, and a Big Canoe

When it comes to ending Bible poverty, I believe the hardest places won't be lands ruled by vicious dictators, or areas where they are killing Christians. Nor will it be reaching tribes in the dense jungles of the Amazon or the nomadic tribes of the Sahara.

The most difficult geographically will be the islands of the Pacific. Jesus said "Go into the uttermost part of the earth." From where Jesus spoke those words, Pacifica is literally halfway around the earth. The "uttermost part." It's difficult to evangelize there, but not because they're hostile to the message. Most islanders welcome missionaries. But as we saw in chapter ten, the challenges in reaching these far-flung places are enormous.

Let's look at the facts for Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia:

- Sprinkled over the largest ocean on earth are 1,072 inhabited islands and atolls.
- Only 64 of the 1,072 islands have an adequate port for boats and ships.
- Airports and airstrips are even harder to find, located on 215 islands.⁶⁷

Some of the islands of Melanesia are 900 miles from an airport.

Pitcairn is one of the most remote. My family and I joined other YWAMers to sail there on YWAM's ship, the *Pacific Ruby* for ministry in 1991. Pitcairners are descendants of the

⁶⁷ These statistics are current as of 2016, according to the 4K Mapping Project, University of the Nations, Kona, Hawai'i.

mutineers from the *Bounty*, plus women they picked up in Tahiti. It sits far from everyone in the southeastern edge of the Pacific. It can take a ten-day voyage to get someone to a hospital. If a resident of Pitcairn has an appendicitis attack, it will likely be a death sentence.

The isolation of these islands requires carefully planned Bible distribution. Fortunately, the Lord has sparked a major renewal of the ship vision within YWAM. We now have twenty-four ships available, most of them smaller vessels. They are ideal for accessing dots of land surrounded by hidden reefs. When they reach them, they focus on YWAM's three-fold ministries--evangelism, training, and acts of mercy.

In addition to these, we have "Partner Ships," where owners lend their crafts for missionary efforts. We lost a sailing ship and one precious YWAMer, Aaron Bremner. It happened in early January of 2015, in a storm off the Kona Coast. The tragedy touched people's hearts and some families gave their ships to replace the *Hawai'i Aloha*.

That's why we're calling our effort to place a Bible in every home of Micronesia "Project Aaron." We want to honor him and his commitment to the Lord and Micronesia.

Lib Island

Some of those ships are already engaged in ending Bible poverty in Melanesia, Papua New Guinea, and Micronesia. The smaller vessels with a more shallow draft—needing less water depth—are the only way to get teams ashore on islands with neither airstrip nor port.

YWAM Ships Captain, Ann Ford tells about Lib Island, one of the Marshall Islands where they were unable to drop anchor. The island has a narrow submerged shelf around it. Then

there's a sheer drop-off where the water is dark blue. Residents don't even know how deep it is. Circling this deep sea is a coral reef.

Islanders blasted a hole in the reef so that small motorboats could enter. As the YWAM Ship bobbed on open seas, Captain Ann and some of the other YWAMers climbed down from their vessel into small boats manned by the islanders. They shuttled them to the island, shooting through that hole in the reef, crossing the deep blue water, and finally reaching the shore.

Lib Island is like almost all the far-flung islands. There are no doctors and no dentists. That's why YWAM Ships' first attraction is the medical help they bring. Teams include doctors, dentists, and nurses from various countries doing short-term mission work. Like all YWAMers, the medical volunteers pay their own way to come.

While the doctors, nurses, and dentists treat the people, the rest of the team gives basic health care training. They also lead people to Christ and give them audio and printed Bibles in their language.

Like their counterparts in the Himalayas, many of the islanders have smartphones and tablets even though they have no internet access. They use them to store and trade movies and music.

YWAM Ships are able to use the LightStream technology I mentioned earlier. It creates a wifi hotspot that relays media in areas with no internet access. Islanders seeking medical care come onto the ship. While they wait to be seen by a doctor they can use their mobile phones to watch and listen to gospel media via LightStream. Teams also take these devices into villages when they go ashore for evangelism, teaching, medical services, and sports.

The JESUS Film is an effective tool to open the way for salvation. When people hear the gospel in their language for the first time through this movie, they're captivated. Documentation has shown that 200 million have made decisions to follow Christ after watching this movie.⁶⁸

As important as the gospel presentation is, we must also remember to leave behind some form of Scripture. This will help new believers become disciples who grow in their new faith.

Think of a Big Canoe

Earlier I shared how unprecedented unity among the Body of Christ is paving the way for an end to Bible poverty. Several mission groups have entered into a committed partnership in the Pacific. They've named it *Wa'a* (pronounced Va-a), the Polynesian word for canoe. The mission groups in *Wa'a* include YWAM, Wycliffe Global Alliance, SIL, *The JESUS Film*, Seed Company, Cru, Faith Comes by Hearing, Island Breeze, 4K Mapping, University of the Nations, and YWAM Medical Ships. Other organizations have also joined in on various regional meetings.

Why did they call their partnership "canoe"?

Thousands of years ago Polynesians crossed the largest ocean in the world in canoes, setting their course by the stars. To do so, they had to commit themselves to the task, relying on one another's strengths, paddling in harmony and perfect rhythm.

That's how this partnership among the mission groups is working. *Wa'a* began when Wycliffe approached YWAM. Wycliffe and its alliance members send out highly trained,

⁶⁸ "Cumulative Exposures/Decisions/Products Distributed Since 1979" *Official Jesus Film Project Ministry Statistics - July 16, 2016, Jesus Film Project*; available from <http://www.jesusfilm.org/about/learn-more/statistics.html>; accessed 10 July 2016.

disciplined, godly people. SIL, one of its alliance members, has the largest number of working linguists in the world. They have the expertise but they need more help. Translation can be done faster with the help of short-term volunteers with a bit of training.

We felt the Lord wanted YWAM to recruit short-term helpers. Wa'a fit with the vision God had already given us, to end Bible poverty. In Kona, my wife Darlene and I met with a group of YWAMers gathered to pray about Wa'a. Ben Nonoa, a New Zealander of Samoan descent, was one of the Polynesian YWAMers who jumped on board Wa'a. Vae Eli from Samoa was another.

Shouting Over the Waves

After dedicating ourselves to taking God's Word all over the Pacific, some of our participants decided to walk down to the Kona seashore to pray. The group stopped at the water's edge, facing the Pacific Ocean. There they arranged themselves into the outline of a canoe. They began to pray, shouting over the crashing waves, giving themselves afresh to Jesus, and to the Wa'a vision. They were loving and obeying God with their strength as well as their heart, mind, and soul.⁶⁹

Wa'a is similar to the Table 71 group--both have drawn together people from different missions, collaborating on finishing the Great Commission. Like Table 71, Wa'a shares data and progress with one another, avoiding duplication of efforts. Members show mutual honor and respect while keeping their unique identities and ministry focus.

⁶⁹ Matt. 12:29-31

This mirrors the honor islanders and visitors show one another. Like the ancient paddlers of canoes, Wa'a team members work in harmony, putting their backs into it, depending on one another's strengths.

It's been a handful of years since Wa'a began, yet they're already seeing results.

"That's why young people are getting excited," says Ben Nonoa. "I'm trusting we'll see waves of islanders going out as missionaries again, responding as they did in 1839." He was referring to the first Samoan missionaries. Nine years after they first met the Lord, they sailed to Vanuatu, the Solomons, northern Australia, and PNG. Some were martyred, but more took their place.

Vae Eli is a Samoan of royal blood and a YWAMer. He was a missionary for thirty years in Europe, Asia, the Pacific, and North America. But Vae says he was unaware of the severe Bible poverty in his home region.

He heard of one of those countries, Vanuatu, that has eleven languages without the Word of God. The Solomon Islands have fourteen Bible-less languages. Vae says these people groups are like his cousins, yet he didn't know of their need.

Just like the Ark of the Covenant

Then it hit Vae. Samoa used to be without God's Word too. The missionaries made an alphabet and writing system and they translated the Scriptures for Vae's ancestors. He wouldn't be able to read the Bible in Samoan if they hadn't come! They didn't merely give his forefathers the greatest book in the world. The missionaries taught them how to read. Now Vae could know his own story. All Samoans could. They could preserve their culture and identity as a people.

Vae wept for days after he realized this. He and his wife Julie left their ministry among First Nations tribes⁷⁰ in Canada. They returned to the Pacific to help end Bible poverty.

He says most of us don't understand the importance of the Bible. That understanding struck Vae when he visited a village in Vanuatu where the locals were receiving their first copies of God's Word. Hundreds came to celebrate. Chiefs and warriors decked themselves out in feathers, and jewelry made of shells, seeds, and bits of bone. They chanted and danced for joy. Then while they sang, young warriors bore the precious book in a box, perched on poles they carried on their shoulders—like it was the Ark of the Covenant. God was coming to live among them and speak from His book.

Scripture in your language is a truly priceless treasure. As Vae said, Bible translation is about more than finishing a project. It's God saying to the people, "I'm available to you. I speak your language."

⁷⁰ Native tribes in the United States are called Native Americans. In Canada they're called First Nations.

Chapter Fourteen

The Gift of Understanding

We need to end Bible poverty--in our world, our nation, our community, our family, and in ourselves.

Yes. In ourselves.

We can own a bookshelf full of Bibles. We can access many translations of God's Word on our smartphones. We can have world-class Bible teachers available to us on youtube or elsewhere on the internet. With a few clicks we can open commentaries and insights into the original Hebrew and Greek. But if we aren't making time for God's Word, asking the Holy Spirit to speak to us, if we're reading from a sense of duty or a careless attitude, we can develop Bible poverty ourselves.

We've already seen how Bible ignorance is growing, even among those who go to church every Sunday. Modern culture educates people all week through film, the internet, celebrity interviews, political speeches, the school system, the business culture, news commentators.... The list goes on and on. How can we expect a twenty-minute sermon once a week to help us understand the Bible, especially when popular culture is contradicting it 24/7?

A recent Barna survey revealed a growing rejection of faith among Americans. The percentage of adults who say the Bible is not a holy book has doubled in the past six years. Millennials are the most skeptical, with 22 percent saying the Bible is not sacred.⁷¹

The psalmist told us how to stand firm in a society that is turning from the Lord. In the first two verses of Psalms 1, he said we should not walk in step, nor take a stand with the skeptics. We shouldn't sit with mockers. And we should never sit in silence while they malign the character of God.

Instead we should delight in His Word, thinking carefully and prayerfully about it day and night.⁷² We will make time for whatever we find delightful.

Falling in Love with the Lord and His Word

As we immerse ourselves in Scripture, relying on the Spirit to bring fresh revelation, we will find ourselves delighting more and more in His Word. The result is that we will grow to love Him more and more. This is also how we begin to change our world. It seems obvious, doesn't it? We can't share what we don't have. We can't see our culture transformed if we aren't continually being transformed ourselves.

It's especially important to study those parts of God's Word that teach principles relating to the most important parts of community life. Because these are the ones under attack from the enemy.

⁷¹ available at <https://www.barna.org/research/faith-christianity/research-release/the-bible-in-america-6-year-trends#.V7gYSZgrI2w>; accessed 19 August 2016.

⁷² Ps. 1:1-2

During a family vacation on the western slope of the Rockies in Colorado, I was seeking the Lord, asking Him how we could obey what Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:19-20. The year was 1975. Even then our country was turning away from biblical principles with alarming speed. So were other nations.

I prayed, “Lord, how can we teach a nation?” We were supposed to be making disciples. But how could we do so when they were tearing down the foundations?

Seven Classrooms

As I prayed, the Lord gave me an idea. *There are seven classrooms, the most effective ways to influence a community or a nation.* I’d never heard of this concept but I grabbed a yellow legal pad and pen, and wrote as fast as I could.

The first classroom was the family; second, education; third, government; fourth, public communication; fifth, what we now call “celebration”--arts, entertainment, and sports; sixth, economy, which includes science, technology, medical, and business; and seventh, religious institutions.

Later we would see how the Bible is filled with these seven, with wisdom and instruction for each category. We would also call them “spheres,” instead of “classrooms.” But on that summer day in 1975, I knew the seven were about training, making disciples of the nations.

As I finished my list a forest ranger came up to our cabin. “You have a call at the ranger station, Mr Cunningham. It’s seven miles away.”

When I got to the station, I found the phone call was an assistant of Bill Bright. Bill was the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ (Cru). He wanted to invite Darlene and me to meet with him and Vonette the next day in Boulder.

Charlie Green flew us over the mountains the next day. When we arrived I was glad I had grabbed my blue blazer. I knew Bill always wore one. He never appeared in public without a tie, either.

As we greeted one another, I reached into my jacket to pull out my yellow piece of paper. The list of seven. But before I could get mine unfolded, Bill had a piece of white paper out.

“Loren, look what the Lord just gave me!”

I looked at his list in wonder. It was worded a bit differently but he had the same items and the same idea. This was the way God wanted us to influence every country.

Three weeks later, Darlene happened to see Dr. Francis Schaeffer on television. He was talking about the same seven parts of any country.

Since then the idea of the seven has spread to others in the Body of Christ. Some call it “The Seven Mountains.” It’s obvious the Lord wants His people to have this concept again at this point in history.⁷³

Hans Nielsen Hauge also understood this. He proved the Bible has answers for every area of life. That idea changed Norway dramatically. As members of Hauge’s small groups

⁷³ Abraham Kuyper, a Dutch minister and prime minister, had a similar set of beliefs regarding three spheres of sovereignty. He divided his three spheres into categories that coincide with those given to me and Bill Bright separately during the summer of 1975. Available from http://www.understandingworldreligions.com/chapter-summaries/cp_22_summary.pdf; accessed 23 August 2016.

discovered, literacy, leadership, and knowledge increased at the same pace as their understanding of the Bible.

Our lives and our nations will be blessed when we become disciples and make disciples in the spheres.

The Bible Is Not Enough

Yes, the Bible has the answers. But we also need the Holy Spirit to guide us into Scripture. We need Him to give us revelation. It goes beyond training or education. We need to hear His voice as we read. Has a Scripture ever stood out to capture your attention as you read? That's often how the Holy Spirit applies His Word to your heart.

The Scriptures were written by “prophets, [who] though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”⁷⁴ Second Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness....”

That's the way people wrote the Bible. They were carried along by the Holy Spirit and God breathed His Word through them. We need the Spirit to carry us along when we read His Word. We need the breath of God to understand it and apply it.

The other side of the coin is also true. If we do not rely on the Spirit when we read God's Word, we can misunderstand it, or even become deceived. The Scriptures warn that the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.⁷⁵ Bible study is good. But if you separate it from dependence on the Holy Spirit the result can be cold, hard legalism.

⁷⁴ 2 Peter 1:20-21

⁷⁵ 2 Cor. 3:6

Chapter Fifteen

Training Outside the Box

We also need the Lord's guidance when we train others. Otherwise we will rely on our own education, teaching the way our teachers taught us. We will miss the ways He wants to use us in these rapidly changing times. We want to teach timeless truths in innovative ways. Only the Lord can keep us on the cutting edge. He is never caught by surprise.

Leaning on Him for revelation rather than trusting old habits is vital when we're training cross-culturally. The Holy Spirit never has culture shock either. He knows every culture of every ethnē on the planet, intimately. He will give us the right approach to our students.

When the Lord led us to found the University of the Nations, we had to depend on the Holy Spirit's guidance. We were beginning a university unlike any other.⁷⁶

It was clearly time for a new wineskin for new wine.⁷⁷

Something Unlike Anything Else

The Lord graciously guided us in our foundational years. He blessed our efforts, then gave us bigger challenges, stretching us more and more. Some of what He taught us may help as you step into your calling.

⁷⁶ For more information on U of N go <http://www.uofnkona.edu/>; accessed 19 August 2016.

⁷⁷ Matt. 9:17

Take our entry point for instance, the Discipleship Training School (DTS). When someone wants to enroll in the University of the Nations, or work with us on staff, he or she first attends a Discipleship Training School (DTS).

We currently operate almost two thousand DTS's in 700 locations in 160 nations, teaching our students in about one hundred languages. During DTS, students learn to know God better and make Him known to others. They find out how to hear the voice of God by submitting to the Holy Spirit and listening to Him. As they take steps of obedience, they discover the faithfulness of God to provide for their needs and open doors for them.

During those beginning years of the university, He was calling us to do something none of us had experienced or learned in our academic backgrounds. We asked the Lord for the details. How do we organize our courses? What spiritual and academic requirements do we set? How do we keep Jesus at the center of every course, not just the religious ones?

There isn't space to tell all the unique characteristics the Lord told us to put into the University of the Nations.⁷⁸ But I'll share one bit of guidance He gave us for the DTS.

The Lord called our attention to 2 Peter 1:5 where the apostle told his converts, "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge."

We noticed the order Peter placed those values in. First, our students should have faith--choosing to believe God, to hear and obey His Word. Next, they were to add virtue--they must stay true to Jesus, growing more like Him. Finally, they were ready to gain knowledge.

⁷⁸ For more information on the University of the Nations, go to www.uofnkona.edu.

The First Temptation

It's a mistake to begin with knowledge. That was the original temptation in the Garden of Eden. The serpent offered them knowledge so they could "be like God."⁷⁹

People often say knowledge is power. But if we gain knowledge without faith and virtue, we might end up wielding that power in an unrighteous way.

The order of those qualities in 2 Peter 1:5 is why we require our U of N students to take the DTS first. After that we offer courses that add knowledge to faith and virtue. We have more than 500 upper-level schools, seminars, and workshops, offering training in the seven spheres. But it all begins with faith and virtue.

Stepping Into the Bible

While every U of N course is founded on God's Word, some focus entirely on the Bible. There are plenty of fascinating courses, but I'll tell about two that offer new ways to encounter the Bible.

In the School of Biblical Studies (SBS), students read through the entire Bible, outlining it chronologically, studying every verse of Scripture five times, writing thirteen hundred sermon outlines, and drawing a chart of the entire Bible.

While completing such training is a significant achievement, what's more important is the process of baptizo--soaking in the Word. These unique SBS courses are offered in forty countries.

⁷⁹ Gen 3:5

Another school, Word by Heart, is yet another way to experience Scripture. Think of it as Bible training combined with a school of drama. Students memorize Scripture by a different means. Instead of learning by repetition, the students step into the story. They memorize an entire Gospel, such as Luke, presenting it as a dramatic, word-for-word, one-person play. Word by Heart Schools are now scattered over six continents.

When I first heard a Word by Heart presentation, I felt like I was on the streets of Jerusalem two thousand years ago, encountering Jesus along with His original audience.

Especially for Non-churchgoers

Of course, YWAMers are not the only ones helping to end Bible poverty through education. Jesus taught His followers concepts that turned their lives upside down. The church engaged in training from its beginning.

In our time, special ministries have offered biblical training to various segments of society. One of the best is the Alpha Course. It's designed for non-churchgoers and new Christians, "a practical introduction to the Christian faith."⁸⁰

A host couple invites people to come for dinner. They tell their guests their questions about Christianity will be answered. Because the approach is warm and friendly, Alpha Course has led to countless conversions and church growth.

⁸⁰ Gordon R. Lewis, "Alpha Course: Evaluating Alpha, *CRI*, available from <http://www.equip.org/article/alpha-course-evaluating-alpha/>; Accessed 12 August 2016.

One and a Half Million Brits

Tens of thousands of Alpha Courses are running in 110 countries. It's quickly spreading to prisons, businesses, and schools.⁸¹ In the United States, Alpha is offered in more than two thousand churches and in more than forty-eight denominations, from Roman Catholic to Pentecostal.⁸² In the UK where Alpha Course began they have reached 1.5 million Brits.

Of course, Bible study differs from culture to culture and sphere to sphere. When we speak of an end to Bible poverty through education, we include everyone. Significant differences exist: cultural, urban vs rural settings, belief systems before learning of Christ, and of course, language. Some people groups have had the Bible in their language for centuries. Others have only recently received one. That's why we must each ask the Lord how to accomplish the calling He's giving us.

To end Bible poverty we need the whole Body of Christ. No matter which of the seven spheres you relate to, there is something you can do. What experience, talents, or gifts has the Lord given you? Ask the Lord what part He wants you to play. There are numerous possibilities.

Becoming Literate at Stunning Speed

This story may sound unbelievable, but I saw it happen. It's a miracle of a different kind.

Some of our staff, including David Hamilton, had been studying the problem of the hundreds of millions who couldn't read. This meant they couldn't read the Bible or study the commentaries of men and women of God. They couldn't use the internet or record their own

⁸¹ *ibid*

⁸² *ibid*

history. Most importantly, they couldn't develop their God-given talents. This kept them in poverty. They felt inferior.

David's group had been meeting to research and pray about this for six years. They knew the problem, they just couldn't come up with the answer.

A few years ago, Chong Ho assembled a group of twenty YWAM staff and leaders to tackle something else--how to proceed with an IT ministry. I was in this gathering and so was David.

As we waited on the Lord, I thought of what David had been struggling with. I felt led to go over and lay my hands on his head. Others joined me as we asked the Lord to use him in a new and powerful way. We asked Him to give David a creative word.

The moment we prayed God gave David a new writing system. It rushed into his mind, the whole plan, how it would work, and the way it would apply to every language.

A Linguistic Game Changer

Soon David began working with other YWAMers, including Edson and Marcia dos Santos Suzuki, veteran linguists who decoded languages of indigenous tribes in the Amazon for more than twenty years. They began to develop the system the Lord had given to David.

They named it UniSkript. It is the first system that can reduce all seven thousand spoken, written, and unwritten languages of the world into a useable “orthography.”⁸³ Orthography is “the representation of the sounds of a language by written or printed symbols.”⁸⁴

UniSkript is a game changer in the world of linguistics. No written language in history has used characters that shows how to use the lips, palate, mouth, and throat to make the sounds of speech.⁸⁵ UniSkript does this. People look at the symbols and know immediately how to sound it out. As they pronounce the symbols they recognize one of their words. They go on to the next symbols and say another word. Soon they are reading their language. It’s intuitive. We describe it as “icono-phono-logical.” The symbols are “icons,” showing where the sounds are made in the physical body. “Phono” shows how the sounds are made. Also it’s “logical.” It makes sense. People instantly recognized it.

Today universities are discovering UniSkript, the innovation God gave in an instant. We have 84 patents on UniSkript. The patent lawyer said he has never handled something so amazing. He said, “This will do more good than all the religions in the world put together!”

I’m not sure about that. But UniSkript has been tested on six continents with more than thirty languages. The tests revealed those using UniSkript can teach people to read in their mother tongue in two weeks or less.⁸⁶

⁸³ “What is Uniskript?,” *What We Do*, UniSkript Research & Literacy Institute, Copyright 2016; available from <http://uniskript.org/what-is-uniskript>; accessed 14 July 2016. For other information see also, <http://www.uofnkona.edu/ministries/uniskript/>; accessed 24 August 2016.

⁸⁴ Available from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/orthography>; accessed 14 July 2016.

⁸⁵ Available from <http://uniskript.org/what-is-uniskript>; accessed 10 August 2016.

⁸⁶ Available at <http://uniskript.org/>; accessed 24 August 2016.

Many recognize how revolutionary it is. But we know God gave UniSkript to end illiteracy and Bible poverty, and to finish the Great Commission.

Chapter Sixteen

Engaging With The Word

Water and a Lightsaber

Before we can see transformation in our communities, in our cities, or in our countries, we have to be transformed ourselves.⁸⁷ It starts with us. God says, “If my people....” If.

The Bible is not just a book or an app. It’s the Lord Jesus opening His heart to us, welcoming us as a friend. It’s there that we encounter the living God. As we open our Bibles and our hearts to the Holy Spirit, we begin to change. Saint Paul compared the Bible to bathing: “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word....”⁸⁸

We can also think of the Bible as a *Star Wars* lightsaber, slashing away things that don’t belong. “For the Word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.”⁸⁹

We become new people. We learn to know Him and become His friends. We don’t want to bring pain to His heart. That’s the real motivation for change.

⁸⁷ 2 Chron. 7:14

⁸⁸ Eph. 5:25b-26 NASB

⁸⁹ Heb. 4:12 NLT

When Potiphar’s wife tried to trap Joseph into a sexual liaison, Joseph wasn’t worried about losing his position or his reputation. He was alarmed at the thought of sinning against God because he was His friend.⁹⁰

That’s where transformation begins. It’s as if your mind becomes rewired. Instead of living for yourself, you live for the Lord. Paul described the process. “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.”⁹¹

Detoxing the Mind

Danny Lehmann, a close friend, has been a missionary with YWAM since 1980. He used to surf, hanging out on California beaches. But like multitudes of young people in the 1970s, he damaged his mind and body with drugs.

Then one day Danny was surfing at Hook Beach in Santa Cruz, California. Two young men walked up to him on the beach and gave him a gospel tract. After he got alone, he read it and gave his life to Jesus. He was thrilled to know he was right with God and on the way to his new life. There was one problem. He knew his soul was saved, but his mind and body were still messed up from all the drugs.

Danny plunged into the Word of God everyday. He started memorizing key portions. The more he read and memorized, the more he wanted. He says the Bible was washing his brain, clearing his thinking, and restoring his memory. His long-term drug habit lost its appeal and he

⁹⁰ Gen. 39: 9b

⁹¹ Rom. 12:2

stopped getting drunk. As he continued to memorize passages, his mind began to heal and his body grew strong. He was being transformed.

Danny is now a zealous evangelist and a charismatic leader, motivating and training thousands of young people internationally every year. He serves as the Dean of the College of Christian Ministries of the University of the Nations. And he still has that gospel tract two young men gave him on the beach at Santa Cruz years ago.

Former US Attorney General, John Ashcroft is an acquaintance of mine. His father encouraged me during some difficult days not long after we began Youth With A Mission.

Recently John Ashcroft said, “If we put the Word of God into the mouths of people, it will find its way to the hearts of people. Once it’s in their hearts it finds its way into the hands and feet.”⁹² As transformation happens in person after person, finding its way from their hearts into their hands and feet, a spiritual awakening begins to stir. Energy mounts. It’s like the power that pushes a giant wave. The water isn’t what causes it to crash on shore. It’s the energy pushing the water forward.

The Holy Spirit is the one who’s providing the energy, pushing the waves. God’s Word says, “It’s not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit.”⁹³ We can’t push the wave but we can ride them. Soon the waves will flood the whole world, like in the vision Habakkuk saw.⁹⁴

⁹² John Ashcroft, former Governor of Missouri, U.S Senator, and US Attorney General. From a video, <https://www.evangel.edu/videos/guest-lecture-series-john-ashcroft/>. Quote at 4:00.

⁹³ Zech. 4:6a NASB

⁹⁴ Hab. 2:14 NLT

Experiencing the Drama of God’s Story

We’ve seen how God has stirred people to create innovations that help us in this great push. Because of technology, God has made it easier and faster to take His Word to the whole world.

Other innovations allow us to experience the Bible in new ways. The SourceView Suite of Bibles is designed for students of God’s Word. These Bibles open up new ways of experiencing God’s Word.

The first in the suite, SourceView uses colors and layout to indicate who is speaking. Red shows when one of the Trinity is speaking. Black denotes the narrator of the book, while green is used for primary characters, and blue for secondary ones. Some say it’s like reading a movie script. The story comes front and center.

It’s ideal for small Bible study groups and family devotions. Members can pick one of the colors, then take turns reading the Scripture aloud. When an individual is studying God’s Word alone, he can easily track who is speaking and what is going on—almost as if he is reliving what happened thousands of years ago.

David Hamilton developed SourceView.⁹⁵ It’s the first major change in text formatting since the Scriptures were broken into verses five hundred years ago.

⁹⁵ David Joel Hamilton, a long-time YWAMer, is the International Vice President for Strategic Innovation at the University of the Nations.

A Billion Ways to Study and Understand the Bible

The second in the suite is new--the SphereView Bible. It's an unprecedented aid for Bible study. Because it's such an innovation, it's hard to describe. It would be impossible to put into a book. In fact, it's not a book at all. It's an app. The IT revolution had to come to the point it is right now before it could have been done.

As you can tell by its name, this app for studying the Bible shows the seven spheres throughout the verses of Old and New Testaments. It has icons and color-coding that show which of the seven spheres each verse relates to. Since many verses relate to two or more spheres, this requires a digital format. Think of it as each verse wrapped in layers of meaning, with a multitude of links you can follow to other passages.

With a few clicks, you can access every Scripture relating to a certain sphere, or a sphere as it relates to a people group, like Israel. Or you could explore one sphere's relation to another sphere. You may want to know everything Jesus said about family concerns, or when He said it. You can then search for what the Bible says about the family relating to government.

It's dazzling. With all its metadata, the SphereView offers more than a billion and a half ways to explore God's Word.

The two others in the suite are VerbView Bible and CommandView. They haven't been released yet, but they will also be digital. The VerbView reveals the character of God, showing in each verse what He has thought, felt, the words He has spoken, and the actions He has taken.

The CommandView displays everything He expects of human beings. It shows how each command is motivated by Father God's heart of love for us.

All four in the digital suite of Bibles will connect. So you will be able to see, for example, everything God said He will do for families who follow His commands.

These are some of the awesome gifts the Lord has given us for this time in history. We are blessed to see these things.

Chapter Seventeen

A Dangerous Book

Have you wondered why tyrants fear the Bible? They pretend it's a book of fairy tales, telling about a God who doesn't exist. If so, why do they destroy every Bible they find? Why do they imprison or kill people who have a Bible or who believe in the God of the Bible? What do they fear? And why do people risk their lives for a copy?

The Bible is dangerous to those who want to exercise absolute control. Jesus said you will know the truth and the truth shall make you free.⁹⁶

Horace Greeley was a great newspaper man and an activist against slavery. He ran for US President in the nineteenth century. Greeley said, "It is impossible to enslave, mentally, or socially a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom."

The Word of God sets people free politically. But it brings freedom in other ways. As we saw in Danny Lehmann's story, it sets your mind and body free. It liberates you from personal sin as it did for the tribe in Guatemala mentioned in chapter three. Church members there found freedom from alcoholism, domestic violence, and adultery after they read the Bible in their own language. The Bible sets you free from ignorance and cultural bondage as experienced in

⁹⁶ John 8:32

Norway by Hans Nielsen Hauge's groups. The Word of God also enables people to transform the spheres to which they've been called.

The forces of darkness have attacked the sphere of government, specifically law enforcement. A few years ago I was in Netherlands where I met with Ed Silvosa of Argentina. He and his wife were speaking at YWAM and other places around Amsterdam.

What Happened to the Murder Capital?

Ed said he wanted to tell me about Juarez, Mexico. I knew the area well. YWAM has a beautiful location outside Juarez called Rancho de los Amigos. It is a ministry for orphans.

I also knew the terrible reputation of Juarez and the state of Chihuahua. The area was one of the deadliest places in the world. Drug cartels waged war against one another and the townspeople--men, women, and children. They killed thirty thousand in a handful of years.⁹⁷

Mayors and police officers were the biggest targets. Some were beheaded, others beaten to death. Gangs had murdered eleven mayors in the area by 2010. The carnage was horrific.⁹⁸

When the Silvosas visited Juarez, Ed asked the residents to pray for their police and their streets. They began to intercede. After a few years passed, people took notice. The crime rate

⁹⁷ available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marisol_Valles_García; accessed 29 July 2016

⁹⁸ Leigh Lundin "A Fistful of Valor," *Criminal Brief*, October 24; Available from <http://criminalbrief.com/?p=14303>; Accessed 29 July 2016.

plummeted. According to a 2011 CNN report, more than three thousand were killed in twelve months. But as of April, 2015, only eighty-nine had died.

“Look at this, Loren.” Ed held out a photo. I looked and saw the skyline of the city. A sign on a mountainside facing the city read, “Ciudad Juarez.” Then I noticed. Below the sign residents had used white rocks to spell out, “La Biblia es Verdad. Lea La.” It meant, “The Bible Is Truth. Read It.”

When I read the CNN report, of 2015, the writer quoted several sources who ventured theories of why the crime rate had dropped.⁹⁹ They didn’t have a real answer. But we know. Juarez shows that prayer and the Bible are the only means for transformation.

A Worn-out Bible

Listen to what one Christian leader says about his much-used Bible:

“If you could see my Bible, you would not be particularly impressed.... Such an old, worn-out book! [But] I love my old Bible, which has accompanied me half my life. It has been

⁹⁹Nick Valencia, CNN

“After Years of Violence and Death, ‘Life is Back’ in Juarez,” Updated 1:17 PM ET, Tue April 21, 2015; available from <http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/21/americas/mexico-ciudad-juarez-tourism/>; Accessed 10 August 2016.

with me in my times of joy and times of tears. It is my most precious treasure--I live out of it, and I wouldn't take anything in the world for it."

Those are the words of Pope Francis. That might surprise some. But when my wife and I and three other YWAMers had a private meeting with the pontiff in November of 2014, we found a man who loves Jesus and loves the Bible.

In an article from the Catholic News Agency, Pope Francis called the Bible a "highly dangerous book." He said, "There are more persecuted Christians in the world today than in the early days of the Church." Believers were persecuted because they wore a cross or had a Bible.

Pope Francis also shared his own Bible reading habits. "Often I read a little and then put it away and contemplate the Lord. Not that I see the Lord, but He looks at me. He's there. I let myself look at Him. And I feel — this is not sentimentality — I feel deeply the things that the Lord tells me.

"Sometimes He does not speak. I then feel nothing, only emptiness, emptiness, emptiness. But I remain patiently, and so I wait, reading and praying."

The pope said sometimes he falls asleep while praying. "But it does not matter. I'm like a son with the father, and that is what's important."

Recently, Pope Francis urged one million young people at a youth gathering in Poland to engage with the Bible every day. He said the Bible isn't meant to be on our shelves but in our hands. "Ask yourself if God is touching you in the depths of your longing," he said. "Only in this

way can the force of the Word of God unfold. Only in this way can it change our lives, making them great and beautiful.”¹⁰⁰

Chapter Eighteen

It’s Not a Suggestion

Is it possible to end Bible poverty all over the world? It is if we all do our part. No one organization or movement has the resources to finish Bible translation, production, and distribution. Our resources are like the five small barley loaves and two fishes. We must see what is already in our hands. Everyone has something. We need to pray, give financially, and go--next door or to the remotest islands, jungles, and mountain villages in the world.

It’s going to happen. The Lord is pressing us into action. He has given us talented people and anointed partnerships. He has led men and women to create amazing technological tools. But we need to give Him our own loaves and fishes before He can multiply them.

¹⁰⁰ “Pope Francis to youth: the Bible can change your life. Now read it!” *Catholic News Agency*; available from <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-to-youth-the-bible-can-change-your-life-now-read-it-18483/>; Accessed 29 July 2016.

One Million Intercessors

Our first step is prayer. Our enemy is more powerful than we are, but he will not prevail over the Holy Spirit and the prayers of intercessors. I'm calling for one million commitments from those who will petition the Lord regularly until this vision is fulfilled.

Are you willing to pray? If so, go to <http://endbiblepovertynow.com/> and sign the pledge.

Besides prayer there are other ways to get involved. You can go on a short-term mission to assist professional linguists, as we saw in chapter ten. You can distribute Bibles where you live. Don't assume everyone in your neighborhood already has the Word of God.

Seek the Lord to know what part you are to play. Invite your church to get involved, but don't be discouraged if they aren't interested. Be open to working with other parts of the Body of Christ. But get the blessing of the gatekeepers.

Ask the Lord who is to be on your team. Meet together and plan what you will commit to, how to share what you're doing with the community, how to raise money for the Bibles, and where you will buy them, whether from a publisher or from one of the Bible societies.

If you are a businessman, a police chief, a schoolteacher, an IT worker, or any other professional, ask the Holy Spirit how you can be involved. In Youth With A Mission we have partnerships with people in all of the seven spheres, including many in business, for example, in the IT industry. We help mobilize and encourage such groups. We seek even more partnerships with people on the job, showing how they can help end Bible poverty within their workplace, or use their professional expertise to contribute to the project elsewhere.

Live the Adventure

Going to the “uttermost parts of the world” is another option. Live the adventure of a lifetime. Come with us to climb the Himalayas, caravan through Central Africa, knock on doors in urban centers, or board a small ship bound for some of the remotest islands on earth.

You can even earn an AA degree from YWAM’s University of the Nations while helping to end Bible poverty. For details, see “A Special Opportunity” in the back of this book.

Enough for China, India, and the World

This is the time to take action. Because of the technology God has given us, 80 percent of the world’s population has access to the New Testament in the language of their heart. There has never been such preparation for spreading God’s Word. We’ve seen in chapter six the many IT innovations that are ready. Soon satellites will beam down Scripture to handhelds and smartphones, even to those living in countries that are violently opposed to God and His Word.

Don’t forget Bibles in print either. Did you know China is producing the greatest number of Bibles in the world? One group of printers in China alone is cranking out one complete Chinese Bible every four seconds. That’s fifteen per minute, 900 per hour, 21,600 per day, 129,600 per six-day week, 6,739,200 per year. They can print 30,326,400 Bibles by Christmas of 2020. That’s a shortfall for the 47,174,399 homes of China.¹⁰¹ But if you take into consideration

¹⁰¹ Some may wonder how 1,357 billion can only have 47,174,399 homes. Remember that millions of Chinese households average five people, with three or four generations living together.

the millions and millions of Chinese homes with internet, we can reach the goal. Every home in China, in India, in the world.

The Lord has given us new ways to engage with His Word, such as the SourceView Suite of Bibles. It gives us layers of understanding applied to the seven spheres, allowing us more than one billion ways to study God's wisdom for every part of life.

What about the ones who are illiterate, or can only read poorly? For these 785 million people there is UniSkript, allowing them to learn to read in their language in two weeks or less.

An Objective and a Deadline

All of these things God has released to make it easier for us to do His will. How can we delay taking God's Word to everyone? We are sowing the seed for the mightiest spiritual awakening in history.

Here's a goal for all of us in the Body of Christ. A goal has to have a clear, measurable objective, as well as a deadline. Presently there are about 1,776 Bible-less languages without one portion of the Bible. Our objective is to offer audio New Testaments plus the first twelve chapters of Genesis to every household on earth, in their mother tongue. In the second phase of ending Bible Poverty we can give them the rest of the Bible.

Our objective also includes offering these to nomadic tribes, the homeless, and those in prisons and institutions. We want to go from 1,776 languages without any portion of the Bible to

zero--not one language without a sizable portion of the Bible. Our deadline will be December 25, 2020.¹⁰²

We also want to reach those who have the Bible in their language but don't know about it yet. They've never heard of Jesus, never met a Christian, and have never seen God's Book. Our goal is to also offer Bibles to those who don't have one in their home. This is what it means to end Bible poverty now.

December 25, 2020. Can you think of a better birthday gift for Jesus than taking His Word to every home on earth?

Jesus is crying out to you, "Do it!" He's not suggesting it. He's commanding it. Go and disciple all nations. Get His Word out to them. Immerse them in it by teaching them to obey everything He's commanded. Because He has promised, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age."¹⁰³

We can do this. God is going to back us up. He says He's looking all over the world for those who are fully committed to Him. What's more, He promises to strengthen you.¹⁰⁴ Let's get the Bible into every language. Let's get it onto the internet. Let's get it out in printed copies. He wants us to be transformed, then He wants to use us to transform the nations. Because Jesus promised...

¹⁰² This number is my computation drawing upon those from the Bible translation ministries. They all differ from each other but the reason is simple. The numbers are changing so fast. The number of Bible-less languages goes down as they complete translations. The number goes up if they discover another language group.

¹⁰³ Matt. 28:19-20

¹⁰⁴ 2 Chron. 16:9 NLT

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Matt. 24:35

A Special Opportunity

Our goal is to take Scripture to each of the 1,776 language groups that have no portion of God's Word. This is my call to you. Join in and we will give you training at the same time you help end Bible poverty.

You can immerse yourself in the Word of God, participate in field assignments that spread God's Word, all while earning an AA degree with YWAM's University of the Nations.*

Attending a Discipleship Training School comes first, in one of our locations in 160 countries. After that you can attend any of our second-level Bible courses. There are numerous ones, including the ones I mentioned in this book--Word by Heart, and SBS. Go to uofn.edu and select "Christian Ministries" for more information on these.

In addition, you can choose from different tracks--schools for teaching UniSkript, or learning from professional Bible translators. Another track would prepare you to assist in film sound tracks or verbal recordings in other languages. As with all University of the Nations courses, your staff will be joined by visiting teachers coming from active work in their special field. In this AA degree program, many trainers will be our partners in ending Bible poverty.

Every course will be followed by field assignments, as you help professional translators, filmmakers, and audio engineers get God's Word out to the world. Or you may have the thrill of helping a tribe learn to read their own language.

Your field trips will probably be in various parts of the world. Each school prays and asks the Lord where their teams should go.

All of your training will be aimed at the goal--getting *The JESUS Film* and the New Testament plus twelve chapters of Genesis into all of the 1,776 Bible-less languages by

Christmas of 2020. Our aim is to go from 1,776 to zero. That is, that no one will be able to find a single language without some part of the Word of God. Instead the Bible will be in all 7,000 languages on earth.

Come, get involved. Be a world changer.

Contact us, and go to the website: *endbiblepovertynow.com*.

Sign up for the prayer commitment.

Information on the EBPB AA degree go to: *uofn.edu, or uofnkona.edu*

* University of the Nations is accredited with the Global Accreditation Association (For Christian educational institutions from preschool through universities, worldwide.)

A Covenant to End Bible Poverty Now

I commit to the Lord to help End Bible Poverty Now by praying regularly and doing what the Holy Spirit leads me to do.

Signature:

The goal is one million praying and obeying. Will you also be a multiplier as Jesus said?

"... the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." -- Matt 13:23

"Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth..." -- Gen 1:28

With God's help I will mobilize others to go to endbiblepovertynow.com to sign and commit to pray regularly and obey the Holy Spirit.

____ Just pray ____ 100 others ____ 60 others ____ 30 others

Signature _____

(If you want to be one of the one million signers on a list displayed in public areas, such as museums, go to endbiblepovertynow.com and sign online. Offer this as well to those you mobilize to sign and pray.)

Resources

Books by Loren Cunningham from www.ywampublishing.com

The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country, by Loren Cunningham, with Janice Rogers, YWAM Publishing

Is That Really You, God? by Loren Cunningham, with Janice Rogers, YWAM Publishing

Making Jesus Lord, by Loren Cunningham, with Janice Rogers, YWAM Publishing

Daring to Live on the Edge: The Adventure of Faith and Finances, by Loren Cunningham, with Janice Rogers, YWAM Publishing

Why Not Women? A Fresh Look at Scripture on Women in Missions, Ministry, and Leadership,
By Loren Cunningham and David Hamilton, with Janice Rogers, YWAM Publishing

Other Books

The Book that Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization, by Vishal Mangalwadi, Thomas Nelson Publisher

Discipling Nations: The Power of Truth to Transform Cultures, by Darrow L. Miller and Stan Guthrie, YWAM Publishing

SourceView and SphereView Bibles

Demo Site for SourceView and SphereView, <http://beta.scripturesys.com/>

SourceView Suite of Bibles (SourceView, SphereView, and coming soon, CommandView and VerbView), <https://vimeo.com/138527890>

Brief Tutorial on SourceView, <https://vimeo.com/24106610>

Videos

<i>How to Do an Oral Translation</i>	http://endbiblepovertynow.com/vision.cfm?video
<i>How Bible Translation Works</i>	http://endbiblepovertynow.com/vision.cfm?video
<i>How Bible Translation Works, pt 2</i>	http://endbiblepovertynow.com/vision.cfm?video
<i>Our Lives Tell a Story</i>	http://endbiblepovertynow.com/vision.cfm?video
<i>Wycliffe, Your Prayers Help...</i>	http://endbiblepovertynow.com/vision.cfm?video

Links:

Wycliffe	https://www.wycliffe.org
American Bible Society	http://www.americanbible.org/
Pioneers	https://www.pioneerbible.org/
Every Tribe, Every Nation	http://www.everytribeeverynation.org/
Seed Company	https://theseedcompany.org/
The Jesus Film Project	http://www.jesusfilm.org/
The Issachar Initiative	http://issacharinitiative.org/
SIL	http://www.sil.org/
International Mission Board	http://www.imb.org/
One Story	http://www.onestory.org/
Transworld Radio	https://www.twr.org/
Faith Comes By Hearing	https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/
Renew Outreach	http://www.renewoutreach.com/
Global Recordings	http://globalrecordings.net/en/
Pacific Wa'a	http://pacificwaa.org/?page_id=38

The Christian Magna Carta

We affirm The Christian Magna Carta which describes the following basic rights as implicit in the gospel. Everyone on earth has the right to:

- Hear and understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Have a Bible available in their own language.
- Have a Christian fellowship available nearby, to be able to meet for fellowship regularly each week, and to have Biblical teaching and worship with others in the Body of Christ.
- Have a Christian education available for their children.
- Have the basic necessities of life: food, water, clothing, shelter and health care.
- Lead a productive life of fulfillment spiritually, mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically.

We commit ourselves, by God's grace, to fulfill this covenant and to live for His glory.

To Become a Part of Ending Bible Poverty...

Contact Dax Fears at Kona Bible Office, konabibleoffice@gmail.com