

October 2023 Newsletter



Bill and Rita Johnson



John and Sharon Sanders

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Year of the Bible!

by Bill Johnson

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance." Psalm 33:12

Public Law 97-280
 The 97th Congress of the United States publicly declared 1983 the national "Year of the Bible". WHEREAS the Bible, the Word of God, has made a unique contribution in shaping the United States as a distinctive and blessed nation and people; WHEREAS deeply held religious convictions springing from the Holy Scriptures led to the early settlement of our Nation; WHEREAS Biblical teachings inspired concepts of civil government that are contained in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States; WHEREAS many of our great national leaders—among them Presidents Washington, Jackson, Lincoln, and Wilson—paid tribute to the surpassing influence of the Bible in our country's development, as in the words of President Jackson that the Bible is "the Rock on which our Republic rests";

There it was! On the cluttered bulletin board in the tiny museum of an old building in Elk City, Idaho, was the clipping of a law enacted by Congress forty years ago, in 1983. Rita and I were in town from Dixie RV Park for a few supplies while on a vacation tour of the Idaho mountains. The clipping aroused memories.

In 1983, I was serving the churches of the ABA as director of public relations. The pastors of Texarkana met for coffee every Monday. I had read that President Ronald Reagan, as authorized by Congress in Public Law 97-280, had signed a proclamation making it the "Year of the Bible." Remembering the church member at Lowell Street Baptist Church who had an outdoor advertising business, I suggested to the pastors that the churches should publish Reagan's proclamation. The church member had volunteered to put up a sign on every unsold billboard! The churches would pay just the cost of making the signs. As many as ten were

posted for the remainder of the year! The President and the Congress had made it clear. The churches joined in celebrating the "Year of the Bible!"

Now, forty years later, we must refresh the minds of Americans that, as President Reagan said, "I've often wondered — within the covers of that single Book [the Bible] are all the answers to all the problems that face us today if we'd only look there."

Upon signing the proclamation that 1983 be the "Year of the Bible," Regan said: "I hope Americans will read and study the Bible in 1983. It's my firm belief that the enduring values . . . presented in its pages have a great

meaning for each of us and for our nation. The Bible can touch our hearts, order our minds, refresh our souls."

Please join me in making this, after forty years of drifting away from God, a year of renewal: Let us make 2023 the Year of the Bible! In personal life by reading the Bible through annually and by studying a passage of Scripture every day. May we also go public with the Bible, giving copies of it to anyone we find without one, learning to quote Scripture in every-day conversations, and centering our family time around God's Word. This year and every year must become a "Year of the Bible" for all of God's people!

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER TRAVELS



Pastor Jerry Smith of Shiloh Baptist, Post Falls, Idaho answers a difficult Bible question for the pastors and deacons.

The Pastor's and Wife's fellowship of the churches in Montana was a real blessing for Rita and me. Hosted by North Hills Missionary Baptist in Helena, Montana, the meeting was attended by pastors and deacons and their wives from around the state and one from Idaho. The pastors enjoyed a time of fellowship centered on the preaching of God's Word.



North Hills Baptist Church, Helena, Montana



News from Kenya

Moses and Titus continue to print and distribute *Character Code for Life* books for children of Kenya. They were also blessed to provide the Bible study books for over two hundred in South Sudan.



News from Philippines

Because of damage caused by heavy rain, it was necessary to replace the pump supplying water from the well. We have also constructed a temporary house to cover the well, protecting it not only from the rain, but also from the extreme heat of the tropical sun. We are thankful that staff members were able to use left-over lumber from the building project to complete the well house.



We have found a source for paper, at a great saving from paper costs in the USA. This will prove advantageous to printing the Tagalog language books in the Philippines. Florence continues to learn how to operate the four-color printing press. Soon we will be able to supply thousands of *Character Code for Life* books for the children in the Philippines.





Monsoon rains have struck Myanmar (Burma), flooding even the building housing Hope Children's Home. But God has blessed. We are also touched by the outpouring of love for the children of Hope from the children of Redmond Missionary Baptist, Redmond, Oregon. In addition to the thirty-three backpacks they filled, the Redmond Character Club members have generously given of their resources to provide a great Christmas for the children of Hope!

ICP Project Coordinator Jacob Tubal has been blessed to hold yet another teacher training session to show teachers of several churches how to use the *Character Code for Life* curriculum to train their children in the way of the Lord.



Backpack/Humanitarian Ministry

Backpacks, pillowcase dresses, boys short pants and T-shirts, and hygiene kits are a significant way to reach children of the Philippines with the message of Christ. We are on target for fifteen hundred Backpacks, about four hundred dresses and many hygiene kits for shipment in December.

We especially appreciate Mrs. Lucy Welch from Bethel Baptist Church in Ashdown, Arkansas, and the church in Southeast Texas for their dresses and boy's t-shirts and short pants. While on a tour of churches in the Northwest, Rita and I picked up Backpacks from Shiloh Baptist in Post Falls, Idaho, and Redmond Missionary Baptist, pastor Fred McCarn, in Redmond, Oregon. Victory Baptist Church, Sherman, Texas, Pastor Sid Hunter, loaded our pickup truck with 111 Backpacks.

These things will be a real blessing to the children of the Philippines.



Pictured are boxes of pillowcase dresses, t-shirts and shorts from a Sewing Club in Southeast Texas

John's Notes

ASSOCIATIONAL MEETINGS:

It was good to be able to attend four Arkansas local association meetings in September. In addition to giving a report about our overseas ministry, I shared samples of our *Character Code for Life* curriculum with all who expressed interest in beginning a Character Club at their churches. Contact me if you are interested in knowing more about this opportunity to teach godly moral values to the children, ages 2—6th grade, at your church. I love personally explaining this program that is being used around the world.

I also visited three churches where I was given an opportunity to report on the ministry of ICP.

HUMANITARIAN BACKPACKS:

International Christian Publishers is very grateful to all the churches who are once again participating in our Backpack ministry, filling orange Backpacks with hygiene products and school items for needy children in the Philippines. Eight churches in the Spring River and Macedonia Associations have filled over 250 backpacks.



Macedonia Association Meeting
Missionaries Walt Emory and John Sanders



Pleasant Valley MBC,
Batesville, AR



Cedar Grove MBC, Cave City, AR



Calvary MBC, Pleasant Plains, AR



Westview MBC, Searcy, AR