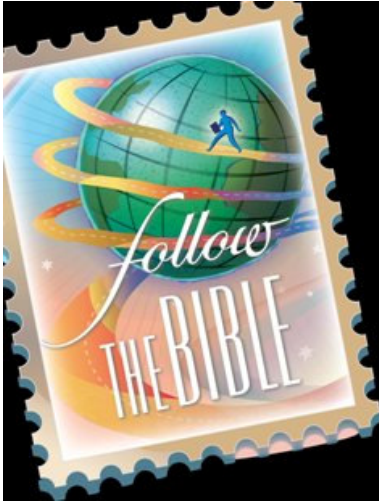


FOLLOW THE BIBLE IN 2009 [BUC News #619 9 January 2009]



What is the relationship between the following? Nahum, Methusaleh, Hannah, Herod, Dorcus and Sarah? Apart from their all being Bible characters they relate to a game we used to play as a family when I was a child. Each new name has to start with the last letter of the previous name. As children it really helped us remember our Bible characters, including my favourite, Mahershalalhashbaz. It was just one of the fun ways my parents kept us focused towards the Bible, particularly during our Friday evening meal. We also enjoyed Bible 20 Questions and other games.

The pre-eminent distinctive characteristic of Seventh-day Adventists throughout their history is that they are "People of the Book". Adventists love their Bible. They have always emphasised the Bible as their guide, their source of comfort and that on which all doctrine must stand. Children learn Scripture texts in Sabbath School and are encouraged to continue memorising Scripture up into adulthood. That is the picture of Adventism. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." [2 Tim 3:16-17 KJV]. The Bible is central and important.

Recognising that importance, an 'Olympic size' programme encouraging Bible reading and study is now running through until the next General Conference Session of the World Church in July 2010. A special, leather bound Bible, written in 66 languages, is currently travelling around the world, covering all six continents. It is due to visit the UK in September 2009. Called "Follow the Bible," the initiative is intended to emphasise to Adventists and their friends the daily need for a connection with the Bible. Adventist World President, Pastor Jan Paulsen says, "Follow the Bible is to lift up the Bible as the Word of God, to highlight its relevance as being a message that addresses all people... and to encourage our people to spend quality time with the Bible." Special meetings and rallies will be held across the BUC on Sabbath, 12 September.

But a rally is only a small token of the difference the Bible can make. More important is the daily and weekly difference it can make in our lives. Here are some suggestions to help make the Bible come alive for you and your family this year:

- Use the "Follow the Bible" yearly reading guide supplied with the last Messenger to read the whole Bible in one year. Both adult and children's guides are available at <www.followthebiblesda.com>. If you want a more interactive guide try <<http://youversion.com>>.
- Read the Bible in a different version to the well worn and loved Bible you keep by your side. This will help the passages you are very familiar with to jump out at you with new life.
- Try downloading the Bible to your ipod, pda or mobile phone. This can give you "Bible on the go" for a few moments at various times in the day. <www.olivetree.com> is one of many places you can download from.
- Buy a dramatised Bible to listen to with your family or while you are driving in the car. Zondervan have published "The Bible Experience". Scripture Union have "Word Alive" or <www.faithcomesbyhearing.com> provide a free downloadable audio New Testament.
- Play Bible games with your family as a fun way of building Bible knowledge.
- Take a Bible Course from the Adventist Discovery Centre. Encourage neighbours or friends to sign up with you and study together. Visit <www.discoveronline.org.uk>.

- Open a 'Church Family Bible'. Newbold church has bought a Bible with wide margins. During the year families are underlining texts and commenting on why they are special for them. Children are encouraged to draw their favourite Bible stories on paper that will build up into a special Children's Bible. These will be regularly highlighted in church. The whole church family is 'buying in' to the Bible.
- Run a Bible competition in your church. A monthly or weekly quiz based on the "Follow the Bible" reading plan.
- Climax the day by reading the Bible for a few moments before dropping off to sleep.

There are many other ways to make the Bible special. Why not make 2009 a special year as together with millions of Adventists worldwide we "Follow the Bible" together.