
30th Anniversary Issue

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“Being spiritual” is popular these days; we often hear how a celebrity or a politician describes himself as being spiritual, or how important her religion is to her. However, those kinds of statements are usually followed up with an explanation that her belief system is private. In fact, much of the world tells us that we’re supposed to keep our religion private, and we’re not even supposed to let it affect the way we live, work, or vote.

That isn’t the case with CBS. In fact, the first word of our name is *community*. CBS stands for the proposition that Bible study is not only important to the life of each person but is something that should be shared in a community with others. It is through studying the Bible with a community of fellow students that I have gained not only an understanding of God’s Word, but also the knowledge of how His Word impacts my relationship with others.

In a sense, Bible study is like skiing! When you’re on the slopes, feeling good about your parallel turns, someone always zips past you doing 40 miles per hour and kicking snow in your face. As you start to feel bad about your ability, you come upon some poor chap who can’t even stand up on his skis in the lift line. I have learned that Bible study is a little like that—there is always someone with more knowledge and maturity than I have, and there is always someone else I can encourage or

help along the way. That’s why studying the Bible in a community of believers (and even seeking nonbelievers) enriches my own study. I am able to learn, not only from my personal



Winn Chapman

study, but also from the study of others who are seeking to understand God’s Word. It is in this way that I am able to gain one of the most important aspects of studying the Bible—learning how to apply God’s Word to my life and to my relationships with those around me.

God has used CBS not only to improve my mind, but more importantly, my heart. The study of God’s Word through CBS has made me a better husband, father, friend, businessman, Little League coach, teacher, and student. Thanks to CBS, I get more out of life, and I may even be more pleasant to live with.

An advertising slogan says “be all you can be.” Without CBS and the study of God’s Word in my life, that is just an empty slogan. But, learning how God tells us to live, with a community of men and women who share the desire to love God and act like it, becomes the way of being all I can be and living life abundantly. “*I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly*” (John 10:10 NRSV).

Winn Chapman
Chairman
Board of Trustees

My Journey of Faith

Six years ago God moved my family from California to Lewisville, Texas due to a job opportunity for my husband, Jeff. We were 29 years old at the time and our son Bradley was four. Eventually I met Vern (Veronica) who became my closest friend and introduced me to Community Bible Study. It was 2000, and I was pregnant with our second son, Grant. Little did I know that God was going to use CBS to help prepare me for a terrible trial that loomed in our future. Reading the Bible helped me realize I needed Jesus, and nothing was more valuable than my relationship with Him.

During my first year in CBS, we studied the *Servants of God*, and I learned the strengths and weaknesses of God's servants. The books we studied taught us what God wants from His servants, and I wondered how I would compare to those we studied. If I were in the Bible what would people read about me?

Early in 2002 Jeff was diagnosed with oral cancer; he was 33 years old. He underwent major surgery and radiation that summer because the cancer spread to his lymph nodes. Seeing him suffer was difficult, but I was learning to rely on God's strength to get my family through this.

In 2002-2003, I volunteered to help in the CBS Childrens Program. I had heard about the godly women who served on the Class Leadership team, and because I didn't know what would happen with Jeff, I felt as though I needed to surround myself with strong women of faith, who relied on the Lord.

God showed me that I needed to love Jeff with God's perfect and unconditional love, not my own brand of selfish love. I experienced God's empowerment as I was able to love as I never had before. I was concerned about Jeff's physical and spiritual condition; he did not know the Lord. In April 2003, after many prayers and the witness of his good friend, he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior.

Our hearts broke when we learned that after going through the surgery and radiation treatments, the cancer had returned with a vengeance. Jeff went through chemotherapy, sought treatment in Mexico, and tried experimental drugs at a treatment center in San Antonio, five hours away from our home. Nothing worked. Jeff's job and medical benefits were at stake. Would he be allowed to work from home while he sought treatment? How would we take care of him without these things? I was beginning to lose hope. I didn't yet know the truth found in Philippians 4:6-8, "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*" Only through God's intervention and prayer was Jeff able to work from home.

Sensing that he might not survive, Jeff expressed his concern for me and our sons. He thought we should leave Texas and move to be near my family in Carson City, NV. I loved my family, and I knew they loved us, but I told Jeff I couldn't imagine leaving CBS, which had been my lifeline.

On December 2, Jeff's carotoid artery burst while we were in San Antonio. The emergency team claimed it a

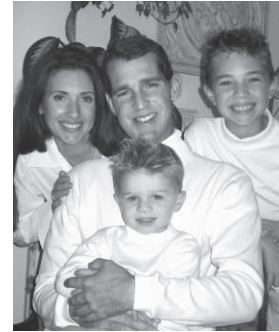
miracle that the bleeding stopped. He was in ICU for three weeks during which God saved him two additional times. Because of his emergency surgeries Jeff would never speak again, but he was able to leave the hospital by ambulance. He arrived home for Christmas. His mom and step-dad came to stay with us, and we had nursing care round the clock.

God's people loved and supported us in every way possible. I saw Jeff's heart turn from the world to Jesus. He wrote how he felt God's presence and knew Jesus was with him. Through this tragedy, Jeff experienced spiritual victory. God gave us 4 ½ more months with Jeff to prepare our hearts for his departure to heaven. Our last day with him was Easter, and he went home to God the following morning.

What was God's plan for us now? I was confused. Should I move near my family? I knew that the only way I would even consider such a move was if there was a CBS nearby. I didn't want to go back to my old way of life. I knew I needed CBS to continue the study of God's Word, to keep me accountable, and to learn dependence on Him. I found one CBS class in the entire state of Nevada, and it was in Carson City! Now I needed to decide if God wanted me to move there as a light to my family or to stay in Texas where I felt comfortable with my Christian friends.

I have purchased a house in Carson City, either as an investment, or as a house for the boys and me to live in after school ends in 2005. I rejoined my CBS Leaders Council in Lewisville in the fall and became a Core Leader for eTeen CBS as well. If I am going to move to Carson City I want to know how eTeen works so that I can help start a class there as an investment in the lives of my boys.

God has taken care of us financially, and I know He still wants to continue to use CBS to help me grow in my Christian life. The Lord truly is a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow. I am not lonely. I feel Him making me stronger, and I am open to His leading. I am praying for discernment to know His will. I've learned that to try to go it alone, in my own strength, is futile. To obey and follow God's plan for my life is to be blessed by Him.



Christmas 2003
Sandy, Jeff, Brad
Grant



Brad, Sandy & Grant
January 2005

Establish the Work of our Hands

We all want to leave a lasting legacy for those who come after us. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that we were “*created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*” It is no wonder, then, that Moses pleaded with God to establish our works. “*May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children. May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands*” (Psalm 90:16-17).

I often think of my grandmother, who was a great spiritual influence in my life. God gave her the gift of music, and she was a fabulous pianist who was able to play anything. She played with symphony orchestras, but her greatest joy was leading others in the singing of hymns, playing in church or at home for her family. Throughout her life my grandmother’s body was strong, but in her last years her memory failed. Before long, living alone was difficult for her, and finally she needed to move to a rest home.

Recently, a precious memory of a visit to my grandmother came to me. My mother and I had taken her into the visiting room where others were sitting around, some in wheel chairs, and many with sad vacant expressions. Grandmother headed straight for the old upright piano on the other side of the room. She sat down and began to play *Joy To The World* with all her old skill and vigor. The room slowly came to life. People who were slumped over began to straighten up and mouths began to move with remembered words. She went on to another carol, *O Come Let Us Adore Him*. I remember the soft singing, with visitors joining those who probably hadn’t sung in a long time. We were singing praises to the Lord, who had come so long ago to Bethlehem and now was present in a rest home in Fresno, California.

My mother began to cry—it was July, and Grandmother was playing Christmas carols. It was so poignant: she didn’t know the season, but what does the season matter when she was singing for joy. She was dwelling, not in a rest home during a hot summer in Fresno, but in her Lord. And she was using, even at the end of her life, gifts He had given her to lead His people in praise. *The Lord had established the work of her hands, and the next generation was watching and learning.*

I am privileged to teach a CBS class, and we are studying the Psalms. As we studied Psalm 90, I prayed that the Lord would teach us, through this memory of my grandmother, that He faithfully keeps those who dwell in Him. Moses prayed that the Lord’s “*deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children*” (90:16). Those who do not know the Lord, who don’t have eyes to see and ears to hear Him, can never understand the tenderness of such an end to a life of faith, singing and praising Him no matter what.

My prayer is that the Lord would be our dwelling place. May we begin to number our days that we might present to Him hearts full of love and praise, and may He establish the work of our hands.

Cassie Sharp
Teaching Director
San Mateo, CA, CBS

Prayer Corner



A Call to Prayer

Anniversaries or celebrations of special times are occasions for serious contemplation of where we are and where we want to be going. CBS has every reason to be grateful to God for His blessings over the past 30 years. Multiple evidences of that blessing can be seen in changed lives, salvaged marriages, growth and development among those who participate, and priceless fellowship, to say nothing of growth in the knowledge of Scripture and its application in our lives.

Having said that, and having been recipients of all of the above, there should be a persistent restlessness and a desire for much more. There must be a longing that God would so move in our midst that our communities, our families, and our workplaces will feel the impact of each of us as instruments of His love.

Bible study is important, both at the personal and class level, but beyond that is the absolute imperative of prayer, both individual and corporate. Having read about many awakenings, without exception, there has been urgent preceding prayer. The Billy Graham crusades have probably been responsible for the greatest number of conversions and commitments in the history of evangelism. The reason for this remarkable moving of God’s Spirit is not the preaching prowess of Dr. Graham. As powerful as that is, there are others as skilled and Spirit-filled, as he would quickly acknowledge. The results stem from the inviolable rule that any campaign must be preceded by months and months of corporate preparatory prayer.

If we at CBS are in earnest in our desire to see our culture and our world changed, the process must start with prayer—first with each of us as individuals and secondly in group prayer. Let me share a few paraphrased thoughts on prayer by great servants of God. Charles Spurgeon said, “The preacher [or in CBS, the teacher, Core Leader, class member] must be distinguished as a person of prayer.” Martin Luther is quoted as saying, “He who prayed well has studied well.” John Wesley reminds us, “God does nothing but in answer to prayer.” In the book of Acts we see that as believers were united in prayer, the Holy Spirit came upon them and great things occurred again and again. If we would see a remarkable moving of God’s Spirit in our world, our nation, in CBS, in ourselves, we are called to daily, serious disciplined prayer. This will come about only through deliberate planning. Will you join me?

John Woods
Teaching Director
Rochester Eve, MN, CBS

Day and Evening Classes

In 1975, the first Day Class of Community Bible Study was birthed in Bethesda, Maryland, and since that time, CBS has impacted innumerable families across the country. Lives are being transformed, family relationships are being healed through the study of God's Word, and the baton of faith is being passed from one generation to the next.

God has blessed the Day Classes in width and depth through the years. Increased numbers reflect the excitement and importance of studying the Bible, but each changed life is the evidence of the value of CBS in our communities. It is the ripple effect of one changed life affecting another, another affecting another. Four generations in my family have been touched by CBS, and our family has been enriched by this solid, credible and foundational study. When we allow our spiritual roots to grow deep, we can then withstand the storms of life with God's grace and mercy.

We have seen evidence of praise in the midst of a variety of serious life challenges in our CBS family, giving powerful testimony to the strength of God in and through the surrendered lives of our members. Then there is also the shared joy of giving and receiving love and encouragement from others in the caring, comfortable CBS atmosphere as we study God's Word together. If you are not participating in a Day Class right now, come join us. We would love to see you!

My prayer for our Day Classes, and for myself, is that we "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which we have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3).

Sue Henderson
National Director
CBS Day Classes

CBS Evening Classes have grown to over 160. At the last Leadership Conference, over half of all attendees were from Evening Classes, many of whom were men. What a contrast to some of our first conferences when male attendees were usually the speaker and a few male teachers. One of our Evening Classes is only eight years old and numbers over 500 people. This class has given birth to two additional Evening Classes, a CBS InPrison ministry, and a Teen CBS!

Our goal is to achieve excellence in all we do in order to honor the Lord and present a Bible study that is consistent with the CBS vision. To accomplish that goal, we revamped our training to make it more interactive, introduced a monthly newsletter, improved leadership development time for training Core Leaders, and added many practical helps in the new CBS Servants Team Manual. These steps were taken to help our Servant Teams better equip their leaders. Our prayer is that all of our class members become confident in the Word as their sole source to thoroughly equip them for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We thank God for giving us the opportunity to prepare these leaders for the next generation.

Gary Roelofs & Helen Dupre
National Director & Associate Director
CBS Evening Classes

We've Been Changed

Dear Gary,

Over 25 years ago, in the early days of getting my own business started, I traveled extensively. At times I was away from home and family three weeks out of every month. I was a new Christian at that time and would have benefited greatly and grown in faith through Bible study. At that time many of my friends from church would encourage me to attend a Bible study nearby, but I felt that because I traveled so often I was too busy to attend.



Joe & Pat Feyder

Now there is a Community Bible Study class in Edina which came along at just the right time for my wife, Pat, and me. With my business well established and a more flexible travel schedule, attending CBS has been a real blessing. It is even more special that I can attend with Pat.

Attending this group with my wife is something I didn't consider to be that important when we started. It was just something we were going to do together, much like going to church. But now, I consider it to be one of the most beautiful blessings God has given me through CBS. Even though we have always talked about our faith and our church over the years, CBS has given us a new dimension to look at our faith as individuals as well as husband and wife. I don't remember the first time it happened, but early on in CBS I noticed that we were beginning to discuss the week's lesson. Most of the time the questions would go something like this:

*Have you started your lesson this week?
Do you think the questions this week are hard or easy?
What did you put for question #5?
Can we make time to discuss it tonight?
Why do you think God did that?
What do you think Jesus meant when He said....
A situation come up today (at work/at home/with a friend/at the store, etc.) that was just like what we're studying in class right now.
This year's study is changing the way I/we think about....*

On and on go the questions and comments between the two of us about our weekly study. God, through CBS, has enabled us to engage in casual and sometimes deep discussions and personal sharing on matters of faith and how we should lead our lives. We are changed people individually and as a couple. I know more about Pat and what she believes because of CBS, and I think she would say the same about me.

I realize many unmarried people, and married folks who attend by themselves, are part of CBS. My observation about CBS may not apply to everyone, but it most certainly has been a blessing for the two Feyders.

Joe Feyder
Edina Eve, MN, CBS

Let Me Handle It

Three and a half years ago my husband retired from his job, and we moved back to our home town so we could spend some quality time with our mothers. Almost immediately the health of both became such that we were spending a lot of time taking care of them. My mother passed away last spring, and I began to look back on all that had happened during those three years. I could see God's hand in everything. Perhaps God should have put my eyes in the back of my head instead of the front, because often I see things clearly only when I look back over what has happened in my life. All summer long my mind kept reviewing what led up to my mother's last day on this earth....

It was spring, my favorite time of the year, when Mother passed away. She had been in declining health for three years, and at first it just seemed that a lot of pain and suffering had come to an end. But after a time of reflection, I came to the conclusion that the last years were an incredible journey.

My mother suffered from rheumatoid arthritis, and I prayed for God to ease her pain. No matter how hard I prayed, her pain did not go away. When I fell down from the weight of this burden, God picked me up and held my hand so I could continue on this journey. Finally, I felt as if God was saying to me, "Celia, I want you to stay out of this. This is between your mother and Me." I was astounded! Did God really want me to stay out of this? My mother was suffering and I couldn't stand to see her in pain. "Yes, I want you to stay out of it and let Me handle it." Reluctantly I did. But I had to do something so I began to praise and thank Him. I prayed, "Lord, thank you for my mother, and thank You for taking care of her." In time something miraculous happened. God began to change me. He didn't change the circumstances; He changed the way I was looking at them. That is not what I asked Him to do, but it is what He did. Something else happened. Mother's pain went away. "The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made" (Psalm 145:13b).

When I took that last step out of my mother's room at the nursing facility, everything was very quiet and still. God's Word says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Psalm 116:15). As I walked through the door of the building into the bright sunshine, the stillness and quietness were almost deafening. Then, as if on cue, a bird began to sing. His song was clear and sweet. It was as if God was saying to me, "I brought you through that dark valley of pain and suffering into this bright, beautiful sunshine so that you could look back on this experience and see how you and I have grown closer." Psalm 57:10 says "For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies." As I look back on this experience, I know it's not what is happening all around you that is important, but what you know in your heart about the faithfulness of God.

*Celia Moorhead
Associate Teaching Director
Greenville, SC, CBS*

Shelter in the Midst of the Storm

*As war clouds darken
Above a distant land
Hearts are fearful, minds are fixed
On news we hear firsthand*

*We look for answers
And find that there are none
To help us understand
Just how will this be won*

*We send our sons and daughters
Our husbands, friends, and wives
To fight for peace and freedom
And risk their very lives*

*Protect the men and women, Lord
From fear their hearts release
Protect them with Your angels
And may they know Your peace*

*May they seek Your shelter there
Amidst that war-torn land
May they find You all they need
Upon the desert sand*

*In the trenches, and the cockpits,
On the ships and on the land
May Your Holy Spirit hover
Helping them to understand*

*That You love them far beyond
Any words could ever say
That You sent Your precious Son to die
So they could know the way*

*The way to find true peace within
To Christ their wills conform
And they'll find that You're their shelter
Amidst their desert storm*

*CBS Class Member
McLean, VA*

REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Contributions: Community Bible Study is not funded or endowed by any private interest group or denomination. The vast majority of support comes from individuals who are class members and otherwise friends of CBS. This support is typically in the form of contributions for class registration and materials—referred to as class revenue—and through other general gift giving received through a class or made directly to CBS by individuals.

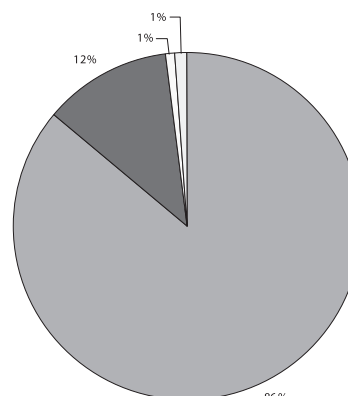
Other Support: Although not a major source of support, the additional gifts from friends of CBS through their wills and estates does contribute to being able to carry out our mission of “making disciples of Jesus Christ in our communities through caring, in-depth Bible Study—available to all.” The remaining, although minor, revenue comes from the sale of *It's In the Book* Bible study materials and interest on funds held for future use and to begin new classes.

BALANCED BUDGETING

Our annual financial budget is designed and developed around our annual planned activities, in which we consider the level of support we anticipate from the CBS community based on historical data. In some years, contributions exceed our disbursements allowing us to set aside funds for those years in which needs exceed revenue. This allows us to continue to conduct and support Bible study classes during those years in which revenue may not cover all costs.

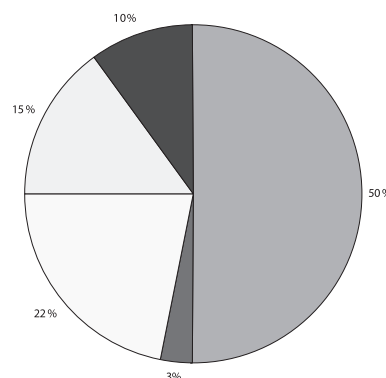
2004 FUNDS RECEIVED:

- Class Revenue 86%
- Gifts 12%
- Publishing 1%
- Interest & Other 1%



2004 USE OF FUNDS:

- Contributions to CBSI & host churches 10%
- Bible Study Classes (materials, etc.) 50%
- Course Development 3%
- Training & Communications 22%
- Administration 15%



CBS FINANCIAL COVENANT & STEWARDSHIP

CBS is committed to the following:

1. Integrity in both finance and doctrine.
2. Oversight by a Board of Trustees, none of whom are paid or on staff.
3. Annual audits by an external independent certified public accounting firm.
4. Internal annual financial review of randomly selected class bank accounts.
5. Availability of current financial statements and federal tax returns (Form 990) upon request, which includes maintaining transparency through organizations such as ECFA and Wall Watchers (ministry watchdog).
6. Avoidance of any conflict of interest that would compromise CBS.
7. Annual planning and budgeting based on the level of expected giving.
8. Operating in a fiscal manner that does not incur indebtedness for operations.
9. Maintaining current membership in the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA).

Everyone in the World...in the Word

CBS International

CBS International joins in the celebration of the 30 years Community Bible Study has been faithful in sharing the Word of God. The dedication of its leaders and the love for the Lord and His Word has helped build this wonderful ministry across this country and eventually...around the world!

CBS's vision to make disciples could not be limited, nor their commitment to share the Scriptures be easily contained. People, motivated by both the desire to maintain CBS studies while living abroad, and the desire to share God's Word with others, sought to build classes beyond the boundaries of the United States. Not long after Community Bible Study was first established, **CBS – United Kingdom** was launched in 1979. Other studies were quickly founded in **Peru** and **Canada**.



CBSI Women's Class
in Russia

Scripture reminds us that when we are faithful in sharing His Word, it will never return void. CBSI can testify to this truth. Over the first few years of reaching beyond the United States, CBSI experienced tremendous growth and expansion. To properly address the needs and uniqueness of an international ministry, CBSI was incorporated as a separate ministry in September of 1992. While separate, CBSI maintains the same vision of making disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, using the materials and methods of CBS.

Our humble beginnings—one faithful soul, ministering in two languages, in three countries—have developed into a ministry encompassing 61 countries and translating courses into 38 different languages. Today, Community Bible Study International operates within six different regions; **Africa, Asia/Pacific, Eastern Europe, North/Central America, South America and Western Europe**. From the villages in southern Africa to the mountains in South America, the island of New Zealand to the great continent of Europe, CBSI continues to build classes so that people have the opportunity to study the Bible. Yet CBS International is just as diverse as the countries in which this ministry operates.

In **Mozambique**, Bernardo dedicated his life to sharing the Word of God. He, along with others, established 10 CBSI classes in the last year throughout the city of Maputo. Provid-



Bernardo teaches a
CBS class in Mozambique

ing course materials in the language of the people, Cebuano, has given the opportunity for thousands to study the Bible. At a local training in Mozambique, a pastor stood and exclaimed, "We have been waiting for materials like this!"

In **Eastern Europe** Lydia joined a CBS International class after years of looking to the Koran for answers. In her own words, "I found the sweet and marvelous conviction that Jesus was the God I was looking for. He gave me His peace, and I am learning to know Him and to pray."

CBS International has also developed a unique and specialized ministry of **multi-cultural classes**. Under the direction of Vicki McIntyre this ministry is reaching out to expatriates living abroad. These classes are primarily conducted in English with a variety of different nationalities participating. As many of these class members return home, they take with them a greater knowledge and stronger relationship with Christ and His Word.

Even here in the United States the Lord has opened the door for CBS International; several classes are being conducted in various languages. Even in CBS classes many areas find a community of Spanish, Korean, or German speaking people who want to study in their native tongue. Such is the case in Sarasota, Florida with a Spanish Core Leader, Luz Hartley. Ministering to a small group of ladies from Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela, Luz leads the Core Group in Spanish providing these ladies with a better understanding of the Scripture. Luz shares, "It is very encouraging to see how eager they are. They all do their lessons, they want to share their answers, and they all show up on time. We have real Christian fellowship."

But the heart of CBSI is not found in the places we serve, and it is not found in the number or size of our classes; the heart of CBSI is found in each life that encounters the Word of God, and personally discovers His love and begins to develop a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

As CBS International translates the material into various languages and becomes culturally adaptable in communities around the world, it opens the door for a greater understanding of the Lord. As language and cultural barriers are removed, people are open and willing to examine the Scriptures and listen as the Holy Spirit leads and directs lives. This is the main focus of Community Bible Study International. May we be found serving Him faithfully.



Vicki McIntyre teaches one
of her multicultural classes

Stephen Hood
Director of Operations, CBSI

CBS Children's Program

The aim of the CBS Children's Program is to offer a warm, loving environment with God's love in Jesus Christ permeated throughout and demonstrated through Children's Directors, Associate Children's Directors, Elementary Supervisors, Teachers, and Core Member helpers. Our vision is found in Matthew 28:19a, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations."

The Children's Program has been a significant and vital part of the total ministry of CBS since its inception. From the onset, provision was made to accommodate children from birth to school age. These children were loved, nurtured, and taught the Word of God.

The Lord has blessed the Children's Program which has grown from 5,250 children in 1989 to 21,700 in 2005. As CBS grew, a need arose for expanded ministry to elementary age children. Curriculum was written and developed for grades 1-6.

The Children's Program strives for excellence, and God has blessed the program with many gifted Children's Directors, Associate Children's Directors, teachers, and writers. Today, babies, preschool, elementary children, and teens are being lovingly taught God's Word in our CBS classes around the country. Thanks be to God! Each week thousands of children are ministered to in CBS classes whose mission is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ in our communities through caring, in-depth Bible study, available to all"—and "all" means children, too!

Vignettes

A little boy, who turned two in August, started CBS in September. His mom thought it was hilarious that he would be expected to make crafts and obey classroom instruction. The teacher admitted that obeying instructions is not always easy for two year olds, but she persisted and continued to teach the children each week. We never waste our time when we obey the Lord's call on our lives.

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The teacher told the story of David playing the harp for King Saul, and during the story, used a child's version of a real harp. When the story was finished, the teacher asked one child to deliver the message to David, using a Hallmark crown seal on the note and envelope to make it official. Most of the children wanted to play-act the story. After acting out the part of the sad and troubled king and how the harp music calmed him, it was craft time. Each child made a paper plate harp with yarn strings. Then it was free time. The teacher went to the king's chair, put on her jewel-studded crown and began a "kingly pout" saying out loud, "I am so sad and depressed!" One alert and perceptive four-year-old boy saw her, got his hand-crafted harp, and brought it to where the teacher was. He sat on the floor in front of her and started strumming on the yarn strings and singing softly, "Do not be afraid, God has heard your prayer," which is the Bible verse for that unit. The teacher's heart melted at the sensitivity of this little boy.

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One morning the CBS teachers were preparing for snack time and the children were choosing where they were going to sit. When everyone was seated at the tables, there remained a single empty seat next to Cole. This was unusual as most of the time every seat was taken by a child. Suddenly, from across the table came a voice from Jared who said, "Oh, look, Cole, Jesus is sitting right next to you!" The teacher's eyes filled with tears. She had never felt such a real presence of Jesus until that moment! "From now on," the teacher relates, "the phrase 'Jesus is with you always' takes on a tremendous reality that I would never have known had I not been serving as a CBS Children's Teacher."

**Mary Harr
National Director
CBS Children's Program**

The Best Tuesday Mornings of My Life

My walk through life has been full of priceless nights surrounded by friends, many struggles, hardships with the species referred to as "females" and time spent searching for my divine purpose on this planet. Every encounter has shaped my life and created the person I am today. My life has many aspects and there are many rooms in my "house of life." My house is sturdy through the many storms that are thrown at me, because the Lord is my rock, my shield, and my stronghold (Psalm 18:2). I have tried to surround myself with other believers, and when the going gets tough, the Lord gets me going. He helps me in everyday issues with life, and He is the only One who can help me endure the painstaking hours at the institution we attend, formally called school! Let me tell you, this is an amazing feat.

I have grown tremendously in my seventeen years, and the Lord has been with me for every one, dating back to the "golden years," ages 3 through 5. Days full of playing games with other kids, dipping graham crackers in water and thinking it was the best treat in the world, coloring outside of the lines and still getting a gold star—the best Tuesday mornings of my life: CBS time, baby!

CBS was the most eventful activity of my pre-kindergarten year and showed me my first punch-out picture of this amazing guy named Jesus. CBS opened up a door I could barely open, but the Lord was giving me the stepstool I needed to go and explore this new world. I was exposed to this huge book with tiny print called The Holy Bible, and to songs that I got to yell, "Pharaoh Pharaoh, OH BABY! Let my people go, UGH! Yea, yea, yea, yea!" What more could a four-year-old want from life: wake up in the morning, watch a little 'toons, eat some cereal; get dressed up for CBS; hang out with my best buds; dip some crackers in water and be satisfied with a soggy snack; sing some fun songs; draw, color, and cutout pictures to hang on the fridge; and get to have somebody read to me. I couldn't ask for more, and those experiences have influenced my life.

Still today I eat Chipotle, hang out with great friends, play some crazy games, and get to be read to or read to middle school kids through my involvement in Young Life, and leadership with Wyle Life (a group similar to Young Life but focused toward middle school kids). CBS set me up to build my house of life and gave me this amazingly strong cement called God. The foundation of my whole life is set in stone with the Lord, and the CBS mornings for kids helped me start my life out right. Now, I couldn't possibly think of any other way to live my life than the way I am living today.

**Brandon McGraw
17 years old, former member
CBS Children's Program**

Teen CBS

My story is not unusual in the world of Community Bible Study, but when I look at our bookshelves and see all the blue notebooks it is too overwhelming to take it all in. To our family they are much more than notebooks, for when we open them we see old prayer requests and answers to



Janice & Bobby with a group of new Teen CBS leaders at Teen Training

questions that allow us to see the hand of God in our family's life and those who were in our groups. I thank God for CBS!

Twenty-two years ago I began by filling out a little registration card at a home in Midland, Texas, to start a new women's Bible study. The accountability and mentoring of this CBS study has changed my life, my family, and many friends. I thank God for the women who prayed this Midland CBS class into being!

I am presently serving as the National Director of Teen CBS, a Senior Leader for Midland 18-2-24 CBS, and the Mustard Seed Core Leader for Midland eTeen CBS. One incredible and glorious part of my 22 years of carrying the blue notebook is how God through CBS continues to bless my own children and their families and all those who have been reached by Teen CBS.

My husband, Bobby, is now the Associate National Director of Teen CBS, a teen class Core Leader, a Senior Leader for 18-2-24, and a Core Group member of Midland Men's CBS class. Three days out of each week Bobby is at CBS, doing his lessons, shepherding, and being shepherded. The first Midland Men's CBS class began as a prayer group in our home and is the fruit of much prayer from ladies' day class. Through a series of God-ordained events, the Midland Men's class was born. The rest is a God-filled history of men studying the Bible in Midland. God blessed many men and their families, and I thank God for those who have come to walk in the light through the Men's CBS class.



The Henry Family

Blake, our youngest child, now an orthodontist in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was blessed as a child in the Children's Program and as a first grader expressed great regret that he had to give up CBS when he started going to school. The CBS leaders in Midland helped us raise our children through their school age and college years. As soon as Blake graduated from high school, Bobby and I started the first Teen CBS class in Midland, along with many precious

visionary leaders. It has been such fun for 11 years, loving teens by encouraging them to do their lessons, serving them dinner and chocolate chip cookies, giving them millions of smiles, phone calls, and hugs, as well as singing praise songs together. Many are grown now and we are so proud to see what God is doing in their lives. I thank God for Lee Campbell's encouragement to me when I asked her one day if we could start a CBS program for teenagers. I also thank all the people who take time from their own families to be a shepherd leader to other people's teens!

Our daughter Kristen has taken her children to the Austin, Children's Program, has been a Teen Core Leader, and is now the class Coordinator for the Austin 18-2-24 CBS. Her husband, Jeff, is a Teen Area Director and an 18-2-24 Core Leader.

Our son-in-law Geoff is the new Associate Teaching Director in the Austin 18-2-24 CBS, and our daughter Carrie will soon be a Core Leader.



Bobby & Janice with their grandchildren

For our family, the blue notebooks represent a treasure of knowing the Word by studying it and discussing it weekly. This treasure can never be lost and is vital to every action and every decision we make. Knowing Jesus through the study of His Word in CBS for 22 years has made me a better wife, mom, grandmother, friend, leader, and business woman than I would have been. I am not perfect or wise, but *I know where the answers for all my questions are found* and where to find love and discipline, comfort, and instruction.

I am so thankful to the Lord for His precious Word to us, and thank Him for giving all of us this useful and workable format, CBS, to learn the Bible. I am thankful for the shepherding process of CBS and how it has taught me to be a friend to others with Jesus as the model. I learned that a simple phone call shows I care. I pray that God will empower each member of CBS with the strength to be bold servants for Jesus Christ. And I pray that He will bring more children, teens, men, and women into His kingdom through Community Bible Study.

Janice Henry
National Director
Teen CBS

Editor's note: The CBS Teen program consists of Teen CBS, geared to high school age students; eTeen for junior high students; and 18-2-24 concentrates on young adults from 18-24 years old.

CBS is a Family Affair

When my family moved to Roswell, New Mexico from Lubbock, Texas, in 1990, it consisted of me, my childhood sweetheart, Lisa, and our two-week-old, carrot-topped daughter, Haley. Since our life has taken root here in Southeastern New Mexico, God has made some fine additions to our family. Our son Jack was born in 1992, and our daughter Lexi Kate came to us in the winter of 1995. God has been so good to us over the years, binding us together with His love and with His Word through Community Bible Study.

Neither my wife nor I had ever heard of CBS when we arrived here. However, soon after our arrival, some wonderful women introduced Lisa to the Day Class, and soon she was helping in the Children's Program there. I was introduced to the Evening Class, and before long our home started filling with the famous blue binders.

I am so happy to tell you that all three of my kids were raised up in the Children's Program at CBS. It was the perfect complement to our local church. The whole family learned the songs the kids sang at CBS. I realized that they were learning about Jesus Christ, and having a fun time doing it. What a great idea! I can relate one story that I can attribute to the wonderful Children's Program. When Jack was about three, he and I were playing with a Nerf football in the backyard. I tossed him one that hit him in the chest and made him stumble and fall backwards. He got up and looked like he was ready to take me on and said, "You knocked Jesus out of my heart!" My son, at three, knew where Jesus Christ dwelled, and I knew exactly where he learned that truth because I had sung about Jesus' place in our hearts with him.

As the years passed, Lisa became a Core Leader in the Day Class, and I was a Substitute Core Leader in the Evening Class. When rumblings began about Teen CBS, I turned a deaf ear to them. The Lord convinced me one night, in no uncertain terms as I stood at my closet door, that I was called to "get off the bench" and make a difference for Him in this new ministry. It was 1997. I have now been the Teaching Director of the Roswell Teen CBS (TCBS) class for the past six years, and it has stretched me like nothing else I have ever done. From the beginning, I have had a great partner in Danette Hanagan, who has served as my ATD. Danette has made certain our class is excellent in every way, and my wife, Lisa, is a Core Leader. It is wonderful to be in this vineyard together with my wife. Our Leaders Council is a family. We laugh together and we have cried together. I love my leaders.

Haley, who came to Roswell in a car seat, is a freshman this year, and for the first time, one of our kids is in the class—how exciting. The Lord has called a group of saints to start an eTCBS class here this year. The class is doing very well, and my son Jack, as a sixth grader, is a member. Both the TCBS class and the eTeen class meet on the same night at different churches, so we had to find a job for Lexi Kate, our fourth grader. Our wonderful Coordinator, Kathy

Fulkerson, has given her the title of her assistant, and Lexi thinks she runs the whole class.

Now Saturday mornings, before the sports schedules start, and early Sunday mornings are not spent in

front of the TV. Most of the time we will be found around the kitchen table together doing our lessons. Each helps the others, and we have group discussions about the questions. I have done many things poorly in my life, but, at the risk of bragging, at such moments I know in "my knower" that God looks down from heaven and smiles as my little family works together to understand the depths of His love for us as revealed in His Word. We are all eternally thankful for Community Bible Study for making a way for my family to be bound together through God's Word.



The Cassels Family
Jack, Haley, Kelly, Lisa & Lexi Kate

Kelly Cassels
Teaching Director
Roswell, NM, Teen CBS

This will be the only issue of *Sharing* that will be mailed in 2005. New testimonies and ministry news will be available on our website (www.communitybiblestudy.org). Please check to see what God is doing in the lives of His people who are part of our CBS family.

Also included on the website is a current list of CBS classes. For further information about locating a CBS class for family members or friends, or about the possibility of starting a class in your community, contact the National Service Center at 1-800-826-4181 or info@communitybiblestudy.org.

Letter from a Teen

Dear Mrs. Crockett,

When I was really young I attended church at the First Baptist Church in Bastrop, Texas, where I was born. We went every Sunday, and I remember it like it was yesterday. I always knew there was something more to church than the stories because I always felt a light, uplifting presence inside of me. I felt like my church was part of my family and that the people there really cared about me. We moved to Austin when I was five, and I hadn't found a church or religious organization where I had that same experience until my sophomore year when I went to TCBS. I never lost my faith in God during the ten-year span between Bastrop and Austin, but I wasn't in the Word enough to really know when He was talking to me.

What I mean by this is, I strayed away from what He wanted and only prayed when I needed something. I remember praying when my parents split up, when my great aunt died, when I got kicked out of the house, when I ran away, when my entire circle of friends deserted me, when my brother first started doing drugs, when I first started smoking, and even times when I thought I had missed the bus. I used to talk to Him about my family and why everything always seemed to go wrong. I wanted to know how He would help me, but I never asked what I could do for Him.

I started CBS at a very interesting time in my life. I was moving out of a battered women's shelter and into an Austin family's home. At the time I was smoking weed and cigarettes, yet I claimed to be an innocent Christian. After starting CBS I really got into the Word, and I started listening to God and what He wanted from me. I got that old feeling back: a light and a rush from the Holy Spirit. I didn't need drugs or cigarettes, so I quit using them. I lost a lot of "friends" over it, not in a bad way, but they saw the change in my life and just drifted away.

I doubt you've really ever noticed, but Bobby and your lectures move me and bring me to tears. Standing and singing God's praise makes me whole again. And doing the Bible study helps me to understand what I am to be in God's plan. CBS has become a home for me; I have skipped out on a lot of "fun" things to attend CBS as much as I can because I feel so empty without it. There is no telling where I would be without CBS support. I am sure you hear this all the time from a lot of kids, but the way I feel can't be expressed in words alone. God will bless you for all you have done. I really think that if my brother could have found CBS, he would be alive today because of what y'all do, because of how you can bring God closer to someone.

With you in Christ,

Jennifer Lowery

Austin, TX, 18-2-24 CBS Class

Editor's Note: Debbie Crockett and her husband, Mike, are Teen CBS Area Directors. Debbie also teaches the Austin, TX 18-2-24 CBS class.



Jennifer Lowery

Island Love Story



Dina and Roger
on their wedding day

Roger and I met in May of 2002 at CBS. Roger (who had moved to Amelia Island eight months earlier) was asked to give the opening talk on Time Management at our CBS class. During his talk he mentioned that he was unmarried, and just about every eye in the room turned to me. I, too, was single, born

and raised on Amelia Island, and I owned a children's toy store. Needless to say, not many single men frequented my shop. Several women had been in the "match making" business where the two of us were concerned, and we were quickly introduced after his talk. We found that we had a common interest in wanting to get Teen CBS started on the island.

Our initial encounter was brief, but later that day I was at a restaurant eating dinner with friends and listening to a band. Roger and a friend walked in and were unable to find a seat because it was extremely crowded. As they were about to leave, the table next to us cleared, so I motioned for them to join us. Roger sat next to me and we ended up talking all evening. We learned that we not only had God and Teen CBS in common, but many other things as well. I told the friend who was with me that night that I had just met the guy I was going to marry. I would later learn that he called his sister and told her he had just met the girl he was going to marry.

Our friendship soon developed into something more. Roger and I, along with several wonderful ladies, began to meet once a week for a year to pray for Teen CBS. During that year, God continued to work in both of our lives. The bond we shared through Christ helped strengthen our relationship. In God's perfect timing, Teen CBS started on the island in the Fall of 2003, and Roger proposed in November. Our wedding was set for June 26, 2004 in the church where my parents were married 48 years earlier.

We feel truly blessed to be part of the Teen CBS ministry. It's amazing and exciting to see the teens and adults develop and strengthen their personal relationship with God. It's an awesome ministry and we look forward to working with the teens in the years to come. We are thankful to God for uniting us, and we are committed to living our lives for Him. With His Word as a lamp for our feet, we are looking forward to where He guides us.



Dina and Roger
in horse and buggy

Dina & Roger Martin
Teaching Director & Associate Teaching Director
Amelia Island, FL, Teen CBS

InPrison CBS

Everyone in CBS has special memories of “Sharing Day” at the end of a course year. It is always a wonderful time to sit back and take stock of what God is doing through His Word in the hearts of the men and women with whom we study. It is a time of wonder and awe. So it is in an InPrison CBS class. At one such event, after the study of *Luke*, an inmate student made an astute observation. He quoted Luke 23:43 in which Jesus, on the cross, replies to the criminal who recognized Jesus as Lord with these words, “*I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.*” The inmate student, with hope and confidence in his voice, pointed out that the “first Christian” in heaven with the Lord Jesus was a convicted felon. So it is “inside” the walls sharing a “caring, in-depth Bible study available to all.”

An InPrison Leader’s Council was trying to decide what course to study next. When surveyed, a Core Facilitator, with only an eighth-grade education and normally very quiet, answered, “I don’t care. I just want to do them all.”

Prisons are dark places, and when the light of the Word shines, it is brilliant and memorable. In a women’s class in California, two “graduates” of the InPrison CBS class have joined prison ministries through their churches and are now seeking to “mentor” parolees in their area. And in Minnesota, two recent “graduates” spoke of their InPrison CBS experience at the CBS Leadership Development Conference. One of those men is now a Core Leader in an “outside” class, while the other is leading a Bible study in his church. What a mighty God we have!

In July of 1998, the first InPrison CBS class began in Houston, Texas. It was the chosen Bible study of Chuck Colson for the Prison Fellowship program called Innerchange Freedom Initiative, or IFI. That class began with 34 inmate students. Today, with the same loyal “outside” Teaching Director, that class has ten times that number. God has now drawn well over 300 men into “faith-based” rehabilitation centered on His Word in that one program alone. But there are also IFI InPrison CBS classes in Iowa, Kansas, and Minneapolis. Other InPrison CBS classes include a class in Texas composed totally of physically handicapped inmates. In Mississippi, a 30-week class for HIV- positive women was completed this year. A class in California is held at a minimum security “camp.” This past year the Lord moved InPrison CBS into two “pre-release” centers, or halfway houses, our first venture out of full-time prisons or camps. Four InPrison CBS classes are in women’s institutions and 21 are in men’s. We have added five new classes this past year, all of them birthed by “outside” CBS classes and leaders who took it upon themselves to pray and respond to God’s call to go “inside” the walls. One of those classes came after six years of prayer and waiting for God to arrange all the details.

In each class there are stories of God using His Word to bring rebirth, growth, and maturity to men and women whom society has forgotten. Many people believe that

prison ministry is an evangelistic ministry. It is. Virtually every ministry is. But it is far more. Many men and women within prison walls had seeds of faith planted in their hearts as children. It may have been a seed sown by a grandparent or a mother, a seed that has sat dormant for many years, but in prison it starts to germinate. InPrison CBS is there to water and nurture that seed with the Word of God. What better cure for a broken or undeveloped relationship with the Lord than to learn His Word?

Community Bible Study makes all this possible. The men and women who attend InPrison CBS have no means to financially support their study. Normal “outside” participation costs would be about 200 hours of work for the average inmate, if he or she even has a job. But CBS graciously provides the materials and the method. The InPrison CBS volunteer Teaching Director and his or her team provide the manpower with training, coaching, and prayer support coming from “outside” CBSers and local classes. As we all know, the Holy Spirit does the rest. The lessons used are from the Condensed curriculum. These lessons contain most of the questions found in the regular CBS courses, as well as a two-page Condensed Commentary. InPrison CBS classes are held non-stop, year round. School years and holidays don’t mean much in prison. Bible study does. Students vary in abilities. One student may have to help another because reading and writing abilities are below average, while the next student may be discussing the Greek and Hebrew original text.

Beside Christ there seems to be two common threads among Christian brothers and sisters in prison. The first thread is love for the song, *Amazing Grace*. It could be called the prison Christian theme song. The grace “*that saves a wretch like me*” is more than a wonderful gift to inmate believers; it is an unfathomable, but magnificent truth. The second thread is the reality of Romans 3:23: “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” Within a prison, the concept of being convicted of one’s sin is not a barrier to a relationship with the Lord. The barrier is finding a way to mature that relationship in a dark and hostile environment. InPrison CBS overcomes that barrier through “caring in-depth Bible study, available to all.”

The writer of Hebrews 13:3 writes, “*Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners....*” InPrison CBS does just that.

Tom Seibert
National Director
InPrison CBS

A New Life

When I was asked to write this article, my first thought was, "How do I put 37 years of grace down in a few words?" We know from 1 John 1:9 that if we confess our sins, all of our sins,



Cameron & Damon
Barbara & Chloe

known and unknown, they will be forgiven. What an awesome God we serve who would grant us that privilege. I have just celebrated my eighth year of Christianity, but I would not be doing so if a few men from Midland, Texas, some of whom are Midland Men's CBS class members, had not come to prison and visited me. These men were compelled to come inside one of the worst prisons in the state of Texas and tell us that God's grace is for everyone,

regardless of race or past mistakes. His love is available to all.

I was 29 years old and had been in prison for over three years, full of bitterness and hatred of the world and everyone in it. I was a young man who had never stepped through the doors of a church. I had already been married twice and lived a lifestyle that suited only me. Not knowing how many more years I would be in prison, I did not want to visit with any Christian people. But something, or someone, tugged at my heart, and nothing I said or did could keep me away. I spent a few minutes visiting with a man named Steve and turned my life over to our Lord.

I spent four more years in prison, and in that time I learned much from Christians inside and out. I studied my Bible daily for hours at a time; I had nothing else important to do. I now know that God used that time for me to develop a relationship with Him that would stand the test of time and would endure when I was released. I was released from prison in March of 2000 to a halfway house in Odessa, Texas. For the first time I began to live my life for Someone other than myself. A friend of mine named Keith Weiser told me of Midland Men's CBS class and invited me to come one Monday evening. I did not realize how important this would be. Now that I was working two jobs, I had lost my time to spend in the Word and my relationship with the Lord. Now with the detailed CBS lesson, I had the opportunity to learn about God's will for my life and to fellowship with other Christian men.

In January 2001 I married my wife, Barbara. She is now the Primary Teacher for a CBS class, and she is on the Leaders Council. In 2002 God gave us a beautiful little girl named Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11). I now have the responsibility to give a child something I never had growing up: a purpose in life that will be pleasing to our Lord. We have a son named Cameron who I am enjoying watching grow in our Lord as well. Just to see his face as he returns home from Teen CBS on Tuesday evenings is proof that our children need that relationship with our Heavenly Father.

My life has been one of peaks and valleys, but now during times of struggle I can still have joy because I know that God loves me and holds my family and me in His hands. While I am still a sinner, I am no longer a criminal. I have the ultimate pardon in life, an eternal pardon.

Damon Underwood
Midland, TX, Men's CBS

CBS Helped Change My Life

When my husband and I were married in 1950, we struggled like all young couples, but something always carried us over, such as our parents who would write letters and enclose \$10.00. When we needed help it was always there. At the time I did not understand that this was God taking care of us, so I never thanked Him.

In recent years, we moved to Sun City West, Arizona, after which George and Donna Mulvany arrived in town. I had known George but not Donna. She and I became friends, and she was continually asking me to go to CBS with her. It was a horrible time for me as my two sons were on drugs and in and out of jail. But Donna won out and I joined her class about six years ago. All I knew was Psalm 23 and John 3:16, so I was in awe of what these ladies knew about the Bible. But Donna would not let me quit. I stayed the year and registered for the next year.

Things got bad at home as both my boys were sent to prison. I could not understand how God could do this to me. What had I done in my life to deserve this agony and punishment? Every time Donna came over we would pray together. I stayed in CBS but kept trying to fix my situation, so the message was not getting through. In the next couple years I realized that I had to turn my life over to Christ and let Him handle my situation because I was not doing a very good job.

It is amazing what happened when I turned to Christ. Both my sons said that going to prison was the best thing that could have happened to them. They both turned to the Lord and they read and study the Bible. They organized prayer groups and Bible studies in prison. One son even taught inmates to read using the Bible.

My life really turned around and I realized I could not learn enough about God. I was invited to be a Core Leader, but I said "no" because I still had so much to learn. The following year I was approached again, and again I was going to refuse. After praying about it, the Lord kept nagging me, and my husband also said he thought I should do it. I accepted the invitation to be a Core Leader, and I am so thankful I did. I have grown spiritually from being in CBS and especially from being part of the Leaders Council. The study of God's Word and the fellowship of His people have made all the difference in my life.

Bette Whitten
Core Leader
Sun City West, AZ, CBS

"Lord...when did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you? The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'" (Matthew 25:37-40).

God's Amazing Grace

Our son Jon ran five miles the morning of September 3 before he and his workmates headed home after a business trip to Cincinnati. He was anxious to get home because he



The Grubbs Family at Christmas
Jon's wife, Gina, & baby Emma
stand next to Sandra

and his wife, Gina, would be on their way to Hilton Head that night for a vacation, as they anticipated the birth of their first child. They had been married for thirteen years, and as you can imagine they were delighted and

very excited about the birth of their daughter who was due to be born in two months. But God had other plans. Instead of going to the beach, Jon went to heaven that night.

When they realized that something was terribly wrong, his colleagues were able to get him to a hospital three miles away, but the staff of the ER told us later that Jon never "knew what hit him." In the midst of our terrible shock and grief, we had the assurance that one moment he was here and in an instant he was "*absent from the body and present with the Lord*" (2 Corinthians 5:8 KJV).

Jon loved life, his friends, his family, and his Lord passionately. He and Gina were active in their church, and they sang duets together in the choir. He was not ashamed of the gospel and walked in God's amazing grace. More than 750 people came to the visitation and funeral. His pastor would tell of the joy he brought to so many in his 37 years. He spoke of the fact that Jon had made preparations and was ready to meet his Lord.

Jon and Gina had given us a week's vacation to Hilton Head Island as a gift and Gina insisted that we go. So less than a month after Jon's death, we went under a cloud of grief. Hilton Head was a place both our family and Gina's parents, Roger and Joy, enjoyed. Gina's parents loved Jon as if he were their very own son and we feel the same way about Gina. Our families are not only friends, but our hearts are joined by our faith in Christ.

This year when we arrived, there was a mix up in our reservations. We ended up staying in the condo where Gina's parents had been staying the night Jon died. After Ron and I unpacked we went to eat at a favorite restaurant, but it was bittersweet to be there because of so many memories.

We watched a table of six couples laughing and having such a good time beside us. They got up to leave and I realized that one of the women wore a Community Bible Study double fish necklace. Ron encouraged me to stand up and introduce myself to her. He is so supportive of me as I serve as a CBS Area Director. I stopped the gal with the necklace as she and her friends were heading for the door. She told me that not only was she a member of Community Bible Study, but the other women were as well.

She asked me where we were staying and when I told her she said, "Gary and Julie are the owners of that condo and they are here. You need to meet them." Julie began to tell me of a couple who had been staying in their condo recently who had to leave the day they arrived because their son-in-law suddenly died. She said that their Sunday school class and their Community Bible Study class had been praying for them.

At that point, I told her that it was our son who had died and introduced her to Ron. She stopped everyone in their tracks and told them that we were the family they had all been praying for. Those women and their husbands gathered around us in that restaurant and wept with us and comforted us. All of us knew that we had experienced a divine appointment in that little restaurant, an example of God's grace.

After we got to the condo that night, we called our daughter-in-law. We told her the wonderful story of God's blessing in the midst of our sorrow. She said, "Now you all know that God meant for you to go to Hilton Head."

Our new friends invited us to go to Sunday school and church with them. We joined them for lunch after church at another restaurant that was a favorite of Jon and Gina's. They had no idea when they chose it that we had gone there the year before. They insisted that we join their Sunday School class the following night for a Low Country Boil dinner. Before the blessing, the woman I met first, Candy, told me that as she put on her Community Bible Study necklace the morning we met, she asked God to let her be a special blessing to someone that day. What an incredible answer God gave her to that prayer.

We stayed an extra day so I could go to the Hilton Head Community Bible Study coed class, which meets in their church. Ron joined me for the lecture time. All of those ladies hugged us good-bye and promised to continue praying for us and our family.

Emmaline Rose Jonathan Grubbs was born October 28. The husband of the nurse who attended Gina knew Jon in college. The doctor who delivered Emma was one of eleven in the practice and she told Gina that her husband had died two weeks before her baby was born eighteen years earlier. Again we saw God's grace in every detail.

Gina added Jon's name to Emma's so she would always have a part of him with her. She has his dimple in her chin and his color of hair. It is our prayer that she will know the love of her Heavenly Father in the same way as her parents and her grandparents.

All of us have been kept in these difficult days through God's amazing grace and the prayers and love of His people. Community Bible Study friends have been a large part of that story of grace.

Sandra Grubbs
Area Director
TN East and VA West

Leaders by Design

In 2002, Community Bible Study made the decision to begin a new arm of the ministry called *Leadership Development*. The ministry was continuing to grow and it seemed important to move forward with a deliberate plan for ministering to our leaders at every level. In keeping with our mission statement, “*Making disciples of Jesus Christ...*” we began to think about how we would continue to disciple our leaders. How would we raise up the next generation of leaders with the heart of CBS?”

The vehicle developed to carry out this objective was the regional **Leadership Conference**. The dream was that a National Conference Team be commissioned to travel to regional conference sites. This would allow the local class leadership to receive encouragement, training, and a personal visit from a National Team. One message of leadership would be taken across the country to every Children’s Teacher, Core Leader, Secretary and Treasurer, raising and standardizing the level of leadership and reaching leaders across the nation with the heart of CBS. We imagined a time of empowering our leaders with a spiritual message and equipping them with informational tools from the national organization. Imagine how a visit like this would enlarge the vision and strengthen each leader. Imagine how it would give a CBS global view to all Leaders Councils. That was the dream! That was where the vision started for **Leaders by Design**, our Leadership Conference program.

In November 2003 in Orlando, Florida, we sailed our maiden voyage! It was thrilling for all of us to see what God had in mind. Since then, the Leadership Conference Team has traveled to Alabama, Texas, Tennessee, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan, Georgia, and California. More than 3000 CBS leaders have been served. They have had the opportunity to meet their Executive Director, National Directors, and Board members, in addition to seeing their Area Directors and Regional Directors for the weekend. Class leaders are driving up to five hours to attend the Conferences, and the National Conference Team and speakers are graciously flying in to greet each one of them.

Evidenced by the feedback received from the Teaching Directors and Area Directors, the vision for the Leadership Conferences is being realized. Our CBS leaders are being challenged to serve with excellence and are catching a fresh vision of the CBS mission statement. Comments like these come in repeatedly:

“My leaders see the big CBS picture now.”

“Now my class knows what I mean when I come back from TD Conference.”

“Our Servants Team became committed to the mission of CBS.”

“We are so thankful for all the speakers who gave us a new vision for our class that will build our unity.”

“This made a huge difference in my Leaders Council.”

“Can I bring more of my leaders to another conference?”

“We had 100% of our leaders here. This Leadership Conference helped bring our leadership together and it put us all ‘on the same page.’ Thanks for making this ‘men friendly!’”

We serve a great God, and God has a plan designed for all CBS leaders! We cannot anticipate how God will minister to individual leaders or what they will actually hear or think about as they come to a Leadership Conference, but God has a purpose and He is using this time to create and fashion us as leaders.

National Trainings were included in Leadership Development as well. We moved Training from Birmingham to Dallas and then, in 2004, to the National Conference Center in Lansdowne, VA, where we began combining Day and Evening Training. Teen Training continues to be held in Dallas. In 2004, 54 new CBS

Servants Teams were trained to go back to their communities and begin classes. There are 600 new CBS leaders who were trained in their Servant Team roles in 2004! Wow! Think of all the men/women/children that are being disciplined to study the Bible on their own because of the leaders trained just in 2004! That is truly realizing our mission.

By the end of 2004, the Training office in Birmingham, which has been serving the trainees so faithfully for four years, was able to relocate to the National Service Center in Virginia. We are very grateful for the organization the office provided and for their goal toward excellence. We are in the process of establishing the new Training office at NSC in 2005.

Music is so important to CBS leaders whenever they gather together. We continue to dream of a national music team for CBS events. As we ministered in music at Training and the Leadership Conferences, it became obvious pretty quickly to the **Creative Arts** ministry that we needed to add audio visual technicians to support our growing numbers. In the fall of 2004, we began to add this support. Song leaders who attend the Leadership Conferences are treated to a seminar on worship.

The **Leadership Development Team** continues to grow, and each of us remains on a steep learning curve. Our prayer is that we will be strengthened as leaders; in our home, in our church, in CBS, and in our community. May God bless each of us as He moves us to the next level of leadership.

“As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood...” (1 Peter 2:4,5a).

The Leadership Development Team



Amy, Darlene, Dawn, Marcie & Kay
at a *Leaders by Design* Conference

Marcie Hamilton, National Director
Darlene Kuzmak, Director, Ongoing Education
Amy Baker, Director, Creative Arts
Dawn Griffin, Director, Leadership Conferences
Kay Wood, Director, Training
Ellen Robinson, Assistant Director, Training

God is Faithful and True

Yes, this issue of *Sharing* is the longest ever! However, after 30 years of His faithfulness, we wanted you to see samples of why we are so grateful for all He has accomplished. May you find these testimonies of His power a great encouragement. The Lord alone knew all He had planned for Community Bible Study from 1975 to 2005. This outreach to every walk of life, at every age and stage, has produced great fruit. We plan for this to be the only issue that we will mail in 2005. Fresh testimonies and ministry news will be current on our website (www.communitybiblestudy.org).

From the very beginning the goal has always been to provide a Bible study where everyone can come and be comfortable, cared for, and become confident in the Word of God. I have been blessed to be a part of CBS since 1982 when the ministry was only seven years old. My husband, Bill, and I have had our lives forever changed by the in-depth study of God's Word. I know how necessary it has been for me to be accountable and disciplined in Bible study. Would I have studied to show myself approved, a workman rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15) if I had been completely on my own? The respectable answer would be "Yes, of course." The truthful answer is "I doubt it."

As we travel the road ahead of us, we know there are many uncertainties. We will have more frightening times as a people living in this fallen world. What is the Lord's future plan for Community Bible Study? How many budding generations around the world will be strengthened and disciplined as a result of studying God's Word in CBS and CBSI? How much longer do we have before He returns? There are many questions, and He alone has all the answers. However, we must be wise and discern or understand the times (1 Chronicles 12:32; Esther 1:12-14). Our Lord rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees for failing to discern the times. In Matthew 16:2-3, He answered them, "*When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times*" (New English Bible). Everything that will be happening around us will happen under the authority of our Sovereign Lord. May He give us as His people great discernment to understand our times as we continue to study His Word. His Word is His will! We can have the "*mind of Christ*" (1 Corinthians 2:16) as we become confident in His Word, and He will keep us in perfect peace as our minds are stayed on Him (Isaiah 26:3).



*A Personal
Word From
Camilla*



**If you would like information for yourself, a family member, or a friend about one of our classes,
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