


MAY 22, 2011

# Power for Living®

**Anthony Rossi's  
ongoing vision  
for taking  
God's Word to  
the visually  
impaired**



**Shattering the  
Darkness**

A photograph of an elderly woman with short, curly brown hair and glasses, wearing a red short-sleeved shirt. She is seated and looking down at a white Braille player device she is holding in her hands. The device is connected to a book, which she is using to read. The background is slightly out of focus, showing what appears to be a table or desk with some papers.

A FLORIDA-BASED  
MINISTRY CONTINUES  
TO CHANNEL GOD'S  
WORD TO THE VISUALLY  
IMPAIRED WORLD.

# GOD'S WORD FOR THE BLIND

BY MARLO SCHALESKY

**I**magine if you were a woman living totally blind, totally alone, with no friends, no family, and very little hope. That was the life lived by one woman from a district in Russia until the day when the postman knocked on her apartment door with a package from America.

A few days before, she had cried out to God, believing no one cared, no one heard, no one would want a "cripple" like her. She didn't expect God to answer. But He did.

He answered with a knock at the door. "Are you expecting a package

from America?" the postman called.

"I don't have any family or friends here, let alone in America," she answered.

But the postman came in anyway. He opened the package for her, and inside they found an unexpected gift—the Bible on cassettes and a player to go with it. The woman touched the cassettes in awe. Who could have sent such a wondrous gift into her darkness, into her loneliness?

The postman put a cassette into the player and together they heard the first words of the Gospel of Matthew,

spoken in their own language. The rich voice from the cassette rolled into the room.

The woman dropped to her knees and wept with joy. The postman knelt beside her. They listened until he had to leave to deliver mail to the rest of the building's occupants. Now, the woman was alone with the beautiful voice speaking God's Word. But not for long. Minutes later, more knocks sounded at her door. She opened it to find her neighbors who heard that she'd received a package from America.

She invited them in, and together they listened to the Gospel. More people came. Then even more until she had to leave the door of her small apartment open so neighbors could sit on the staircase outside and listen to the narration of the Bible in Russian.

Now, every day, people come to her to hear the Bible read to them. They also go to the market for her, wait in line for her for milk and bread, cheese and potatoes. They listen with her, they laugh with her, they share life together. Her once-lonely days are filled with friends, her once-lonely life now filled with God's Word and His love.

All this happened because she received a package from America. A package that contained the Word of God spoken in her native tongue.



This woman's story is not unique. In the United States, and all around

the world, people who are blind, visually impaired, or print-handicapped are receiving free packages of the Bible on cassettes or as MP3s. They, too, are listening in wonder and rejoicing in the free gift of God's Word given especially for them. And it's all made possible by Audio Bibles for the Blind, a division of Aurora Ministries, located in Bradenton, Florida.

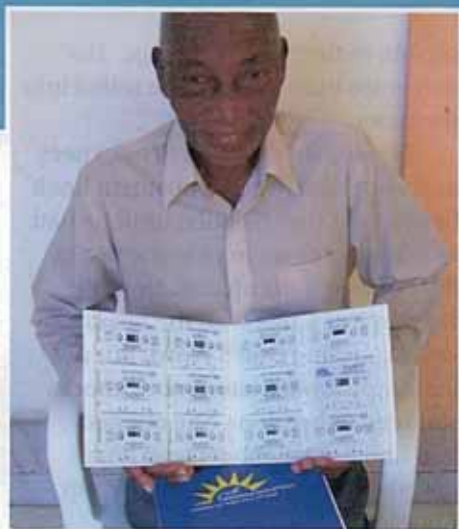
The need for audio Bibles has never been greater. The World Health Organization estimates that 314 million of the world's people are visually impaired and that 45 million of these are blind. Visual limitations are the second leading cause of disability in America. And according to Prevent Blindness America, twice as many people may be blind in 2030 as today. Thankfully, Audio Bibles for the Blind is poised to meet that need. "It is our

**Started about 30 years ago . . . Audio Bibles for the Blind sends out approximately 20,000 Bibles per year in nearly 70 different languages to 130 different countries.**

passion to provide God's Word to help bring light into their darkened world," says Jim Pike, the Director of Audio Bibles for the Blind.

Started about 30 years ago by the late Anthony T. Rossi, the founder of Tropicana orange juice, Audio Bibles for the Blind sends out approximately 20,000 Bibles per year in nearly 70 different languages to 130 different countries.

The ministry started small, with two female missionaries in Africa who



translated the Bible and put it on cassette in the early 1980s. Knowing that God's Word "shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it," (Isaiah 55:11) Rossi caught the vision for a ministry in which those who could not read a Bible would receive an audio version of it at no cost. Dismayed that Braille Bibles were too large, often taking up an entire wall for a single book, Rossi set about to make the Bible available not only to those who couldn't see to read, but also to people who were unable to hold a Bible because of disability. To him, it was simply a matter of seeing a need and working to fill it.

Today, by using modern equipment, Audio Bibles for the Blind is able to send players and audio Bibles in the King James and New King James versions to individuals and also to healthcare professionals who can distribute them to their patients. In addition, the International Children's Bible is available for kids who are

either blind or unable to hold a Bible on their own. Those who suffer with Muscular Dystrophy or Cerebral Palsy, or those who reside in hospice units, are among the recipients of audio Bibles. "Our outreach is simple and straight forward," says Pike. "We give the Bible in audio cassette or MP3 formats free on request with verification of impairment." Any eligible person may receive a copy of the Scriptures.

But recording and preparing the audio Bibles isn't easy. The English Bible alone is 90 hours long, after editing. To record the audio readings of the Bible, a narrator sits in a glass studio with a technician at the computer and two proofers in the next room following along. Any mispronunciations or mistakes are corrected immediately. "We want to make sure that the most important book in the world is read correctly," says Pike. So, they are meticulous for accuracy. Furthermore, a narrator is only able read for four to five hours a day before the voice loses clarity, so to record an entire Bible takes weeks to complete.



After narration, the recording is cleaned up to remove mistakes, coughs, or other imperfections. Tones are then added for the beginnings of books and chapters. Next, the recording is copied on cassettes or as MP3s, which are then labeled by machine, put into albums by volunteers, and shipped all over the world.

Because of the work done by 15-20 regular volunteers as well as other one-time helpers, God's Word in audio form is able to impact people who previously had little to no access to the Bible. Through the ministry of Audio Bibles for the Blind, doctors

have reported being able to stimulate the memory of Alzheimer's patients by using the audio Bibles daily. Others noted very distinctive cognitive improvements in their patients when the Bible was played versus other books. In one nursing home, a Polish woman who had been unresponsive suddenly became interactive when she heard the Bible in her native tongue. Another man, who had read his complete Bible every year since the age of 20, can now continue to do so at age 98 even though he's become blind. A note from the Czech Republic reads, "Oh, what a joy it is to see our

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- Sunday, May 22 • Read: 1 Chronicles 6-7
- Monday, May 23 • Read: 1 Chronicles 8-10
- Tuesday, May 24 • Read: 1 Chronicles 11-13
- Wednesday, May 25 • Read: 1 Chronicles 14-16
- Thursday, May 26 • Read: 1 Chronicles 17-19
- Friday, May 27 • Read: 1 Chronicles 20-22
- Saturday, May 28 • Read: 1 Chronicles 23-25

blind listening to the Word of God. Most of our blind had no one to read for them so you can only imagine their happiness since you made it possible for them to listen to their Audio Bible

## Visual limitations are the second leading cause of disability in America.

any time they want.” And the stories go on.

But it's not only the blind or handicapped who are benefitting. In many countries, recipients of audio Bibles open their windows so others can hear. Groups gather on the sidewalks to listen. Others invite people into their homes for daily “readings.” One quadriplegic woman in Russia travels to outlying villages to play her tapes for others.

The important thing, as Paul writes, is that in every way, “Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice” (Phil. 1:18).

Through the ministry of Audio Bibles for the Blind, God is using people, and His Word, to change the lives of those living in darkness and disability all around the world. And they intend to keep recording Bibles, packaging Bibles, and sending them out. When asked about the future of Audio Bibles for the Blind, Jim Pike says, “We just want to keep doing

what we're doing—getting audio Bibles out to those who need them, all over the world.” He wants to just keep seeing the need and, with the help of volunteers and ministry partners, keep on working to fill it.

It's that simple. As simple as someone seeing a need and choosing to fill it. As simple as others coming alongside,

reaching out to the blind, the visually impaired, the print-handicapped, and giving of their own time and talents to bring the light of the Bible to the hurt and hurting. It's as simple as trusting God's Word to change lives and give hope to people living in darkness.

Because that's what Audio Bibles for the Blind is all about—believing enough to send free Bibles into the darkness so the promise of Isaiah 9:2 can be realized all over the world: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.” That light is the gift of God's Word spoken in the languages of the world, sent by those who care enough to give of themselves so that no one who is eligible is turned away.

That is the power of simply seeing a need and stepping out to fill it. 🍃

*For more information about Audio Bibles for the Blind, visit the following website: [www.audiobiblesfortheblind.org](http://www.audiobiblesfortheblind.org).*

**Editorial Manager:** DONALD H. ALBAN JR., PHD • **Art Director:** NANCY L. HASKINS

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# Seeking First the Kingdom

BY GEORGE MULLER

*"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"*  
(Matt. 6:33, KJV)

**T**he great business which the disciple of the Lord Jesus has to be concerned about (for this word was spoken to disciples, to professed believers) is to seek the Kingdom of God. That is, to seek, as I view it, after the external and internal prosperity of the Church of Christ.


If, according to our ability, and according to the opportunity which the Lord gives us, we seek to win souls for the Lord Jesus, that appears to me to be seeking the external prosperity of the Kingdom of God. And if we, as members of the body of Christ, seek to benefit our fellow members in the body, helping them on in grace and truth, or caring for them in any way, that would be seeking the internal prosperity of the Kingdom of God.

But in connection with this we have also "to seek His righteousness," which means (as it was spoken to disciples, to those who have a Father in Heaven, and not to those who were without), to seek to be more and more like God, to seek to be inwardly conformed to the mind of God.

If these two things are attended to (and they imply also that we are not to be slothful in business), then do we come under that precious promise: "And all these things (that is food, clothing, or anything else we need for this present life) will be added unto you." It is not for attending to these things that we obtain the blessing, but in attending to them.

I now ask you, my dear reader, a few questions in all love, because I do seek your welfare, and I do not wish to put these questions to you, without putting them first to my own heart.

Do you make it your primary business, your first great concern, to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? Are the things of God, the honor of His name, the welfare of His Church, the conversion of sinners, and the pro-fit of your own soul. Your chief aim? Or does your business, or your family, or your own temporal concerns, in some shape or other primarily occupy your attention?

Remember that the world passes away, but the things of God endure forever. I never knew a child of God who acted according to the above passage, in whose experience the Lord did not fulfill His word of promise that "All these things shall be added unto you." 



# A monthly review of spiritual trends

## Americans Splitting Their Church Commitments

(EP News)—A recent Barna survey finds that 10 percent of adults surveyed attend a worship service in a home at least once a month. Ken Eastburn, founding pastor of The Well, a church in Orange County, California, says that statistic invalidates the idea that some Christians are house church Christians while other Christians are conventional church Christians. "Christians sitting in a traditional bricks and mortar church on Sunday morning are often the same ones strumming guitars in someone's living room Sunday afternoon," he said.

Eastburn, who recently moderated the House2House national conference on house churches in Dallas, Tex., attributes the overlap to a reluctance on the part of Christians to completely abandon the customary structure of church. "It's very common for someone to give their tithe and committee service to a congregation in a building because they feel it is too difficult to cast off all structure," says Eastburn. "At the same time, they know they're not growing sitting in the pew, and they love the idea of

dialoguing about Scripture instead of being on the receiving end of a lecture all the time."

According to the Barna research, the number of those claiming to worship in a house setting depends on how the question is asked. When researchers asked the question in the strictest sense the number dropped to 5 percent.

## Study: Early Churchgoing Has a Lasting Impact

(EP News)—The Barna Group asked adults to think back on their upbringing and to describe the frequency of their involvement in Sunday school or religious training. Among those who frequently attended Sunday school or other religious programs as children, 50 percent said they had attended a worship service in the last week, which is slightly higher than the national average. Among those who frequently attended religious programs as teenagers, 58 percent said they had attended a worship service in the last week. David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, said, "The odds of one sticking with faith over a lifetime are enhanced in a positive direction by spiritual activity under the age of 18."

