

Critical Pivot Points for Prayer:

- (1) **Berlin**—February was a huge push for the “Connections” Resource Center in Berlin. March, then, will be a time to follow up on visitors during this powerful Easter season. Pray for the staff and volunteers to connect non-believers to the body of Christ in the local church.
- (2) **Middle East and Prague**—Two of our Library couples had to return to the states during February due to deaths of family members. Jim and Laurie Barnes from Prague and Harvey and Nancy Bacus from the Middle East boarded a plane on the very same day, landing on the West coast and Midwest respectively. Pray that they will comfort their families and be comforted in return. Pray that they will experience some sense of rest while away from their primary work. Pray that they will connect meaningfully with supporters and gain new friends.
- (3) **Budapest**—Willard Black will be in Budapest on March 20th for a critical meeting with the Library board to discuss transitional issues. A couple from Iowa (to be named later) will travel with Willard since they are exploring the possibility of staffing the Budapest library for an interim period when the Andersons return to the states next fall. Pray for a positive reception and a ‘yes’ on both sides.
- (4) **Resource Development**—Here in Joplin, Shane Wood and Mark Moore are editing a series on “How to Read and Understand the Bible”. This eight-session DVD must be completed by March 28 for a major church conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma where hundreds of churches will receive a copy. This will be the first of several conferences where this strategic resource will be distributed.
- (5) **Strategic Planning**—On April 24-May 5, Mark and Barbara Moore will be in Berlin for a lecture and Prague for strategic planning for the future expansion of the Library there. Pray for a spirit of wisdom and encouragement for our support of our international workers.

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TEACHING BIBLICAL APPLICATIONS AND SKILLS FOR EVERYDAY PROBLEMS IN FAMILIES, SOCIETY AND CHURCHES.



Biblical Illiteracy: A Growing Problem

By Mark E. Moore

For more than a decade now the dominant focus in a vast number of churches has been seeker-sensitive services. Here new-comers feel welcomed and can engage Jesus in ways that are comfortable and culturally appropriate. The music is hip, the dress is casual, the ser-

mon is filled with stories and practical tips on daily living. Has it worked? Has it ever! The explosion of mega-churches is unprecedented. Many even have cafes inside the building, most have child care that rivals theme parks, and all have parking attendants skillfully orchestrating the massive flow. It is truly an organizational wonder to behold. The best part is that hundreds of thousands are coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

Let me go on record as a great fan of the mega-church. However, there is a downside. In a brand new book, *Reveal: Where Are You?*, Willow Creek, the grand-daddy of mega-churches, confessed they have been wrong. In a study of their own church and others who use their model, they discovered that heavy involvement in the church and its programs does not necessarily lead to spiritual maturity. “We made a mistake,” they say, because getting people in the door does not necessarily get them into Christ. Sure, many thousands confess Jesus as Lord, but because of biblical illiteracy, they have no idea how to translate their confession into obedience. Willow Creek will, therefore, shift emphasis toward biblical doctrine to mature those they attract.

Willow Creek’s announcement will have a powerful impact on the direction of the church in the next decade, a direction which the staff of ICR applauds. In a seemingly unrelated news release in USA Today (December 29, 2007), MIT is putting many of its classes online FOR FREE! Now you obviously don’t get college credit, but the information is available. They are not the only ones. Stanford, Berkeley, and a growing host of other institutions are using the technologies of YouTube, iTunes, and OpenCourseWare to release their classrooms to the globe. Higher education is realizing that opening their doors on the internet will not close the doors of the campus but rather expand their student pool. In addition, educators sense a moral obligation to use technologies to disseminate their knowledge even where they receive no monetary benefit. Again, the staff of ICR applauds MIT, Stanford, Berkeley, and all those centers of higher learning which sense a moral obligation to make available to the world the resources at their finger tips.

To that end, ICR will use our own website as a portal of higher biblical education to help stem the rising tide of biblical illiteracy. We invite you to visit our site at www.icrtransform.com, where you will find a number of courses already available FOR FREE. Right now we are recording the lectures of a number of the most noted Christian educators in the country. These will soon be available as well. Furthermore, the lectures you helped send overseas through Willard Black, Ron Wiebe, Margo Grieg, and a number of other noted resource people will soon come back to you. They too will be available online as permanent resources to build Christ’s church. The Scriptures are the inspired word of God, addressing the real-world problems that people face. And Spirit-filled teachers are God’s design for imbedding the truths of Scripture into the heart of the Christian community. This teaching is not just our gift to the world, it is our moral imperative.

A Word From Willard



March is decision making month for an American couple who are exploring the possibility of becoming the new directors of the Public Christian Library in Budapest. The week before Easter I'm to join them there as they meet with the Hungarian library board and the Andersons who currently direct the library.

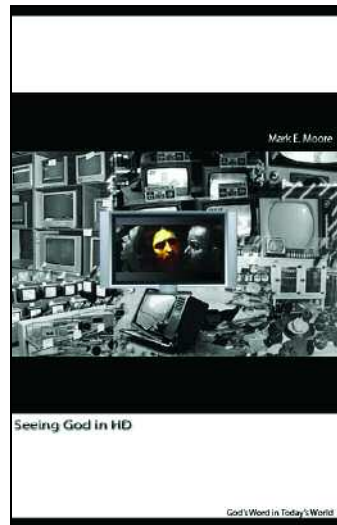
For those of you who receive the ICR E-Letter, I am continuing a series of brief practical living helps for single parents. For 25 years I have listened to scores of single parents across the US and overseas in

Russia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Brazil and the Philippines; the practical helps addressed are common issues single parents face nearly everywhere.

In the spring of 2009 I am considering another missionary and cultural exposure tour to Vienna, Budapest, Krakow, Warsaw, Berlin, and Prague. If you are interested or if you would like a group from your congregation to participate please e-mail me at WBlack5323@aol.com. We would need 25 to 30 confirmed reservations in January 2009.

I am grateful for your financial and prayer support of ICR as we continue established ICR ministries and move into some new frontiers under Mark's leadership.

ICR to Teach 250,000 People in the Next 18 Months!



Coming soon is Mark Moore's new book "Seeing God in HD: God's Word in Today's World." This book is a synthesis of Mark's college course on how to interpret the Bible written on a popular level. This book will allow the people in the pew to study the scriptures with the depth that bible college students do every day by utilizing the free internet resources referenced throughout the book. Accompanying this book will be a 8-session DVD series featuring Mark Moore teaching the material in the book. This will allow churches to use the resource in a much more interactive manner than merely a book by itself can offer.

So where does the "250,000 people" come in? At the 2008 National Missionary Convention and a major Church of Christ Convention (March 2008), ICR will be distributing the DVD series with the book for free to 2,500 churches/missionaries. If each recipient trains 100 people with these tools, ICR will have trained 250,000 Christians worldwide on how to interpret the Bible. Praise God for this amazing opportunity!

ICR wants to issue a formal "Thank you" to several key partners in this project.

West Link Christian Church (Wichita, KS) – The 8-session DVD series was shot at a workshop hosted by the church. Thank you for facilitating this important part of the project, which will literally touch lives exponentially.

Pleasant Grove Christian Church (Texarkana, TX) – \$6,000 was donated by the church for the DVD's production and free distribution. Thank you for the generosity that allows people access to high-quality Bible study tools for free.

College Press Publishing (Joplin, MO) – Thank you for partnering with us to help distribute the books to the 2,500 churches. This is a true testimony to the heart of your organization and the kingdom focus that motivates your ministry.

We are excited to see God's name spread through this project that will contribute greatly to eradicating biblical illiteracy!

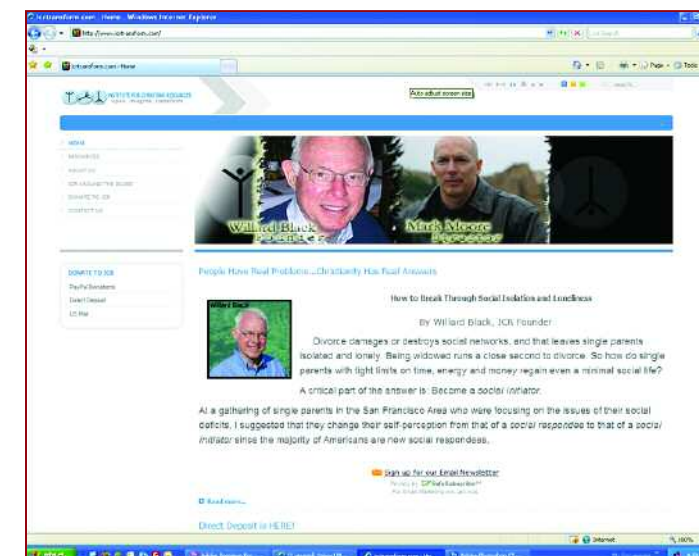
www.ICRtransform.com

If you type in www.icrnet.org, you may notice something—this is not the same website! That's right. The new ICR website is up and running...and we are truly excited. While all of the aspects of the old website have been retained, the new ICR website promises to be an important tool in the success of the ministry for the future.

One of the key aspects of ICR is the global distribution of quality resources for the healing and educating of inquisitive minds. The new ICR website is geared to assist powerfully in this area. Over the coming months, www.ICRtransform.com will become a juggernaut of biblical resources that can be downloaded and distributed copyright free around the world. There are three key areas of resources where literature, video, and audio will increasingly become available: Bible Study, Ministry Training, and Social Issues. Some of the top teachers in the world will be developing resources in one of these particular areas of study that can be downloaded for free and given to as many people as possible.

In addition, you can sign up for the ICR E-newsletters and old E-Newsletters will be available to download on the new website. You can donate to ICR through Paypal, Direct Deposit or US Mail through the new website. You can keep up to date on continual ICR News Updates on the new website. And MUCH, MUCH MORE!

We encourage you to check out www.ICRtransform.com and put it on your "favorites" list to keep up with the continual updates on this powerful tool for ministry. Here's to finding new ways to eradicate biblical illiteracy.



Direct Deposit is Here

By Phyllis Lanyon

ICR is now able to provide direct deposit to those who prefer that method of donating funds. To get set up for direct deposit, you may access the applicable form by going to www.icrtransform.com and click on "Donate to ICR." From there you will click on "Direct Deposit" and then download the appropriate form, follow the directions as outlined on that form and attach a voided check before mailing it to the address indicated. Of course, you may also request a form by writing us at ICR, PO Box 7494, San Jose, CA 95150 and we'll be happy to supply you with the direct deposit form. Always feel free to email questions to transform@icrtransform.com or call us at 408.226.1986.

Christmas Around the World

With ICR's global involvement, new and unique aspects of various cultures surface from time to time. In the reports from our library efforts overseas, we came across some surprises around the Christmas holiday that we thought you may find interesting. Here are some unique anecdotes from our newest library effort in Amman, Jordan.

Jordan

- The shopping malls are lavishly dressed with festive decorations, especially Santa Claus
- Stores and supermarkets are playing traditional Christmas carols
- Local Children's choirs sing traditional Christmas songs for fun and in formal concerts
- A number of homes have brightly lighted Christmas trees
- Both strangers and friends greet each other in English with "Merry Christmas"
- December 25th is recognized as an official holiday with all government offices closed

It is incredible to see how even a world away we can be united during times of festivity. While we may live in different locations, we may not be as different as is often assumed. In our celebrations and our inner longings, humans internationally share tremendous similarities. Fascinating...don't you think?

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. — Colossians 1:28

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. — Romans 12:2