

### 4 FAMINE OF THE WORD

*By Wayne Cordeiro*

Americans average three Bibles per family – yet hardly read any of them. What would you do if owning even a scrap of Scripture could cost you prison time?

### 6 SO WHAT?

*By Randy Loescher*

What makes people value the Word of God? Parents, pastors, and mentors who want to pass on a love for God's Word, this article is for you.

### 7 STRIKE THREE!

*By Don Tietz*

What does America's pastime have to do with the Men of Vision Evangelize team in the Dominican Republic? Read this story to find out!

### 8 INDIA INSTE: PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

*By Nick Venditti*

Half a billion people claim Hindi as their mother tongue. Nearly 200 million more speak Hindi as their second language. Discover how you can partner with INSTE to reach these people with the gospel.

### 12 WHAT PRICE DO YOU PAY?

*By Tom and Sherry Moore*

An old man is poisoned, possibly by his younger brother. His wife could be next – if she follows Christianity.

*Plus Much More!*

## Taste and See!



ANDREA JOHNSON/Editor

Remember the taste of a deep red strawberry fresh from the strawberry patch? Its sweet juiciness will ruin you for the store-bought substitute.

The same is true of most fruits and vegetables. Yet it takes time and diligence to produce a crop of strawberries, and picking them is back-breaking labor. So we usually settle for whatever the local grocer has shipped in.

The same is true with the Word of God. Digging through its pages to uncover what the Spirit is saying to us takes diligence and time. And we have at our disposal an abundance of books and materials written by others who have already done the work for us. These materials may be better than no spiritual food at all, but they might be better used as a supplement to – rather than a substitute for – a fresh word from God. A good gardener will research gardening as much as possible, but material about gardening will not replace his or her passion for digging in the dirt.

This happens in Sunday schools as well as in our personal lives. We don't want to make the effort to dig into God's Word ourselves so, out of a sense of duty, we study books about God or parenting or some other popular topic. Those books substitute poorly for the true Word and a real relationship with its Author, and we soon get bored. A radio show personality or talk show host's opinions soon become much more entertaining. We get lazy and forget what the "real" thing tastes like. Our lack of passion is visible to those around us who, in turn, want nothing to do with our "religion."

I love chocolate – chocolate chip cookies, brownies, M&Ms, you name it. Yet, at the end of

the 30 Hour Famine (a fast our youth group did to raise money for World Vision) chocolate was not what I craved. I wanted "real" food. Early on in the fast, a teenager had shown me M&Ms he was saving to share at the end of the fast. I thought about those M&Ms several times. But at the end of the fast, the chicken and rice looked, and tasted, much better. I tried to eat the M&Ms, but couldn't.

In his article, Wayne Cordeiro talks about a famine of the Word of God. It may be that we do not realize how desperate we are for spiritual nourishment because we've filled up on junk food. People who lack access to the Word of God discover nothing else will satisfy their craving. It's not enough to dig in and read the Bible, they memorize it as well.

Recently after our office staff was treated to a dramatic enactment of scripture, from memory, by Rod Carlson (see News Across the Nation), President Farmer challenged us to memorize a chapter of scripture. I chose Revelation 1. Never has the book come so alive to me. I can just "see" the one like a son of man, head and hair white, "like white wool," and His face "shining like the sun in all its strength."

We tell our children to eat properly and hopefully model that behavior. With every version of the Bible imaginable available to us at very little cost, we have no excuse for our poor spiritual health. When those close to us see the difference a healthy spiritual diet makes in our lives, they are more likely to dig in themselves. Taste and see that the Lord is good!

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