



# renew

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CASEY LANGBROEK CGA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BFM FOUNDATION (CANADA)

## Beyond Our Imagination; TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

Who would have thought? Who would have imagined?

It all started in India in November, 1988. Reverend John Klomps, then Executive Director of The Bible League of Canada, Ben DeRegt and Morris Thalen, members of First Chilliwack Christian Reformed Church, traveled with The Bible League of Canada to see the ministry work firsthand. They were awestruck by the overwhelming need for Scriptures and the radical change that God's Word could bring to the people of India, particularly to those known as the "Untouchables." John, Ben, and Morris felt the need to do more to bring Christ to the people of India.

When they returned to Chilliwack, BC, Ben and Morris plotted. Their first plan of attack was to invite some unsuspecting future volunteers to dinner. On a dreary evening in February, 1989, fourteen couples dined and heard the testimony of John, Ben, and Morris regarding the need for God's Word in India. The evening ended with the promise to work to fulfill this need.

Their first project was to purchase building lots, construct

*I have seen people confidently  
take risks that would make a  
lawyer's hair turn grey.*

homes with volunteers, sell them, and turn the profits over to The Bible League of Canada. I was asked to volunteer my time to set up the Society and work with Income Tax Canada to obtain a Charitable Organization Number.

Bibles For Missions was officially formed in April, 1989, as BFM Holdings Society. Ron Kaye, a solicitor in Chilliwack, BC, volunteered his time to form the Society... thanks Ron. But my dealings with Income Tax Canada resulted in a refusal of the application for a Charity Number because building houses, albeit for charitable purposes, did not meet the guidelines.

So the Chilliwack group moved away from house construction to the idea of a small Thrift Store. They purchased a store and officially opened in May, 1989. The sought after number for Charitable purposes was awarded by Income Tax Canada in July or August, 1989. (Did we really operate for profit and should we have paid tax on the profits generated from April 1989 to

*continued on page 2...*





**FROM TOP LEFT:**  
Joe Hall, Joanne  
Vriend, Bill  
Downey, Doreen  
Ferguson, Len  
Joose, Teresa  
Tenbrinke **FROM**  
**BOTTOM LEFT:**  
Henk Nienhuis,  
Janet Melissen,  
Casey Langbroek,  
Irene Van Soelen,  
Jerry Bulthuis  
*National Board  
Members*

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August 1989? Was it ever reported that way?)

I have been involved in this organization from the start in one form or another. I began as a volunteer to organize; now I am an Executive Director who works with the 3000 volunteers who drive this organization.

**I have seen a lot in this twenty years.**

**I have seen the love that volunteers have for this work, evident right from the start.**

**I have seen dollars pinched and turned over twice and three times.**

**I have seen and heard Annual General Meetings in the early days, when there was little or no Agenda, where stories of success and humour were exchanged. Such meetings were not without the deliberations of “this was all wonderful, but who is going to pay for all this? This meeting and the travel will cost at least 25 Bibles.”**

**I have seen people confidently take risks that would make a lawyer’s hair turn grey. All for God’s Kingdom.**

We could not have imagined or dreamed of the results.

Since that meeting in February, 1989, in Homer’s Restaurant, Chilliwack, BFM has netted over \$29,000,000 for The Bible League of Canada’s work delivering God’s Word around the World. (Come to BC in November, 2009, or Waterloo in May, 2010, to hear from the Ministry Partners of The Bible League of Canada, those who work in foreign lands, about the results of your efforts). We are on target to deliver close to or over \$4,000,000 to The Bible League of Canada for 2009.

For the next editions of the Renew, I would like to round up some facts, stories, and humour of the BFM Family over the past twenty years. Please deliver these to me or to Joyce Riewald at The Bible League of Canada. Pictures would be great, as well. Joyce and I will serve as judges in a contest to find the best story or picture. I will award to the winner, at my expense, the choice of a \$50 Tim Horton’s Gift Certificate, a \$50 gift certificate for Esso gas, or a \$75 charitable donation in the winner’s name to The Bible League of Canada.

As I reflect on my involvement in the BFM organization, I can only sum it up in this way...To God be the Glory! And thanks to all who so willingly volunteer of their time.

# HE'S THE BEST!

**JULY 2002 - JULY 2009**

More than seven years ago Frank Ritskes began the daunting task of promoting and opening up new Bibles for Missions Thrift Stores in Eastern Canada. Frank reflects here on what has been his passion, starting and renewing stores – to serve God and give Him the glory.

“We speak often of recycling furniture, clothing and numerous other items, but what about people? People who thought they had nothing left to offer or to do? I have heard hundreds of seniors say what a blessing the BFM stores are to them; and not only to seniors but to everyone, both young and old. Recycled furniture, recycled clothing, renewed people.

We now have 36 stores, and with an average of 85 volunteers per store, that is approximately 3000 volunteers who are witnessing the power of the Spirit. The best thing we can do, as thrift store volunteers, is to speak to friends and associates about the richness and purpose.

If you know of a community that has the potential to open a thrift store, please let the store development representatives (Fred Meyerink or Marshall Dunn) at BFM Foundation know. What about Orillia, Peterborough, Lindsay, Port Perry, Orangeville, Belleville... and on it goes.

What a privilege it has been to serve, the Bible League, and the foundation, Without God's help this would not have been possible. It is my prayer that in the coming years many more stores will open, many more volunteers will be added and millions of people will come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.”

Yours to serve –FRANK RITSKES



**Frank Ritskes**

*Editor's note: Each time I speak with Frank on the phone or meet him in person, when I ask Frank how he is, Frank always replies, "I'm the best!" Frank, you are the best and you have given your best to God. May you keep giving your best to Him as you continue to serve Him each day. JR*



**Ron VanderGriend from Mission India inspired delegates and guests. He spoke on the theme, "Beyond our Imagination," taken from Ephesians 3:20.**

# BFM CONFERENCE

## CONFERENCE – surveys

The conference has come and gone, the surveys are in and analysed, and the responses have been overwhelmingly positive. So where do we go from here? Well, based on survey responses, our delegates were very happy with the conference and left with a wealth of knowledge and renewed energy.

We would like to thank everyone for filling out the conference surveys; surveys have been very helpful in gauging the overall value of the conference to BFM and delegates. These surveys are designed to be very specific to allow the committee to deal with all aspects of the conference. Questions were asked about the venue, the food and beverage service, the value of workshops and the motivational speakers and more. I'm happy to report that the majority of your responses were near-perfect.

Delegates were asked to list some of their positive takeaways from the conference. The overall consensus was that they left with a new confidence, renewed energy and a sense of community. A lot of our newer delegates or first-time delegates were surprised at the scope and size of the ministry. As with most conferences, networking is key and the responses that we received reiterated this. Exchanging ideas and discussing the day-to-day operations of each other's stores was very important to all delegates.

The conference committee will continue to study the results of these surveys and will deal with each comment individually. Surveys have great value and will guarantee the improvement of next year's conference. The days of not being able to find delegates to come to the conference are behind us. As we grow together, the importance of communication and telling the BFM story becomes more and more important. The organizing committee for the 2010 conference will continue to entertain any new suggestions to enhance and improve the overall experience. Thank you again for taking a few minutes to fill out the surveys at the conference. We look forward to seeing you in 2010.

–FRED MEYERINK, DIRECTOR OF STORE DEVELOPMENT

# WORDS FROM THE CONFERENCE DELEGATES:

The 2009 BFM Conference was an inspiring, informative, positive, and encouraging rally. This is the second conference I have attended and again I came away with a sense of a community working together with great results. It gives me a feeling of accomplishment to see all of these volunteers and leaders work together to spread God's Word throughout the world.

Even though Prince George is a small store, we still feel that our contribution is important. We learned that many hands make light work, and that help is available from the Foundation and its leaders whenever we need it. We were encouraged by the shared information from the many stores. We shared the joys and difficulties. We heard about how The Bible League of Canada is wisely using our money. We learned of lives changed through the Scriptures and materials produced by The Bible League of Canada. Above all, we give thanks to God for His work through our many willing hands. Yes, it is "Beyond Our Imagination" what God can do.

## -DELEGATE FROM PRINCE GEORGE

"Beyond Imagination" was an appropriate theme for the 2009 Annual General Meeting for the Bibles for Missions Thrift Stores. After 20 years, the stores had grown from one to thirty-three, and still more stores are added to the Foundation every year. Praise the Lord for His faithfulness to us.

This year marked my 3rd AGM and I felt proud to be part of such a wonderful group of people so earnestly seeking to promote the gospel message of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

As a facilitator this year, I was not able to attend the workshops as I was busy presenting mine, but even as a presenter it was fulfilling to learn from those attending the many challenges and successes that each of our stores face on a daily basis. Through all three days I quickly came to realize that no matter how small or large the store, some with larger problems than others, we are all still on the same journey: and that is being obedient to the call to serve! Every delegate present was quick to promote their store and their community, which was heartwarming to see and hear. We can work together for the GREATER GOOD if we recognize why we operate these stores and for what purpose our money is generated—so that The Bible League of Canada can continue their work in making sure that the gospel message is heard!

Leaving the conference always makes me feel connected to the Bibles for Missions in ways that promote healthy conversations back at our store, and provides me with



**Sharon Brandsma, Manager  
of Lethbridge BFM Store**

the tools and strength that I need to carry out my call to serve the Lord. This year's conference was positive, uplifting, and refreshing. I was especially thrilled to see Susan Bergen dressed up in her clown outfit and our own Betty Oostenbrug riding off into the sunset with her cowboy hat and stuffed hobby horse!

With the Lord at our side, nothing is beyond our imagination. We only have to trust. The Lord will supply the means that enable us to remain successful by putting responsible men and women in places that will be best for each store. Let us continue to pray and uphold all those that lead and guide our Bibles for Missions stores and look forward to next year's conference when we can then reflect on another year of God's continued grace to us all!

-SHARON BRANDSMA, LETHBRIDGE

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In November 2008 Nellie Jonkman began gathering information and talking with Fred Meyerink about opening a BFM Thrift Store in Georgetown. Over the next few months, she found eight more people



**Dinner hostesses from Oshawa**

interested in working on the project. These nine people have formed our steering committee for BFM (Halton Hills) Enterprises Society.

Our first steering committee meeting was on April 6, 2009, when we began the process of creating a Bibles for Missions Thrift Store in Georgetown. Every three weeks we have held a meeting, two of which involved going to existing BFM Stores, where we were given tours. Fred

Meyerink attended our meeting in late May and again in July with Len Joose and Marshall Dunn. They answered many of our questions and renewed our enthusiasm. We are in the process of becoming incorporated.

We are actively searching for a suitable and affordable location. Thus far, three real estate agents have been contacted and eight locations have either been viewed or researched. We are striving to wait patiently for God to lead us to the right place and following up on any leads as they become known.

We (Nellie Jonkman and Kathy de Kleer) attended BfM Conference in Waterloo on the last weekend of May. After being there a short time, we realized that all of the people with green name tags were in the same category as our group—looking for a location. It was heartening to hear other experiences about the process.

We did not know what to expect before arriving, but we found the whole conference was a very positive experience. Everyone was helpful and ready to share tips with us from their own experiences. The workshops were packed with information and people willing to provide support and encouragement. We were surrounded by people with common goals and situations.

Everything was well organized. Obviously many people had worked hard so that the attendees could learn and enjoy. The whole conference gave us a lot to think about, and present to the steering committee. We were blessed to be invited to attend and learn more about BFM.

Our prayers are that we may soon find a location and fill the shelves with all the “treasures” which we have been collecting. It is quite amazing to see the response we have received since telling others about our plans. We now have one sea container (donated) filled with good quality items; a second one partly filled; and a third one in place. Many more items are being held for us in basements, garages, and spare rooms until we find our location.

**–KATHY DE KLEER AND NELLIE JONKMAN**

I did attend the 2009 Annual Conference in Hamilton Ontario. It was a blessing from the moment Fred called to ask...

The travel arrangements were put in place quickly and God even provided seat sales ☺. I would highly recommend this trip to anyone who is considering starting a store or is currently volunteering. To meet people from across Canada with a like vision and passion is priceless.

Not only did I make contacts with people



who are close to us, (well, relatively, no one is close to Whitehorse, Yukon). It seemed that, whoever I met, they were interested in where our store was at - in the start up process. Everyone was very informative and provided much needed input and stories about their stores. When you add the informative seminars “to the mix” it was a trip that I won’t soon forget. Especially the singing. I must say it was the best sounding group I have heard in a long time... unless they secretly practiced just for me, I was blessed either way.

It was also wonderful to personally meet the representatives from The Bible League. When you talk with these people and see the new videos the vision becomes even more enlarged. I did see the integrity of the business meeting from start to finish, as well as, how the Bible League represents and disperses the funds, with integrity from the BfM stores.

The one thing I need to mention is - I am a Pastor and honestly I went to this conference to check out this organization - so to speak. I had never heard of it until only a few weeks before the trip and frankly, as a Pastor of a new church plant I did not need any distractions to my call. I can honestly report that the Spirit I felt and the genuine fellowship of fellow Christians (that love the Lord -

across Canada) was a refreshing relief. I know there are a lot of needs in our community, but I have come to realize that I cannot meet all the needs.

I can now see how, “Bibles For Missions Whitehorse” does fit into our ministry. I am excited to see where God takes this store and how we can continue to work together to meet the needs of our community. Giving all the Glory to God as He makes it happen.

- PASTOR DALE FROM WHITEHORSE

As a delegate from Prince George, I found the Annual Conference informative, uplifting and very encouraging. The business end was smooth and efficient. The work sessions were informative and one of them was especially helpful regarding the impact of volunteers. Information on how to canvas for volunteers was also useful. My thanks to BFM for an instructive conference.

-DELEGATE FROM PRINCE GEORGE



**Mike Penrac from Chatham, one of our workshop leaders**



**FROM LEFT: Joanne Vriend, Joanne Bakelaar, Janet Melissen**



**Delegates enjoying their experience**

## BfM Thrift Stores Across Canada

Abbotsford, BC	604-854-6682
Barrie, ON	705-797-1587
Beamsville, ON	905-563-6905
Bowmanville, ON	905-623-9600
Brampton, ON	905-450-3522
Brantford, ON	519-750-5741
Burlington, ON	905-631-1199
Calgary, AB	403-246-7298
Chatham, ON	519-351-3817
Chilliwack, BC (1)	604-858-9444
Chilliwack, BC (2)	604-793-1996
Clarkson/Mississauga, ON	905-822-3390
Duncan, BC	250-746-7462
Dundas, ON	905-627-2412
Edmonton, AB	780-489-6958
Guelph, ON	519-821-2498
Hamilton, ON	905-383-0004
Kelowna, BC	250-860-4791
Kingston, ON	613-531-7852
Kitchener, ON	519-578-3860
Langley, BC	604-533-3995
Lethbridge, AB	403-327-3199
Maple Ridge, BC	604-463-1595
Oshawa, ON	905-720-2430
Ottawa, ON	613-288-1996
Ponoka, AB	403-790-0012
Prince George, BC	250-564-3345
Red Deer, AB	403-340-2522
Sarnia, ON	519-337-1614
St. Catharines, ON	905-704-0422
St. Thomas, ON	519-633-7300
Trenton, ON	613-394-2464
Victoria, BC	250-361-9398
Windsor, ON	519-250-9628
Winnipeg, MB	204-667-5329
Woodstock, ON	519-539-2118

# Who would want a wheel-less skateboard?

SOMETHING OTHER THAN SALES NUMBERS  
HIGHLIGHTED WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

Upon arriving at the store, I found a pile of items outside the front door, including a skateboard with no wheels. "Who would want this thing?" I thought.

Early that afternoon, a boy named John, about 10 years old, sauntered into the store carrying a sturdy plastic bag. He asked if he could leave his bag behind the counter while he looked around. A few minutes later, he returned with the wheel-less skateboard. A big smile stretched his lips. When John opened his plastic bag, he showed me the wheels off of his old skateboard. His board had broken that morning.

I was amazed, I must admit, at seeing what I had thought was useless bringing such joy to this little boy.

Sometime later, John reappeared at the store wanting to buy a backpack. When there were none upstairs that fit, he

trotted downstairs with one of our volunteers and emerged holding a backpack that was just right. John left the store excited by his findings.

To our surprise, he returned again, about twenty minutes after he had purchased his backpack. He marched up to the till and handed me all of the coins he had in his pocket (about \$1). "Here," he said, "this is for the store." When I asked when this was all about, he explained: "I found stickers in the backpack and wanted to buy them, too."

Our work at the store indirectly helps children in the third world. We volunteer so that their lives can be guided by God's Word. But I was reminded on July 29 that there are precious children all around us. We have the opportunity to make an imprint on them, too--first hand!

—FROM A FAITHFUL VOLUNTEER

