



A History of Bible Quiz in the Assemblies of God

By Robert Carter and Ruthie Edgerly Oberg

For over 50 years, teenagers in countless Assemblies of God (AG) congregations have hit buzzers, lit lights, and dug deep into their memory banks for answers in a true battle of brains. Unlike many quiz or game shows, the focus is on Scripture.

Bible Quiz has been a part of AG Christian education since the early 1960s. Teams of quizzers strive to memorize portions of the New Testament each year, and then recall answers based on those verses under pressure of time and competition. Teen Bible Quiz became a national Assemblies of God ministry in 1963, followed in 1975 by Junior Bible Quiz for elementary school children.

Bible memorization has always been a core discipline in Assemblies of God Christian education. Children and youth have frequently memorized Bible verses in Sunday school, vacation Bible school, children's church, Christ's Ambassadors (now National Youth Ministries), Missionettes (now National Girls Ministries), and Royal Rangers. This commitment to planting Scripture in the hearts and minds of young people arises from the conviction that the Word is God is divinely inspired and authoritative in faith and life.

Teen Bible Quiz

Origins

Assemblies of God Bible Quiz has its roots in a similar effort by Youth for Christ (YFC), an evangelical ministry to young people.¹ YFC had been holding local, regional, and national teen talent and Bible quiz competitions since about 1949 when Youth for Christ leader Jack Hamilton started a high school "Bible Club" in Kansas City.² That competition, in turn, was based in large part on popular television quiz shows from the 1950s and 1960s. The game format is similar to the program, *G.E. College Bowl*, which ran for many years on CBS

and NBC television networks with Allen Ludden (later of *Password* fame) and Robert Earle as the quizmasters.³ That show spawned dozens of local television quiz programs for high schools, some of which continue to this day. "Quiz bowl" or "scholar's bowl" is widely played as a school activity much like sports teams.

Owing to the popularity of quiz programs in the broader culture, many church youth groups began having their own informal quiz matches as aids in gaining biblical knowledge.

Ralph Harris, first director of the National Christ's Ambassadors (C.A.) Department, recalled that district youth leaders requested formulation of a standard for the Bible quiz competitions that were springing up among local churches.⁴ In 1960, responding to these appeals, the C.A. Department published a standard rule book and study guide for use in local churches, *Action in Acts*. The study guide, which included suggested questions and a chapter-by-chapter analysis of the book of Acts,

was written by Nicholas Nikoloff, chairman of the Department of Bible at Central Bible Institute and former general superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Bulgaria. This early rule book allowed for participation by quizzers between the ages of 12 and 19 and encouraged competition between local churches in sections, culminating in a final quiz at the district level.⁵

The C.A. Department noted positive responses to the release of *Action in Acts* in its report to the 1961 General Council and began making plans to expand the program.⁶ When Owen Carr became the national secretary of the C.A. Department in 1962, it fell to him to begin the process. In an interview, he recalled,

I was the district youth director—they called them D-CAP [District Christ's Ambassadors President] back then—in Kansas from 1953 to 1958, and a number of the districts had Bible Quiz. Then in 1962 I became head of [what became known as] the National Youth

Bible Quiz is a proven, effective means to instill God's Word into the next generation.

—Doug Clay

Department, and I said, “This should be a national program.” Before that, each district picked their own book of the Bible and wrote their own questions, had their own rules, and it was not organized at all.⁷

In 1963 the C.A. Department received permission from the executive presbytery to take quizzing beyond the district level and conduct national competitions.⁸ The first book chosen for study was *Luke*, and the first national

sion of the General Council, during a night when youth ministries were featured at the biennial convention.

A large electronic scoreboard stood behind the quiz teams, and a crowd of about 5,000 looked on as Lee Shultz—who later became the announcer and producer of the “Revivaltime” radio broadcast—presided as the quizmaster.

Carr recalled that Shultz unwittingly became the person that the crowd sided against—thanks to an incident early in the championship game.

“Early in the game, the moderator

the generation coming of age in the 1960s was experiencing pressure to accommodate to the values of the surrounding society. In addition, leaders were aware that other revival movements that started strong seemed to fall back into spiritual complacency and worldliness—something that Assemblies of God leaders wanted to avoid.

In 1963, the C.A. Department called for a national youth convention, something that had not been done in almost twenty years. This youth convention would include anointed preaching, prayer, a Teen Talent search, and the national Bible Quiz tournament. The stated purpose of the convention was to

Strike at the heart of our youth with a challenge to perpetuate Pentecost by a personal experience—to challenge them to a life of dedication, a life of self-sacrifice, and seeing the work of God carried forward with Pentecostal fervor.¹⁵

A primary goal of the Bible Quiz program from its beginning was “the revitalization of the next generation of leaders within the Assemblies of God.”¹⁶ Believing firmly in the power of Scripture to transform lives, C.A. leaders sought to implant the Word of God in the coming generation of students. Bible Quiz was one of the tools they used to accomplish this goal.

Early Writers, Buzzers, and Books

In the early years, the challenge of writing questions for official competitions fell to several different writers. During the 1960s and 1970s, writers included Donald F. Johns, Kermit Jeffrey, G. Raymond Carlson, Anthony Palma, Verne MacKinney, George O. Wood, George Edgerly, and Brenton Osgood. Several of these writers also prepared the study guides for teams to use in their personal study and church practice. Edgerly began writing the individual quizzer study guides in 1975, and he continued



Contestants, quizmaster and judges are in place for the final competition of the national C.A. Teen Bible Quiz teams, August 1965.

quiz tournament, using questions from writer Stan Walters, took place at the 1963 General Council in Memphis, Tennessee.⁹ Initially the ministry’s name was Teen C.A. Bible Quiz. It has also been called Bible Quiz and Teen Bible Quiz (TBQ).

The first national championship tournament included eight teams, each of which had won its regional championship.¹⁰ It was strictly a single-elimination bracket playoff, or sudden-death tournament, where each team is immediately eliminated from the competition after one loss.¹¹ Most of the quiz matches these players had experienced prior to the national competition took place before a handful of spectators in a Sunday school room. Now they were competing for the opportunity to quiz in the final match, to be held during a plenary ses-

ruled one of the students incorrect, and the young man said, ‘I’d like to challenge that.’ The crowd hushed, and the judges then ruled that he was correct. Everybody cheered, and from then on they were all cheering for the kids against that mean old quizmaster,” Carr said.¹²

The first national champions were from Bouldercrest Assembly in Atlanta, Georgia.¹³ The congregation went on to win the title two more times in the 1970s and continues to be active in Bible Quiz as Evangel Community Church in Snellville, Georgia.¹⁴

The Motivation Behind the Ministry

As the Assemblies of God looked toward its fiftieth anniversary in 1964, there was concern that the church’s growth was beginning to slow and that

to do so until 1999. Students of that era associated Edgerly's name with national Bible Quiz, which earned him the title "Father of Bible Quiz," although he was not directly involved in its beginnings.

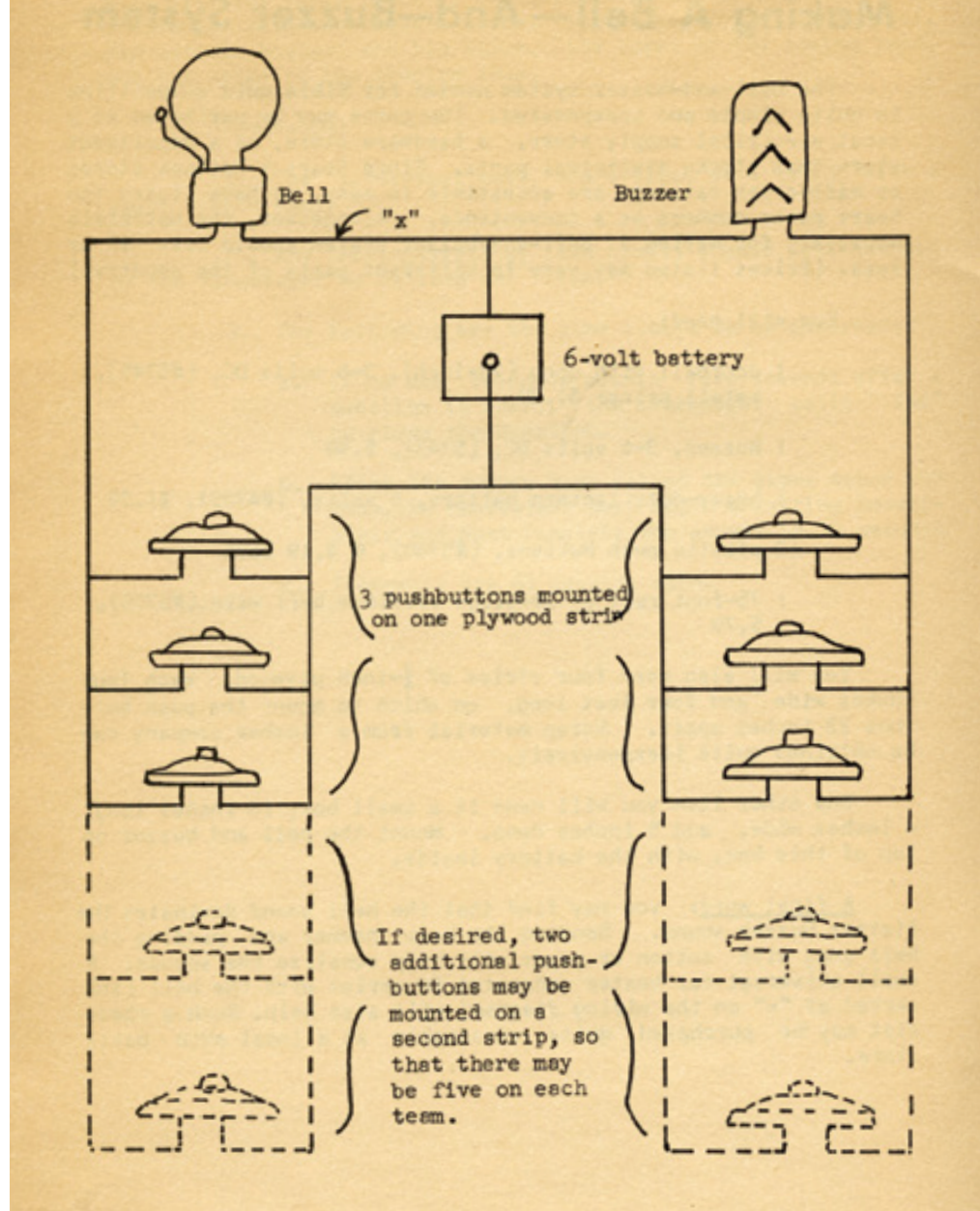
Electronic buzzer systems were not readily available in an affordable, portable form in the 1960s. To assist churches in determining which quizzier was first in responding to a question, in the 1960 *Action in Acts* study guide, the national C.A. Department included hand-drawn instructions for creating a simple bell/buzzer device using materials roughly totaling \$7.00 from Sears & Roebuck stores.¹⁷ In this system, quizzers raised their hands (covered with a colored glove) when they pressed a manual buzzer. The task of determining which quizzier was first to the buzzer fell to a specific judge. In 1970, a portable device called "The Judge" became widely popular among quiz teams. "The Judge" was a briefcase with red and green lights on the front and cables attached to buzzer pads coming out either end. The device became synonymous with Bible Quiz itself.

Except for the replacement of the Gospel of Luke with the Gospel of Mark, the Scripture material has remained relatively consistent for more than 30 years—a Gospel or Acts in one year, alternating with two or more epistles in the next, over a nine-year cycle.¹⁸ Books covered in the current nine-year cycle are: 1) Acts; 2) Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon; 3) Mark; 4) I and II Corinthians; 5) John; 6) Hebrews, I and II Peter, Jude; 7) Matthew; 8) I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus, I, II, and III John; and 9) Romans and James.

With this schedule, it is not unusual for a quizzier to finish his or her quizzing career having memorized thirteen to fifteen books of the Bible in their entirety.

Competitions

The National Bible Quiz tournament and Teen Talent continued to be held in conjunction with General Council meet-



In the beginning years of Bible Quiz the C. A. Department distributed this diagram for creating a simple handmade bell/buzzer device for Bible quizzing.

ings in odd-numbered years and met separately in even-numbered years. In 1986, when Teen Talent became Fine Arts Festival, the festival played host to both events. However, both ministries experienced such growth that by the mid-1990s they returned to their original practice of holding separate events on different dates.¹⁹ The 1997 national Bible Quiz finals in Indianapolis was the last to be held in conjunction with General Council. It was located at suburban Lakeview Temple, several miles away from the main Council site at the RCA

Dome. National quiz meets have been held across the country from California to Maryland.

Quizzers experience their first taste of competition in their local church among members of their own team. They then have opportunity to hone their skills against other teams in their section as each team prepares for the annual district quiz tournament. Teams then advance from district competition to regionals. The top four teams in each of the eight regions are invited to the national tournament, in addition to eight wild-card



Members of the 1963 Bible Quiz championship team from Bouldercrest AG, Atlanta, Georgia (l-r): Ronnie Pruett, Pastor Eugene Gustafson and Mrs. Gustafson (coaches), Rusty Laurens (in front), Scott Laurens, Mrs. Brenda Gregg, Barbara Gregg, and George Bates.

teams from across the entire nation, leading to the event's unofficial nickname of "The Final 40." The national tournament now runs for five days, with several additional events such as a "quoting bee," where contestants must quote a verse (in later stages, two or three) perfectly in a set time span that decreases as the event moves toward its end.

While the Scripture portions have remained largely the same, the questions for competition have become increasingly difficult.²⁰ In the early days, an answer which came from two consecutive verses was considered quite challenging. Today, a question which requires a quizzier to perfectly quote a seven-verse section is not unheard of at Nationals, and it is usually answered correctly by a handful of elite quizzers—though it is done at a high speed which tests the ability of judges to clearly hear each word as quizzers attempt to finish within the 30-second time limit. It is a feat which still inspires huge applause from fans gathered to watch two teams battle it out for the championship, even as easier questions did in that first 1963 title match in Memphis.

Participation increased through the years, with more than 1,000 teams in-

volved at the ministry's peak in the 1990s, according to Bernie Elliot, who has been involved in the Bible Quiz ministry since coaching his first team in 1977 at a small church near Syracuse, New York. He has served as the Bible Quiz National Coordinator since 1999.²¹

Bible Quiz now numbers more than 600 teams. While an increasing number of extracurricular activities have cut into participation from the ministry's peak, that trend has reversed in recent years. Bible Quiz leaders have been working to promote the ministry by holding coach seminars at youth conventions, Bible Quiz retreats, and outreaches at camps across the nation. Elliot also guest lectures in AG colleges and universities to promote biblical literacy through the ministry of Bible Quiz.²² This outreach has been an important means of promoting the ministry, as many AG youth ministers are unfamiliar with Bible Quiz.

In an effort to increase participation and to get as much thorough Bible knowledge to as many teens as possible, National Youth Ministries has added competition levels specifically for middle-school students, with less material covered at a time. Likewise, a new "Experience League" has been established

which covers roughly a single chapter each month of the season, with no review of the previous month's material, easier questions, and no end-of-season playoffs. The new league, first used nationally in 2014, has already resulted in new teams in many churches.

During almost all of its history, Bible Quiz eligibility rules restricted teams from churches outside the AG. While non-AG churches were allowed to quiz in local and sectional meets, they could advance only as far as district playoffs. They were later allowed to go to regional finals tournaments. That policy ended in 2016 when Atlanta Tamil Church (Norcross, Georgia) became the first non-AG team to compete at the national finals.

Recognition and Awards

Over the years, several Assemblies of God colleges and universities began to offer scholarships to top quizzers at the district, regional, and national levels. An endowment fund was established to provide additional scholarships for top teams at the national Bible Quiz finals; those scholarships can be applied to any institution of higher learning and may accumulate over multiple years. Quizzers with multiple appearances at the na-

tional finals have earned scholarships ranging from \$4,000 to \$5,000. The total amount awarded to quizzers in 2017 was \$30,000.²³

Bible Quiz also introduced new challenges designed to take quizzers' memorization efforts to the next level. In the 2000s, a National Memorization Award was introduced, which requires that the Scripture portion in use that season be quoted a full chapter at a time, with four mistakes or fewer per chapter.

When that award was achieved by many quizzers (and even some coaches and adult officials), an even tougher level—the Master Memorization Award—was introduced. It requires the entire Scripture portion to be quoted at one sitting within a specified time limit and fewer than a set number of errors. For instance, the 2016/2017 award for quoting the entirety of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon had a 45-minute limit with no more than five mistakes. Thirty-eight quizzers achieved this distinction in 2017.²⁴

The Discipleship Award provides balance to the competitive aspects of Bible Quiz by encouraging quizzers to develop their Christian walk. Rather than focusing on memorization or points scored during quiz matches, recipients of this award must read the AG position paper on the baptism in the Holy Spirit, perform community service, write an essay on spiritual disciplines, and incorporate fasting and prayer into their regular schedules, among other requirements.

Junior Bible Quiz

Beginnings

The Bible Quiz ministry grew greatly in the 1970s with the advent of an elementary school version called Junior Bible Quiz (JBQ). In the fall of 1972, Bob Brechtel, an Evangelical Covenant Church layman, came to George Edgerly in the office where he served as Iowa D-CAP to ask him about Bible Quiz. Edgerly told him what the Assemblies of God had been doing since 1963. Edgerly

remembered Brechtel interrupting him and saying, "I don't want something for teens. And I don't want it over just one book of the Bible. I want a ministry that will help children learn the names of the books of the Bible, how the Bible came to be, and what it teaches. And it should be written to the child's level of ability to understand its great truths." Edgerly recalled responding, "That's a great idea. When I find time I'll try to develop your concept."²⁵

Just a few months later, Edgerly was invited to join the National Sunday School Department in Springfield, Mis-



George Edgerly, circa 1970.

souri. In a brief hallway conversation, Edgerly discovered that Ralph Harris, editor-in-chief of Church School Literature, had been tossing around a similar idea. Together they brainstormed ways to adapt the Teen Bible Quiz program for quizzers in second through sixth grades. Their goal was to choose a broad range of material that would serve as a "Pentecostal catechism" and would reinforce what the children were already learning in Sunday school, children's church, Missionettes (now National Girls Ministries), Royal Rangers, and vacation Bible school. They also wanted to make it accessible for parents to use for Bible teaching at home.

The idea was presented to the joint committee of Church School Literature editors and Sunday School Department consultants, which expressed several concerns. Would promoting competition among elementary age students introduce a "little league syndrome" to Bible study? Would memorization be accompanied by an emphasis on application? Would participation in quizzing isolate students from other ministries of the church?

With these concerns in mind, the committee approved the preparation of a set of questions with the understanding that competitive quizzing between churches would not be promoted by the national office. JBQ was designed to supplement the basic biblical concepts and doctrines taught in other children's ministry programs rather than competing with them.²⁶

Developing a Pentecostal Catechism

The questions and answers for the Bible Fact-Pak, the source of JBQ match questions to this day, was developed by Edgerly, along with Ralph Harris and Children's Ministries Consultant Ron Clark. The trio wrote more than 800 questions, covering important events, persons, and places in the Bible, and the major doctrines of Christianity and the Pentecostal movement. The doctrinal questions were based on concepts from the Statement of Fundamental Truths, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible* by Myer Pearlman, and *Bible Doctrines* by P. C. Nelson.²⁷ The Fact-Pak also included 84 quotation questions requiring perfect recitation of Bible verses in the King James Version (KJV). From these submitted questions, 576 were chosen—a number based on how many 1½ by 3 inch cards could fit on 24 sheets of cardstock for printing. Checking the questions for doctrinal issues was assigned to then-Assistant General Superintendent G. Raymond Carlson, who later became general superintendent.²⁸

Questions and answers were inten-

tionally structured to aid in understanding biblical concepts. Rather than using a question that stated, “Quote the seventh commandment,” the question asked, “Which commandment protects the sacredness of marriage,” helping the quizzier to understand the concept of adultery. Even the numerical order of the questions was intentional. The questions about Bible stories were arranged in biblical order, and questions about Bible doctrines were often followed by a question about a Bible story that illustrated the concept.²⁹ The writers chose

nations also made use of the Fact-Pak, it continued to be printed in both KJV and NIV for several years. By 2010 the demand for KJV became low enough that further production was discontinued.³³

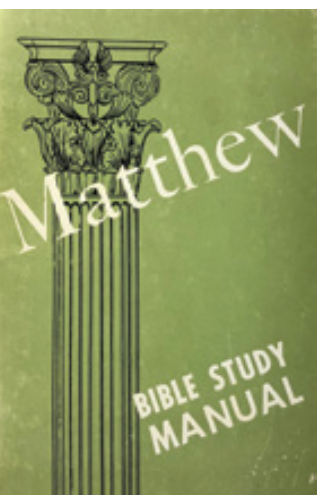
The questions have seen a few minor changes—mostly the updating of language (for example, “Holy Ghost” was changed to “Holy Spirit”) and adjusting questions due to the change from KJV to NIV—but the vast majority of the original questions by Edgerly, Harris, and Clark are still used today.

Instead of a box of red, white, and

ing difficulty: Discoverer, Searcher, Achiever and Master seals. The Master seal required 59 out of 60 correctly-answered, randomly-selected questions from the Bible Fact-Pak. In succeeding years, two more levels of difficulty were added: Bible Quoter, which required perfect quotation of the 95 Quotation Questions (increased from the original 84), and Bible Excellence, requiring 571 out of 576 correct answers completed in one sitting without a break. As of 2017, more than 5,000 people have completed the Master Award.³⁶ The Master Seal program made participation possible for children who did not attend a church with a JBQ program or who did not enjoy or learn well in a competitive environment.

JBQ has also been able to achieve its goal of complementing other children’s ministries. JBQ questions are included in the AG’s Radiant Life Sunday School curriculum, from Primary through Pre-Teen levels. The *Fact-Pak* is used in children’s church gatherings and vacation Bible schools, separate from the official JBQ program. National Girls Ministries and Royal Rangers award JBQ and Bible Quiz merit badges for participation in the program. Requirements for the badges include competing on a team, scoring 500 points over a quiz career, three quiz-outs (accomplished by answering six correct questions in a given match), and earning the Searcher seal in the Master Award program.³⁷ The Children’s Ministries Department also included JBQ questions in its Fire Bible for Kids devotional books.³⁸

While it was agreed that the national offices in Springfield would not promote JBQ quizzing between churches, nothing prevented districts from doing so. In March 1978, five teams from Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa met at First Assembly of God in Des Moines for an informal quiz meet. After that meet, Dan Rector of Minnesota and John Crabtree of Illinois were asked by their districts to organize JBQ on a district level; both district programs began in 1979.³⁹ Many other districts followed suit, with each



easily-understood language and defined terms like “redemption,” “justification,” “sanctification,” and “vicarious atonement” on a third-grade reading level.³⁰

The first printing was completed in November 1975, with question cards of graded difficulty in red, white, and blue to correspond with the American Bicentennial.³¹ To keep costs low, Edgerly printed the question cards, which came to be known as the “Bible Fact-Pak,” on a printing press in his garage. It was introduced to the District Sunday School Directors in the March 1976 conference.³²

In the late 1980s, as other Assemblies of God ministry programs were making the switch in publication from the KJV to the New International Version (NIV), it became necessary for JBQ to also make the change. Because other denomi-

blue (later changed to white, yellow, and green) cards, spiral-bound books are typically used today (although cards are still available), and sets of questions for practice or for competition can be generated online at a dedicated website, biblefactpak.com. The Bible Fact-Pak has also been translated into numerous languages,³⁴ it is used for Bible quizzing in other countries,³⁵ and it has become part of the Bible curriculum for many homeschooling families.

Competitions

To curtail concerns about competitions, JBQ questions were initially promoted as an aid for individuals to memorize Scripture. JBQ participants could work toward Master Seal goals (now known as the Bible Master Award), progressing through four levels of increas-



Quiz team from Bethel Assembly, Quincy, Illinois at a special quiz meet in Des Moines, Iowa, March 1978.

district writing its own rules based on Teen Bible Quiz. In 1980, George Edgerly and Dan Rector wrote the first set of guidelines that began the process of standardizing JBQ meets.⁴⁰

In 1981, Dan Rector and Ken Devoe of Wisconsin—both from the North Central Region—organized the first regional meet. Other districts and regions wanted more interaction for their teams, leading to the first National JBQ Festival in 1986, held in Rockford, Illinois. The team from Forest Edge Church of Columbus, Ohio, won the first national championship. The National Festival is still led by an independent committee today, although the executive presbytery of the General Council gave official blessing to the festival in the mid-1990s.⁴¹ The National Festival has led to additional cooperation between local, district, and national leadership and has set a standard for excellence in the JBQ ministry. Approximately 80 teams attend the annual festival, which was held at Calvary Church in Naperville, Illinois, for most of the 1980s and 1990s. It has since been held in various locations. Barry Jorris has served as coordinator of the festival since 2007.

Junior Bible Quiz has also led to fellowship with churches outside the Assemblies of God. Because of its unique-

ness in providing a basic introduction to Bible doctrine in a fun and easily accessible format, many non-AG churches have made it available and have participated in quiz meets with Assemblies of God churches at the local, district, regional, and national levels, including First Baptist Church of Bowling Green, Kentucky, which finished second at the National Festival in 2001.⁴²

Since its introduction, Junior Bible Quiz has gone on to surpass Teen Quiz in the number of participants. While records of participation are incomplete, JBQ is estimated to have more than 2,000 teams with as many adult coaches and quiz officials, and nearly 10,000 quizzers in its official program. That is at least triple the current number of those taking part in Teen Bible Quiz.⁴³ From sales of the Bible Fact-Pak in the United States, it is estimated that over 300,000 children have had the chance to learn the Bible in this question and answer format.⁴⁴

Benefits of Bible Quiz

Now that Bible Quiz is approaching its 55th anniversary, we can look back on its history and see some of the benefits for those who have been involved in Teen Bible Quiz and Junior Bible Quiz. The greatest benefit, perhaps, is that the Word of God has been implanted

into the minds and hearts of countless young people. Quizzers who are now in their 60s testify that much of what they learned in their quiz experience has stuck with them throughout life. For many, the lessons learned in Bible Quiz solidified their commitment to God and to the church.

Bible Quiz also gives young people an opportunity to develop a positive attitude during stressful times. They learn how to handle both victory and defeat in a supportive environment. Quizzers must learn how to process emotions and persist through difficulty, often using their own anxiety and the tension of competition to their benefit. Learning to be gracious to a winning opponent in a match or to a quizmaster who has ruled an answer incorrect helps to build positive behaviors in other areas of life. The confidence gained from attempting something difficult and seeing it through to completion prepares young people for later success as they see tasks that seem larger than their abilities.

The teamwork encouraged by Bible Quiz helps youth to see the value of others. A single quizzers cannot answer all questions for a team; members must learn to share the spotlight in order to maximize the team's score. Social skills gained in tedious practice sessions, on the long trips to meets, and in the matches themselves are invaluable for life. Quizzers often establish lifelong friendships with those from their own team and from other churches.

The memorization skills gained in Bible Quiz are also a major benefit. Training the brain to memorize and to think quickly and critically has led to success outside of Bible Quiz. Quiz experience lessens test anxiety and gives confidence in mental abilities. Quizzers who perfect the art of "contesting" (presenting an argument as to why a judge's ruling is correct or incorrect) develop rhetorical skills that serve them well in public speaking and debate.

Bible Quiz also provides opportunities for adults to mentor quizzers. The

time invested by parents and coaches into their quizzers pays long-term dividends, especially when the coach is able to come alongside the parents and reinforce the values being taught at home.

Life After Bible Quiz

Bible Quiz participants frequently go on to success in ministry and other careers, and many top quizzers from the early years have become Bible Quiz coaches, officials, and question writers, continuing their involvement by mentoring other quizzers. David Boyd was a bus kid in Huron, South Dakota, who joined a Bible Quiz team that went to the national finals. He now promotes JBQ in his role as the director of Children's Ministries and Boys and Girls Missionary Challenge (BGMC).⁴⁵

Bible Quiz is often a family affair, with parents serving as either coaches or officials. Outside of the AG, perhaps the most broadly known quizzing family is the Wagner clan, Canadian natives who emigrated to Oklahoma. Competing for First Assembly of Owasso, the Wagner brothers, Joshua, Jesse, and Daniel, won three national championships over four years and finished second in the fourth. But they are known outside of the Bible Quiz ministry for their successful run on the Game Show Network program, "The American Bible Challenge,"⁴⁶ in which they won the championship of the second season in 2013. The family took their winnings—\$140,000—and staged crusades and missions throughout Central and South America.⁴⁷

Many other former quizzers and coaches are involved in ministry all over the world, including at least four current members of the Executive Leadership Team of the Assemblies of God: Doug Clay, Greg Mundis, Rick Dubose, and Jim Bradford, who was a two-time Minnesota state champion. Many are missionaries, pastors, teachers, homemakers, and serve in scores of churches around the globe. Others have gone on to successful careers in secular fields, including Rhett Laurens, an attorney grad-

uating from Yale University and Harvard Law School,⁴⁸ Rob Moore, member of the Canadian parliament,⁴⁹ and John Porter, former quizzer and coach who is now a vice president for IBM.⁵⁰

Although winning tournaments is a goal of the coach, National Bible Quiz Coordinator Bernie Elliot is quick to state that the most successful coaches are those who have "a high percentage of students still in a strong relationship with Jesus years later."⁵¹ Edgerly recalled in 1989 that his first team in Gray, Iowa, never won a district meet. However, he noted, "their efforts have come to shake the world for Christ. One team member is a missionary to South Africa, another to Tanzania. Two are married to pastors, and one is the wife of an Army chaplain. Another is Office Coordinator for the Africa field office in the Division of Foreign Missions [now known as Assemblies of God World Missions]. No, they never had a winner—but they are winners." Edgerly also mentioned a 1969 letter from a helicopter pilot in Vietnam that he carried in his briefcase for many years. The pilot wrote, "Thank you for all the hours you spend with the quiz team. If it hadn't been for my grasp of the Bible, particularly the book of Romans, I would have messed up my life a couple of years ago."⁵²

Bible Quiz in a Post-Christian Age

Bible Quiz is perhaps more important now than ever as biblical knowledge is decreasing in America's post-Christian culture. General Superintendent Doug Clay believes the ministry is one of the best ways to promote biblical literacy among young people. "I am concerned that our children are growing up in a culture that undermines biblical values," Clay notes. "I encourage every church to provide opportunities for young people to learn the Word of God and to develop a healthy, biblical worldview. Bible Quiz is a proven, effective means to instill God's Word into the next generation."⁵³

Bible Quiz is not merely a competition or a program—it is a mentor-based

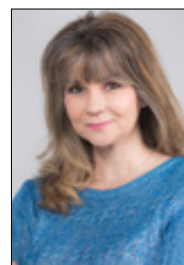
ministry. For both Junior Bible Quiz and Teen Bible Quiz, the importance of the coach relationship is vital to the growth of the quizzer. As George Edgerly was fond of saying, "Most spiritual truth is better 'caught' than 'taught'"⁵⁴ and "It isn't enough to teach the lyrics of Christianity, we must also model how to carry the tune." Bible Quiz gives the opportunity for youth to become very close to an adult mentor who has a personal interest in their spiritual and intellectual development.

At George Edgerly's funeral in 2016, more than a dozen former quizzers, ranging in age from late teens to mid-60s, took the microphone to share the lasting impact of their Bible Quiz coach on their lives. Similar testimonies have arisen from quizzing programs across the Assemblies of God. For over 50 years, Bible Quiz has helped to develop discipline and biblical literacy in countless Assemblies of God youth—an investment in the future which has yielded eternal dividends. ✝



Robert Carter, a semi-retired newspaper reporter, has served in various capacities in the Teen and Junior Bible Quiz ministries since

1986; he's been the chief statistician for Teen Bible Quiz national finals since 1998. He attends Garywood Assembly (Hueytown, Alabama).



Ruthie Edgerly Oberg, an Assemblies of God minister, is on staff at the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center. She is the niece of

Bible Quiz pioneer George Edgerly.

NOTES

¹Art Deyo, “Celebrating 70 Years of Youth For Christ,” accessed January 29, 2018, https://www.yfc.net/images/.../YFCs_History_by_Dr_Art_Deyo_-_Final_Version.pdf.

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⁴Ralph W. Harris, “History of the National C.A. Department,” [197?]. Typed manuscript.

⁵*Action in Acts*.

⁶“Report of the Christ’s Ambassadors Committee,” *General Council Minutes*, 1961, 74.

⁷Owen Carr, telephone interview by Robert Carter, April 25, 2017.

⁸“Notes For Our D-CAP’s,” October 1962; *Capsule*, August 1963.

⁹“National Bible Quiz Finals - Official Question Writers,” accessed January 31, 2018, http://www.biblequiz.com/history/nationals/question_writer.htm.

¹⁰Leland G. Shultz, “Teen Quiz Tournaments Encourage Bible Study,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, March 1, 1964, 16.

¹¹“Nationals, 1963,” accessed February 1, 2018, <http://biblequiz.com/history/nationals/1963/main.htm>

¹²Owen Carr interview.

¹³“The Winners,” *C.A. Herald*, November 1963, 8.

¹⁴“National Champions,” Biblequiz.com, accessed April 21, 2017, http://biblequiz.com/history/nationals/team_champions.htm.

¹⁵*C.A. Day Committee Minutes*, [196? (pre-1963)].

¹⁶*C.A. Day Committee Minutes*, [196?]; “National Youth Conference,” *C.A. Herald*, December 1963, 28.

¹⁷*Action in Acts*.

¹⁸This was originally an eight-year cycle before the additional books were included.

¹⁹Jesse Segrist, “Fine Arts Festival: Fifty Years of the Arts in Ministry,” *Assemblies of God Heritage* 33 (2013): 52.

²⁰Bernie Elliot, telephone interview by Robert Carter, March 30, 2017. TBQ used the King James Version until the 1994-1995 season, when it switched to the New International Version. TBQ and JBQ currently use the 2011 New International Version.

²¹For several years, the national coordinator of Bible Quiz was a full-time staff member of National Youth Ministries in Springfield, Missouri. When Elliot took the post, he based his work out of his suburban Pittsburgh home, though he does not see much of it. Appearances at invitational tournaments, speaking opportunities at churches and ministerial meetings, and numerous other efforts keep him on the road as he promotes both the teen and Junior Bible Quiz ministry. Elliot, with his wife Jeannie alongside to serve as a *de facto* assistant director, has now served longer than any other national Bible Quiz director. Bernie Elliot, telephone interview by Robert Carter, March 30, 2017.

²²Bernie Elliot, e-mail to Ruthie Oberg, January 17, 2018.

²³Bernie Elliot, telephone interview by Ruthie Oberg, January 16, 2018.

²⁴*2017 Bible Quiz Nationals* [program] (Springfield, MO: National Youth Ministries, 2017).

²⁵George Edgerly, “The Beginnings of Junior Bible Quiz.” Typed manuscript, [ca. 2012]. Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷George Edgerly, oral history interview by Ruthie Oberg, February 29, 2016.

²⁸George Edgerly, “The Beginnings of Junior Bible Quiz.”

²⁹George Edgerly, “Feedback on JBQ to Wayne Murray,” no date.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹George Edgerly interview.

³²Edgerly, “Feedback on JBQ to Wayne Murray.”

³³Edgerly, “The Beginnings of Junior Bible Quiz.” The remaining stock of KJV materials were given free to missionaries requesting them, with the cost of shipping being paid by Boys and Girls Missionary Challenge (BGMC).

³⁴Edgerly, “The Beginnings of Junior Bible Quiz.” The Fact-Pak has been translated into French, Russian, Swahili, Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese, Lithuanian, and Braille, among others.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶“Bible Master Awards,” AGKIDMIN Junior Bible Quiz, accessed January 31, 2018, <http://kidmin.ag.org/ministries/juniorbiblequiz/jbqbiblemaster>. The Master Award does not have an age limit. Many adults have earned the award alongside their children.

³⁷“Girls Ministries Merit Requirements,” accessed January 31, 2018, <http://rmdc.org/files/Missionettes/Reviews/Merit%20Badges%20Combined.pdf>

³⁸“Resources,” AGKIDMIN Junior Bible Quiz, accessed January 31, 2018, <https://biblefactpak.com/Home/About#resource>.

³⁹Dan Rector, “The History of the Junior Bible Quiz Festival.” Essay, [ca. 2015]. Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Edgerly, “The Beginnings of Junior Bible Quiz.”

⁴²Larry Mullins, telephone interview by Ruthie Oberg, January 17, 2018.

⁴³Bernie Elliot, telephone interview, March 30, 2017.

⁴⁴“The Buzz,” Friday, June 12, 2015. Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

⁴⁵David Boyd, e-mail to Ruthie Oberg, February, 14, 2018

⁴⁶Rita Sherrow, “Owasso Brothers on ‘American Bible Challenge’ Well-prepared for Game Show Thursday,” *Tulsa (Okla.) World*, April 30, 2013, accessed April 26, 2017, http://www.tulsaworld.com/scene/tv/owasso-brothers-on-american-bible-challenge-well-prepared-for-game/article_d7b2d3ef-9990-5874-8ed9-f7d65b921384.html.

⁴⁷Tyler O’Neil, “Okla. Brothers Win American Bible Challenge; to Donate \$140,000 Winnings to Missions,” *The Christian Post*, May 24, 2013, accessed April 26, 2017, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/okla-brothers-wins-american-bible-challenge-to-donate-140000-winnings-to-missions-96626/>.

⁴⁸“Rhett H. Laurens,” accessed January 26, 2018, <http://www.lawyerdb.org/Lawyer/Rhett-Laurens/>.

⁴⁹“The Honourable Rob Moore,” Members of Parliament, accessed May 25, 2017, [http://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members/Rob-Moore\(17210\)/Roles](http://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members/Rob-Moore(17210)/Roles); “Harper Moves 10 in Cabinet Shakeup,” CBC News, January 19, 2010, accessed April 25, 2017, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/harper-moves-10-in-cabinet-shakeup-1.761446>.

⁵⁰Bernie Elliot, telephone interview, March 30, 2017.

⁵¹Chuck Goldberg, *The BQ Interviews: Top Coaches Reveal Their Secrets for Getting Teens Into the Word!* (Springfield, MO: National Youth Department, A/G Teen Quiz, 1997), 23; Bernie Elliot, e-mail to Ruthie Oberg, January 19, 2018.

⁵²George Edgerly, “Quizzers Shaking the World for Christ,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 16, 1989, 19-20.

⁵³Doug Clay, e-mail to Darrin Rodgers, January 30, 2018.

⁵⁴Edgerly, “Feedback on JBQ to Wayne Murray.”