

ENRICHING

The 2015 Annual Report of Bible in the Schools



Enriching the next generation with the wisdom and knowledge of the Bible.

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CHALLENGING STUDENTS' WORLDVIEW

There is a right and wrong.



» I had a student who was a (self)-proclaimed atheist. And he would always challenge me in class. But as the class moved on, he began to open his mind to some of the philosophies in the Bible. He started to say, 'Hey, there's some good truth in here that even I can listen to, even about morality.' So even an atheist can say, 'I may not believe this aspect of Christ's life, but I look at the Proverbs, the Psalms, and just how to live a good healthy life.' I think that planted a seed in his heart that hopefully will continue to grow as maybe he takes my class again later in his career.

— **Mr. Matthew Smith**, Bible History Teacher, Hixson High School



» I had a student come up to me after class who told me that I had saved his life. He went on to explain that last semester he was thinking about ending his own life and committing suicide, and the things that we talked about in class—the stories that we read in the Bible, the journaling that we did—made him realize that he did have a lot to live for, and that he needed to think differently about his life, and he just wanted to thank me. I was just so profoundly moved by that, to see that Bible history class saved someone's life.

— **Mr. John Daum**, Bible History Teacher, Central High School

» I had a seventh grade student once that, as we were studying the Ten Commandments, in particular the commandment, "Do not steal," we were going over what stealing really is: not just taking of something you can touch, but other areas where you could steal as well. He took it to heart. Next day when he comes back to school, he told me that he had gone and deleted all his pirated music that he had collected over the years. He had erased it all.

— **Mr. David Adels**, Bible History Teacher, Ooltewah Middle School

» I would just like to thank you for not only being my teacher and mentor since I first entered your class, but for also caring about me. You have made an incredible impact on my life and just my spirit in general. You are more than just my teacher, you are one of my closest friends and I really value the presence of you that I have had the honor to have in my life.

— **"Teddy"**, Bible History Student, Howard School, in his note to Bible History Teacher John Culp

Learn more about the impact of Hamilton County's Bible history program by watching a short video at www.BibleintheSchools.com/video



“WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE?”

This irreverent statement sums up how many of today’s middle and high school students view the world: through their own “personal truth.”

That’s because, for so many of our young people, there is no such thing as right or wrong. They no longer believe in absolutes. They think that no one has the right to tell anyone else how to live their lives. They say such things as:

- » *We should accept everyone’s right to live as they please, as long as no one is “hurt”.*
- » *Who are we to judge what someone can or can’t do with their body, or whether marijuana, abortion or prostitution is “right” for you?*
- » *So what if an unmarried couple lives together, if that’s what makes them happy?*
- » *How dare we call one thing “good” and another “bad,” or tolerate a book that offends so many decent people?*

These are not isolated opinions. These destructive ideas represent a widely accepted worldview among our children and grandchildren today. To many young people, they simply make GOOD sense. This negative way of thinking is reinforced daily by popular celebrities, hostile textbooks and the media, and it has taken root with our students. In the Bible Belt. In Hamilton County.

Proverbs 14:12 states, “There is a way that seems right to man, but its end is the way to death” (emphasis ours).

Bible history classes are challenging this destructive worldview, which has gained so much acceptance with young people. Through a study of characters and situations in the Bible, they learn that there are consequences to the choices that they make ... there is such a thing as right and wrong ... there is meaning to life ... character does matter. They hear, often for the first time, about humility, forgiveness and selflessness.

As they are given an opportunity to study the Bible in school, they begin to see the world—and themselves—in a new way that stirs them to life.

» *I had a boy who struggled with depression. We were studying the Ten Commandments, and we got to where it says, “You shall not murder.” He came up to me after class and asked about suicide and whether that counted as murder. I said, “Yes, the Bible would say that would be murder.” I could tell he was struggling, and this really made him think about it more clearly.*

— **Mr. Tyler Roberson**, Bible History Teacher, Soddy Daisy Middle School



A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the midst of an increasingly hostile worldview, Bible history classes are providing students a different perspective – a perspective backed up by the wisdom, knowledge and truth of the most influential book in human history. This different view allows students to learn that not everything is relative; there is such a thing as right and wrong; and there are consequences to actions. Most importantly, it provides insights and understandings that literally change lives. Truly, God’s Word does not return void; it accomplishes His desires and purposes.

As a result of your support, we anticipate that some 4,000 students will spend some 250,000 hours this year in a rigorous study of the Bible. Past studies suggest that one half of the new Bible history students will have had little or no previous exposure to the Bible. Absent these classes, many never would. What a blessing for these students to have opportunity to learn from God’s Word.

As reported in the pages of this Annual Report:

- » This year, more teachers are reaching more students in more schools with the truth of God’s Word.
- » Bible history classes continue to enjoy broad support as evidenced by the expansion into additional schools and the significant growth in donors.
- » Based on pre/post test results, students’ knowledge of the parts of the Bible studied actually doubles as a result of the classes.
- » As reflected in the testimonies contained in this report, this learning goes beyond just facts and stories from the Bible – attitudes, behaviors and beliefs are being changed.

Clearly, there is much to celebrate as Bible history classes are bringing truth and understanding to a new generation.

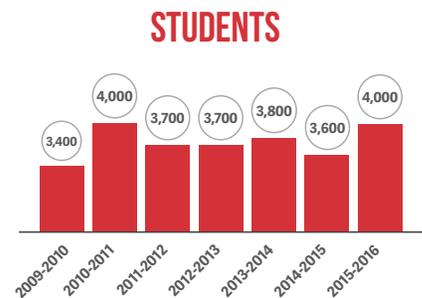
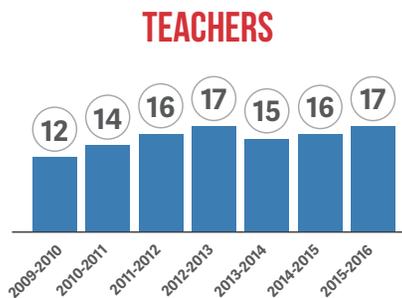
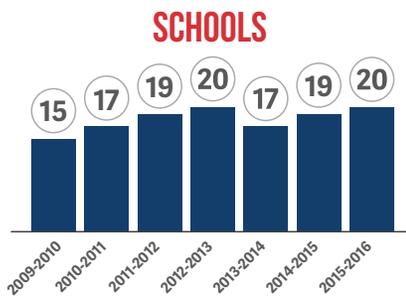
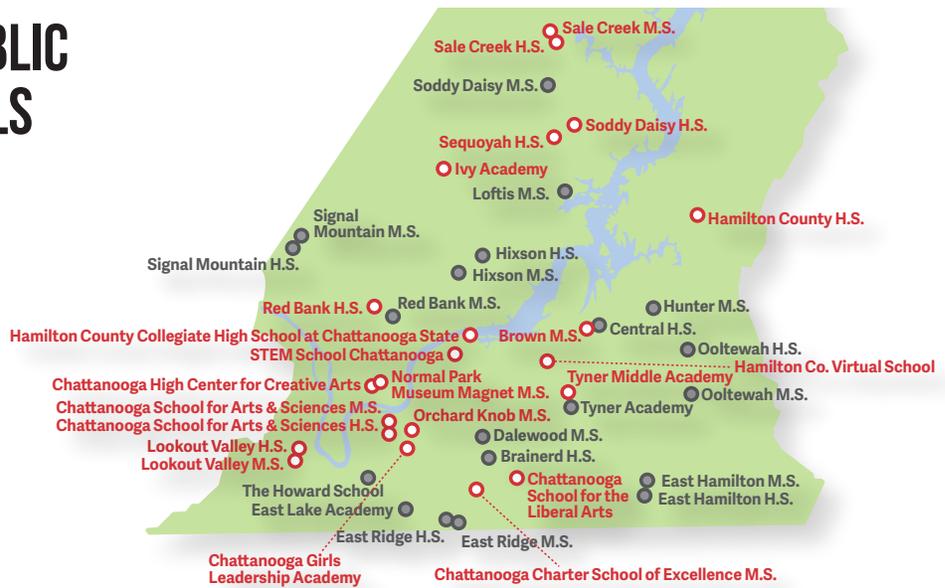
But while there is much to celebrate, there continues to be great need. Even with an expansion into additional schools this year, only two-thirds of Hamilton County public middle and high schoolers have access to Bible history classes. One-third, or about 6,600 students, do not. We need your continued partnership as we seek to offer more students an opportunity to learn from God’s Word. Thank you for your support.

— **Ralph Mohney, Jr.**

HAMILTON COUNTY PUBLIC MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOLS 2015-2016

- 14,837 students in 20 schools can elect Bible history (66%)
- 7,616 students in 22 schools have NO access to Bible history (34%)

*Based on 20th Day Enrollment Report, Hamilton County Department of Education, Sept. 17, 2015



KNOWLEDGE DOUBLES: INVESTING IN A QUALITY CURRICULUM

Over the last few years with your financial support, Bible in the Schools has reimbursed the Hamilton County Department of Education for the full cost of a Bible history program consultant to help our teachers develop new strategies and learn best practices for teaching the Bible.

Dr. Terry Stevenson, a local educator for 30 years who now serves as a consultant with the Hamilton County Department of Education, has led a five-year effort to develop interactive teaching guidelines for each of the five Bible history courses: Genesis, Exodus, Life of Jesus, Old Testament Survey and New Testament Survey.

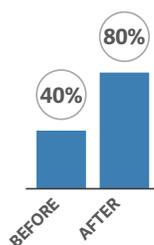
Completed in 2015, these teaching guidelines are intended to enhance the quality of learning through

a focus on essential themes and enduring understandings from the Bible.

Your investment in quality continues to bear fruit in the classroom. In 2014-2015, pre- and post-test scores demonstrated that students' knowledge of the portion of the Bible which they studied doubled.

The curriculum is *that* engaging.

Average Learning Scores 2014-2015



» I had a [troubled] student ... One day I could tell she had been crying because there were tears in her eyes. She said, 'Mr. Clinton, I have something to tell you. You've always talked about the Bible, and I feel I can trust you with what I have to say.' She told me that the night before, someone had shot bullets into her house. ... I asked her why did she tell me? She said because I taught Bible history, and she trusted me. At least she knows that trustworthy people are teaching the Bible, and it made her have the confidence to come and tell me. ... The Bible has an impact in strange and mysterious ways.

— **Mr. Steve Clinton**, Bible History Teacher, East Ridge Middle and High Schools



HAMILTON COUNTY BIBLE HISTORY TEACHERS 2015-2016



(First Row, Left to Right)

Mr. David Adels
Ooltewah Middle

Mr. Danois Allen
Dalewood Middle

Mr. Jesse Bankhead
Signal Mountain Middle/
High

Ms. Mary Bowman
Red Bank Middle

Mrs. Grey Briggs
Ooltewah High

Mr. Nathan Cates
Tyner Academy

(Second Row)

Mr. Steve Clinton
East Ridge Middle/High

Mr. John Culp
The Howard School

Mr. John Daum
Central High

Mrs. Tania Doyley
East Lake Academy

Mr. Jeff Fairbanks
East Hamilton Middle/High

(Third Row)

Mr. Quincy Harris
Brainerd High

Mrs. Kim Hixson
Loftis Middle

Mr. Bryan Johnson
Hunter Middle

Mr. Tyler Roberson
Soddy-Daisy Middle

Mr. Matthew Smith
Hixson High

Mr. Charles Witter
Hixson Middle

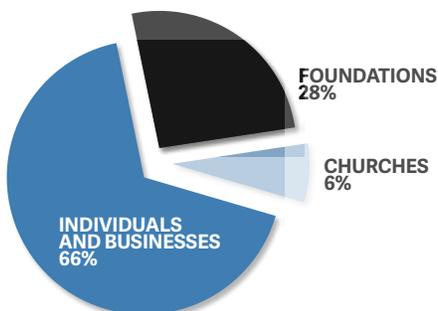
COMPLETELY FUNDED WITH NO TAX DOLLARS

Bible history teachers are funded entirely through private contributions from local individuals, businesses, churches and foundations.

No tax dollars are used to fund this elective, for-credit opportunity offered to Chattanooga-Hamilton County public school students

In order to reimburse the Hamilton County Department of Education for all teacher-related costs and to cover the administrative and fundraising expense of Bible in the Schools, last year over \$1.1 million was required.

Income, 2014-2015



HOW MUCH DOES A BIBLE TEACHER COST?

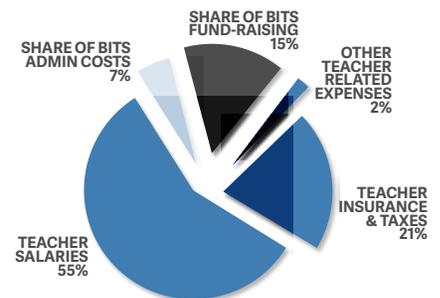
Enrolling in a Bible history class may not change students' attitudes or beliefs overnight. But a personal relationship with a mature Bible history teacher is the way many students begin to see the world—and themselves—in a whole new way that stirs them to life.

On average, the cost to fund a Bible teacher in the Hamilton County schools is about \$75,000.

The majority of that cost goes to the teacher's salary, insurance, taxes and other teacher-related expense (totaling nearly \$60,000).

There are other expenses as well, including a share of the administrative costs and fund-raising expense associated with Bible in the Schools.

Expense, 2014-2015



» I had a Muslim student in one of my classes who didn't get a single question correct on the pre-test. She stayed in the class though, and her parents were willing to let her take it. By the end of the semester, she had the highest post-test score out of anyone in the class – she only missed one question out of 33! She received that year's Bible History Award.

— **Mr. Steve Clinton**, Bible History Teacher, East Ridge Middle and High Schools



BROAD LOCAL SUPPORT FOR BIBLE HISTORY

While legal, Bible history classes in our public schools would not be possible without broad community support. Classes are:

- » **Embraced by the local education community**, including the Hamilton County Department of Education and Superintendent Rick Smith. Bible history is offered as an elective, only in schools where the principals invite the courses into the curriculum. Seventy percent of students who attend schools that offer Bible history will elect at least one course while at that school.
- » **Sustained by a loyal, growing and diverse donor base**, making this program possible for 93 years. From



\$5 monthly gifts to large bequests in the thousands, the community's generosity spans the socioeconomic spectrum, with the number of donors nearly doubling since 2009.

- » **Supported by community gatherings**, organized each year by diverse groups of churches to shore up funding for new and existing teachers. Over the last seven years,

more than 100 churches have sponsored Gatherings in their local communities.

- » **Promoted by an active board** that includes prominent civic, business, government and nonprofit leaders from throughout Hamilton County.

The students of Hamilton County are beneficiaries of a local phenomenon with the broadest local support.

» *One of the other faculty members was having a difficult time with some of the new students, so I asked if any of these students would be interested in my class. One did, and I later found out this student was on probation, and had to see his probation officer regularly. But this troubled student who had significant behavioral discipline problems became one of the most engaged students in the class. He wrote me a letter thanking me for how much he had learned, and how this class had changed his life. He had really gotten into the material and is now making better choices.*

— **Mr. David Adels**, Bible History Teacher, Ooltewah Middle School

IS IT LEGAL?

YES! In 1980, U.S. District Judge Frank Wilson affirmed that teaching the Bible is constitutionally permissible.

“To ignore the role of the Bible in the vast area of secular subjects ... is to ignore a keystone in the building of an arch, at least insofar as Western history, values and culture are concerned,” wrote Wilson in his ruling.

- » Teachers must be employed and supervised by the county Department of Education.
- » Teachers must be licensed, certified and have a minimum of 12 semester hours of Bible content courses as part of their college education.
- » Bible courses are elective, and academic credit is given for their study.
- » No religious proselytizing, sectarianism or denominational recruitment is permitted.
- » The curriculum is court approved.

GIVING GUIDE: WHAT CAN BE SUPPORTED BY VARIOUS LEVELS OF GIFTS?

Were it not for your support, the attitudes and beliefs of hundreds of young people in Hamilton County would remain unchallenged.

A one-year commitment of:

- » **\$25/month** will allow one student to participate in a Bible history course.
- » **\$50/month** will allow two students to participate in a Bible history course.
- » **\$75/month** will fund a student taking all three Bible history classes over their middle school years.
- » **\$125/month** will allow a student to participate in all five Bible history courses over their middle and high school years.
- » **\$150/month** will fund two students taking all three Bible history classes, Genesis, Exodus, and the Life of Jesus, over their middle school years.
- » **\$175/month** will provide for a week of Bible history at one school.



WHO ARE WE TO JUDGE?

The average teenager consumes more than 10 hours a day of social media, online videos, television and music. Some say this has negatively influenced their behavior. Others say this has opened their minds to new possibilities.

But, really ... who are we to judge?

Watch a compelling 8-minute video at BibleintheSchools.com/video or scan the QR code with your smart phone.



Public School Bible Study Committee
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CHALLENGING STUDENTS' WORLDVIEW

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom.



» I had a student once as a freshman that was struggling with homosexuality and she revealed that to me. The whole year she was feeling isolated and alone and she didn't know what she was doing. She ended up almost committing suicide and had to go get help. She struggled throughout high school and got into drugs and continued to try to find herself. We would talk after school and I would try to help her in any way that I could. Later on, she found me on Facebook and at this point she was in college. We met for some coffee and she had changed her whole life around and she was a new person. She still had struggles, but she had found something that showed her truth in life.

— **Mrs. Grey Briggs,**
Bible History Teacher,
Ooltewah High School

KEY FACTS ABOUT BIBLE TEACHING

- » Bible history classes are funded totally by voluntary contributions: no tax dollars
- » Classes are electives (voluntary) and for credit
- » The curriculum meets all legal requirements
- » Bible is studied from an historical vs. religious or denominational standpoint
- » Teachers are employed by the Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE) and are selected by school principals
- » Bible in the Schools reimburses HCDE for teacher salaries and benefits
- » The approximate cost to fully fund a Bible history teacher is \$75,000 per year
- » This year, an estimated 4,000 students will elect Bible history courses
- » Classes are currently offered in 11 middle and 9 high schools:
 - **Middle Schools:** Genesis, Exodus, and the Life of Jesus (using Luke)
 - **High Schools:** Old Testament Survey and New Testament Survey



Is it legal? How are teachers hired? **Find answers to common questions by visiting www.BibleintheSchools.com/questions**