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ICBM Newsletter



THE BUILDING IS PAID OFF!

Thank you to all who sacrificed and helped in paying off the remain debt on our building. Your prayers and your gifts were instrumental in providing us with this facility. It will be a work space for the International Christian Braille Mission for many years to come. Please continue to pray that the blind and the deaf-blind will continue to read the Gospel of Christ.

Digital Audio Ministry



We've added the Restoration Herald monthly magazine to the publications that we offer on digital audio format. In February, we added the Restoration Herald to our audio production list. This was accomplished because the Lord has prompted people to volunteer to read for the International Christian Braille Mission.

We also have an arrangement with the publishers so that we can receive the Christian Standard/The Lookout and The Restoration Herald in digital format. Thanks to the publishers and to the narrators for all they do for Christ and the blind. If you would be interested in narrating for ICBM, please contact us at 606-474-3411 or email at secretary@icbminc.org. Please leave your name, address, phone number and email

address and we will contact you with/for more information. Thank you for your willingness to help.



STAY IN TOUCH

E-Mail: icbmwv@icbminc.org • Website: www.icbminc.org • Facebook: [icbminky](https://www.facebook.com/icbminky)

PO Box 520, Grayson, Kentucky 41143 • Phone: 606-474-3411

Those Whom We Serve

S.N. is a blind lady living in Charleston, West Virginia. She has been reading our magazine, *We Would See Jesus*, for many years. Her and her husband became friends with Mike and Barb Smith when they lived in Charleston. They shared many Thanksgiving dinners together. S.N.'s husband passed away recently.

When Mike's sister came up to visit over Christmas, they found out that S.N. was going to spend Christmas alone. So, Mike and his sister drove to Charleston and brought S.N. back to celebrate Christmas with them. Like sighted people, for various reasons, Christmas can be a sad time for blind people. In this case, it was because of the death of S.N.'s husband.

As many of you know, Mike's wife, Barbara, passed away in April of 2020. Instead of spending Christmas alone, S.N., Mike and Mike's Sister spent a happy Christmas celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Please pass this on and encourage someone today who may be feeling alone.



Newsletter by Email

If you would rather receive this newsletter by email, we can do that. However, we will need your email address. If we can get as many people as possible to receive the newsletter by email, it will save the mission money which we will use for our service projects.

If you want to start receiving ICBM's newsletter by email, please email secretary@icbminc.org to let us know.

The Effect of Covid 19

So far, no one working at ICBM has come down with COVID-19. While we are grateful and thankful to God for this, the pandemic has affected the mission in other ways. Individuals and churches are struggling because of the lack of job opportunities and the increased need for churches and individuals to help one another locally during this time.

While we do not want anybody, church or individual, who is struggling to try to give us money that they don't have, we do ask those that are recovering and able to give to help us through this time. We realize that some areas of our nation have been affected more than other parts of our nation. We thank you and praise God for your help.

The Resurgence of Braille

In the Late 40's and the 50's to the beginning of the 60's up to 70% of blind people were braille readers. When blind people began to be "mainstreamed" into the public schools, many teachers of the visually impaired (VI teachers) began to rely strictly on audio instead of braille.

The result is the usage of braille has plummeted until recently. The usage of braille will again be stressed for several reasons. Braille is the way blind people read and write. The expense of braille continues to fall. While hard copy braille remains expensive, the growing use of electronic braille is cutting the cost for both the patron and the producer of braille.

This is because with the e-reader, a braille document can be transferred to an SD card or thumb drive, thus eliminating paper and making it possible for braille readers to take what was once those bulky braille books with them on a small SD card that goes into an e-reader which is about the size of a cell phone.

What are We Doing in Here?

Thomas Bleemel and Mike Smith are working well together. Since Barb's passing (Mike's wife), Mike has taken on the task of braille proofreading. When we braille a publication or upgrade a publication to current braille format, we do the following things: first, Thomas scans or keys in the publication to our computer. He puts it on the Duxberry transcription program first in print and proofreads the document using the hard copy paper document. Second, Thomas or Mike then prints a paper braille hard copy on the embosser. Mike then proofreads the braille copy.

We will do this over and over until we are satisfied that the publication is in good reading order. This is a time consuming and tedious process. While this doesn't produce copies as fast as we would like, it assures the braille reader will have good quality braille to read concerning the Good News of Christ, or encouraging fellow braille reading Christians by giving them tools that will help them to study God's word more deeply.

Finally the publication, which may be one volume or many volumes or even in electronic braille format is sent to the



patron. The hard copy braille books will be packed and sent by mail. Electronic braille copies can be sent to a patron so that they can download the publication onto the SD card or thumb drive or straight to their e-reader.

Gifts may be sent by mail to our address below or by using the donate button on our website. Email addresses as stated before can be sent to secretary@icbminc.org. Thank you. In Christ, Mike Smith and Thomas Bleemel.