

All eyes point toward the scoreboard, and all ears strain to hear the quizmaster's final question. Lights on the scoreboard flicker on and off. Silent tension fills the auditorium. "Question number 20 is an interrogative question, question," says the quizmaster. He begins reading the first two words of the question; a split second later a light flashes on the scoreboard. "Andrea," calls the quizmaster. As the final quiz draws to a close and the score remains unsettled, the pressure mounts as the audience holds its breath waiting for her answer. She answers incorrectly. However, although Andrea answered incorrectly, she stole the question away from the other teams who had a chance to win. After a quizzier from another team answers a ten-point bonus question, Andrea's team jumps to their feet and cheers because they, the Northwestern District team, won the Consolation Finals. Only ten points separate them from the team finishing second, the smallest possible point differential. This, just one example of an extremely competitive quiz, demonstrates the intensity and drama of the unofficial sport, Bible quizzing.

Although little known, Bible quizzing provides a wholesome and life-changing activity for Christian children and teens. Many denominations offer Bible quizzing with variations on rules and styles, but I have experienced quizzing in the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA). Bible quizzers memorize verses from a book in the Bible according to a predetermined eight-year cycle: John; Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter; Matthew; Romans and James; Acts; Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians; Luke; 1 and 2 Corinthians. Each month during the school year, all quizzers from area churches gather with their teams of three to five people to compete against two other teams in three different quizzes that day. They sit on pressure-sensitive benches which cause a light to turn on in the quizmaster's control panel when a quizzier jumps off his or her seat. Sometimes a scoreboard displays the score of the quiz. Quizzes consist of 20 different questions from that month's quizzing material. Seven specific types of questions make it challenging: interrogative, multiple answers, chapter references, chapter verse references, situations, finish-the-verses, and quotes. One quizzier may correctly answer a maximum of four questions in a quiz, which gives him or her a quiz-out; should a quizzier error three times, he or she errors out and must sit out for the rest of the quiz. Quizzers receive 20 points per correct question, with bonuses awarded for multiple quizzers on the team correctly answering questions, for quizzing out without errors, and for other reasons.

Throughout the United States and Canada many different C&MA districts hold district quiz meets. Sometimes two or more districts combine for a large tournament. At the end of a year each district holds an award ceremony. In my district, the Northwestern District, the statistician tallies each quizzier's score, and the top fifteen quizzers receive trophies. Likewise, he or she totals the teams' wins and losses, and the top three teams receive awards. Our district offers quizzing at three levels: A Division for high school and advanced middle school quizzers, B Division for fifth to seventh graders and beginners, and C Division for third and fourth graders. Usually approximately 35 teams and 150 individuals participate in the Northwestern District.

During the summer all the districts in the C&MA have an international—international because Canadians also attend—competition. Depending on the size of the district, districts may send one or two teams to Internationals. In July 2007, 23 teams met at Wheaton College for the international competition. Some districts send their top five or ten quizzers, and some hold tryouts to form their international team. Quizzing at the international level rises a whole step up from quizzing at the district level. Quizzers have dedicated many hours to studying and can

jump on questions within the first few words and still answer correctly. Challenges, protests, and strategy fuel the competition. Competition lasts for four straight days, and after the quizzing ends, all the quizzers hang out and have fun. Aside from almost nonstop quizzing, participating at Internationals allows quizzers to meet new friends from all over North America who also love Jesus and have hidden His Word in their hearts.

Quizzers benefit greatly from Bible quizzing. Every Christian should memorize verses from the Bible, and quizzing provides motivation for doing so. As quizzers study the quizzing material each month, they frequently memorize it; many quizzers can quote large passages from multiple books in the Bible. They have truly hidden God's Word in their hearts. Aside from memorization, quizzers develop friendships based on Jesus and a shared love of His Word. Most of my best friends I met through quizzing.

Many people know little about Bible quizzing. However, quizzing takes place regularly throughout North America in many denominations. Quizzing provides wholesome friendships and intense competition. Above all, students treasure up Scripture in their hearts. Psalm 119:10-11 says, "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (NIV). These verses show the lasting impact Bible quizzing can have on a student's heart. Scripture will transform and produce lasting fruit in even an average quizzer.

Purpose: inform



A quizzing scoreboard



Four members of the Northwestern District team quizzing at Internationals '07



Northwestern District's 2007 international quiz team and coaches (I'm in the front row, 2<sup>nd</sup> from right)



An example of a quiz (This picture is the Consolation Finals, the girl in the red shirt with the number 1 is Andrea)