

Bibleman Tour Returns This Month With a Change in Lead Role

Original Bibleman Willie Aames is hanging up his cape and will head a Kansas-based entertainment company

Robert "T" Schlipp figures he's found his dream job. He's a superhero.

Last summer, Schlipp resigned as children's pastor of one of the largest churches in Northern California to become the new Bibleman, the Christian super-action hero who triumphs over evil by quoting Bible verses. His accomplice in good deeds, Biblegirl, is his wife, Anayansi.

"Being able to be a superhero, a superhero who delivers something of real value, is every kid's dream come true," Schlipp said. "We're truly blessed."

Schlipp replaces Willie Aames, the original Bibleman who toured the country the last eight years, putting biff, bam and pow into Bible-verse memorization. Initially Aames, who starred in the TV series *Eight Is Enough* from 1977-1981, was to remain as a consultant for Bibleman Live and continue to do Bibleman videos. But Aames said he was told in January that his position as senior executive vice president at Pamplin Entertainment, which produces the Bibleman videos, "was no longer needed."

Pamplin CFO Andrea Merek would not discuss the circumstances surrounding the departure, but said they "parted ways on good

terms.”

Aames’ final appearance as Bibleman was to be in the March release of *Divided We Fall*. Though he will hang up his Bibleman cape, Aames said he will serve as co-owner and president of the Kansas City, Outpost Broadcast Communications. He said he hopes to create characters “like Bibleman”—who has helped bring thousands to Christ.

In one year, 16,000 children and adults committed their lives to Christ in Bibleman outreaches. In September at a Franklin Graham crusade in Tulsa, Okla., where Aames made one of his last appearances as Bibleman, nearly 600 people—mostly children—accepted Christ.

The Schlipps, who married in March 2000, will begin an 8-1/2-month tour this month, doing between 80 and 100 performances, traveling across the country and living in a mobile home. “That’s pretty ambitious,” said 28-year-old Robert. “But we’re young, and we’re naive.”

Initially, Schlipp worried there would be a resistance to anyone other than Aames being the Bibleman. But he’s been reassured by an open-arm reception. “We don’t have to convince people about Bibleman,” Schlipp said. “There’s already a good reputation. We haven’t had to do a lot of publicity.”

Schlipp first met Aames six years ago at a Bibleman performance at Schlipp’s church, Sunset Christian Center in Rocklin, Calif. Schlipp served as children’s pastor there for seven years until he resigned in February 2003. Aames first asked him to join the Bibleman tour as a villain. In June he became the lead.

“Pastor T believes in the [Bibleman] ministry as much as I have,” Aames said. “The impact that Bibleman has had on our nation’s youth has been nothing short of miraculous. It would be a win for the enemy if we were to let this ground-breaking ministry fade.”

Plots of Bibleman adventures will center on the same themes. Bibleman, Biblegirl and Bibleman’s computer, Unis, will overcome villains such as the Wacky Protester, or an evil computer named Lucy that sneaks into the Bibleman’s headquarters. Bibleman counters by quoting Scripture and swinging his light saber, which Schlipp calls the sword of the Spirit.

Biblegirl has been in four videos, but she’s never been on the tour. “It’s an opportunity to have something positive for girls to look to, and to encourage them to learn Scriptures,” Anayansi Schlipp said. “Kids often tend to be the afterthought in the church world. After seeing the live Bibleman show for the first time, I was really impressed with the quality of it.”

In addition to Aames’ work on a new millennium Christian superhero, he plans to produce a series for 8- to 12-year-old girls, as well as some productions for adults, including a show titled Novella for the Spanish TV network TeleMundo, a fall pilot on the Food Network titled Local Entrée, and a documentary based on the book of Acts.

Gail Wood and Rhonda Sholar