



Word in Action

SUMMER 2023



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Thank you for being part of Bible Society's mission

Dear supporter

Hello folks!

After recommitting my life to Christ ten years ago, I shared my faith with friends. Most ignored me, some mocked me. Was I wasting my time?



Then late last year, an author (and atheist) friend of mine who'd attended my baptism told me she'd become a Christian. In April, she was baptised. I couldn't be there because I was in Tokyo. There, my elderly friend 'The Terrier', who I'd met when we were down and out, told me he'd started praying to Jesus. I'd forgotten that I'd sent him a Japanese New Testament a few years ago.

I share this with you because your regular support of Bible mission is constantly creating situations like this worldwide. It takes just one Bible to change a life.

I've invited my author friend to take The Bible Course. I loved it. And now I'm going to do The Romans Course (see pages 4-5).

God bless you all and thank you for your support.

Simon Bartz

Simon Bartz, Editor
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Word in Action Summer 2023

The reason for Romans

We want to see Christians confident that the Bible really is alive, that it's capable of bringing life, insight, wisdom and transformation to every aspect of our lives, individually, socially and corporately. And *The Bible Course* is our foundation for that in a church.

But people who've done *The Bible Course* ask, 'What's next?'

The Romans Course is part of our answer. The reason we are developing these courses is because we are helping the Church in England and Wales raise the level of Bible confidence among its members, and in its conversation.

Romans is theologically and historically important, but the most important reason for reading and understanding Romans is that it's part of the Bible, part of the remarkable inheritance that we have as Christians that is unique to the Christian Church.

A true translation is cultural

At Bible Society we always think of how a translated Bible will be used. Is there a community who want it or a group of people committed to missionary work who will use it? Both are good enough reasons for a translation. But what we don't want are lots of shelves full of translated versions of the Bible that are not read.

The purpose of translation is always the connection with the audience. Going beyond a linguistic translation to become a cultural translation is crucial. This is when a community of disciples start to relate the words of the Bible into their life in a way that starts to change people's behaviour and transform their lives.

This cultural translation needs to happen, even in societies where there are many linguistic translations, even here in England and Wales, where many Bibles are unread and often poorly understood.

This is why linguistic translation alone is not an adequate goal. Our goal must be Bible engagement, of which, linguistic translation is a vital and necessary foundation.

Paul Williams, Bible Society's Chief Executive



Front cover:
Andrew Ollerton, creator of Bible Society's *The Romans Course*.
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Bible Society

Final whistle hasn't blown on plight of migrant workers in the Gulf

The suffering of migrant workers continues in the Gulf region, despite not making so many headlines now that the FIFA World Cup in Qatar has ended.

One thing is for sure: Bible Society, with your amazing support, will not forget them. We will continue to provide them with Scriptures and other biblical resources, and to train pastors so they get the guidance and leadership they need.

The migrants mostly live in cramped conditions in labour camps, working long hours for pitiful salaries. (35p per hour for security guards was recently reported.) Many have reportedly died at work, while others have killed themselves. But thank God that more and more are turning to Jesus for hope through Scriptures provided by you.

Your generosity enabled Bible Society to distribute thousands of copies of John's Gospel and the New Testament in 14 different languages during the World Cup finals. And this year more and more Scriptures are being distributed to churches in Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Crucially, inexperienced pastors are getting quality training.



Migrant workers hold Bibles given to them by Bible Society at one of our bookshops in the Gulf.

This year, Bible Society in the Gulf is holding seminars in Kuwait, for example, focusing on a teaching tool Jesus often used: asking questions.

The first seminar, held at the National Evangelical Church in Kuwait, focused on, 'Who do you say I am?' (Matthew 16.15, GNB). This is a critical question because migrant workers come from different backgrounds, and many have heard that Jesus was a great man, but not that he was the Son of God.

More than 150 attended. And as word spread, the second seminar, focusing on Luke 2.49, was an even greater success, attended by 250 people. On the right, you can see what two of the attendees had to say ...

'We need to have the faith that Peter had – Jesus is not merely a prophet or just a miracle worker but he is God incarnate. We must resist any misconception about the deity of Jesus. Today's seminar is a very good step in strengthening our faith.' Bharathi

'This seminar confirmed the sincerity of our belief that Jesus Christ is God manifested in the flesh. My congregation is always in need of such biblical teachings. May God bless Bible Society and its supporters.' Pastor Reddy

Simon Bartz,
Editor



Support migrant workers directly at biblesociety.org.uk/gulf-wia or scan the code.



Rescuing Romans



Photos: Alex Baker/Bible Society

Andrew Ollerton shares his passion to bring the mountain-top experience of Paul's letter to the Romans to everyone. This has led him to create *The Romans Course* with Bible Society

Andrew has been working with Bible Society to create *The Romans Course* as an invitation to take on the challenge of Romans and experience its transformative power. As an extrapolation of the gospel, mining the greatest story ever told for meaning within meaning, Romans can get, Andrew says, 'knotty and complex'.

But even if it seems like a theology textbook, that's not what Romans is for. It was

a letter meant for everyone in every church in the cosmopolitan City of Rome. It's for you as much as it is for the archbishop. It's for your friend who you'd love to see engaging more with the Bible.

Andrew sees Romans like an awesome mountain that all believers can be empowered to experience and properly equipped to climb. (He uses the mountain image on the cover of his book, *Romans: A Letter That Makes Sense of Life*, which is published by Hodder Faith and available to buy from Bible Society.) Christians are naturally overawed by Romans, but it does us no good in the end to dodge it. *The Romans Course* represents an ambitious but inclusive raising of the bar.



Romans is for everyone

'We, as church leaders, sometimes think that it will help people come into church if we keep lowering the bar until it's almost on the floor,' Andrew says. 'But no sports club, no cooking class, no music teacher does that. If you want

to go somewhere, you've got to take something on. So this set of Romans resources that Bible Society has created is a challenge. And I think people want a challenge. They don't just want it to be easy.'

The Romans Course is video-based and was filmed in Rome – but not just for a nice backdrop. Visiting Rome, 'this eternal city, a place that everyone was in awe of', brought home for Andrew the audacity of Paul's message. In his letter, the Apostle Paul wasn't visiting Rome as a tourist; he was coming at it as an evangelist. 'It doesn't matter how many servants, theatres or hot tubs they've got,' Andrew says. 'Rome needs Jesus. I'd not seen it like that before – Paul's confidence

Explore the letter to the Romans

The Romans Course



in the gospel. This is the great city he's writing to, but he has no hesitation.'

'Paul writes, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1.16, ESV). Romans is thoroughly spiritual, powerful, life-giving.'

Romans transforms prisoners

Andrew is looking forward to seeing prisoners engage with *The Romans Course*, just as with *The Bible Course*. 'The emails I've had from the prison context have been the most moving for me. I've been into prisons to meet guys who have gone through *The Bible Course*. When you know that you need to change, you reach out for help more immediately. People in these settings are more willing to be honest about where they are and what they need.

'I've seen *The Bible Course* provide inmates with a fresh vision. They can see that there is a meaningful story to life. They can say, "I'm not an accident. I'm not a hopeless case. I can reach forward to God, who reaches out to me in Jesus Christ." That absolutely is my hope for *The Romans Course*, that it will not only be something that well-read people will find helpful, but

that people who struggle educationally will also say, "Romans has given me hope."

'Near the end of Romans, Paul writes: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15.13, NIV). That image of someone overflowing with hope – that's my prayer.'



James Howard-Smith, Digital Fundraiser

• *The Romans Course*, available soon, consists of ten video-based sessions with resources for both small-group and church-service contexts. Preview *The Romans Course* for free at biblesociety.org.uk/theromanscourse



Photo credit: Bible Society in Burkina Faso/
Clare Kendall

Bible Twinning funds new translations of the Scriptures, meaning more access to God's word for people like Suzanne (centre), seen here in her mud home.

Hearing God speak your language

Suzanne said before she had any Scriptures in her own language, 'I used to pray, but I didn't understand my faith. With the Bible, when you pray it gives you light and makes your faith grow. It gives you more happiness. Whenever I'm sad, I read the Bible and then my sadness goes away.'

The mother-of-four lives in the West African country of Burkina Faso and speaks Bissa.

The Bissa New Testament has been in print since 2002, and Suzanne says it's changed her life. She went as far as to say that being able to fully understand the New Testament has improved her relationship with her mother-in-law.

There's much more for Suzanne to discover as the Old Testament is published in Bissa this year for the first time, completing her Bissa Bible.

When we hear God speak in our language, the experience is richer and the teaching is clearer. The availability of Scripture in the heart language of a community especially opens up a huge

opportunity to reach young people. In Guatemala, where Spanish is the official language (it's French in Burkina Faso), 30 per cent of the population speak one of many Mayan languages. For 11-year-old Damian Chub, and a million others, it's Q'eqchi'. Experiencing the Bible in his own language is as powerful for Damian as for Suzanne, and it will change the direction of his life.

'My favourite lesson is the one about self-control,' Damian said. He has *Seeds of Value*, a Scripture book with Bible passages in Q'eqchi' for children. 'I learned in Proverbs 16.32 that "Controlling your temper is better than being a hero who captures a city". Thank you for bringing the word of God to my community, in my language.'



James Howard-Smith,
Digital Fundraiser

You can change lives by twinning your Bible

Translations take a long time. A lot of wisdom, perseverance and incredibly hard work is required from the translation team. Suzanne will have waited two decades for her Bible.

Supporters of Bible Society pushed that translation to the finishing line last year when they twinned their Bibles with the Bissa Bible.

This year, you can make an amazing difference for communities in Africa, Central America and Eastern Europe by twinning your Bible with an urgently-needed new translation.

The Ngäbe people are the largest of Costa Rica's eight ethnic groups who don't have the New Testament in their language.

Christians in Togo, West Africa, who speak the country's second national language, have heard the gospel in Kabiye and they're hungry for more.

The Serbian Church has suffered decades of communist rule, leaving people deeply disconnected from the traditional translations of Scripture.

With a donation of £60 you'll be making a major investment in a life-changing translation project, and you'll get a bookplate to show you've twinned your Bible

Visit biblesociety.org.uk/twinwia to find out more about the Ngäbere New Testament, the Kabiye Bible and Serbia's New Testament for a New Generation.



Bible Society

Scripture translations for 723 million people completed in 2022 – THANK YOU!

Bible Society teams around the world completed Scripture translations in 81 languages used by 723 million people in 2022, despite global disruptions caused by Covid, economic instability and the war in Ukraine.

This was achieved thanks to the kind giving of Bible Society supporters. Thank you!

From Brazil to Bangladesh, 57 language groups – a total of 100 million people – received first Scripture translations.

This included 14 first full Bible translations. Five million Ethiopians who speak Arsi Oromo and 6,000 Indonesians who speak Taghulandang (Sangir dialect) are just two examples of communities who can now access the Bible in their heart language.

New or revised translations were completed in another 25 languages used by more than 623 million people. These are crucial as languages change over time and Scripture translations can become outdated and hard to understand, particularly for younger generations.

Last year, Bible Society teams also completed Scripture portions in 20 sign languages.

The full Bible is now available in 733 languages spoken by 5.9 billion people, as of the start of 2023. Over 70 per cent of these were translated by Bible Society teams. But that leaves more than 1.5 billion without the full Bible in their heart languages.

With your support, Bible Society teams aim to make the Scriptures available in every language so that every single person in the world can more easily engage with the word of God.

Since 2018, Bible Society teams worldwide have been focused on a bold vision – to complete 1,200 Scripture translations by 2038. So far, thanks to the kind giving of Bible Society supporters, 133 translations have been completed and 333 are in progress.



Photo credit: Bible Society in Guatemala

With your support, Bible Society teams aim to make the Scriptures available in every language so that every single person in the world can more easily engage with the word of God.



Simon Bartz,
Editor

A woman and baby at the launch of the very first full Bible in the Achí of Cubulco language in Guatemala, a translation made possible by your support. In 2023, your generosity means work continues on other translations in Guatemala.

Explosion of Bible storytelling



Photo credit: Bible Society in Argentina

Children make rain sounds by clapping their hands together at an Open the Book storytelling school assembly in Buenos Aires.

Five years ago, we had an idea to take our Bible storytelling project overseas so more children could hear God's word. Your support made it happen – and now it's going global.

The children gasp, wide-eyed, as they watch the conniving Jacob hold out his arms – wrapped in the hairy skin of an old goat – to trick his father. They lean forwards eager to see if the deception will work. Then, as Esau discovers the treachery and his angry face grows 'as red as his hair', the room erupts with laughter and noise.

This is Kenya – and these excited children are among thousands who now hear Bible stories in an unforgettable way, thanks to your support.

Mwiki Primary School in Kiambu, on the outskirts of Nairobi, is among the latest batch of schools to take up Open the Book, our Bible storytelling project. More than 4,700 children, aged 4 to 11, attend the school. Every other

week, 11 young volunteers from a nearby church visit to re-enact stories from Scripture, engaging children in the drama using costumes and action.

Today, the story is 'The Bad Brother', and the children are hearing how Jacob tricked his brother Esau out of his birthright. It's engaging and enormous fun. But it's also instructive. Later, a little boy tells our team: 'Thank you for the story. I have learnt to be loving and not to plot evil for others.'

It was back in 2020 that Open the Book first arrived in Kenya. When the Covid-19 pandemic closed schools, the team in Kenya adapted quickly to train staff in orphanages as Bible storytellers, so they could share God's love and word with children throughout lockdown.



'The Holy Spirit paves the way,' Angela Lopez Branco, Head of Open the Book International.



Photo credit: Bible Society in Kenya

Thanks to you, Open the Book is thriving in Africa, including here in Kenya where a volunteer brings the story of Solomon and the two mothers to life.

It was a phenomenal success – and Open the Book took off.

Now Bible storytellers go into 32 schools and orphanages across Kenya, reaching more than 23,000 children with Scripture, every month.

There have been reports of children giving their lives to Christ, young people with HIV finding hope in the stories of Jesus' miracles, and Muslim children volunteering to take part in Bible storytelling. But the explosive growth of Open the Book is not limited to Kenya. The project is expanding in Uganda, Ghana and The Gambia. Up to five Portuguese-speaking African nations will join the Open the Book family this year. And across the Atlantic, in Latin America, Open the Book is up and running in Argentina, and is preparing for launch in Ecuador, Honduras and Guatemala.

So what's the secret of its success? There's no doubt Open the Book is both fun and simple. It taps into people's heart to share God's word with the children. But for Angela Lopez Branco, who runs Open the Book International, this is God's mission.

'When I started this job in 2020, we had a handful of international projects. Now there are ten and five more on the way. By 2024, Open the Book will be in 15 countries – and it's still growing,' said Angela. 'It's the Holy Spirit who paves the way. God makes it grow.'

If your church, Bible Study group, football team or just you and some friends are interested in sponsoring an Open the Book team in another country, or being more directly involved in bringing Bible storytelling into schools worldwide, then go to biblesociety.org.uk/sponsor-otb or scan the QR code.



Claire Smith, Freelance writer



Sign of the times

Open the Book teams in Latin America are leading the way in making Bible stories accessible for more children by incorporating sign language.

Bible Society teams from Argentina, Honduras, Ecuador and Guatemala recently met for training to launch Open the Book in their own nations. Sign language has also been included in each story.

There are signs for animals, for example, and colours and fabric are used for effect instead of sound and light.

Angela Lopez Branco, who runs Open the Book International, said, 'Small adaptations mean children can enjoy the stories equally, whether they have hearing loss, autism or other disabilities. The training was attended by two Bible Society staff who are deaf.'

Scripture in the kitchen

Thank you to all of the people who wrote in, having successfully used the recipes included in the first instalment of this occasional column.

The Honeyed Fish and David's Blessed Buns were tasty, but I'm confident Jacob's Red Stew is going to ignite your taste buds and blast you into culinary heaven. I would say that – it's my personal favourite dish.

Scouring the Bible for food and recipes is a real joy. If you have any ideas yourself, then let us know at wia@biblesociety.org.uk or use the comments form attached.

These recipes are perfect for the church hall or a small group, and why not even use them as an opportunity to witness to friends and family members?

'This is delicious.'

'I got the idea for this recipe from the Bible.'

'You what?'

'Yes, I'll send you the Bible story.'

The recipes in this column keep things simple, while also reminding us of stories, themes or even food in the Bible. Thank God for all the wonderful food we have been blessed with through his creation.



Jacob's Red Stew

SERVES 4

One day, when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came home hungry and said, 'I'm starving to death! Here and now give me some of that red stew!' Genesis 25.29–30 (CEV)

When you read about Esau trading his birthright, can't you just smell the stew cooking? This recipe is straight out of Jacob's kitchen, and although you could eat it with a certain brand of cream crackers, I recommend mashed potato or crusty bread instead. This will give you the real comfort food vibe that Esau just couldn't resist after a tough day out in the fields.

Ingredients

- 2 chicken thighs (on bone is best)
- 2 chicken breasts
- Several small mushrooms
- A handful of fresh thyme
- 5 garlic cloves
- 2 carrots
- 1 onion
- ½ a bottle of red wine (or a small cup of cranberry juice, but wine is best)
- 3 stock cubes
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tins of tomatoes
- A hefty shot of tomato purée (to make it redder!)
- Shot of red wine vinegar (optional)
- Shot of lemon juice (optional)



Photo credit: Yyumi Bartz

Method

1. Into a big bowl, put the chicken, the whole mushrooms, the thyme, each piece of garlic chopped in half, and the carrots and onion, chopped into chunky pieces. Put it all in the bowl and pour over the wine. Stick it in the fridge for several hours to marinate.
2. Add the stock cubes in a cupful of water, the salt, bay leaf and two tins of tomatoes. Squirt in some of the tomato purée (and lemon juice and/or vinegar) and cook with a lid on for two hours on Gas Mark 3 (160° C, 140° C fan). Ensure the chicken is cooked through. You could eat it straight away but it is best to leave it overnight, as further marination will embolden the flavours.
3. Next day, one hour before eating, reheat it for one hour on Gas Mark 3 (160° C, 140° C fan).
4. If you want, thicken the sauce with some some flour, and add more salt if needed.



Simon Bartz, Editor

Who's the Bible person you'd most like to meet?

Your help is needed to create a Bible booklet for 2023! We want to know which Bible person you'd like to meet and why – and, crucially, how you'd spend a day together.

Perhaps you'd go paddle-boarding with Paul (watch out for stormy weather!) or bring John the Baptist to your book club?

Maybe play music with David in a cave somewhere? Or would you meet with Moses, and go hiking together?

Today, we're asking you to imagine that someone could step out of your Bible to spend a day with you – *who would you choose?*

Of course, it goes without saying that we all want to meet Jesus. But we hope you'll dive into the rest of the Bible too – the Old Testament as well as the New. There are plenty of fascinating people peppered throughout Scripture – and this is your moment to shine a new light on them.

Since 2018, we've created a new Bible booklet every year. Previous booklets include *Words of Wisdom*, *Prayers in the Pandemic*, and *Words of Hope*. They all capture the stories and experiences of people like you, as you read and live out the Bible.

This year, our booklet is *Bible People We'd Like to Meet*. We've got the title and a few ideas – but you and others in the Bible Society family will need to provide the content.

'You mean I get to compose a new psalm with you, David? Rock on!'



So please take a moment to consider who you'd *really* like to hang out with. What would you ask them? What would you plan for your day together? Where would you go?

Be as creative as you like, and then:

- Go to biblesociety.org.uk/booklet-wia
- Write a couple of sentences about who you'd like to meet and why
- Ensure we have your entry by 31 August 2023 to be considered for in the booklet

Draw nearer to God using prayer cards

Jesus demonstrated what a lifestyle of drawing near to God in prayer looks like. He didn't just pray in public places with his disciples or in the temple, but consistently retreated to spend time with the Father.

This pack of themed prayer cards has been designed with the same prayerful pursuit of God in mind. Filled with inspiring scriptures and

declarations, these guides will help you to intentionally develop a deeper practice of prayer and fellowship with God.

You were made for connection with God. Order your prayer card pack today at biblesociety.org.uk/prayercards and gift them to family and friends for only £2.99.



Photo credit: Bible Society

On fire for the Lord in China

Thanks to your kind giving, we've sent discipleship materials to Feicheng. Their impact has been huge.

'As we go through the discipleship materials, it helps us to know where people are in their spiritual life and how we can come in to shepherd them more effectively,' says Elder Wang (pictured).



Elder Wang keeps a white notebook with the word 'Shepherding' written on the cover. In it she records the names of churches, group leaders and believers in the Chinese city of Feicheng who have participated in small Bible learning groups. She makes notes of each person's progress.

She also has another list of believers who are eager to join a small group. It's 700 names long right now and growing. These people are waiting for leaders to be trained up.

Wang, who oversees a church in Feicheng, says all of these people have one thing in common – they are yearning for discipleship, hungering to grow into maturity in Christ.

'It's the work of the Lord! This is the first time we are having the small Bible learning group format in our churches using the discipleship materials *The Abundant Life* and *The Abundant Grace* donated by Bible Society. And we are seeing lives change, which is what only God can do,' says Wang.

Lack of leaders

Millions across China have come to faith over the past few decades but not all have a clear understanding of the Christian faith. Like many other churches in rural China, the believers in Feicheng are village farmers and labourers. Due to the severe lack of pastors and spiritual resources in China, many rural Christians are not properly disciplined. So they remain either as 'baby Christians' or become nominal, apathetic believers.

Small groups in Feicheng

From 1 small learning group of 2 people, there are more than 20 groups now consisting of 240 people using the Bible Society materials.

And from 1 church, 14 churches are now using the materials.



Rev'd Chen Yiping, a veteran pastor from Fujian province, wrote in the preface of *The Abundant Life* and *The Abundant Grace*: 'The churches in China are growing but there is a potential crisis. As the number of believers keeps climbing ... there are many sheep without shepherds. Whenever I visit rural churches, I come across many believers who are not clear about their beliefs. As a result, they are susceptible to the lure of cult groups.'

This has happened in Wang's church. 'We have members who only come on special occasions like Easter and Christmas, and also those who have stopped coming altogether.'

When services at Wang's church were suspended due to Covid, she organised visits to the homes of church members. One woman was struggling badly with her faith so Wang's co-worker, preacher Zhen Shasha, visited this person regularly, praying and holding Bible studies with her.

'Then we knew that more of our members needed materials,' said Zhen. 'The materials from Bible Society were just what we needed. The material designed for small groups comes with a leader's guide. It brings a young Christian through foundational teachings like repentance, assurance of salvation, and the importance of Bible reading and prayer.'

'God surprises us'

Wang and Zhen later began using the resources in small groups at the church.

'God surprises us! From one small group, we have grown to more than 20 groups now consisting of 240 people. And from our church, we have gone to share this small group format using the Bible Society discipleship materials to 14 other churches in Feicheng.'

The resources, provided through your kind giving, are



A group member holding *The Abundant Grace* booklet.

so popular that Wang's church once ran out. Small group members responded by making handwritten copies.

'In small learning groups, people find it easier to ask questions, open up and share,' said Wang. 'More have also stepped up to serve in church. People are on fire for the Lord now. They are bringing the gospel to their family and friends. Backslidden believers are also returning. Praise the Lord!'

The task ahead

Wang and Zhen encourage those who have attended small groups to become leaders of their own groups and they build from there.

'The need for shepherding is great,' said Wang. 'What we want to do is to bring this small discipleship group format to the more remote villages.'

To directly support pastors, lay preachers and other church workers in China please go to biblesociety.org.uk/china-wia



Through the learning groups, believers strive to live a more Christ-like life, becoming doers of God's word and not just hearers.



Cynthia Oh works for United Bible Societies–China Partnership

Your letters & comments



Rostyslav

I was able to pick out the three emblems in the new logo. It's beautiful, thank you!

Mrs Marsden, Bedworth

Simon: Nice one Mrs Marsden! How about the rest of you? If you haven't yet picked the new logo apart, then go for it. And then test your friends or family (or ask them for help)!

Word in Action is most informative and tells us of the vast array of projects Bible Society are involved in. I would have liked to have heard more about the Open the Book schools in the UK and beyond. Bless you all for what you are doing.

Marjorie, Merton, London

Simon: We must be on the same wavelength, Marjorie. If you haven't already done so, take a look at pages 8 and 9, and Kerry on the facing page. Glad to be of service (your editor bows deeply in the direction of South West London).

Very well illustrated. Easy to read. Down to earth. Extremely high standard of presentation. Thank you for your hard work in providing such a quality publication. Very informative, giving food for prayer!

John and Joyce, Stoke-on-Trent

Bravo!
Anthony, Southwold

Simon: I appreciate your powerful brevity, Anthony! Thank you to all the people who write in commending the magazine. It's of great encouragement to me and the team.

I enjoy reading Word in Action and look out for bits to consider putting in my next sermon.

Ian, Leicester

I always enjoy reading the uplifting news about the way the word of God is helping people all over the world to come to know, love and follow Jesus. It's an antidote to all the 'doom and gloom' we usually read! God bless your work. It's so vital.

Julie, Nottingham

Simon: Julie, your letter reminds me of the powerful report from my colleague Rostyslav in Ukraine that I published in the summer edition of the Bible a month prayer letter. Even in the darkest places, nothing can dim the light of Jesus. Read Rostyslav's report here: biblesociety.org.uk/wia-bam

I pray through Word in Action and then take it to my church and leave it on the information table, praying that others may be inspired by it too.

Mrs Prosser, Leigh-on-Sea

Simon: Just a reminder folks that you can receive more than one copy of Word in Action. For details, email contactus@biblesociety.org.uk or phone 01793 418222

Email us your thoughts and comments at WIA@biblesociety.org.uk and we may print your letter. Only include details - such as your full name and location - that you are happy to have published.

We reserve the right to edit letters for style and length. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of Bible Society.

One Verse



Andrew Ollerton
Author of *The Bible Course* and *The Romans Course*

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope (Romans 15.4, ESV).

This is a verse I keep going back to for its personal resonance. I've spent probably too many of my years in a university environment, far away from the more marginalised contexts. And when you're filming something like *The Romans Course*, you can feel a step removed from the audience. So I always try to remember my friend Danny.

Danny has a troubled history with little education, but he loves reading the Bible and he's always wanting to get deeper

into God's message for him. I want to make sure someone like Danny is never left out of Bible study. I think, 'Will this make sense to Danny? Will this help Danny?'

And I come back to this verse in Romans. Paul is saying here that all these teachings in the past were written to give endurance, encouragement and hope. That means they weren't written to give knowledge, philosophy and theory. And that's for me and for anyone else, just as much as for Danny. For all of the opportunities that I've had to be in the world of learning and scholarship, for which I'm very grateful, I'm just another human being like the next who needs more encouragement, endurance and hope. So I love that particular verse.

Bible people



Kerry Evans
Head of Open the Book

I was born in Kent and later moved to Surrey where I began work as a flight attendant and met my husband. We have three grown-up sons. After coming to faith I got involved with a local church and took a degree in Youth Work and Ministry. My passion for sharing the Bible with children in school then took off. And now I'm Head of

Bible Society's Open the Book ministry in England and Wales.

Open the Book is an exciting project where Bible stories are shared with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable. As invited guests, volunteers in storytelling teams use the Open the Book programme to prepare and present a 10 to 15-minute scripted Bible story at a school assembly, involving the children as much as possible.

A Bible story well told has the power to spark the imagination, inspire exploration, give hope, create a smile, teach important lessons and connect generations. Our vision is to share Bible stories with all children, everywhere, through the power of storytelling. Inspired by Psalm 78.1-7 we are continuing the Christian tradition of intergenerational storytelling; sowing seeds for future generations.

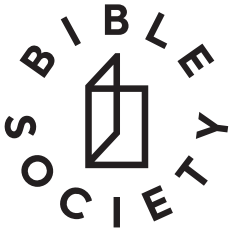
We've just launched a new 90-story programme, *The Storytelling Bible*, written by Bob Hartman.

You can download a free sample by going to the webpage at the end of this article.

Open the Book is launching a new membership scheme to invest more in Open the Book storytelling and resource you better as volunteers.

Full membership will give you access to new and improved resources, and a free ticket to Bob Hartman's upcoming tour. You'll also receive additional resources including *The Storytelling Bible* and the Open the Book *Storyteller's Handbook*, a discount code to use at the Bible Society online shop, and more.

For more information go to biblesociety.org.uk/openthebook



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Change lives with the Bible. Join Bible a Month today.

To find out more go to biblesociety.org.uk/wia-bam or scan the QR code



The regular giving of more than 20,000 Bible a Month supporters meant Bibles and bread were provided to Ukrainians in war zones as soon as the conflict started. Many of those who received Scriptures have found peace and hope in Jesus. To read an eyewitness report of Bible work in Ukraine check the Bible a Month newsletter summer edition at biblesociety.org.uk/wia-bam

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