



Bible
Society

word **in** action



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Chat with our Chief Exec

Q: What will be achieved by forging closer ties with the Chinese Church in England and Wales?

A: Bible Society has been working in China for almost our entire history and during that time we've seen the phenomena of Chinese people spreading out throughout the world so that there are now many Chinese diaspora communities everywhere.

We want to work with this Chinese community, make the Bible available to them, help them engage with it and witness the transformative effect the Bible has on people's lives.

Fundamentally, we are engaging with the Chinese diaspora in England and Wales to help grow Bible confidence amongst Chinese Christians and work with them as they engage with non-Christian Chinese people who come here too.

Because of the mobility of people in our modern world if we are successful in this we are not only going to work with this significant Chinese diaspora community here but also have an influence with the wider Chinese mobile population. And often those Chinese who are being educated abroad will take leadership roles back in society in mainland China.



Paul Williams

Q: On the eve of the World Cup in Qatar, tell us about the importance of the migrant ministry in the Gulf.

A: The wealthy Gulf states attract labour from poorer countries. Often one or two members of a family will go to work in relatively low skilled and certainly low paid work. They save every penny they can and send it back to their families. These workers can find themselves living in cramped conditions in migrant worker camps outside of regular society. Many are lonely, enduring harsh conditions, but there are vibrant Christian communities active among them.

It is an enormous privilege for us to support our Bible Society colleagues in the Gulf to help bring the Scriptures into these communities. More and more migrants have a hunger for the gospel and are coming to faith; this has a ripple effect back in the countries that these people have come from.

During the World Cup, Scriptures will be distributed to not only migrants but also football fans from many countries. I would encourage everyone to pray for this work, that any obstacles will be overcome, and Scriptures will reach the hands of people who really need them.

Hello Friends

It's a great honour to serve you as your new editor. As we were about to print this edition, the Queen sadly passed away. Now she is with her King. Please read the tribute on Page 3.

To introduce myself: I spent many years in Japan working for national newspapers. I moved back to Britain in 2019 because my elderly parents needed me. I was tired of mainstream journalism and my dream was to work for a Christian charity. I prayed. I was in my 50s. It would be tough getting any job! My wife was pregnant and had given up a good job in Japan. She arrived here to find her husband jobless.

I prayed more and the doors of Bible Society opened. Praise God! I'm also working with a great team. By 'team' I mean you too. Thank you for being the driving force that propels Bible mission forward!

*God bless you all.
Simon Bartz*

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 @biblesociety
 facebook.com/biblesociety

Bible Society
Stonehill Green, Westlea,
Swindon SN5 7DG
Tel: 01793 418222
biblesociety.org.uk

Registered charity 232759
Chair of the Board:
Alan Eccles
Chief Executive:
Paul Williams

Editor: Simon Bartz wia@biblesociety.org.uk
Design: Studio56 07824 468387
Order line: 01793 418300
Online ordering: shop.biblesociety.org.uk/wia
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Front cover: Arleen Luo, Bible Society's Manager of Chinese Mission. Photo credit: Andy Knight

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Photo credit: Reuter/John Stilwell

Gone to be with her King

'She had a particular love of the Bible.'

The nation – and the world – has mourned the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The close of her long reign was truly the end of an era.

For the whole of her time on the throne she was the Patron of Bible Society, and she supported us financially with a gift from the Privy Purse every year.

Of course, she served as Patron of many charities – she had a strong sense of duty and wanted to lend her name where it would be of most use. We do know, though, that she had a particular love of the Bible and a deep Christian faith. Especially in her later years she often spoke in her Christmas broadcasts about what Jesus meant to her.

In 2002 she said: 'I know just how much I rely on my faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning. I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings and to put my trust in God ... I draw strength from the message of hope in the Christian gospel.'

We are deeply grateful for the support she gave to us over the years of her reign. The Servant Queen is now in the presence of the King she served.

Please visit: biblesociety.org.uk/HMQueenTributeWIA



The Queen in Sydney in 2006.

Photo credit: Reuter/Rob Griffith

Her faith was her guide

With the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II we have lost not only a remarkable public servant, but also a presence, the presence of a much-loved and respected Christian leader during a period of extraordinary change.

We cannot understand the Queen without reference to her Christian faith. There's a marvellous section in her Coronation service when she was presented with a Bible, described as the 'Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes' and 'the most valuable thing that this world affords'. The Queen's life and testimony make it clear that she took these words very seriously.

The Queen's faith has made a real difference to her reign and to the nation. She attended church more than weekly, prayed and read the Bible. Her Christian faith has been her guide during the highs and lows of her life and because of that she has been able to be a stable and enduring presence in our national life.

I think that the Queen's legacy is her example of what true service and duty looks like. Her whole life has been one of service. I think the Queen will be remembered in line with these words from Proverbs 10.7, 'The memory of the righteous is a blessing.'

Paul Williams, Bible Society's Chief Executive Officer

Your support of the Chinese Church in England and Wales will have a global impact, says Manager of Chinese Mission Arleen Luo.



Photo credit: Andy Knight

The Chinese Church: A new chapter

The Chinese Church is at a pivotal moment of change – both in mainland China and around the world. But what does it mean for Bible work, and how is your support making a difference?

In the days before the pandemic, if you walked into Manchester Alliance Church you'd find a thriving congregation of around 200 Chinese Christians. They were an eclectic group. Local take-away staff worshipped alongside Chinese students (mostly post-graduates). Many were new believers.

But visit that same church today and you'll see a drastically different picture. Numbers have swelled from 200 people to more than 1,200 – and the church is full of mature, educated and largely wealthy Christians.

What happened? Answer: the Hong Kongers arrived.

In January 2021, the UK opened up a path to British citizenship

for Hong Kongers and their dependents. Anyone born before 1997 became eligible for British National (Overseas) status (BNO) – and, in the wake of China's increasingly authoritarian grip on the former British colony, thousands applied.

Some 120,000 people have arrived in the UK already, and many more are expected in the coming years. They are educated professionals (80 per cent have university degrees), mostly families (more than half come with children). And – despite the fact that Christianity accounts for just 10 per cent of Hong Kong's population – two in every five of the new arrivals are Christians.

'Chinese are now the biggest ethnic group of Christians in the UK,' says

Attendance at Manchester Chinese Christian Church has grown from 500 people to 600 in the last 12 months, and they now have eight worship sessions at weekends.



'What we do now in the UK could shape the Chinese Church all over the world.'

Arleen Luo, Bible Society's Manager of Chinese Mission. 'The Chinese Church has tripled in size, and the landscape of the Church has really dramatically changed.'

But there are challenges. The Chinese Church is poorly resourced. Unbelievably, it's not even possible to buy a traditional Chinese Bible in the UK. 'Not from Bible Society, Amazon, churches or bookshops,' said Arleen. 'That's something we're changing, right now. There's a real need for Bibles and resources to help Chinese Christians engage with God's word.'

There are also tensions between the newcomers – who feel hurt, betrayed and forced from their homeland – and people from mainland China who may have different political views. 'Most pastors we meet don't know how to deal with that division,' said Arleen, 'They are asking us for help.'

In this complex and fast-changing situation, your support is key. As well as developing, translating and providing Bible resources, you are helping to train Chinese pastors and grow their connections with local, non-Chinese churches. And because of the size and nature of

the Chinese Church, your support has a global impact.

'China has the biggest diaspora population in the world,' said Arleen. 'Every Bible resource we develop can be distributed by Bible Societies around the world, to reach this huge population of really influential people.'

'What's more, unlike many diaspora populations, Chinese people share a similar cultural life, whether they are from China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan or Malaysia. So every resource is relevant to all of them. What we do now in the UK could shape the Chinese Church all over the world.'

- Please pray:**
- Pray for peace, unity and collaboration among the UK Chinese Church
 - Pray those arriving from Hong Kong will be welcomed and quickly settle
 - Pray that more Chinese Christians will love, read and engage with the Bible



Claire Smith
Freelance writer

In mainland China, Bible mission is constantly adapting to overcome obstacles, writes **Arleen Luo**.

Restrictions on religious activity still exist but the main issue recently has been the zero-tolerance approach to Covid. Whenever there's a city-wide lockdown, churches are closed. This makes it more challenging to get books and other resources to people.

Since 1 March 2022, anyone wanting to put religious content on the internet needs permission, but the authorities are still figuring out what's allowed and who the 'safe' content providers might be. We are working to overcome this hurdle.

Interestingly, approval was given for a book by Bible Society theologian Dr Simon Wong on Chinese Bible history. The authorities told us they welcome books like his, which give no political views and are authored by a Chinese person.

Our pastor training programmes continue to serve a crucial need as there is a severe lack of ordained ministers in China. In mountainous regions, pastors and preachers often serve several churches spread over a wide area. You've been providing them with resources, including motorcycles, so that they can more easily reach their congregations and expand their work. Thanks to your support, this is an aspect of our work we plan to develop even further in the coming years.

Visit biblesociety.org.uk/china to find out more

Bake for Bibles this Autumn!



Every autumn, people pile into the kitchen with the arrival of a new *Great British Bake Off* series. So, how about baking for Bibles so more people around the world can 'taste and see that the Lord is good' (Psalm 34.8, ESV)?

Whether you organise a bake sale, host a church coffee morning on Bible Sunday (see the other story on this page), or get competitive with a baking contest, you can change lives for good and have dollops of fun too.

The kind giving you encourage will enable vital Bible-based work to continue in Ukraine under the most difficult of circumstances, as well as in other regions under pressure. Across Europe Bible Society teams are supporting Ukrainians who have left their homes with nothing, providing scriptures, humanitarian aid and emotional support to those who need it most.

Get hold of your Bake for Bibles fundraising pack today. It's full of inspiring info to help you bake for Bibles. And you can join the Bake for Bibles community at biblesociety.org.uk/bakeWIA



#BakeForBibles



Scan to go to page

Share photos of your bakes and events with us over social media using the hashtag #BakeForBibles. And don't forget to spread the word to your friends, family and church community to get even more people involved!



Why not BAKE FOR BIBLES on BIBLE SUNDAY?



Join us for Bible Sunday on 30 October!



'Solid Foundations, Common ground'

Bible Sunday is on 30 October this year and we want to invite you to join us in celebrating the wonderful gift of God's word!

We've prepared material, for adults and children of all ages, that will provide you or your church with an entire Bible Sunday service.

Last year was a huge success with thousands of individuals, small groups and congregations using the material at home or in church.

This year's sermon, which will be available in note form, draws from Romans 15.1-6.

This sermon 'Solid Foundations, Common Ground' helps Christians to re-examine their areas of disagreement by looking at the Scriptures together, demonstrating their unity in Christ. This picture of unity draws the Church's vision forward, inspiring the work of reconciliation necessary for witness and brings hope for the body of Christ in a fractious culture.

There are all-age worship activities based on the themes of endurance and encouragement (Romans 15.4). These include a group-based memory verse, an endurance game and a Word Search to encourage everyone to enjoy learning the passage.

Every member of the congregation can get involved with the fun. And, if you want, you could even Bake for Bibles on Bible Sunday!

Go to biblesociety.org.uk/BibleSunday22WIA if you want to receive this free material.

A gospel goal for the World Cup

John's Gospel and copies of the New Testament in 14 different languages will be distributed during the World Cup finals in Qatar in November and December thanks to your support.

The Scriptures will be given to migrant workers who have toiled to prepare the country for FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 as well as football fans visiting the region for the event.

Last year the Guardian reported that 6,500 migrant workers have died in Qatar since World Cup 2022 was awarded to the nation 12 years ago. World Cup organisers disputed this figure. The Daily Mail reported that workers have been paid just £12 for 11-hour shifts in brutal heat constructing the venues.

What is not in doubt at all is that many migrant workers, who are usually impoverished and go there to earn money, end up living and working in extremely poor conditions. During the pandemic a lot of them lost their jobs and found it impossible to support their families.



This migrant worker was delighted to receive a Bible in the United Arab Emirates.



Migrant workers gather in a small space to worship in the Gulf.

Photos: Bible Society in the Gulf

A growing number, though, are rediscovering hope through the gospel and churches are flourishing in the region. The Bible Society team in the Gulf, which trains pastors and distributes Scriptures, is now intensifying outreach to the 1.8 million Bangladeshi, Nepali, Indian, and other migrant workers in Qatar who have been constructing eight World Cup stadiums, expanding the Hamad International Airport, building Qatar Rail, and even building a new city, Lusail (which houses one of the stadiums).

'Our mandate as a Bible Society is to light hope, care, and love in the hearts of thousands. We take this mandate very seriously,' said Dr Hrayr Jebejian, the General Secretary of Bible Society in the Gulf.

'The 2022 FIFA World Cup is an amazing opportunity for Bible Society in the Gulf to spread the good news of the gospel to thousands. The plan is to reach migrant workers and World Cup international visitors through the distribution of the Gospel of John and the New Testament in Arabic, English, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Malayalam, Nepali, Portuguese, Sinhala, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil and Telugu,' Hrayr said.



Thanks to your support, Bibles are regularly distributed in the cramped quarters of migrant workers in the Gulf.

The Scriptures will be shipped to Qatar from England.

'This is a tremendous chance for the Bible Society in the Gulf to reach lonely, depressed, and troubled people - workers and visitors - with the comforting and life giving word of God,' added Hrayr.

Read more about Hrayr in 'Bible People' on Page 15.



Simon Bartz
Editor





Amazing Christmas resources for you, your church and community. Let's celebrate together!

This year we have a whole host of Christmas resources for you, your family, church and community to share the story of the very first Christmas.

All the Christmas resources are available from biblesociety.org.uk/christmas22WIA or call on 01793 418222.



Scan to go to page



Amazing Days: The story of the very first Christmas

Take a look at this year's children's booklet, featuring Bob Hartman stories from the new Open the Book Handbook, with amazing illustrations by Amy Lane. Join us, as we walk through the amazing days of the very first Christmas, following them to their most amazing conclusion!

Available in English and Welsh, £3 per copy, bulk discounts for large orders.

Video animation

There's a lovely video animation of *The Christmas Poem*, ideal to show at your church Christmas service and Parents and Toddlers group.

Instant Nativity

Looking for a fun and interactive, rehearsal-free Nativity to perform in your church? Look no further! Adapted by Bob Hartman, this energetic script will be enjoyed by all ages at a Christmas service. It's available as a free download with an accompanying PowerPoint.



The Christmas Poem

Back by popular demand! Enjoy a refreshed retelling of the great big story of God and us and everything, taken from the Bible, with wonderful rhymes from Bob Hartman and enchanting illustrations by Honor Ayers. Ideal for pre-school children and families.

Available in English and Welsh, £2.75 per copy, bulk discounts for large orders.



Christmas stickers

A perfect way to decorate your Christmas card envelopes and Christmas presents and share the Christmas story.

Available to buy for £2.25 for four sheets of stickers.



Charity Gifts

Choose your Charity Gift from a selection of ten options, then opt to send either an email or a beautiful printed card to the recipient. Give the gift of the Bible this Christmas.

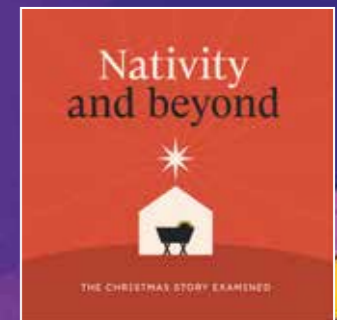
Christmas cards

Beautiful Christmas cards designed by Emma Skerratt, based on Luke 2.13-14. Available to buy in packs of ten, with five great designs. £4.50 per pack.



Nativity and Beyond

Exploring questions like 'Who was Jesus? What was he about?' this book takes you beyond the Nativity story, to explore the life of the grown-up Jesus in the first-century Roman world. Perfect to use as a give-away to adult seekers at your Christmas service. £1.20 per booklet. Accompanying downloadable script and PowerPoint slides available to help you make the case for the historical credibility of the gospel and its power to change lives.



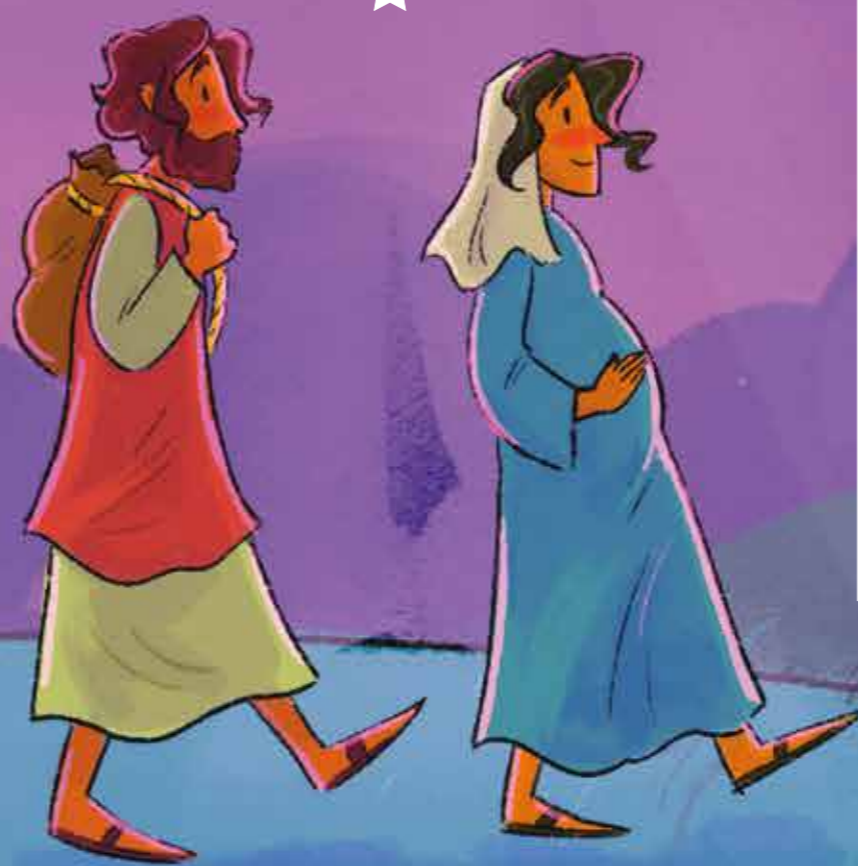
A Christ-mess Story

A down-to-earth book which unwraps the good news of Christmas through poetry, playfulness, honesty and humour. £4.25 per copy, bulk discounts available.



Video animation

Check out the brilliant video animation of *Amazing Days*, perfect to show at your church Christmas service.



Pastors and translators thank God and pray over a box of the newly translated Jola Bibles. Photos: Bible Society in The Gambia.



‘God speaks our language’

The first ever Jola Bible was launched in The Gambia this summer, amid great celebration and joy. Your support helped to make it happen.

‘How do you pray?’

That was the question Bible translator Brian Tanner asked the Jola people when he first arrived in The Gambia, back in 1992. ‘In Arabic,’ they replied – as 96 per cent of people in this country are Muslim. ‘But when you really have something on your heart, when you have a family problem or when you have great joy, how do you pray then?’ Brian asked.

‘Then, we pray in Jola,’ came the answer.

‘That was the challenge I took,’ said Brian. ‘The Jolas want to speak to the Lord in the language of their heart.’

Today – 30 years after Brian asked that question – the Jola people have their first full Bible translation.

It was launched in the small town of Kampant amid great celebration. And your support made it happen.

‘A blessing in our generation’

People filled the room and spilled outside into the hot sun, worshipping God as the boxes of pristine Bibles were carried into the church.

As they sang and danced, the leaders stretched their hands over the Jola Scripture in prayer, before Bibles were handed out to waiting believers.

‘This is a blessing which we are delighted to see in our time and in our generation,’ said one pastor. ‘God speaks our language and we will see people come to Christ!’

Answered prayer

The Jola Bible has been long-awaited. Work on the New Testament began in earnest in 2007, in response to pleas from church leaders who wanted God’s word to grow the faith of Christians and serve as an outreach tool in this majority-Muslim nation. There are 65,000 Jola people in the Gambian West coast, and more across Africa, and they are mostly farming people with traditional beliefs often mixed with Islam.

The New Testament was launched in 2012 and work on the Old Testament began in 2013. A small team of full-time translators led by Brian Tanner’s wife, Miran, set about translating from the original Hebrew text. Seeing their work bring joy to people at the Bible launch was a special moment for the team.

Shouting to be heard over the sound of the musicians and with a broad smile across his face, Bible Society’s leader in The Gambia, Michael Ellis, said, ‘We are giving people what they have longed for! The Bible can address our nation’s problems, and people’s needs will be met, in word and deed.’

Now, Michael plans to use the new Bible as a basis for audio Scriptures, new reader portions, evangelistic materials and stories for children. Faith will grow, people of all backgrounds will come to know Jesus, and Jola society will be transformed, he said. ‘The Bible is for all people, in every living language,’ added Michael. ‘Amen.’



Claire Smith
Freelance writer



Translation team member Faburama (centre) learned to read and write through a Bible Society literacy course.

Lives will change

‘This has been my desire for a long time, and I have prayed to see this Bible completed. I am a Jola, brought up in a Muslim family, and now I follow Jesus. How? Because of the word of God. This Bible will impact people’s lives so much.’
Brother Abraham Jarju.

‘I believe there will be exponential growth in the Church as people experience God in their own way, through their own language. I feel super excited.’

Issakka Abdoulie, who works with Bible Society

‘The more people read and understand this Bible, the more their lives will change. They will give their lives to the Lord. Also, our language will not die, and our children will inherit Jola.’
Tombong Badjie, Bible translator



Noemie during an earlier trip to Malawi.

Meeting the translators by Noemie Foster, Mission Specialist Africa

During my visit to The Gambia, I spent time with the wonderful small team of translators working on the very first Bible in the Jola language. They have been working so faithfully for years. When I met them, the team had documents and handwritten notes sprawled across the table, with many tabs open on their computers. Translating from the original text means long, hard graft, and they could not wait for the launch event.

The team was led by a Korean missionary, Miran, who came to the country 30 years ago to devote herself to the language. She’s the last person I expected to meet in The Gambia! Another translator was Faburama, aged 52. He’s from the Jola community and learned to read and write only a few years ago through a literacy class run by Bible Society. The fact that he’s on the team shows the incredible transformation that can happen in people’s lives when they read God’s word!



Photo credit: Syrotkin Oleh

As people's lives were torn apart by the invasion of Ukraine they looked to Bibles provided by you for hope.

£1 million for Ukraine – thank you!

At the time of writing, you had raised more than £1 million for Ukraine. That equates to a tremendous amount of Scriptures and other support for Ukrainians whose lives have been devastated by war. Thank you so much for your amazing support!

Your generosity continues to make a huge difference to these people's lives. You've given hope to people who had lost hope. And you've done this by providing them with God's word. In the Bible they can encounter God's eternal love for us through Jesus Christ.

Much of what has been raised has been used to support people in Ukraine itself, but Ukrainian refugees in other countries, including England and Wales, are also being provided for too. And it's all thanks to your gracious giving.

- Free Russian and Ukrainian Scriptures have been provided to Ukrainian refugees who have arrived in England and Wales

(Bible Society has partnered with Welcome Churches to achieve this)

- 3,688 different resources have been provided to individuals and churches across the UK so far (at the time of writing)
- Beyond Disaster*, a Bible-based spiritual first-aid resource available in Ukrainian and Russian, is available for free to help individuals address the lasting wounds of trauma in their lives

'We are hearing of individuals who have found comfort and relief through the *Beyond Disaster* resource and have been deeply moved to see these Ukrainian Scriptures available to them in such a tragic time,' said Harry Fenner Crawley, Bible Society's Community Engagement Manager.



Scan to go to page

You can order free resources such as Scriptures and *Beyond Disaster* here: biblesociety.org.uk/Ukraine22WIA

They lost everything, but found God

Andriy and Yana were nonbelievers who were forced to flee war zones in Ukraine twice, leaving everything behind. The couple and their two children found sanctuary at a church in Lviv in the safer West of Ukraine. They came to faith by reading Bibles given to them by Bible Society.

'It looks like (God) was with us from Mariupol and led us by hand, straight to this church, to a great community,' Andriy says. 'He helped in many aspects and gave us understanding that we need to stay here, we need to get baptised. And from now on, we aren't only waiting for him to act but also try to come closer towards him.'

'We try to get busy with work and studying the Bible,' Andriy adds. 'So, everything that happened to us before, it slowly departs. And the wound in your soul becomes smaller because – and this is how we understand the Bible – we don't focus on losing our home, we focus on retaining our lives.'



Andriy and Yana had to flee invading forces twice, but then experienced the power of God's word thanks to you.



'Family Bible Challenge' takes Big Church Festival by storm

We were invited to Big Church Festival this summer and we jumped at the opportunity to share the Good News Bible – Family Edition with families in person. Our mission was to create an experience showing how fun and engaging the Good News Bible – Family Edition is ... and the 'Family Bible Challenge' was born!

We met over 300 families and groups during the two day festival. They had a blast taking part in our game which combined two of the fantastic interactions this Bible has to offer to help families explore the Scriptures. It gave them a chance to not only see this Bible, but to feel it and experience it with friends, family and sometimes the Bible Society crew.

Funmi Akinlade and her family had a go at the challenge and got their first look at the Family Edition. 'I like

that you can sit around a table and read it together and the interactive game element. I love the fun side – it's really important to engage these children and to encourage them to want to read their Bible. This Bible would be really useful! The Poynter family loved the honest introduction. 'I love the brief introduction. It says that your family may find it difficult for various reasons which is a great way in. There are lots of blockers but this version is honest and helps with that, so clever!'

The Good News Bible – Family Edition is uniquely designed to help the whole family engage with the Bible together at home. With its huge A4 pages and quirky but practical layout, families regularly tell us that it has transformed the way they spend time reading and responding to the Bible together. Joy Thavayogan and her family reminisced about reading the

Bible together when their children were young and wished the Family Edition had been available when their children were growing up. 'We used to read the Bible together. One would read while the rest listened. But this is so interactive and gives everyone the opportunity to get involved. The different elements of colouring, doodling and videos make it enjoyable and engaging. I wish we'd had this when the children were growing up!'

Joy and her family still read the Bible and pray together. They live by the motto, 'family that pray together, stay together' and that certainly seems to be the case.

Find out more about the Good News Bible – Family Edition and the free online resources available here: biblesociety.org.uk/GNBFamily22WIA



YOUR LETTERS & COMMENTS

We will be using the information on Ukraine in prayers at church on Sunday. Encouraging to get a Christian view after all the media presentation.

JULIE, BLACKBURN

Thank you for another informative, inspiring and encouraging publication - with special thanks to Larissa for her six years of faithful editing. May the Lord bless you and guide you, Larissa, as you move on to pastures new. Your dedicated work with Bible Society has touched and impacts us and many others and we thank God for the way you have effectively used his gifting in your life. Proverbs 11.25 'he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed'.

VICTORIA, HULL

(Larissa is still at Bible Society, thankfully. She's been a great mentor to me as I put together this issue, my debut. - Simon)

To read about the really wonderful impact the Bible has on people's lives around the world is so uplifting. To know that the Bible is being translated into so many languages is hastening Christ's return. Praise God. To be able to pray with knowledge of our neighbours is truly faith inspiring and blesses all of us. Thank you.

JANET, PLYMOUTH

I think *Word in Action* is very good as the word of God is truth and light in a dark world such as we are in right now.

PEARL, GLASGOW

It is very interesting and encouraging to read about the work of Bible Society in so many parts of the world. May God continue to bless all those working to spread the good news of the gospel to so many who need to hear and know that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

MARIANNE, CHICHESTER

(And may God bless Bible Society supporters like you, Marianne. Without your prayerful giving, Bible mission would not be possible. - Simon)

Word in Action gives me the opportunity to get involved with God's work in many different ways. I love the idea of 'twinning' my Bible. Thank you all for your dedication to our Lord.

NORMA, NUNEATON

It is so encouraging to read (and see pictures) of people rejoicing because they can now read the Bible in their own language and feel it is really for them.

SELINA, RUGBY

(Look how delighted Magdalena is in the photo. She worked for eight years as part of the team translating the Bible into the Achi of Cubulco language in Guatemala. Finally she was holding a copy in her hands - Simon).

WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Email us your thoughts and comments at wia@biblesociety.org.uk or use the comments form attached.

We reserve the right to edit letters for style and length.

The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of Bible Society.

One verse



I made a lot of friends with people who lived on the streets. I visit them whenever I return to Tokyo, as in this photo taken last year.

My story is very Prodigal Son. It was mostly fun at the time but looking back, it was reckless. You're fortunate there's no space here for details!

I became a Christian aged 12 at a summer camp. I then went to Hong Kong and Tokyo and as my career rocketed my life became decadent. Over 20 years I spent more time in hospital than church. One silly mishap after another and I almost died a few times.

I ended up destitute in a dosshouse in Tokyo. One day, I fell to the floor, pressed my head against the tatty tatami and said to God three words, 'Please help me.'

Instantly, my mind began to clear.

It was as if I was wiping dirt off a mirror. I could see the light of Jesus shining from within the mirror, and the more dirt I wiped away, the more truth and love I encountered. I was born again... again.

So one of my favourite verses is Acts 9.18: 'At once something like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he was able to see again. He stood up and was baptised.' (GNB)

Jesus led me out of the dosshouse and I was baptised soon after. My testimony (and the Prodigal Son's) might sound dramatic, but the drama of the verse regarding Saul applies to all who Christ embraces.

Simon Bartz
Editor

Biblepeople:



Dr Hrayr Jebejian is the General Secretary of Bible Society in the Gulf.

I was born in Beirut, Lebanon, and was 17 years old when I lost my father. This was the year when the civil war started. All my classmates emigrated to the United States and Canada, but to my utter surprise, I was not granted a visa.

I continued my studies while war raged around me and later got a part-time job at Bible Society.

Today, I am in a much better position to understand God's calling for my life: 'Hrayr, I need you to stay in this region, and I want you to work for me.'

I have been at Bible Society for 42 years now. I desperately want to reach out to thousands of vulnerable, hopeless people with the word of God to bring love, joy, and faith to their lives by engaging them with the hope of the Scripture. The Lord's Great Commission challenges me to do more because witnessing thousands of people being baptised and confessing Jesus Christ as their savior is an incomparable experience.

What I enjoy most about working at Bible Society is coming up with innovative, engaging projects designed specifically to increase the faith and deepen the understanding of thousands of faithful believers of the word of God, especially at a time when migrant workers in the Gulf countries find themselves between a rock and hard place.

The number of people losing their jobs and committing crimes and suicide is increasing exponentially. These painful realities compel our team in the Gulf to do more. We have many projects including providing the Scriptures in more than 60 languages, organising Bible storytelling workshops for the semi-literate, and conducting adult literacy programs so that people can read the Scriptures for themselves.

'The whole world is in the Gulf'

The Gulf countries are home to 200 nationalities! The whole world is in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. This indisputable fact renders Bible Society's ministry in these countries quite unique and makes the impact of this local Bible Society, global. And we are thankful for the prayerful help of Bible Society supporters in England and Wales. You are part of this singularly impactful global outreach!

'I know just how much I rely on my faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning. I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings and to put my trust in God ... I draw strength from the message of hope in the Christian gospel.'

Queen Elizabeth II
(Patron of Bible Society)



Please visit: biblesociety.org.uk/HMQueenTributeWIA



Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7DG
Registered charity 232759