



**T**his Spring Sower we bring you stories from our partners – powerful and humbling testimonies of God’s amazing love in places of extreme stress and trauma.

It is with both a troubled and humble heart that I commend this Sower to you. Our focus for the Spring appeal is the provision of practical aid and God’s word to those living in countries where trauma is part of everyday life. The Arab-Israeli, Syrian and Iraqi Bible Societies are often at the front line of conflict and emotional, psychological and spiritual trauma. Personal stories captured in these pages remind us of the transformational love of God amid such hardship.

A participant in one of Bible Society Syria’s trauma healing programs writes: “I had been forgiven. I had received a new life. Yes, reading his word was like reading my own heart, and I knew I had finally come home.”

You will find some prayers written by our partners to help inform your daily prayer time. Incredibly, our partners are always humbled when they learn Christians so far away are bringing their concerns before God, and yet, you and I are in awe of their resilience and faith in circumstances beyond our comprehension.

I also want to thank you for your financial and prayer support for Bible Society. Perhaps you receive our monthly prayer diary as well, and pray for our work, our staff and our board each day. We never take this for granted!

As you know, a key part of the work of all Bible Societies around the world is Bible translation into people’s heart languages. Let me share with you a remarkable statistic: during the past two centuries, the number of languages with Scripture translated has increased by 4000 per cent. How huge is that!

You will find some other wonderful statistics about Bible translation inside these pages. So much to thank God for.

Also, you will be warmly encouraged by the news from our partnership with the ADF. Bible Society has worked with ADF chaplains to launch not one, but two books this year to Open The Bible with Defence Force personnel. Read about the Tri-service Devotional book and the testimonial, ‘My Story, My God’. The work being done through the ADF chaplains is inspirational. God is good!

*“We have this hope as an anchor to the soul.”*  
*Hebrews 6:19a*

GOD BLESS,

*Grant Thomson*

CEO, BIBLE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA



**During the past two centuries, the number of languages with Scripture translated has increased by 4000 per cent. How huge is that!**



# Letters from the Frontline



Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation,  
be constant in prayer.

- Romans 12:12 ESV



A photograph of a war-torn street. The road is paved but flanked by rubble and damaged buildings. Two people are walking away from the camera on the right side of the road. The sky is overcast.

# Hope in the midst of conflict



**M**any of Bible Society's international projects are located in what has been described as the 10/40 Window. This term was coined by a Christian missionary in 1990 based around the geography of countries facing the great need and least access to the Christian message. These regions in the eastern hemisphere, and parts of Europe and Africa in the western hemisphere are located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator.

Approximately two thirds of the world's population live in this area. The majority of the world's Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs live in the 10/40 Window and it is also home to 80 percent of the poorest of the poor.

Some of the countries in this Window experience a history of conflict, economic and political unrest, and an internal displacement of people. This is the context our Bible Society partners in Syria, Iraq, in the Arab-Israeli parts of Israel and Cameroon are ministering in, and why the projects we are supporting focus on the provision of Bible-based trauma healing, on enriching the lives of their people with literacy, providing Scripture and relief packages, and through all of these, offering God's hope and love.

This region is called a 'window' to keep us looking in. In the pages that follow you will read personal testimonies and prayers from people living in these regions. Their struggles and faith are both profound and humbling. How can we respond as wealthy Christians living lives of comfort and safety? Let's join them in crying out to God, seeking his intervention to bring about a sustainable peace.

*Please note that photos and names have been changed for privacy reasons.*



**Love Another**

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God and anyone who loves is born of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love. It is not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other, for the love that has ever seen God remains in us and is shared with others.

دوستان عزیز، بیاییم با یکدیگر را محبت کنیم. خداوند ما را چقدر دوست دارد را نشان داد تا ما بتوانیم زندگی ابدی داشته باشیم. این است که ما خدا را دوست داریم، بلکه خداوند ما را دوست داشت و پسر خود را برای ما فرستاد تا ما را از گناهانمان نجات دهد. عزیزان، چون خداوند ما را این قدر دوست داشت، ما قطعاً باید یکدیگر را دوست داشته باشیم. زیرا کسی که خدا را دوست دارد، خدا را دوست داشته است و خداوند او را دوست داشته است تا گناهان او را ببرد. عزیزان، چون خداوند ما را این قدر دوست داشت، ما قطعاً باید یکدیگر را دوست داشته باشیم. زیرا کسی که خدا را دوست دارد، خدا را دوست داشته است و خداوند او را دوست داشته است تا گناهان او را ببرد.

**Discerning False Prophets**

Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. This is the way to find out if they have the Spirit of God. If a prophet claims to speak by the Spirit but does not confess Jesus Christ who came in the flesh, do not accept them into your homes. Do not greet them. Good evening to those who greet you with a peace greeting that only comes from God. But love one another, for love is the sign that we have the Spirit.

دوستان عزیز، هر کسی که ادعا کند که روح خدا را دارد، همه را نپذیرید. شما باید آنها را امتحان کنید تا ببینید روحی که در آنهاست از جانب خداست یا از جانب انسان است. این است راهی که می‌توانید بفهمید آیا آن روح از جانب خداست یا از جانب انسان است. اگر کسی ادعا کند که روح خدا را دارد اما نمی‌گوید که عیسی مسیح، که در دنیا آمد، فرزند خداوند است، او را نپذیرید و در خانه خود نپذیرید. سلام ندهید به کسانی که سلام خداوند را به شما می‌دهند. اما یکدیگر را دوست داشته باشید، زیرا محبت نشانه آن است که ما روح خدا را داریم.

# Syria

## Great is His faithfulness



**S**ince March 2011, Syria has been embroiled in civil war. The conflict has led to 500,000 deaths and caused 6.7 million internally displaced people.

Over 6.8 million Syrians are refugees and asylum seekers. In addition to this, in 2020 Syria experienced a major economic crisis, further complicated by international sanctions.

*The emergence of COVID-19 put these conflict-affected, displaced communities at further risk, and exacerbated the existing health, economic, political and security crises. More than 80% of Syrians live in extreme poverty, and ordinary Syrians are unable to procure food - 9.3 million Syrians have become food insecure - and also can't access essential drugs and other basic necessities.*

*This is the context in which Bible Society Syria is reaching out to people with God's life-giving word, offering hope and a way forward through their trauma healing programs.*

I was brought up with guns. Since childhood, a gun has always been by my side. Like the girls played with dolls, all of us boys played with guns. Now, I've grown up - but the guns are still there. What started as a game became a harsh reality!

When I listen to my own children, it shocks me to hear the language they use. It's so violent and loud. I wish they had a better start in life. I wish I could have been like our Heavenly Father who ran to meet up with his son who had done everything wrong. A son who had shown such disrespect for his Father, but the Father's love was always there for him. Amazing!

Yes, I have lost one of my eyes, and my body is the body of an old man, although I'm young. My memories haunted me during the day and night for years, and I deserved it. I had played with guns so much that when it became reality, I still thought it was a game and I didn't know

what power that gun could have over me. Now it scares me thinking about it and even toy guns freak me out.

One day, well into this war that has destroyed so many of us, somebody quoted a Bible verse. It made me think of a God who I had long kept away from. I hadn't wanted to think about him, as I felt that he wouldn't like the choices I had made.

"A day is coming when people will sing, 'Give thanks to the Lord! Call for him to help you! Tell all the nations what he has done! Tell them how great he is!'" (Isaiah 12:4, GNB)

I started thinking what I could be thankful for, and suddenly it dawned on me. I realised I had been given a second chance. Many of my friends had died beside me in battle, and God had kept me alive. I had found a wife willing to live her life with me and work hard. God had also given us two sons. At that moment I became sure God had reached out his hand to me and he had protected me and, later on, my family. We had moved from place to place, just like so many others, but together with my family, I had finally found peace with Him.

I went back to the person who read that Bible verse to me and asked him for a Bible. As life got harder for us, I realised I needed my Father to talk to me; and he did. I found the Bible, God's word, actually had something for all circumstances. Before, I relied on little lines of encouragement on the internet and reading my horoscope, but now I was reading words from somebody who had lived through all my troubles.

Now, even though my body cannot keep up for a long day's work and my wife will have to take over, we know that this is what we can expect in life, as God's word says: "You will have to work hard and sweat..." (Genesis 3:19). Through it all, and living from day to day, we rejoice with

these words: “The Lord’s kindness never fails! If He had not been merciful, we would have been destroyed. The Lord can always be trusted to show mercy each morning. Deep in my heart I say, The Lord is all I need; I can depend on Him!” The Lord is kind to everyone who trusts and obeys Him. It is good to wait patiently for the Lord to save us.” (Lamentations 3:22-26, CEV). We have been told from Ecclesiastes that there is ‘nothing new under the sun,’ but we are also told here in Lamentations: ‘His mercy is new every morning!’ (Lamentations 3:23)

I read and everything was true: “But He endured the suffering that should have been ours ...” I continued reading: “All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way. But the LORD made the punishment fall on Him, the punishment all of us deserved ... He willingly gave His life and shared the fate of evil men. He took the place of many sinners and prayed that they might be forgiven.” (Isaiah 53:4,6,12b) I had been forgiven. I had received a new life. Yes, reading his word was like reading my own heart, and I knew that I had finally come home!

## PRAYER FOR SYRIA: FROM THE BIBLE SOCIETY IN SYRIA

Jesus, our Lord,

Please teach us how to follow you! You are the only Way, the Absolute Truth and the only Life worth Living. You, who knew the innermost feelings and emotions of your own mother, you know what our grandmothers, mothers, wives and young girls are going through during the worst of circumstances. They are trying so hard to keep the family together, and it’s hard, almost impossible when money has lost its value, when she comes home from the shop without having been able to afford buying anything.

You also know how cruel the world is! Jesus, bring changed ways of thinking, new laws to protect the women of Syria. And Jesus, don’t forget our children who have seen and heard too much.

Jesus, you know what every little child is going through: his and her traumas, their fears, their unwillingness to think of tomorrow, as today has just been too hard.

Jesus, can you spare a thought for our young people who have lost their dreams, whose world is so dark that they will hang on to just anything to be able to survive. Yes, Jesus, you have been there, you have faced the same darkness and You tell us that You have overcome the world! Please, Jesus, be with our young people in our beloved Syria. We know that You love them so very much!

Jesus, we feel both unworthy and very weak as we continue sharing the wonderful message about you in our country that we don’t recognise anymore. Please be with us, as we try to bring healing to the many traumatised people around this country.

Be with us and speak your own Word to us and the many who hear it through us. Jesus, show us and our volunteers and friends and all the people that we meet that “Your Word is Truth! Yes, Jesus!”

**Amen.**

# Arab-Israel

## Now I know how valuable I am



**S**adly, conflict and violence have characterised Israel for generations, both internally and with external forces. The Arab Israeli Bible Society (AIBS) serve people who belong to a double minority: they are a Christian minority living among a Muslim majority, and as Arab citizens of Israel, they are a minority within the state of Israel. They are living in a war zone and their country is tense. The ongoing conflict between Gaza and Israel over the last 13 years has been particularly traumatising for those AIBS ministers to, with not only violence but anger and tensions between Jews and Arabs escalating.

*This is the context that children and young people are growing up in, and the reason why the projects run by the Arab Israeli Bible Society are so crucial in bringing them God's love, peace and healing.*

I am 21 years old from a large Christian family in the north of Israel. I graduated from high school several years ago, and I am not working currently. My family is very supportive of me

though I did not acquire higher education or a skill for employment. I love music and use my gift to help in worship in my church.

Since childhood, my life has been full of changes and painful circumstances. My family moved several times, and I did not have a stable place for learning or to acquire friends. At my last school, I was bullied. Such circumstances and changes affected me in educational and emotional ways.

The spread of Coronavirus added to my anxiety, distress and lack of confidence. Especially in a time that I was praying very hard for God's intervention in my life to find a job and comfort.

When I heard that the Arab-Israeli Bible Society was holding a two-day session on 'Inner Healing', I wanted to participate. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the study days were held in our church in a small group.

The sessions were very helpful and gave me an understanding that God wants to help me deal

with my traumas, anxiety, self-esteem and stress. He wants me to forgive others for the past, forgive myself and to be healed.

After bringing all my pain and issues to the cross, I have realised my value in the eyes of my Heavenly Father. In the past I expected that God will act on my behalf immediately and in accordance with my plans. I was angry because he did not answer my prayers, while he did respond to others. Now, I am reading my Bible in a new way and praying for the Lord's will to be done.

I asked the Lord to forgive me for my thoughts to take my life away. On the other hand, I am convinced that God wants me to surrender more

of myself to him. I am hoping to learn more about wholeness in Christ. To accept myself as the Lord loves and accepts me. I desire to develop my skills in music and song writing.

I want to hold to the Lord's promise in this verse I cherish: 'The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.' (Psalm 18:2, NIV)

Please pray I will be able to get a job compatible with my skills and that will help me to develop them more. Also, pray I have an opportunity to study or develop my skills in serving the Lord through hymn writing and music.

## PRAYER FOR ISRAEL: FROM THE ARAB-ISRAELI BIBLE SOCIETY

Dear Lord,

We pray that you will use these difficult times to encourage people to look up to you and seek your mercy.

Please be with those who are suffering, as COVID-19 impacts Israel in many ways. Please be with the many people who have lost their jobs and are feeling hopeless.

Dear Lord, please bring peace to our country and guide the New Israeli government to advocate for social justice. You know, Lord God, the tension Israel has been going through, with right-wing supporters increasing and extremism is growing. Please bring peace and give wisdom to our leaders.

Thank you, Lord God, that the Arab-Israeli Bible Society (AIBS) has been active in the midst of suffering. Thank you that we have grown the Trauma Healing sessions for young people. Thank you that during the conferences, many people in the sessions discover your power and mercy.

We pray for our team who serve. We also ask for wisdom in how and where to conduct the conferences, as we receive many requests for our trauma conferences and our bullying sessions as well. Thank you, Heavenly Father, that many people open up in these sessions, and that we have a great opportunity to offer them your word. Please give us your wisdom, God; we need it.

Dear Lord, please bless the efforts of AIBS as we seek to empower families to be godly. We pray specifically for the women we have met in our workshops who are frustrated, and suffering in a patriarchal society. Please, Lord, empower us to offer Christ as the head of the family and the way for building a godly family.

**Amen.**



# Cameroon

Habiba's life is transformed by literacy

**C**ameroon has faced ongoing violence and unrest over many years. This includes the attacks by terrorist organisation Boko Haran, ongoing violence which in 2020 resulted in the death of two Bible Society literacy workers. In addition to this, since 2016 there has been an ongoing bid for independence in the Anglophone region of Cameroon, resulting in violence and the displacement of more than 450,000 people.

*In this context, Bible Society runs its literacy and trauma healing projects, to enrich the lives of the people with God's hope and love.*

An active member of the Catholic Church in Makoulahé, Cameroon, 36-year-old Habiba is a married woman with seven children. She has never been to school, so could not read or write. She has encountered much hardship throughout her life because of this lack. Habiba regularly

attends her church and everyone discovered in her exceptional leadership abilities, but her illiteracy did not allow her to fully participate in this role.

“I have missed a lot of opportunities for a decent job in my life because I can’t read or write,” she said.

When Habiba heard about the “Parkwa” native literacy school coordinated by the Bible Society in Cameroon – and supported by you, through Bible Society Australia funding – she was one of the first people to seize the opportunity.

“I didn’t expect to find such an opportunity. I never had the chance to sit down and be taught,” said Habiba.

“Coming from a family of 12 children, there were two girls. I was in third place. My father always told us that school is not for girls and that I should rather learn to manage my future home next to my mother. That is, doing housework.

“I was very shocked when I saw girls my age going to school. Until my marriage, I could not read and [could] write even less. It had many unforgettable effects on my life.”

“People find that I dress well; I am very respected and respectful too. I am appreciated by everyone in the village but, deep down, I was nothing because I could not read, I did not even know how to write my name.”

At the start of classes, which are held twice a week, she had some family constraints that did not allow her to progress normally, particularly in taking care of children. Out of her four boys and three girls, five go to school.

In addition, her husband felt Habiba gave too much importance to her school, to the point where she did not run the house well. Soon after this, Habiba reorganised herself. Since her little sister was also unable to go to school, she brought her into her home to help.

When Habiba goes to literacy class, her little sister takes care of the chores around the house.

After two years of learning, Habiba has reached what she calls an acceptable level in reading and writing.

More important to her, she has now acquired a taste for reading the word of God and for writing. For her, everything changed when she participated in the meeting of women held in the Cameroon town of Mora in December 2020, where she was chosen as co-director of her delegation.

“This meeting of women allowed me to put into practice these skills that I received in the literacy class,” Habiba said. “I was surprised when I made a record of the women attending before we started. They just had to pronounce their name correctly, and I could write it.

“In addition, at camp I made the phone call every morning and evening to make sure everyone was there.

“Truly I give thanks to God and I thank the Bible Society and our teachers. Today, in addition to my physical appearance, I feel good everywhere I go. I fit in without the slightest difficulty and with a certain confidence.”

Life has opened for Habiba. As she devoted herself to learning her mother tongue, she found herself reading and writing some French as well. Her husband is proud of her because she has become more attached to the word of God and to the works of the church. As well as this, since her little sister did not have the opportunity to go to school, Habiba is now seeing that she learns her mother tongue, with all her children as well.

The importance of being literate in the mother tongue was understood by Habiba and she’s sharing this wonderful opportunity.



## PRAYER FOR CAMEROON: FROM THE BIBLE SOCIETY IN CAMEROON

Dear God,

We pray for the end of wars, for security, and for harmonious living together.

We pray for the areas of conflict in the north of our country, Cameroon. We pray for the villages in the far north who have been targeted by Boko Haram, and continue to face attacks. Please bring peace to these areas, and protect both those who have fled the villages and those who have nowhere else to go.

We pray for the English-speaking areas of our country, who continue to suffer from secessionist violence.

We pray for the socio-political climate and our economy, as they are affected by these crises.

Lord God, please restore peace completely to our country, so that life may resume fearlessly.

We pray for a good social and economic climate to favour the smooth running of our

Bible Society programs, including the literacy project and the Esther Program.

We continue to pray for the literacy classes, that they would run smoothly. Lord God, please give the language committees good collaboration as they work together.

We pray for the Esther Program, which is reaching out and caring for young girls and women who have experienced sexual assault. We pray that the project would have an ongoing impact in the lives of the participants. We pray also that the Esther Program may be extended to reach more young women in need of help and support.

Finally, we pray that you would give success to the activities being prepared in other programs, such as the children's camp, a part of the trauma healing program.

Father God, we pray together for the end of wars, for security, and for harmonious living together.

**In Jesus' name, Amen.**



# Iraq

The need is great,  
as are the risks

**I**raq has faced ongoing conflict, violence, civil unrest and instability for decades. Violence against Christians rose after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and the ensuing war displaced many of the remaining Christian community from their homes. As of 2020, 9.2 million Iraqis were internally displaced or refugees abroad. The refugee crisis has impacted both Iraqis who fled and the communities that they left behind.

*This is the context in which Bible Society Iraq is ministering to refugees and displaced people, supplying relief packages and Scriptures, offering God's hope and love.*

Ayman\* is an Iraqi who became a follower of Christ three years ago when he received a Bible from the Bible Society in Iraq.

Ayman and his family were followed up by a house church and he volunteered to work with the local Bible Society in the distribution of Bibles and food packages.

He was very active as he knew from his own experience the need of people to learn about Jesus.

In this difficult COVID-19 pandemic with health, economic and security issues, Ayman insisted on continuing his distribution of Bibles and food because of growing needs. The Bible Society in Iraq provided volunteers with masks, gloves and hygiene items.

Recently, the pandemic situation in Iraq worsened as the government was unable to control people and to provide them with the necessary medical equipment. Despite the precautions he took, Ayman became infected while visiting another city on a mission.

His condition worsened very quickly and he couldn't be admitted to any hospital because they all were overloaded.

We prayed for him in Iraq, as well as in Lebanon and Jordan, but unfortunately, he passed away.

His wife, son and daughter are now in a difficult situation and need our support and prayers.

Bible Society Iraq will connect them with one of its Trauma Healing teams to help them.

\*Name changed for security reasons



## PRAYER FOR IRAQ: FOR THE BIBLE SOCIETY OF IRAQ

Heavenly Father, we pray that your people in Iraq may be strengthened in their faith, hold on to their trust in you, and find restoration and peace.

Lord God, thank you for the faithfulness of Iraqi Christians working with Bible Society to distribute relief packages and Scriptures to those who are in need and displaced.

We praise and thank you for Ayman, for bringing him to faith in you, and transforming his life. Thank you for his faithful service, and his passion to see others come to know Jesus. We thank you that he is with you, at peace in your presence.

We pray for Ayman's family, for his wife, son and daughter, as they grieve his loss. Please comfort them, Father God. Please make a way for Bible Society Iraq to support Ayman's

family, and provide for their needs as they grieve.

We pray that you would bless Bible Society Iraq's efforts to provide Trauma Healing for all they can reach. Equip them with your wisdom, guide them with your Spirit, and smooth the way for them as they seek to reach others with your hope and healing.

During these difficult times, where conflict, displacement and the threat of the global pandemic touch every person, we pray that you would bring your comfort, peace and hope to those who serve with Bible Society Iraq, and all those they seek to help.

**In Jesus' name, Amen.**

**Will you help those in crisis to anchor their hope in Jesus?**

**\$40**

Share hope through Scripture.

**\$52**

Provides a refugee family with food, practical essentials and Scripture.

**\$85**

Helps one person in a trauma healing class to rebuild their shattered life.

**PLEASE GIVE NOW**

Use the DONATION FORM on page 33, call 1300 BIBLES (1300 242 537) or visit [biblesociety.org.au/sow](http://biblesociety.org.au/sow)

# Bring *hope* for those living through *conflict*.

Together, we can help those in crisis to anchor their hope in Jesus. Please help provide practical aid, trauma support and access to the life-changing comfort of God's word.

[biblesociety.org.au/sow](https://biblesociety.org.au/sow)

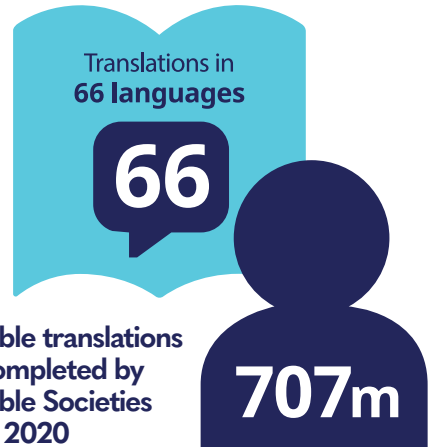




# 75 years & 1 Billion Bibles

**B**ible Society Australia is part of the United Bible Societies (UBS), who operate across 240 countries and territories worldwide. UBS was formed in 1946, in the wake of World War II, in response to the sentiment that “the deepest need of the human soul is for the positive – the great ‘yes’ to life. There is no book in the world other than the Bible which replies to that deepest longing.”

This year, to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UBS, we’re taking a look at how it has combined forces globally to spread God’s word across the earth.



used by **707 million people**

## 4000% Increase Languages with translated Scripture

The Bible Society movement has been active globally for about two centuries. In that time, the number of languages with Scripture translated has increased by over 4000 per cent, from just 82 at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 3,462 (May 2021). This growth is thanks to the work of Bible Societies and other translation agencies and churches.

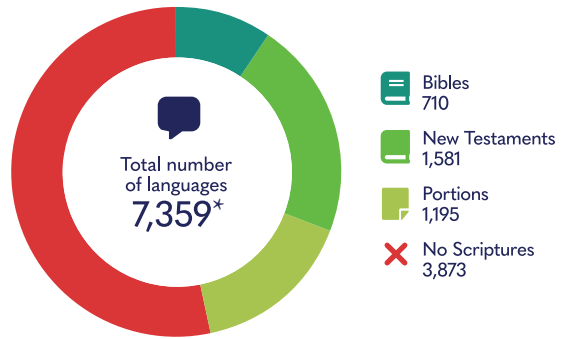
## 4 Billion People

Bible Societies around the world have provided Bible translations in languages spoken by about 4 billion people. In the five years from 2015-2019, for example, Bible Societies completed Scripture translations in 270 languages used by 1.7 billion people.

# 710

## Languages with a full Bible

The number of languages with a full Bible translation increased from 41 at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 710, and Bible Societies were responsible for helping complete more than 70 per cent of them. During the past 30 years alone, the number of full Bible translations has doubled (from 339 in 1990).



\*Includes 242 sign languages without recognised language codes.

2023

2028

2033

2038

**5 years**

200 projects

**10 years**

500 projects

**15 years**

880 projects

**20 years**

1,200 projects

# 1200

## New translations by 2038

United Bible Societies has a Bible Translation Roadmap goal - to complete 1,200 translations by 2038, which will make Scripture accessible to 600 million people.

# One Billion Bibles

## Distributed around the world

Throughout the 75 year history of UBS, more than one billion full Bibles have been distributed around the world. Since the first full year of collective UBS Bible distribution work in 1947, there has been a 20-fold increase in full Bibles distributed - from 1.5 million to 30 million in 2019. Between 2015-2019 alone, more than 184 million full Bibles were distributed globally through UBS.

# 24 Billion Scripture Items

More than 24 billion items of Scripture all together have been distributed. Since 1947, there has been a 400 per cent increase in New Testaments distributed (from 3.3 million, to 14.6 million) - and almost 30 times the number of smaller segments of Scripture (from 9 million, to 257.9 million).

# Bike for Bibles

## Pedals power millions for Scripture work



Since 1978, Bike for Bibles rides have raised more than \$13 million dollars.

The first rider was 17-year-old apprentice carpenter Geoff Deutscher, who took one week's holiday to cycle 400 kilometres from Ballarat to the small town of Underbool. He raised about \$1,300, and could not have known how his initial Bike for Bibles ride would engage so many people – and raise so much support for international Bible work.

During the past 43 years, people of all ages and personal circumstances have



joined Bike For Bibles (BFB) rides – including Geoff, who went on to raise another \$35,000 across four rides.

BFB rides have had a rider with multiple sclerosis and another recovering from leg surgery. There have been those in their seventies and one as young as five. Some have loved the speed while others have preferred to drive the food truck.

Recently, a BFB team rode 800 kilometres in New South Wales over six days, raising over \$40,000 for Bible Society Pakistan’s literacy project.

Keeping the purpose in mind helped rider Andrew Ricker weather everything – literally.

“There was one day in particular when it bucketed down with rain, and there was a crosswind, and we still had 30 kilometres to our destination...All I could think of during those 30 kilometres was how excited the young women in Pakistan would be when they received a Bible in their own language and learned to read God’s word for the first time,” said Ricker.

Fellow cyclist Sita Martin says she came away with a greater understanding of God’s presence in her life in all circumstances.

“It’s amazing what you can do day after day when you think you are physically and emotionally spent. I’m sure I was able to do what I did in God’s strength.”



# ADF Resources

## Opening The Bible to the frontline



Bible Society Australia has been privileged over many years to work with Australian Defence Force (ADF) Chaplains, supporting them with the ADF Scripture Grant. In the first half of 2021, Bible Society and ADF chaplains gave away 1,620 ADF CEV Full Bibles, 8,130 Army New Testaments, 880 RAAF New Testaments and 5,761 Navy New Testaments.

In May this year, Bible Society and the ADF together launched an exciting new book, designed to help people of the ADF Open The Bible: a new tri-service devotional book. This book will become a companion to the upcoming new NIV tri-service full Bible.

The devotions were written by chaplains from the Army, Navy and Air Force, and introduce people to the God of the Bible. Readers are taken through the Bible and shown how it is a cohesive historical record





of God speaking to humankind, a God whose living word still speaks today.

Present at the launch were the Directors General Chaplaincy of Army, Airforce and a representative of DGCHAP Navy. Captain Luck spoke to the usefulness of this devotional and the main contributor and curator of the devotional, Chaplain Hayden Lea (RAAF) gave insight into the development and writing of the devotional.

At the launch, thanks were warmly expressed to Bible Society donors for their support and to staff for their work in putting the devotional together.

Just over 4,000 copies of the new ADF Tri-service devotionals have been given away already.

In August, Bible Society and the ADF also launched *My Story, My God: Reflections from Christians in the Australian Defence Community and their Families*.

The book consists of short testimonials from military and public service personnel of the Australian Defence Organisation, past and present. As Principle Chaplain Mark Willis says in the foreword, “Each story is unique and all are important to God, woven into the tapestry of the work that he does in the hearts and minds of people.”

Julie Jaensch and Phil McMaster on behalf of the Forum of Christian Military Ministries write in the book’s welcome message, “Wherever you are on your faith journey, we pray that you will find the stories in this book an encouragement and comfort, growing your faith and love for our Saviour Jesus Christ as you read them.”



**Watch now**  
*Supporter stories*

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Watch these interviews with Bible Society supporters from across Australia. Hear their personal stories and find out why Opening The Bible to all people everywhere is so important to them.

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# Faith Stories

This unforgettable tale of an impossible prayer is part of an Eternity series of testimonies compiled by Naomi Reed.



I grew up in Kalimpong, North India. My parents were both very much against Christianity and I never heard about God. They quarrelled a lot and there was violence in our house when I was a child.

When I was in Grade 2, my dad left. He said he was going on a trip, but he never came back and we never saw him again.

After that, my mum lost it. She began to drink and smoke. She ended up in wrong relationships. I never knew where she was, or if she was coming back. I was an only child and I was completely alone.

*Eternity*

My neighbour sometimes let me into her house and sometimes they put me in a hostel. I didn't know what was happening and I felt no hope at all.

When I was 12, my mum suddenly came home. I hadn't seen her in weeks. This time, she brought three friends who I'd never seen before. It was getting late, so I told my mum I was going to bed. She hugged me goodnight. I went to sleep, but in the middle of the night, I woke up and my bed was shaking. I saw one of my mum's friends stab my mum. I screamed and they pushed me and then ran away.

My mum was still breathing. I went outside for help. It was 2am in the morning. Nobody would come. I went to my uncle's place, who lived some distance away. By the time we got back home, my mum was dead.

I didn't cry at all. I was so traumatised. I didn't even cry at the funeral. Afterwards, I went to live with some relatives. I hardly ever laughed or smiled. I felt so lost. I had big questions in my heart. Why is it like this for me? Why has this happened to my parents?

When I was 16, I went to stay with another uncle. His wife was a believer. She asked me if I wanted to come to church with her. I said, "Yeah, why not?"

I really liked it. Everyone was so welcoming and nice to me. It was the first time in my life anyone had been nice to me. So I went back. I wanted to know if God was really real. That Sunday, the people in church were praying. I didn't know how to pray, so I prayed a strange prayer. I said, "God if you're real, please give me back my family."

I knew it was an impossible prayer, but I

prayed it anyway. I was really craving love and a family.

A few weeks later, there was a couple in church, sitting by themselves, praying. They didn't know my story. But while they were praying, God said to them, "That girl over there... you have to make her your daughter."

They were shocked. They asked people about me. They found out my story and they felt amazed. They called me over to them and told me what God had said. Then they said, "We want to make you our daughter."

They really loved me! They disciplined me. And I slowly opened up to the word of God. I realized that God was real and he cared about me. He had bestowed on me 'a crown of beauty instead of ashes.' (Isaiah 61:3) I completely gave my life to Jesus and everything was different.

Later, I saw God's timing. After my mother was killed, the police were never able to catch the person who killed her. But five years later, the police finally caught the person and I had to go to court and face them. I didn't want to go, or forgive them. But I prayed about it and I felt God say to me that it was important. On the day, I took a key chain with the words of Isaiah 41:10: "Fear not, for I am with you."

I stood in the court and I held the key chain so tightly! I was shaking, but in the end, I let go. I said to God, "I forgive them. Whatever they have done, I forgive them." It was like a breakthrough, from my heart, I was completely free. God was so gracious to me. Healing takes time but I want to tell everyone... there is hope when you trust in Jesus!"

**READ MORE FAITH STORIES:**  
[ETERNITYNEWS.COM.AU/FAITH-STORIES](http://ETERNITYNEWS.COM.AU/FAITH-STORIES)

# Daily

## Hope

Nothing is so withering to the soul, so black and so despairing as lack of hope. Conversely, nothing gives such motivation, resilience and comfort as hope.

*Dr Nick Hawkes is a scientist, pastor, writer and broadcaster.*

### Day 1

*‘...we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Romans 5:3b-5).*

When God came to us as Jesus on that first Christmas, hope was born... and that hope changed everything. When that happened, we knew that we were loved, forgiven, commissioned and sealed for eternity.

Our hope springs from the fact that Jesus came to pay the price for our sins. If we accept what Jesus has done, and ask him to be the leader of our lives, our future hope in eternity is assured (Romans 8:24). This has depowered the finality of death, and stopped suffering from having the ultimate say in our lives. We can now sit above it with a heavenly perspective and allow suffering to refine our character.

The Christian French philosopher Gabriel Marcel said, “Hope is for the soul what breathing is to the body.” Breathe in your hope.

### Day 2

*‘Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3).*

Is your hope about to die? If so, I invite you to whisper this truth to your heart and stir it to life. The apostle Peter describes Christians as those who have a ‘living hope.’ He uses this phrase to make it clear that we don’t just hope in a theory, we hope in someone who has been resurrected back to life, i.e. who is living. This gives us the assurance that if we align ourselves with Christ, we too will be resurrected with Christ (1 Peter 1:3).

This results in a quality of hope that is strong enough to form a solid foundation for faith (Titus 1:2). Hope is more than just wishing for luck. Christian hope is based on truth; it is a living hope... and that’s what makes it so powerful.

# Bible

## Day 3

*But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet (1 Thessalonians 5:8).*

The apostle Paul reminds us that our hope is something we need to consciously 'put on' to protect ourselves from the attacks of Satan. He speaks of us 'putting on ... the hope of salvation as a helmet' (1 Thessalonians 5:8). By reading Scripture each day and communing with God in silence and with words... we put on hope.

And here's the bonus: If we hold on to our courage and hope, we can positively know that we belong to Jesus (Hebrews 3:6)

## Day 4

*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).*

God's Holy Spirit pours hope into us. So welcome it.

The apostle Paul was passionate that

Christians should 'know the hope' (Ephesians 1:18) that was theirs. He says that he does not want them to be ignorant and 'grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope' (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

When you have a hope that is strong enough to put your faith in, you have true biblical hope. And when you have true biblical hope, you have an anchor for your soul in uncertain times (Hebrews 6:19).

## Day 5

*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful (Hebrews 10:23).*

Hope changes things. Paul speaks of both faith and love coming alive in us as a result of hope (Colossians 1:3-5). He also speaks of hope giving us endurance (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

Hope does this because it enables us to have one foot in this world and another in God's future kingdom. It therefore enables Christians to live a little of God's future kingdom now. As such, hope is the air we breathe and the language we speak.

**READ MORE DAILY BIBLE AT [BIBLE.COM.AU](http://BIBLE.COM.AU)**

# Become a lightkeeper today

The Lighthouse is a community of generous believers who are committed to letting the light of God's word shine - Lightkeepers who know the Bible has the potential to transform the lives of people across the world.

[biblesociety.org.au/sowlight](http://biblesociety.org.au/sowlight)



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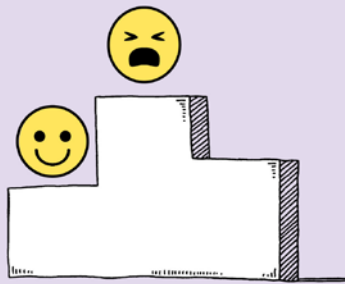
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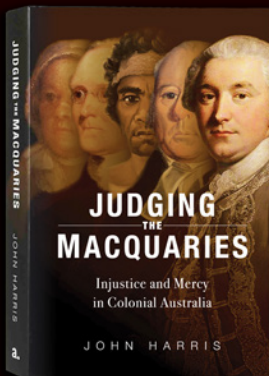
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