



GOD'S WORD WHERE NEEDED MOST

Record

WINTER 2015

EVERY TRIBE EVERY NATION

ACCELERATING BIBLE
TRANSLATION AROUND
THE WORLD

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BUILDING A CITY
OF GOD THROUGH
SCRIPTURE
ENGAGEMENT

Page 10

Gift Catalog Inside



AMERICAN
BIBLE
SOCIETY

Reminders of God’s Faithfulness



Dear friend,

Every year at Christmas, I look forward to one special tradition: reading the Christmas story—for years to our children, now to our grandchildren. Each year with the reading, we open the first gift under the tree and put baby Jesus into the empty Crèche. From the shepherds watching their flocks by night to the Magi traveling across kingdoms to worship baby Jesus, I never fail to be amazed that Christ came *here* to live among *us*.

It is a time when I am especially thankful for the Bible, because I remember again how God continually uses his Word to encourage me and draw me closer to Him. But this season also challenges me to reflect on how I have seen God’s Word touch the lives of others throughout the year.

One highlight for me came in September when my wife, Rita, and I had the opportunity to present Pope Francis with a large print Gospel of Mark in Italian. Our visit to the Vatican coincided with a message from the Pope about the importance of the elderly in society. After the message, Rita and I were able to join Pope Francis in distributing 100,000 of these Scripture Portions provided by generous financial partners to seniors in St. Peter’s Square. I was encouraged by the message that this communicated to the 1.2 billion Catholics around the world—that Bible engagement is important and essential for all in the faith. As we shared God’s Word with the crowds, we saw the joy of Scripture begin to take root in the lives of the people who received the Gospel message.

I’m encouraged by the tremendous progress toward

opening 100 percent of the world’s languages to Bible engagement. Momentum has continued to build to accelerate Bible translation, which you can read more about in the cover story of this issue. With the prayers and support of financial and ministry partners, we’ve been able to see God’s Word reach people in their heart languages for the very first time.


Finally, I feel awe in the work God is doing to reach people in cities across our nation. As people in our country continue to move into urban centers, I know God has a special plan to reach these places with His Word.

All of this work is made possible through the faithful prayers and support of partners like you. I would like to thank you for sharing the story of Jesus through the pages of Scripture. I also invite you to peruse our Christmas catalog to see if there is a project that touches your heart in a special way this season—whether your passion is for military veterans at home or orphans across the world.

So in the midst of the holiday, I give thanks. I rejoice in the work that God is doing in our country and throughout the world by the power of His Word. And I rejoice that this is done through partnership with you. May God bless you and your loved ones this Christmas.

Serving Together,

Roy



President & CEO, American Bible Society



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The mission of American Bible Society is to make the Bible available to every person in a language and format each can understand and afford, so all people may experience its life-changing message. American Bible Society is a member of the United Bible Societies, a partnership of the Bible Societies throughout the world cooperating to make Scriptures available to people everywhere in their own language.

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Meeting Jesus in My Heart Language

By Becky Silva



Becky Silva attended the distribution of the Bible in a local language in Mexico.

My Bible has been available in English for more than 400 years. And I’ll be honest. I take it for granted. But I recently realized what a blessing my Bible is when I visited Mexico to see people receive a Bible in their language for the first time.

Now when you think of communicating in Mexico, you may imagine saying something in Spanish. However, 14.9 percent of the country’s population is indigenous, and Mexico recognizes 68 different Mexican indigenous languages. Each ethnic group has its own culture, religious practices and language. If people in these indigenous ethnic groups speak Spanish, it is usually their second language.

American Bible Society partnered with the Bible Society of Mexico and the Korean Bible Society to fund an adult New Testament translation and a translation of the Gospel of Luke for children into one of these languages. I flew to Mexico to document the ceremony and distribution of these New Testaments. It was incredible to be a part of this event. I climbed to the top of a roof to capture images as 4,000 New Testaments were passed out to the community.

I was able to interview some of the recipients of these Bibles. We needed two translators on hand. One was there to translate the local language into Spanish, and the other was there to translate Spanish into English. An older woman, teary eyed, thanked me profusely for her copy of the Bible. Another woman told me that she had read the Bible in Spanish, but when she saw the Scripture in her heart language, Jesus became real to her.

I was overwhelmingly touched. What if we lived in a world where people could see Jesus clearly because the Bible was written in their heart language? People would be changed, and it would transform the world.



God’s Word for MILITARY WIVES

Throughout the United States, there are millions of active duty military spouses. These dedicated individuals, many of whom are young, have to adjust to the hardship of a nomadic lifestyle that involves frequent change and long absences from loved ones. That’s why American Bible Society’s Armed Services Ministry team is creating a Bible devotional designed specifically for military wives. The devotional, “The Journey of a Military Wife: God’s Truth for Every Step” uses the analogy of a pilgrimage to share how faith is a journey, and God is with us at every step.

“A military wife can certainly relate to viewing life as a journey,” explains Brenda Pace, au-

thor of the devotional. “Her life can be an adventure into the unknown, but God is there each step of the way. The devotions and Bible studies found in this journey are written to encourage her to evaluate and grow in her walk with Christ.” The series is scheduled to launch in the next year.

For more information about American Bible Society’s Armed Services Ministry, visit ArmedServicesMinistry.com.

Bible Blog Shares INSPIRATION ONLINE

Sometimes it’s hard to figure out how the Bible is present in the daily routines of life. But with American Bible Society’s new Bible blog, online audiences can read regular posts that encourage, inspire and inform—all with Scripture. From learning what the Bible says about Mary Magdalene to reading Bible verses that remind us to give thanks, the posts provide thousands of readers with insights into how Scripture applies to life and culture.

“Our goal for the Bible blog is to deliver content that gives our readers practical information that points toward Scripture,” says Web Manager Jeremy Gimbel.

To visit the Bible blog and to subscribe to regular updates, visit Abs.us/bibleblog.



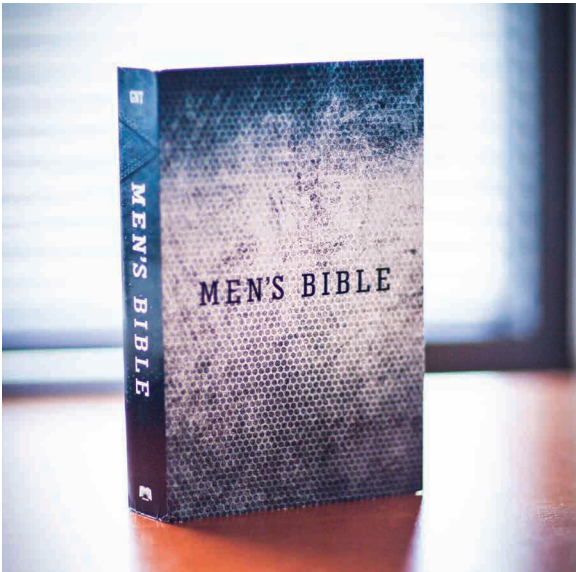
ABC Documentary Features BIBLE-BASED TRAUMA HEALING

Around the world 1 in 7 people suffer the trauma of war, abuse and natural disaster. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the number is even higher. The new documentary *Hope Rising: Stories of Trauma and Healing*, which will air on local ABC stations throughout the country, tells the stories of people in the DRC who have experienced hope and healing through God’s Word after trauma. The documentary highlights the transforming power of God’s Word in the lives of women, children and youth who have survived trauma.

“This documentary uses the voices of survivors to inform and educate people about the reality of trauma,” says Jane Wathome, director of American Bible Society’s Restoration Ministry. “It challenges us to do our part to bring Scriptures to the millions of people separated from God by trauma.”



To watch a trailer and request that your local station show the full documentary, visit HopeRising.tv.



New Men’s Bible REACHES MINISTRY LEADERS

American Bible Society recently launched a new Bible with resources designed specifically for men. *The Men’s Bible*, which was developed in partnership with the National Coalition of Ministry to Men (NCMM), will launch at NCMM’s annual Reload Leadership Summit in November and will be available on Bibles.com and Christian bookstores everywhere. The Bible features 72 devotionals for men on topics such as purpose, priorities and relationships. “One of the things that I like about this Bible is that you have 60 or so Christian leaders, people who’ve spent their lives mentoring men, pouring wisdom into the pages of the devotionals they’ve written for this Bible,” says Leary Gates, NCMM board president.

To learn more about the Men’s Bible, visit TheMensBible.com.

Bible Summit Provides TRAINING FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Approximately 500 participants attended the annual Northeast Regional Bible Summit held in New York City in June. Prominent scholars in the field of biblical studies presented at the event, which provides scholarly biblical education for Catholic leadership. American Bible Society co-sponsored the event with the Archdiocese of New York. The keynote speakers were the Rev. Anothony Ciorra and Dr. Nuria Calduch-Benages from the Gregorian University of Rome.

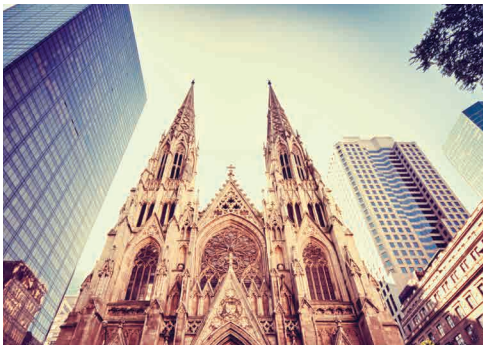


Photo credits: Benjamin Leaman, Thinkstock.com, iStockPhoto.com and courtesy of Hope Rising.

Helping Persecuted Christians in IRAQ

Thousands of Iraqi Christians have been driven out of their homes by the Islamic State, formerly known as ISIS. Most have fled with little more than the clothes on their backs. Many have taken refuge in Kurdistan to the north, a relatively peaceful and autonomous region of Iraq. The sheer number of refugees, however, is taxing the Kurdistan government, which is saying it may not be able to provide for their needs.

“These people are deeply traumatized and have already lost everything,” reports the team at Bible Society of Iraq. “We must help provide them with the practical and spiritual support they need.”

Bible Society of Iraq, which has been helping the persecuted Christian community in Iraq for years, is responding with packages of food, hygiene items and Scriptures.

To read more about the state of Iraqi Christians, visit Abs.us/iraq.

Youth in BANGLADESH Become Witnesses to Christ

Many Christian youth in Bangladesh are poor, and few own a Bible. To give them a firm foundation in Christ, Bangladesh Bible Society (BBS) and local partners organized 30, one-day Bible seminars in various churches



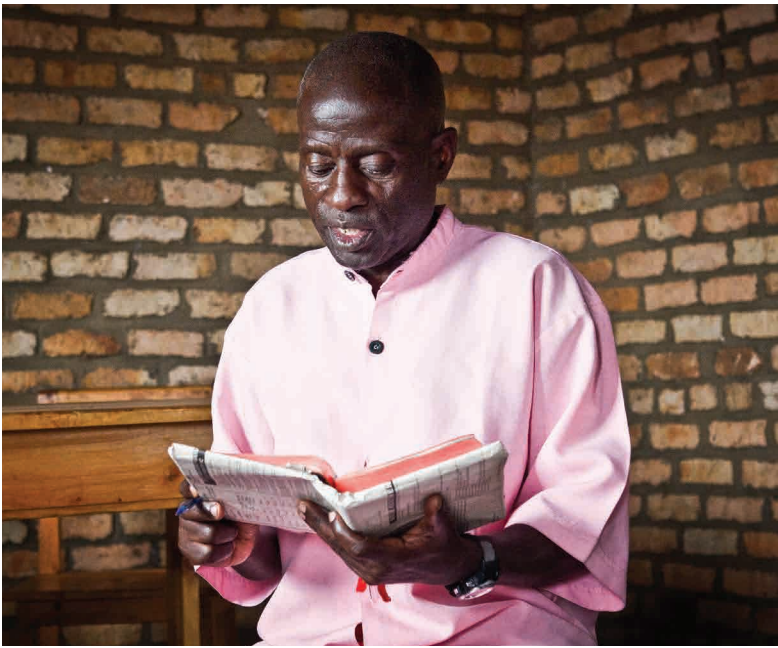
of different denominations, including Roman Catholic, Assemblies of God and Baptist. The goal was to equip children to become living messengers of God’s Word. Through this project, BBS successfully reached 10,000 children so they can become effective witnesses to Christ.

Sowing Seeds of Faith In THE HOLY LAND

Over the last two decades, the number of Christians in Israel has grown, accounting for 2 percent of the population. Arab Christians, in particular, need Scriptures to continue to grow in their faith. To meet this growing need, Bible Society in Israel (BSI) distributed Scripture Portions to nearly 75,000 people through outreach events. Free Hebrew and Arabic Scriptures and Scripture Portions also were given to Christians and others interested in learning about Jesus and the Christian faith.



Photo credits: Chris Leaman and courtesy of the Bible Societies of Iraq, Bangladesh, Israel, Rwanda and Bolivia.



God's Word Proclaims Hope to the People of RWANDA

Rwandans are still coping with the tragic genocide in 1994 that claimed 800,000 lives in just 100 days. To help them heal, Bible Society of Rwanda (BSR) is providing Scripture through the Faith Comes By Hearing program. Listening groups gather weekly to hear God’s Word and to discuss the Bible.

In addition to targeting existing listening groups, BSR introduced Faith Comes By Hearing to prisoners, as well as congregations from the Catholic Church. BSR has been reaching communities with God’s Word for the past seven years and now has more than 2,000 listening groups accessing the power and love of God through his Word.

Bringing the Bible to Abandoned Children in BOLIVIA

Bolivia is one of the poorest and least-developed countries in South America. Many children live on the streets and experience homelessness, malnutrition, lack of education, physical and sexual abuse, and prostitution.

To offer holistic intervention, Bolivian Bible Society has partnered with social service organizations that give children shelter, food, health care and basic education. BBS provides age-appropriate Bibles and materials so children can know God’s love. Through this project, nearly 8,000 children have experienced the hope and power of Scripture.

To read more stories about how the Bible is changing lives around the world, visit Abs.us/news.



At-Risk Youth in PANAMA Receive Scriptures

Panama is a young country, with more than 28 percent of the population ages 14 or younger. Unfortunately, many children and youth living in the crime-ridden cities fall prey to violence, substance abuse and promiscuity.

To address this problem, Bible Society of Panama is working with strategic partners and local churches to reach at-risk children and youth. Through workshops, mentoring, support and activities, Bible Society of Panama is teaching kids biblical and moral values. Through this project, these children and youth are gaining hope and finding alternatives to crime and violence.



Photo credits: Maria Wolf.



Left: This full-page miniature depicts the adoration of the Magi and the miracles of the virgin Mary in Ge'ez. The manuscript was copied by the scribe Wäldä Maryam, Ethiopia, in the late 19th century. Above: These Chinese manuscripts in Hebrew date from the 17th Century.

CELEBRATING GOD'S WORD AROUND THE WORLD

BIBLE EXHIBIT CAPTURES THE POWER OF SCRIPTURE TO REACH THE WORLD AND BEYOND. BY MARIA WOLF

Verbum Domini II: God's Word Goes Out to the World is a remarkable Bible exhibit that testifies to the power of Scripture and people's thirst for the Word of God.

Launched at Vatican City in early April, the exhibit showcased more than 200 sacred artifacts from the Green family's private collection. It traced

the Bible's worldwide journey, which started in Greece and went to Northeast Africa, China, the British Isles, North America and, finally, the moon.

It also showed the sacrifices people made—some with their lives—to bring the message of Jesus to others.

In an interview just before the opening, Steve Green—who heads Bible exhibits on the Green family's behalf—talked about his love for God's

Word, which was a gift he received from his parents, David and Barbara.

These devout Christians showed Steve and his brother Mart the importance of engaging with Scripture and living its message. Steve remembers going to Christian camps, which were “strong faith builders” in his life. The camps, in addition to the example his parents set for both children, laid the foundation for Steve's love of the Bible

Photo credit: Maria Wolf.

from his earliest days.

That love for God's Word has, in turn, fueled his passion—and that of the entire family—for collecting sacred artifacts. At last count, the Green family had accrued more than 40,000 artifacts in their private collection, an impressive feat given that they bought the first piece about five years ago.

EXPERIENCING THE EXHIBIT

Impressive is one word to describe Verbum Domini II exhibit, which was sponsored, in part, by American Bible Society. Compelling and inspiring are two others. A globe at the entrance of the exhibit spins, and recordings of Gregorian chants immediately signal the sacred walk visitors will take.

Gallery after gallery in Verbum Domini II showcased artifacts from different parts of the world, capturing

people's devotion to God's Word throughout the ages.

For example, one gallery contained sacred texts and artifacts from Northeast Africa. Here, an Ethiopian manuscript depicted the life of Mary. This manuscript, one of the plethora of Marian visual arts from the mid-15th century, demonstrated the Ethiopian Church's devotion to her.

A beautiful array of psalters, Bibles

percent.

The transition from violence to peace occurred because of the Bible, said a tribal chief. “We acted badly until they brought us God's carvings. Now we walk his trail.”

Aside from making its way into people's hearts, God's Word also made it to the moon. A 4-centimeter square of microfilm with 1,245 pages of the King James Bible was on display after having landed on the moon Feb. 5, 1971.

GOD'S WORD IS FOR ALL

In a private interview, Barbara Green talks about Verbum Domini II, the successor to Verbum Domini, which showcased the contributions of a variety of faith expressions to the Bible.

“We never thought our lives would take this direction,” says Barbara, referring to the family's extensive collection and Bible exhibits. “But the Lord has his plans, and we are just following his lead.”

David Green, CEO of the Oklahoma City-based Hobby Lobby, agrees that the family is simply following God's lead. He also emphasizes that the Bible is for everyone.

“We shouldn't put so much emphasis on the things that are different among us,” says David. “We cannot draw yellow lines around the Scriptures,” says David. “His Word is too important not to share.”

As Verbum Domini II showed, God's Word could not be contained to just one corner of the world. It traveled from one place to another, touching the hearts of those who came before us—and those who are to come after us.

Maria Wolf is a contributor to Record Magazine and has blogged at American Bible Society's news site: News.AmericanBible.org

BUILDING A CITY OF GOD

SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT TOOLS HELP COMMUNITIES
REVITALIZE THEIR CITIES.

By Maria Wolf

Imagine a world where churches in cities across America engage Scripture with their congregations, who then go out into their communities to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and take care of the sick.

And imagine a world where this living out of Scripture transforms the city itself: crime rates drop, literacy

rates rise, domestic violence plummets, and children receive a quality education.

This is the anatomy of a Gospel movement. And it lies at the heart of American Bible Society's focus to transform cities through the life-changing message of the Word of God.

"Leaders catalyze gospel movements," says Dr. John Edgar Caterson, executive director, catalytic church partnerships. "Gospel movements change cities, and cities change culture."

"Corporate spiritual disciplines and Scripture engagement are the foundation for changing cities and changing culture," Dr. Caterson continues. "We believe that regularly engaging and living out the Bible's message can transform hearts and lives, renewing cities in the process."

EQUIPPING LEADERS

Scripture is the heart of American Bible Society. As such, we're customizing biblical resources for church leaders who minister to people in cities. An engagement component invites pastors to journey through the Word with their congregations so all are empowered to address issues of justice for the common good and welfare of the city.

Determining Scripture needs starts from a posture of listening and serving, says Chris Thyberg, director, city Scripture engagement. "Through the networks and partnerships we have, we begin a conversation and explore how to equip churches in cities so all can embody the Gospel."

"We collaborate with Christian leaders to address the needs and oppor-

tunities God has stirred in their hearts for the welfare of their city," continues Thyberg. "And we work hard to ensure that the resulting expressions of Scripture are owned by each city, will grow in that city each year and will spread to other cities."

One such customized resource is *Now Is the Time*—a Scripture engagement initiative begun four years ago through a collaboration of American Bible Society, the New York City Leadership Center and Concerts of Prayer Greater New York.

Now is the Time examines God's Word, his love for cities and his passion for justice. Four different versions of this print and digital resource have been created since 2011. Each year, *Now is the Time*, focuses on different books of the Bible, all with the goal of encouraging renewal in cities.

Now is the Time: Nehemiah, for example, explores the themes of restoration and revival found in the Book of Nehemiah. *Now is the Time: Acts* examines the Book of Acts and the need for Christians to serve the community in the name of Jesus Christ. With a youth and children's track, *Now is the Time: Acts* encourage Christians of all ages to serve the needs of the people in their communities—whether it be their classrooms, the playground or the soccer field.

Since the inception of *Now is the Time* four years ago, up to 240,000 participants in more than 2,000 churches have journeyed through *Now is the Time*.

"These numbers only show part of the picture," says Caterson. "The leaders who helped write *Now is the Time* are



Photo credit: Benjamin Leaman.

amazing. They work in small churches with 80 people to mega churches with 35,000 members, all of whom have journeyed through this interconfessional resource. That means Catholics and Protestants have taken this journey together, uniting all of us in the name of Christ for the welfare of cities.”

The next iteration of *Now is the Time* will focus on Luke’s Gospel and is slated to debut in October.

MAJOR MULTIPLIERS

American Bible Society serves Latino pastors, who minister to thriving communities in cities across the United States. However, research has shown that only 8 percent of the Hispanic community regularly engages with the Bible, says Rev. Emilio Reyes, executive director for church relations at American Bible Society.

“Studies also suggest that people

of the cloth aren’t interacting with the Scriptures,” continues Dr. Reyes. “They only do so when they’re preparing a sermon. Many Latino pastors are bivocational; they work outside the church and don’t have the time or the resources to learn how to engage their people with the life-changing message of the Bible. We’re hoping to change this reality with Descubre La Biblia.”

Descubre is a series of full-day seminars for inner city pastors who are equipped with information about American Bible Society’s Scripture engagement resources.

Church leaders are major multipliers, says Dr. Reyes. They reach their congregations with the message of God’s Word. And their congregations then go out and serve as the hands and feet of Christ in their communities.

Seminars have been held in cities around the country—from New York

to Miami to Chicago to Los Angeles. Last year alone, 32,555 people were impacted by Descubre seminars.

“At American Bible Society, we want to remove obstacles that prevent people from experiencing the life-changing message of the Bible,” says Dr. Reyes. “God is at work in major cities just by the mere fact that Christian leaders are uniting. We are part of the Gospel movement by providing the Scripture engagement component. What happens after that is work of the Holy Spirit.”

Maria Wolf is a contributor to Record Magazine and has blogged at American Bible Society’s news site: News.AmericanBible.org

You can help share God’s Word in our nation’s cities! Visit: ABSRecord.com/cityreach

RELATING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

BIBLE SOCIETY OF INDIA EXPANDS SCRIPTURE MISSION
BY MARIA WOLF



Rev. Dr. M. Mani Chacko is a man with style and substance.

As the general secretary of the Bible Society of India (BSI), Dr. Chacko brings a radically different approach to leadership: equality. “I practice community leadership,” he said in a recent visit with American Bible Society. “There is no high or low here. No one is better than another. We all have our assignments and tasks. All of us are leaders together.”

In a country defined by caste—what Dr. Chacko calls a “deeply rooted evil in our society”—his leadership style certainly raises an eyebrow or two. “I stand for what I believe in. We are all created equal in the eyes of God.”

This means Dr. Chacko has an open door to anyone who wants to see him. All 350 employees of BSI have access to him so they can share ideas, concerns and thoughts about the Bible Society’s work and mission.

Style intersects with substance in this man, an ordained clergy of the Church of South India. Dr. Chacko believes God loves all people—whether they’re Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Jewish. This openness to people of all faith communities sets him apart from many of his contemporaries.

“Who am I to condemn anyone

because they happen to be Hindu or Muslim?” he asks. “I am a Christian, and I am called to be like Christ. This translates into the values Jesus stood for: sacrificial love, peace, compassion, justice, making the world a better place. It’s not about condemning others.

“Anyone can give themselves a label and say they’re Christian,” Dr. Chacko continues, “but the question is ‘How do they live their lives?’ I want to show I am Christian by the life I live. I want to build a community of love at the Bible Society of India.”

This community of love, in Dr. Chacko’s view, necessitates expanding BSI’s mission, which traditionally has been Bible translation and distribution. Translation is still important, since 1,652 official languages exist in India. (This number doesn’t include tribal dialects.)

“But we can’t let our work stop there,” Dr. Chacko urges. “Times have changed. The world has changed. The mission of BSI will not be complete unless our work is holistic. To do that, Scripture engagement must become a vital part of what we do. What’s the point of translating the Bible into multiple languages unless people can engage with the Scriptures?”

This engagement requires BSI to think about the other, Dr. Chacko emphasizes.

The “other,” as he defines it, “may be an orphan, a sexually abused child,

a widow, a suffering woman,” he says. “The other is an extension of myself, whether rich or poor, sexually abused, high or low.” An array of projects, funded in part by American Bible Society, will help BSI reach the “other.” By engaging with sacred Scripture, these people will know the God of the Bible who loves, cares and offers hope.

Dr. Chacko shares the story of stopping at a red light in India, always an opportunity for beggars to rush the car, asking for money. One day, a young girl of about 12 or 13 was begging. She was pregnant—bereft, lonely and pathetic.

“I can’t get her out of my mind,” he says, as he talks about child sex trafficking, a problem in India. “We must relate the Word to the world,” he says. “Translation becomes complete when it touches a person’s heart and transforms them.

“She needs to know that God loves her,” Dr. Chacko continues, “that she is worthy of dignity, respect, love. And only by engaging with the Scriptures will she understand that.

“This is precisely why I’m here at the Bible Society of India.”

Maria Wolf is a contributor to Record Magazine and has blogged at American Bible Society news site: News.AmericanBible.org

You can help share God’s Word around the world! Visit: ABSRecord.com/translation

IN MEMORIAM

“I depend on God alone; I put my hope in him. He alone protects and saves me; he is my defender, and I shall never be defeated.” Psalm 62.5, 6 (GNT)

Friend and former board member of American Bible Society,
The Rev. Canon John Andrew
Remembered by friends and colleagues at American Bible Society

My father,
Arthur Falk
Given by Ruth Ann Henson

Herb Hanby
Given by Curtis R. Grant

Harvey S. Hawn
Given by Lieselotte K. Hawn

Matt Williams Jones
Given by Tammy J. Williams

My father,
Jere Lawrence Jr.
Given by Senter Crook

My mother,
Catherine Mcdonnell
Given by Michael Mcdonnell

Jeanne Miller
Given by Charles O. Miller

Billy Nantz
Given by Elizabeth Morgan

Samuel Courts Redford Jr.
Given by Jeanette Barnes

My parents,
George and Elizabeth Simpson
My brother and sisters,
James Alexander Simpson, Frances Simpson Schutte and Winona V. Simpson Ottenstroer
Given by the estate of Margaret Simpson

My aunt,
Lucile Wolter
Given by Mildred L. Daugherty

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Photo credit: Michael Gibeault.

Accelerating Bible Translation Today

TOGETHER WE'RE OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO BIBLE TRANSLATION.
IT NOW TAKES ONE-FIFTH THE TIME TO COMPLETE A NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATION.

BY JENNICA STEVENS



Théodore Yébovi makes his way to the Bible Society office each day through the winding, dusty streets of Lomé, Togo's capital city. The journey from his house on the outskirts of the city to the old, cement building in the center of town is 30 kilometers, which he

often traverses on the back of a motorcycle taxi.

When he arrives, he opens his computer and eases into his seat at a long wooden desk—Yébovi on one end and his colleague on the other, silent bookends translating the most precious story of all: the Bible.

This work of Bible translation is in high demand. More than 4,000 of the world's nearly 7,000 languages still do not have a complete Bible. Many of the approximately 2,000 translation projects under way continue through war, tsunamis, genocide and faulty equipment. Bible translation is perilous, even though the need for God's Word has never been greater.

Despite these obstacles, Bible translation has made significant progress over the last half century. It took an average of 15 years to complete the translation of the New Testament for projects started from 1981 to 1990. That average dropped to eight years for

Cover Story photo credits: Benjamin Leaman.

projects started from 2001 to 2005.

One of the greatest advances in Bible translation came in 2010 with the formation of the Every Tribe Every Nation alliance, a partnership of financial partners and Bible agencies, including American Bible Society, United Bible Societies, Wycliffe, Seed Company, Biblica and SIL. Together these agencies commit to overcoming obstacles in translation. Recently the Every Tribe Every Nation alliance began two New Testament translation projects on a three-year timeline—one-fifth the time it took the average New Testament translation just three decades ago.

The need for rapid acceleration in translation is something Yébovi has seen firsthand in his work translating the Old Testament into the Mina language. Although the Mina are one of the largest people groups in the country, Mina Christians still have to read the Bible in a trade language—either French or Ewe.

Without a Bible translation in their heart language, Christians have difficulty growing in their faith. In some rural Mina villages, less than 2 percent of people identify as Christian. Most practice traditional religions. Even among Christians, it is easy for leaders to take advantage of a congregation that doesn't know the Bible. And the Church itself won't flourish.

The urgency of this situation motivates Yébovi to press on in the work of Bible translation, using all the resources available to him—including new technologies.

The flagship digital tool of Every Tribe Every Nation is the Digital Bible Library (DBL), an online repository of completed and ongoing Bible translations around the world. As of October, the DBL has acquired 944 texts, from recent translations



Théodore Yébovi (left) and his colleague translate the Old Testament into Mina at the Bible Society of Togo office.

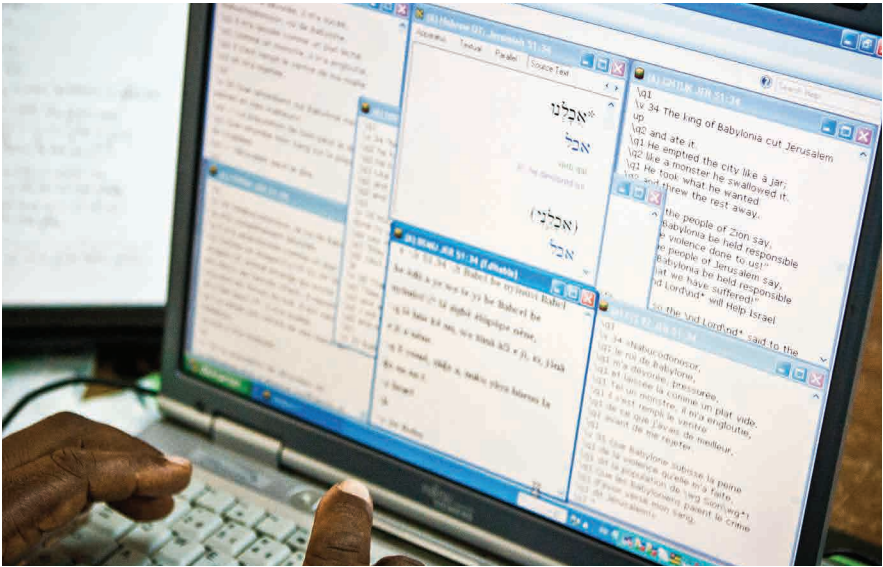
to digitized versions of older, print translations.

“When translators were using pencil and paper, the process would take 30 years,” explains Nick Garbidakis, the operations coordinator for the DBL and CIO/CTO of American Bible Society. “They faced wars, floods, fires, genocides, you name it. Without Internet access, 10 years of translation work would disappear when a tsunami struck. With today’s tools, we don’t have to repeat these issues. We have all the texts in a centralized,

secure place.”

It’s because of the DBL that translators like Yébovi know their work is safe. In the 10 years he has worked on the Mina translation, he has persevered through irregular power and spotty Internet access. But his biggest hurdle came when his laptop was stolen halfway through the translation project. All the files were lost, and he had to start translating again. From Genesis.

But now, every time Yébovi saves his progress, it’s backed up automatically. No thief will steal his work again.



ParaText allows translators to simultaneously reference the text in the original languages and modern translations.

Every Tribe Every Nation also increases the productivity of translators by training them to use translation tools such as ParaText, a computer program that includes commentaries, comparative translations and automatic back ups to the DBL. Before ParaText,

Yébovi explains, he would have 28 different Bibles, commentaries and reference books open on the table to ensure the accuracy of every verse he translated. Now he can easily access all these tools and more on his laptop.

In rural Zambia, two pilot Bible

Society translations of the New Testament in the Ila and Nsenga languages are experiencing the full benefits of new technology and coordination through Every Tribe Every Nation.

In addition to having access to tools such as ParaText, translators also can receive training from experts in Bible translation. Both projects, which began in 2012, are on track to be completed in 2015—two of the fastest Bible translations to date. “We’re accelerating translation by eliminating road blocks,” Garbidakis says.

But the benefits of Every Tribe Every Nation don’t stop once a translation is complete. Because texts are stored in the DBL, distributing God’s Word in the final Scripture translation becomes easier. Digital storage of Scripture makes it possible to reprint previous editions.

“Before the DBL, we had hundreds of texts that were only available in print and could not be reproduced,” Garbidakis explains. “We digitized these texts so that we can make them available to all the Bible Societies, and they can typeset them and prepare them for printing.”

The DBL also makes it possible to provide the Bible to people in electronic formats, such as the popular Youversion Bible app for mobile devices and Bible-Search website housed at Bibles.org. Before translations were collected in the DBL, Youversion representatives would spend precious time traveling around the world to access each different translation for distribution. Sometimes the files for these translations were saved on floppy discs, or the texts were only available in print, explains Garbidakis. It would often take months to get one text. Now any time a new translation is finished and permissions are granted, Youversion gets an electronic version,

and it's in the system in hours.

One Bible translation that recently launched in the Cook Islands was completely digital. Recipients waved their cell phones in the air as they downloaded the Bible onto their phones.

There is still much work to be done. Millions of people, representing thousands of language groups are still waiting to hear God's Word in their heart languages. But now these projects, including the 54 translation projects supported by American Bible Society, can continue at an accelerated pace.

And for Yébovi, the celebration can begin. The recently completed Mina translation is ready for publication and will soon bear spiritual fruit in his community. He has already

“When translators were using pencil and paper, the process would take 30 years, They faced wars, floods, fires, genocides, you name it. Without Internet access, 10 years of translation work would disappear when a tsunami struck.”

–Nick Garbidakis

planned literacy and evangelism programs, using the Mina Bible translation as a tool. And soon, thousands of Mina people in Togo will be able to read Scripture during church services, consult the Bible for guidance and listen for the voice of God speaking through his Word—all in the language that their mothers used to sing them lullabies.

“It’s a blessing and a grace to have the opportunity to really work for God,

and to translate His Words,” Yébovi says. “It is the best job a human being can do.”

Jennica Stevens is content manager of American Bible Society and managing editor of Record magazine.

You can help share God's Word around the world! Visit: ABSRecord.com/translation



QUIET TIME

“The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where soul and spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of the heart.” Hebrews 4.12 (GNT)

January 2015

God's Word:
God's Guiding Word

- 1 Psalm 1
- 2 Psalm 19
- 3 Mark 1.1-20
- 4 Mark 1.21-45
- 5 Mark 2.1-28

EPIPHANY

- 6 Psalm 72
- 7 Mark 3.1-19
- 8 Mark 3.20-35
- 9 Mark 4.1-20
- 10 Mark 4.21-41

- 11 Mark 5.1-20
- 12 Mark 5.21-43
- 13 Mark 6.1-29
- 14 Mark 6.30-56
- 15 Mark 7.1-23
- 16 Mark 7.24-37
- 17 Mark 8.1-26

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY BEGINS

- 18 Mark 8.27—9.1
- 19 Mark 9.2-32
- 20 Mark 9.33-50
- 21 Mark 10.1-31
- 22 Mark 10.32-52
- 23 Acts 8.4-25
- 24 Acts 8.26-40

- 25 Acts 9.1-25
- 26 Acts 9.26-43
- 27 Acts 10.1-33
- 28 Acts 10.34-48
- 29 Acts 11.1-30
- 30 Acts 12.1-25
- 31 Acts 15.1-35

February 2015

God's Word:
God's Loving Word

- 1 John 3.1-21
- 2 John 3.22-36
- 3 John 4.1-42
- 4 John 4.43-54
- 5 John 5.1-18
- 6 John 5.19-47
- 7 John 6.1-24

- 8 John 6.25-71
- 9 1 John 1.1-10
- 10 1 John 2.1-29
- 11 1 John 3.1-24
- 12 1 John 4.1-21
- 13 1 John 5.1-21
- 14 1 Corinthians 13.1-13

- 15 John 10.1-21
- 16 John 10.22-42
- 17 Psalm 23

ASH WEDNESDAY (WESTERN CHURCHES)

- 18 Psalm 51
- 19 Psalm 52
- 20 John 13.1-20
- 21 John 13.21-38

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

- 22 John 14.1-31

GREAT LENT (ORTHODOX)

- 23 John 15.1-17
- 24 Mark 12.13-27
- 25 Mark 12.28-34
- 26 Deuteronomy 6.1-25
- 27 Ephesians 3.1-21
- 28 Ephesians 4.1-32

March 2015

God's Word:
God's Prayerful Word

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

- 1 2 Chronicles 5.1-14
- 2 2 Chronicles 6.1-11
- 3 2 Chronicles 6.12-42
- 4 2 Chronicles 7.1-22
- 5 2 Chronicles 34.1-33

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

- 6 2 Chronicles 35.1-19
- 7 Ezra 8.1-23

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

- 8 Nehemiah 9.1-38
- 9 Daniel 9.1-19
- 10 1 Samuel 1.1-28
- 11 1 Samuel 2.1-11
- 12 Psalm 4
- 13 Psalm 5
- 14 Psalm 11

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

- 15 Psalm 12
- 16 Psalm 13
- 17 Psalm 30
- 18 Psalm 31
- 19 Psalm 32
- 20 Psalm 33
- 21 Psalm 34

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

- 22 Hebrews 1.1-14
- 23 Hebrews 2.1-18
- 24 Hebrews 3.1-19
- 25 John 11.1-16
- 26 John 11.17-44
- 27 John 11.45-57
- 28 John 12.1-11

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY (WESTERN CHURCHES)

- 29 John 12.12-26
- 30 John 12.27-50
- 31 John 17.1-26

April 2015

God's Word:
God's Hopeful Word

- 1 John 18.1-24

MAUNDY THURSDAY (WESTERN CHURCHES)

- 2 John 18.25-40

GOOD FRIDAY (WESTERN CHURCHES)

- 3 John 19.1-30
- 4 John 19.31-42

EASTER SUNDAY (WESTERN CHURCHES)

- 5 John 20.1-18
- 6 John 20.19-31
- 7 John 21.1-25
- 8 Colossians 1.1-23
- 9 Colossians 1.24—2.19
- 10 Colossians 2.20—3.17
- 11 Colossians 4.2-18

PASCHA (ORTHODOX EASTER)

- 12 1 Peter 1.1-25
- 13 1 Peter 2.1-25
- 14 1 Peter 3.1-22
- 15 1 Peter 4.1-19
- 16 1 Peter 5.1-14
- 17 2 Peter 1.1-21
- 18 2 Peter 2.1-22

- 19 2 Peter 3.1-18
- 20 Jude 1-25
- 21 Revelation 5.1-14
- 22 Revelation 21.1-27
- 23 Revelation 22.1-21
- 24 Romans 1.1-17
- 25 Romans 3.19-31

- 26 Romans 4.1-25
- 27 Romans 5.1-21
- 28 Romans 6.1-23
- 29 Romans 7.1-25
- 30 Romans 15.1-13

PRAY AROUND THE WORLD

Bible Societies around the world are helping to spread God’s message of hope and love with those who need it most. Here are prayer requests from a select group of Bible Societies that ask you to lift them up in prayer.



BOLIVIA

Please pray for the Bolivian population. Most people earn less than \$180 per month. Pray also for the completion of the Quechua Bible and that the Word of God will reach special groups, such as victimized women, abandoned children, the elderly, those affected by HIV, and sexual abuse victims.



EAST CARIBBEAN

Please pray that local funding will continue to increase in response to the Gallery of Students’ Heroes flagship project. Pray also that there will be a successful reactivation of the regional volunteers program, the mobilization of the Jacob Joseph Legacy Foundation to raise resources from churches, state and private sectors, developmental agencies and individuals. And ask for an increase in full-time staff, enabling the Bible Society to achieve commercial viability and become self-financing.



LEBANON

Thank the Lord for the fruitful work of the Bible Society of Lebanon in providing assistance to thousands of Syrian refugee families, as well as for the projects *Bible World* and *Books for Life*. Please pray for the development of three projects: Peace and Justice Bible, Western Armenian Study Bible and the One Year Bible. Pray also for political stability in the country.



SRI LANKA

Please say a special prayer for the Bible translation projects into sign language. May the Word of God teach the hard of hearing or those who cannot speak to praise the Lord. A glossary of biblical terms in sign language with Christian music videos in Sinhalese and Tamil is being prepared. Praise God for this project. Pray also for the campaign that will encourage churches to plant a tree and then donate the cash value of the corresponding wood to the local Bible Society.



THAILAND

The number of believers in Thailand has never reached 1 percent of the population. The Thai Bible Society has translated the Bible into Thai and other minority languages, such as Shan, Pwo Karen, Mien, Lahu and Ahka. Praise God for this. Please pray for more opportunities to distribute the Holy Bible through secular bookstores in Thailand.



TOGO

Thank God for his constant support of the Bible Society of Togo’s work. Praise the Lord for the completion of Bible translations into Bassar, Mina and Ewe. Please pray for the ministry with children, teenagers, the military and women, as well as for the impact of the Faith Comes By Hearing project in French.

HEALING BROKEN LIVES THROUGH SCRIPTURE

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY PARTNERS PROVIDE JOHN’S GOSPEL TO INMATES. *BY LISA GOETZ*

For more than 25 years, Lucille Sapp shared God’s Word with female inmates in the Douglas County Correctional Center in Omaha, Neb. As a member of the Gideons Auxiliary, she would travel 60 miles round trip several times a month to deliver copies of the New Testament, offer Bible study, sing songs and pray with the women.

“We also had them write prayers in a book that we could take home

include English and Spanish versions, also feature four pages written by prisoners, discussing the key messages in John’s Gospel and a sinner’s prayer.

“For a person who has never read Scripture, the Book of John is a good one to introduce them to the Lord and get them started,” Lucille says. “The other books can be more difficult to understand, especially the Old Testament.”



Bill and Lucille Sapp are passionate about sharing God’s Word in the U.S. prison system.

“It is beyond my imagination what can really happen. Sometimes just one page can turn a life around,”

– Lucille Sapp

and pray for them during the week,” Lucille says. “It was just heartbreaking to hear their prayers. Many were good girls who just went astray and got into trouble. So many of them found the Lord in jail and prayed to straighten out their lives when they got out.”

Although she had to discontinue her trips to the jail because of the physical demands of the visits, Lucille and her husband Bill continue their prison ministry work through donations to American Bible Society. They have funded a massive Bible portion project that involves a key jail ministry partner, American Rehabilitation Ministry (ARM), in Joplin, Mo.

Through their donation, 1 million copies of the Gospel of St. John will be distributed via ARM to 3,500 U.S. prisons. The Scripture Portions, which

The Sapps see this as a way to share the blessings God has given them. Bill, the son of sharecroppers, and three of his brothers opened their first truck stop. Today, Sapp Bros. operates 16 travel centers from Pennsylvania to Utah and is the largest petroleum marketer and propane distributor in Nebraska. Lucille and Bill credit family and faith for putting them in the position to give back to society in a meaningful, Christ-centered way. Through their generosity, they have seen firsthand the ability of God’s Word to heal hearts and rebuild lives.

God’s blessing poured forth on the Sapps’ stewardship of the project. Just one week after funding half of the venture’s cost, the Lord blessed them with extra, unexpected resources that allowed them to finance the entire

program. In addition to supplying the Scriptures, they have now financed all costs for postage and shipping to transport God’s Word to thousands of prisoners around the country.

Thanks to the Sapps’ gift to American Bible Society, potentially 1 million of the 2.3 million inmates in the United States will encounter God’s healing Word. Lucille finds the opportunity to touch so many broken hearts with Scripture “overwhelming.”

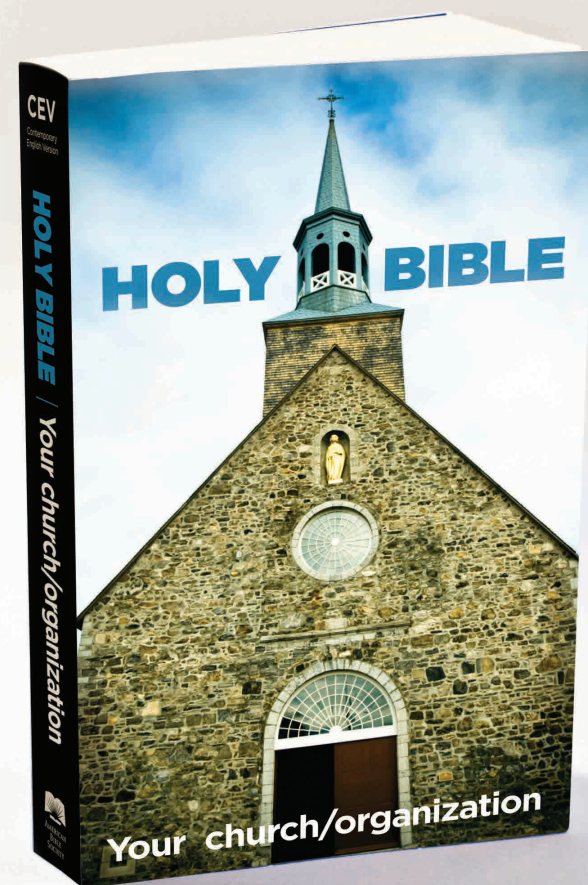
Lisa Goetz is a contributor to Record Magazine.

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Photo contributed by Lucille Sapp

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The Gift That Keeps Giving



Don Horton (left) with his son, Larry. Through giving charitable gift annuities to American Bible Society, Don provides sustainable, lifelong income for himself and his son.

“It’s an eternal investment that pays me a good income for life and then lives on — supporting God’s kingdom into the future.” – Don Horton

Don Horton has a knack for business. And to him, contributing to American Bible Society through charitable gift annuities just makes good business sense.

Don believes in the importance of hard work, family and responsible stewardship. After serving in the military during the Korean War, he returned home and eventually started a carpet cleaning business. When he retired, he sold the business to his son, Larry.

Now, Don continues to receive safe, dependable income through the charitable gift annuities he has given to American Bible Society. He even uses some of that income to take out additional charitable gift annuities for his son, Larry, who will be able to use the income throughout his lifetime. Eventually, all of Don’s contributions will help advance Bible work around the world, which truly reflects his deepest values.

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