

LIVES CHANGED BY GOD'S WORD

Record

FALL 2018

NOW JESUS SPEAKS

Audio Bibles in Ethiopia

Page 14

RECORD TURNS 200!

Page 2



AMERICAN
BIBLE
SOCIETY

CHRISTMAS GIFT CATALOG INSIDE!



*“How great are his signs,
how mighty his wonders!
His kingdom is an everlasting
kingdom, and his dominion
endures from generation
to generation.”*

DANIEL 4:3 ESV

Join us in celebrating
Record's 200th birthday!
Record is the second-oldest
continuous publication in
the U.S. Since 1818, faithful
people like you have been
sharing the Bible's powerful
message of hope with people
around the world. It is our
honor to record God's signs
and wonders for you—from
generation to generation.

LEADERSHIP

Chairman of the Board
Jeffrey Brown

President and CEO
Roy L. Peterson

Senior Vice Presidents
Robert Briggs
Laura Dabkowski
Andrew Hood
Stephen Kao
Whitney Kuniholm
James Puchy
Mark Wilson

RECORD STAFF

Director
Rebecca Richman

Executive Editors
Tom Mathew
Bran Van Deirse

Managing Editor
Laura Chan

Art Direction & Design
Caleb Komorowski

Production
Caitlin Emas

CONTACT

American Bible Society Record
ABSRecord@AmericanBible.org

Bible-A-Month™ Partnership
888-227-8262
BAMInfo@AmericanBible.org

Catalog or Bible Requests
800-32-BIBLE
Bibles.com
Info@AmericanBible.org

Gift Planning Programs
(for Stock or Real Estate Gifts, Gift Annuities,
Charitable Trusts, Bequests, Wills, and free
Estate Planning Services) 215-309-0900 or
GiftPlanner@AmericanBible.org

Partner Care
866-895-4448
ABSDonor@AmericanBible.org

GET UPDATES

Twitter.com/AmericanBible
Facebook.com/AmericanBible

ABOUT THE COVER

Villagers and churchgoers from the Wolaita Kale Hiwot Church in Ethiopia gather to listen to God's Word read over a Proclaimer™, a solar-powered Bible player. Photo by Clare Kendall from British and Foreign Bible Society.

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 United Bible Societies, a fellowship of the Bible Societies throughout the world cooperating to make Scriptures available to people everywhere in their own language.

Published since 1818, American Bible Society Record is the official periodical of American Bible Society and the second-oldest continuous publication in the United States. It is published three times a year and is sent to as many of our supporters as budget allows.

Postage is paid in Philadelphia, PA, and additional mailing offices. Other publications are encouraged to reprint the text of any Record article, but prior written permission must be obtained from American Bible Society Record to reproduce any images. Publications reprinting the text of a Record article must include a credit line. Please send a copy of the issue to the Record at 101 North Independence Mall East FL8, Philadelphia, PA 19106-2155.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from:
Good News Translation® Copyright © 1992 American Bible Society.
All rights reserved.



A MESSAGE FROM
ROY PETERSON

American Bible Society President and CEO

A friend at work recently asked me, “What’s the one thing you wish we would all focus on?” I responded without hesitation, “Be deeply rooted in God’s Word.” Scripture is our roadmap for life and our hope for the future.

The Bible’s message of salvation is essential for all people. I don’t just say that as a CEO of a Bible Society; I say that as a man who has seen the Bible’s power firsthand. I have stood shoulder to shoulder with orphans, widows, pastors, priests, Bible translators, soldiers, nurses, athletes, and criminals—all made new by the love of their Savior. I have worshiped God in cathedrals in Kenya and small flats in London, in sign language and Spanish, in Latin and Lisu.

Despite cultural differences and physical locations, all believers have one thing in common. Can you guess what it is?

Their love for the Bible.

The Bible is where we connect with Jesus. It is not only a record of God’s miracles—it is an invitation into his miraculous work. Record magazine is how we share stories of God’s continued miracles. For 200 years, Record has reported how people are meeting God in the Bible’s pages.

Forgive me for the obviousness of what I’m about to say, but nobody meets God in the Bible if they never receive a Bible. God has blessed us by allowing us to have a key role in sharing his Word with others. As you read this issue, I ask you to see yourself in its stories of hope: the rescued soldier called to encourage his brothers, the next generation of Americans searching for God, the Ethiopian prisoner starting new because God spoke to him. It’s all because of the God of the Bible. Praise him!

Serving together,

Record

Fall 2018 | Volume 164 | Number 2

IN EVERY ISSUE

6 NATIONAL UPDATE

Is there hope for America?

Veterans find strength in Scripture

8 INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

First children’s Bibles for Kyrgyzstan

Nigeria gets Scripture in sign language

10 PARTNER PROFILE

Heather Evans races for healing

12 QUIET TIME

God’s peace for anxious minds

13 IN MEMORIAM

Remembering our loved ones

INSIDE

14
GOD BROKE
INTO PRISON

Ethiopian prisoners
prove God’s mercy



20
WHAT ONE
BIBLE CAN DO
Soldier goes from
suicide to surrender

TOP RIGHT PHOTO: Doug Notlage, American Bible Society; BOTTOM PHOTO: Photo courtesy of Multi-National Corps Iraq

HOPE for AMERICA

INSIGHTS FROM
STATE OF THE
BIBLE 2018

The Bible is the most influential book in American history. For centuries, its message of hope has inspired the women and men whose lives have defined the American pursuit of liberty and justice for all. It continues to inspire us today.

However, the State of the Bible 2018 report (commissioned by American Bible Society and conducted by Barna Group) brings some disheartening news. Fewer and fewer Americans are turning to God's Word. You've probably seen the results of this shift: You may have children or grandchildren who have fallen away from faith. You may have noticed fewer people coming to church. You may be frustrated by how little culture seems to be influenced by the teachings of Jesus.

THE BIBLE IS
LOSING INFLUENCE

2/3 of us read the Bible
less than once a month

79% of us believe our moral
values are declining

42% of us are more fearful
than we were 5 years ago

BUT THERE'S HOPE
FOR AMERICA

4/5 of our families
own a Bible

2/3 of us are curious
about the Bible

57% of us wish we read
the Bible more often

But there's so much hope. More than half of all Americans say they want to read the Bible more. And two out of three Americans—two out of every three people standing behind you in the grocery line, sitting next to you on the train, or waiting with your kids for the school bus—say they're curious about the Bible.

We have an amazing opportunity to encourage Americans to turn to the Bible for its life-giving answers.

Through your support and our dedicated effort, we believe God will draw millions of curious people to explore his message of salvation. As we pray for our nation, for the country our children and grandchildren will inherit, let's hold fast to hope.

Statistics taken from the State of the Bible 2018 report commissioned by American Bible Society and conducted by Barna Group.

PRAY: God, we believe you love each person in our nation. Give our neighbors, our families, and all Americans a desire to know you more. Keep us from fear and anxiety, and cause us to speak your truth to all we meet.

VETERANS HEAR GOD IS WITH THEM ON "NEVER ALONE" WEBSITE

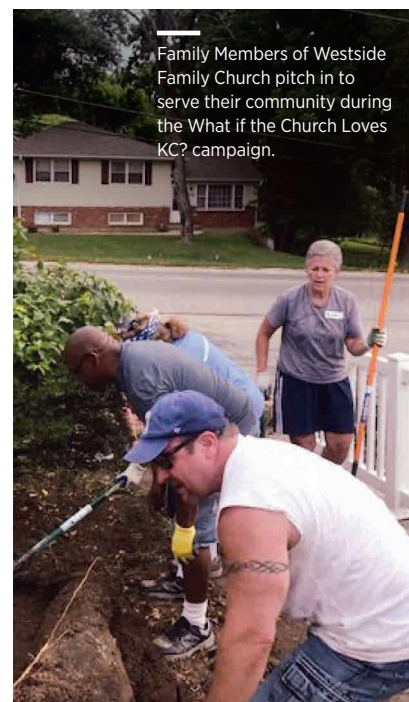
20,800 visitors have encountered God's hope and comfort for Veterans through a new website, www.NeverAlone.Bible

Twenty American Veterans commit suicide every day. Veterans are five times more likely than civilians to suffer from depression. Through your support, however, we're telling our Veterans that God is near to them in their grief and suffering. Now, when Veterans search the Internet with questions of doubt and sadness, they're prompted to visit NeverAlone.Bible. The online resource shares Bible study materials and personal testimonies that reinforce that God is present even in the hardest points of military service and life. Bryan Flanery, an Army Veteran featured on the site, met Christ in the Bible and found a new reason to live. "Most people who are going to take their lives are searching for answers," he says. "The Bible is that answer."

PRAY: God, please be near our Veterans as they struggle with grief and memories of war. Remind them of your presence and restore their hope.



Army Veteran Bryan Flanery found the Bible is the answer to all life's hard and dark questions.



Family Members of Westside Family Church pitch in to serve their community during the What if the Church Loves KC? campaign.

KC CHURCHES LOVE NEIGHBORS WELL

22,000 homes in Kansas City were adopted by churches that committed to pray and care for their neighbors.

In May, members from 47 churches in Kansas City went over and above their normal service to show their neighbors the love of God. This effort was grounded in Scripture, with more than 1,500 people reading the devotional *Love Your Neighbor* produced by American Bible Society. In addition, 4,000 church leaders received guides on facilitating a What if the Church Loves KC? initiative. A major part of this initiative was Bless Every Home, a mapping and evangelization tool that connects participants with people in their neighborhoods who may not know Jesus. Through this, more than 22,000 families in the Kansas City area received prayer and care. It's amazing to see what God is doing through his church!

PRAY: God, we praise you for these churches that are caring for their Kansas City communities so well. Remind us to also love our neighbors as you have loved us.

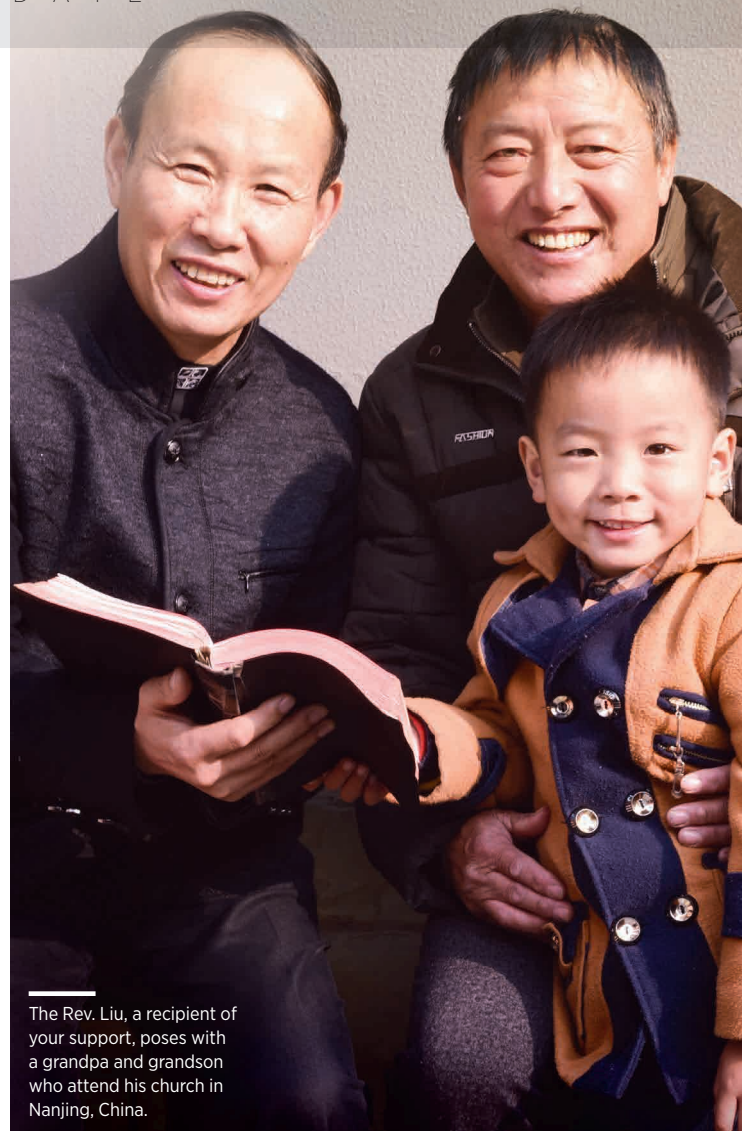
CHINA

More than 40,000 churchgoers rejoice that their pastors got the support they need to keep preaching.

Each pastor in rural China reaches an average of 800 people, often covering churches across a broad distance. They rarely receive sufficient financial support, making it a challenge to sustain consistent ministry.

Partners like you have made a dent in this crisis, providing Bible training and support to help more than 50 pastors continue their ministry. Pastor Qiao Haijun is one of these pastors. Working extra jobs in the coal mines and in construction to repay his seminary debts, he never had time to fulfill his pastoral duties. He considered giving up. Then, he received your sponsorship and was filled with a deep sense of comfort. Now, he is continuing his ministry and trusting God to continue to provide.

PRAY: *God, thank you that believers in China are hearing the truth of your Word. Encourage the pastors you have appointed to serve your church so they do not grow weary in their service.*



The Rev. Liu, a recipient of your support, poses with a grandpa and grandson who attend his church in Nanjing, China.

NIGERIA

110 video Bible stories made for 1 million deaf in Nigeria.

A deaf translation center has been established to bring the full Bible to Nigeria's deaf community. Until now, many people within this community struggled to read written Scripture. Now, they're receiving God's Word alive and in motion, and it's transforming their understanding of the God who loves them.

PRAY: *God, thank you for sharing your message with the deaf community in Nigeria. Guide the translators as they diligently complete an entire Nigerian Sign Language Bible.*



KYRGYZSTAN

8,000 kids receive personal children's Bibles.

For many years, there were no children's Bibles in Kyrgyzstan. Thanks to your support, that's no longer the case. Now, kids are discovering God's love for them as they read and illustrate their Bibles in Russian and Kyrgyz, Kyrgyzstan's core languages.

Kira, a third grader who received a Bible, has a difficult home life. Both of her parents are alcoholics, and she and her sister often feel alone. However, she is finding new hope in God through her Bible. She says, "I have learned more about God, and now I believe in him more than before."

PRAY: *God, thank you for calling these precious little ones to yourself. Help them know you more as they read about your goodness.*



Children like Kira received their first Bibles thanks to gifts from partners like you.



Bible-based comic books are telling children in El Salvador "No Temas"—"Fear Not"!

EL SALVADOR

10,000+ children receive "Fear Not" Bible comics.

The *Fear Not* comic books being distributed in 30 private and public schools in El Salvador are helping children find peace in Jesus. El Salvador (The Savior) is named after Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace. But because of a gang crisis in the country, it's one of the most violent places in the world. Children, often orphaned by this violence, live in constant fear. Through your support, Bible Society of El Salvador is bringing children the much-needed message that they do not have to fear because God is always with them (Isaiah 41:10).

PRAY: *God, thank you for freeing children from fear! Please bring your true peace to reign in all of El Salvador.*



Do you want to get the Bible into people's hands, hearts, and minds? Visit AmericanBible.org/SendBibles

HEALING IS A MARATHON

ONE CREATIVE PARTNER IS USING HER SNEAKERS TO SPREAD GOD'S HEALING IN AFRICA

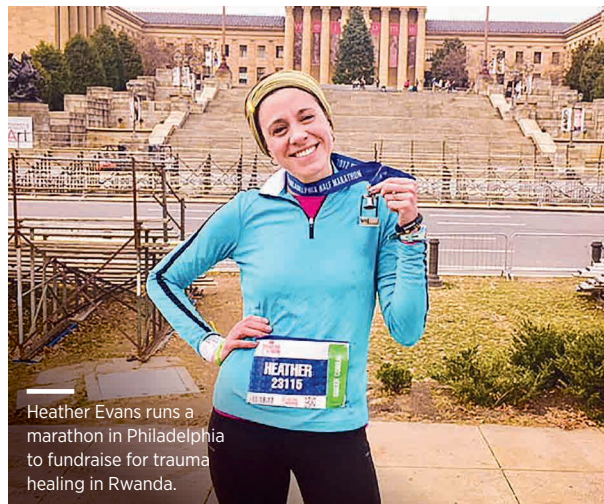
BY JACK NEWMAN

Heather Evans lives in two places at once.

Most of the time, Heather serves as a social worker in Pennsylvania's beautiful Lehigh Valley. She cares for broken families, traumatized teenagers, and sex trafficking survivors in her community.

But her heart has also made a home in Africa. "My heart has been captured by the country of Rwanda," she says.

Heather visited Rwanda for the first time in 2014 as part of a training with American Bible Society's Trauma Healing Institute. She wanted to use her counseling skills to equip and support counselors and trauma healing caregivers in the country. The experience rocked her world.



Heather Evans runs a marathon in Philadelphia to fundraise for trauma healing in Rwanda.

"I bore witness to brokenness, trauma, tension, and loss that exceeded my expectations," Heather says. "The Rwandans' deep, piercing gaze remains in me."

In the midst of this deep sadness, Heather saw God at work. She experienced the power of Bible-based trauma healing alongside her brothers and sisters in Rwanda.

"Scripture-based trauma healing empowers common people to lead others through a healing process," Heather explains. "It takes Scripture and incorporates important principles of psychology."

In Rwanda, Heather saw God work wonders in the hearts of broken people.

"I witnessed firsthand that this ministry works," Heather says. "I saw the beauty of brokenness being restored. God is present amidst the chaos, messiness, brokenness, and darkness."

When Heather returned to the United States, her heart remained in Rwanda.

"I thought: What can I do about everything I just witnessed?" Heather says.

Heather got creative. "Every year I run a half marathon," Heather thought. "What if I could use this race to raise awareness?"

She did just that, challenging her friends and family to



Heather Evans says Rwanda captured her heart when she saw the great needs for faith and healing in the country.

"I witnessed firsthand that this ministry works. I saw the beauty of brokenness being restored. God is present amidst the chaos, messiness, brokenness, and darkness."

pledge a dollar for every mile she ran. She also asked them to pray for Rwanda, assigning them a different prayer request for each of the thirteen miles.

"Knowing that people were joining me in prayer has totally changed my running experience," Heather says. "I was smiling the whole time. It was so powerful."

Heather's half marathon in 2014 raised \$1,400 for Bible-based trauma healing in Rwanda. She didn't stop there. She's raised thousands of dollars each year since then.

"I'm not a full-time fundraiser, so it surprised me how enthusiastic people are," Heather says. "I get checks in the mail with personal notes thanking me for giving them a way to contribute."

With the money she raised, Heather cares for hurting people in Rwanda. She says her giving helps meet great needs in the country for hope in God and healing from generational wounds. "Trauma is a barrier to human relationships and to the reception of the Scriptures," she says. "If left unaddressed, it will not only have a ripple effect in families and communities, it will be passed on to the next generation."

Heather is excited for how she's seen God move and is inspired to keep doing her part so more and more people in Rwanda experience freedom and renewal in Jesus.

"I plan to keep doing this," Heather says. "As long as I have legs to run!"

LEFT: Photo courtesy of Heather Evans; RIGHT: Doug Nottage, American Bible Society



This morning I overslept my alarm, forgot my carefully packed lunch in the refrigerator, and arrived to work disheveled. My mind raced in a thousand different directions—none of which were life-giving. It seemed like each stressor multiplied my frustrations, doubts, and worries.

Often, we dwell on the negatives—our big struggles and our little annoyances. But what would happen if instead we not only dwelled on, but savored, God’s words in Scripture?

Try starting with Paul’s words to the church in Philippi found in Philippians 4:8.

First, read the verses slowly.

“In conclusion, my friends, fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable.”

Then, reflect on the words.

Do any of these words stand out to you? Consider what it means for a thought to be good and deserving of praise. You may want to do a word study on “true,” “noble,” “pure,” “lovely,” or “honorable.”

Next, apply the words to your life.

Identify what is worthy to think about, based on Paul’s definition. What is good? What thoughts do you need to discard?

In closing, end with a prayer.

God, help me discern my thoughts. I don’t want to be anxious and miss your presence. Fill my mind with your thoughts, and keep my eyes fixed on you.

When I took time to identify the thoughts that were cluttering my mind, I was able to shift my attention to God’s life-giving words. I focused on what was true and praiseworthy: the miracle of waking up that morning, the gift of being greeted by coworkers, the chance to rely on God even in my lack. I turned my worries into thanks for God’s undeserved and indescribable peace.

My prayer is that as you too ask for God to lead your thoughts and fill your mind with good things, “the God who gives us peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:9). 📖

LEFT PHOTO: Karen-Lau, Unsplash.com; RIGHT PHOTO: PHOTO: Aaron Burden, Unsplash.com

in memory of
**Andy Admiraal &
Tena Admiraal**
given by Jane D. Admiraal-Nykamp

in memory of our mother and
mother-in-law
Blanche Bellinger
given by Victoria and James Schuette

in memory of my husband
Peter W. Burnahm
given by Elizabeth Burnahm

in memory of my husband
Robert M. Byers
given by Janice M. Byers

in memory of
Mark A. Chapman
given by the Mark A. Chapman Foundation

in memory of
Agnes Curry
given by Gloria and Michael Croft

in memory of
**Col. J.P. Fitzgerald &
Charlene Fitzgerald**
given by Jackie and Jimmy Fitzgerald

in memory of my parents
**Frank W. Grandell &
Ina L. Grandell**
given by Elizabeth Burnahm

in memory of my parents
**Dr. Richard Hagerman &
Dorothy Welles Hagerman**
given by Mary Lou Koto

in memory of my wife
June Handwerker
given by Bob Handwerker

in memory of
Evelyn Gold Herbst
given by John Herbst

in memory of my husband
George Lyles
given by Pamela Lyles

in memory of my husband
David E. Morey
given by Anna M. Morey

in memory of my grandparents
**Philip Nelson &
Elizabeth Nelson**
given by Mina D. Timm

in memory of
Dr. Oliver Risoldi
given by Gloria and Michael Croft

in memory of
Charles H. Smith, Jr.
given by Sandra P. Smith

in memory of
Rev. Kenneth Smith
given by Keith Pearson Robinson

in memory of
Joseph Sobaje
given by Mary and David Rogne

in memory of my sister
Judy Thompson
given by Kathy J. Roemer

in memory of
Karl Ziegenfuss
given by Sandra Hawn-Hanes

We’ve created a daily Bible reading guide just for you! Download your guide at

[AmericanBible.org/DailyBible](https://www.AmericanBible.org/DailyBible)

Honor the memory of a loved one by providing Bibles to people who don’t yet have them.
Memorials of \$500 or more for one individual or family unit will be published in *Record*.

For further details about the memorial process,
please contact our Partner Care team at: **1-866-895-4448**

G O D B R O K E I N T O P R I S O N

BY LAURA CHAN

You're on a thin mat on the red dirt of an open room. The air is stagnant and reminds you of your unmoving life here. Men lie to the right and left of you. You haven't had space to yourself for years. Everyone here is always angry or sad, and you feel entirely lost. *How did I end up here?* You spend your days going over and over and over your failures, your sins. Your only solace comes right now.

Now, Deacon Demeke enters the room and puts a small black box on the floor. He hits

play, and the room goes silent. All twenty-one men hush. The only noise is the words flowing across you and into you in a way you never knew possible.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God..." the box says. *Who is this God?* you wonder. "To all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." *Could I believe in this God? Could this God really call me his child?*

B I B L E B E H I N D B A R S

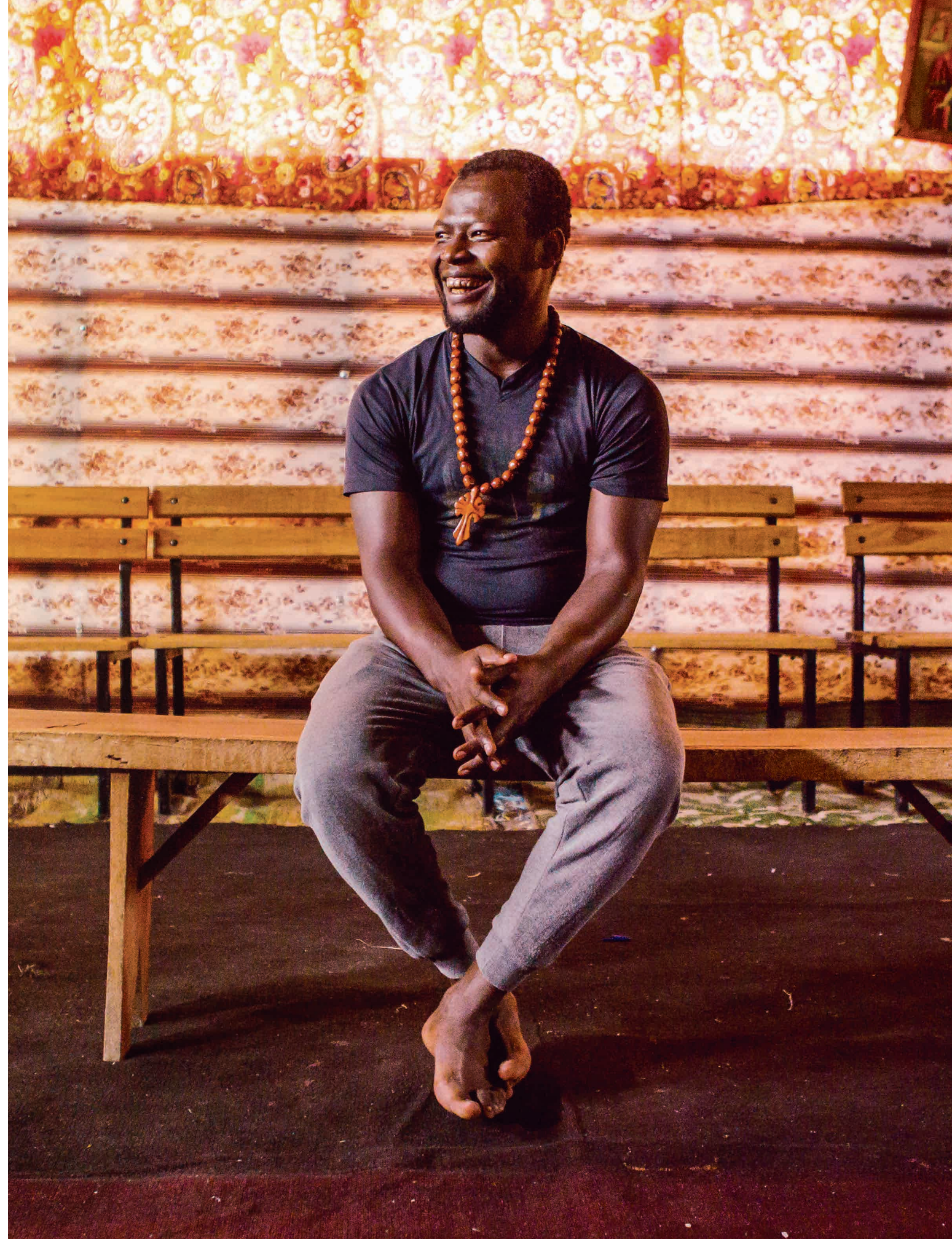
This story belongs to Nesanet Kurubahcw—and to others like him. Nesanet is a young man who met God in a maximum-security prison in Ethiopia when he heard the Bible read over a Proclaimer™ in his language, Amharic. Partners like you provided this Proclaimer that now serves the entire prison. It's carried from room to room to read Scripture aloud to some 260 prisoners every day.

✦ *Proclaimers are solar-powered digital players loaded with Audio Bibles. They were invented by our partner, Faith Comes By Hearing.*

Our team visited Nesanet's prison because we'd heard God was doing great things in the lives of the men there. We found that to be true. Miracles are happening in the everyday dirt and drudgery of these prisoners' lives.

I won't sugarcoat these prisoners' daily realities for you—they urinate in gutters and are guarded by machine guns. Through the Bible, however, many of them have discovered a hope for the future they never thought possible. They have discovered that their sins don't define them. They have discovered that justice is in God's hands—not theirs nor their government's. They have discovered a truth that frees even those in physical captivity.

PHOTO: Doug Nottage, American Bible Society





REAL
POVERTY,
REAL
CONSEQUENCES

When I met Nesanet, I was struck by his youth. He didn't raise his eyes to meet mine, and he nervously played with the wooden cross around his neck. He reminded me more of the shy high school students I once taught than of a convicted criminal.

To understand Nesanet, you need to know where he's from. Nesanet was born in a small town called Shashemene, nestled deep

in Ethiopia's Rift Valley. Shashemene is somewhat of a tourist destination because of its connection to the Rastafarian movement, but tourism hasn't done much to boost the area's economy. Shops are constructed from scavenged materials like tarps and tree limbs. Simple homes are made from mud dried by the sun.

As you can imagine, living in remote, impoverished circumstances like these, job options are limited. Nesanet felt desperate to support his family, and his desperation led him down a dark path.

"When I was living in the area, I used to fight. I used to hurt others," he says.

Shop owners in an
Ethiopian marketplace
prepare produce for sale.

PHOTO: Doug Nottage, American Bible Society

Describing his past to me, Nesanet drops his eyes. "Poverty led me to that type of life," he explains. "My family, they were unable to help me to go further, even to study in a good school. That's why I chose this life."

One day, Nesanet's bad deeds caught up with him. He tried to steal from someone and ended up stabbing the person when things went sideways. He was dragged to court and thrown in prison.

GOD TURNED
MY LIFE
AROUND

Now, more than a year later, memories of Nesanet's sins still weigh heavy on him. He's a young man, but he has seen the worst side of himself—and he believes he would have continued down the same path had he not been providentially thrown in prison. "God turned my life in a different direction," he says with the first hint of a smile.

"I learned
that God is a
forgiving father,
merciful father."

In prison, Nesanet heard Scripture read over the Proclaimer. Through the Bible's words, he discovered there was another way to live. "I realized that I'd made mistakes," he says. "I asked God to forgive me."

As Nesanet has grown in his faith, he has found solace in the Bible's message. He says, "I learned that God is a forgiving father, merciful father." He explained to me how it overwhelmed him to learn that God became human to die to save us.

*"The Sovereign LORD
has filled me with
his Spirit.*

*He has chosen me
and sent me*

*To bring good news
to the poor,*

*To heal the
broken-hearted,*

*To announce release
to captives*

*And freedom to
those in prison."*

ISAIAH 61:1

THE NEED IS GREAT. BUT OUR GOD IS GREATER.

With your support, we've distributed millions of Bibles globally. We celebrate that reality—but we also know it's far from enough.

One billion people still don't have the Bible in their language—let alone in their hands.

Will you answer the question of people like Nesanet: "Do you think you could get me a Bible of my own?" Give Bibles at:
www.ABS.Bible/GiveBibles

He was amazed that sinless Jesus would pay the cost for what sinful Nesanet had done. "That's really touched me because of my salvation," he says. "God made his son like me."

Now, Nesanet is eager to share the grace he experienced with others. Under Deacon Demeke, Nesanet is training to be a priest once he's released from prison.

Like Jesus, Nesanet is spending time with thieves and murders—telling them they too can know our great God. Because he takes his calling seriously, Nesanet spends his free time seeking God and studying the Bible in a small shed that serves as a church.

Even in our short time, I could see the level of respect the other young men have for Nesanet. I asked one of his friends, Yitbrark, what Nesanet is like. He told me, "He is a transformed man. His life has been miserable. But now he serves us and sings with us. He is a model for us."

Nesanet went from being a criminal to being a model for others to serve God—all because of the Bible.

N E S A N E T T H A N K S Y O U

I hope you see the significance of your gift. Through just one Proclaimer Audio Bible that you provided, hundreds of men are being taught that God cares for them and has more for their lives than sin and loneliness. Nesanet reminds us there is still great salvation to come. He says, "Many others will listen to the Bible and change their lives as we have been changed."

T H E Q U E S T I O N I C A N ' T S H A K E

As we prepared to leave the prison, Nesanet pulled me aside. "Can I ask you for something?" he whispered.

I'll admit, my heart sank with this question. I'd been encouraged by my time with Nesanet and the other young Christian men in the prison. I braced myself



Men imprisoned in Awassa, Ethiopia, study communal Bibles they share with dozens of other inmates.

to say no to what I assumed Nesanet was going to ask—*Could you get me a lighter prison sentence? Could you take me back to the States with you?*

The real question took me aback: "Do you think you could get me a Bible of my own?"

I hope the weight of this question hits you the way it hit me. I still tear up thinking about it.

“Do you think you could get me a Bible of my own?”

At American Bible Society, we receive a lot of requests for Bibles, but I'd never been the one directly asked the question. My first thought was, *Of course. I'd never deny anyone a Bible who asked me for one.* Then I realized that's exactly what I've done. In knowing the need and not responding to my fullest ability, I've denied Bibles to people who are asking for them.

I made a promise to Nesanet: that believers around the world would be praying for him. That we wouldn't forget him and his need. Will you join me in fulfilling my promise? Here is how Nesanet asked

us to pray, in his own words, *"I ask you to pray for me and for my brothers here. Pray that we may not go back to that terrible life that I would say is a cursed life, and pray that we will continue being transformed by God, God's Word. Pray we lead a new life in Christ who changes our physical, spiritual, moral lives."*

And yes—we made sure Nesanet got his Bible. 📖



About the Author

Laura Chan writes for American Bible Society. Last year, she traveled to Ethiopia to capture stories of God's grace. Laura says, "It's such a privilege to sit with Christians around the globe and see how—despite dramatically different cultural contexts—the Bible brings the same message of worth, belonging, and hope."

WHAT ONE BIBLE CAN DO

BY WINDSOR MARCHESI



PHOTO: U.S. Army photo by Elizabeth Fraser



A SOLDIER'S JOURNEY FROM PAIN TO PROMISE

He was just 18 years old.

Barely out of high school, a young Chris Runnells decided to join the Army as an airborne infantryman. "I wanted to serve my country as my grandfather had done in Korea," he remembers.

But Chris's view of himself, the world, and God was about to change. From school dances and algebra tests to jumping out of planes into combat zones, there was no way to prepare for what was to come.

He left for Iraq. "In my first deployment, one third of my unit were casualties," he says.

Fellow soldiers—newfound brothers, sisters, friends—were gone. And in some ways, so was a part of Chris.

"I thought I had a good grasp on my faith—but after that, I lost all faith," he says. It was a season of numbing loss. After losing so many comrades, Chris continued serving his country for five more years—two of which were spent in some of the harshest conditions of war.

The years that followed revealed a different kind of battle as Chris tried to cope with the aftermath of war. Post-traumatic stress disorder. Tormenting memories. Survivor's guilt. Physical wounds.

Chris reached an all-time low and knew he needed help. Out of options and unwilling to let war win, he decided to meet with his chaplain.

Along with wise words of counsel, his chaplain handed him a military edition Bible, made for Service members just like Chris.

PAGES OF HOPE

Chris began reading—and the words on the pages spoke to his heart. They were from someone who understood the aches deep within his being. Someone who would carry his heavy burdens. Someone who would wait patiently for him to heal.

"I felt I had been let down. And I still have difficulty processing that in some aspects. But I've come to the understanding that God loves us so much," Chris says. "Jesus is here to comfort me, and tell me that those things that happened in battle weren't my fault."

Chris's appetite for God's Word increased. He started soaking up Scripture through a Bible-in-a-year reading plan. He went to church and studied the Bible with friends.

He began to realize his brother, friend, protector, and comforter—Jesus—had never left his side.



“It has been a process that has taken well over 10 years of understanding,” Chris says. “Now I know I’m never alone; I always have Jesus with me.”

Through his journey of healing and discovery, Chris recognized something strangely profound in his suffering—that it wasn’t for nothing. He realized that, in some way, God was going to take his experiences of pain and loss and use them to accomplish something good.

Chris had lived through the unspeakable, the unimaginable. But all of it, however dark, gave him a unique ability to relate to other victims and survivors of war. He discovered that his brokenness, combined with God’s goodness, could help guide others to a place of peace and closure. He decided to go back to school to become a chaplain.

**THE JOURNEY
TO CHAPLAINCY**

“I think it’s important for people to have access to the Bible so that when they are ready, they have access to Jesus,” Chris says.

Chris is eager to share God’s Word with others as a chaplain. To Service members and Veterans, he shares these words: “No matter how dark and frustrating life can be, there is always light when you look for it and when you need it.” He recommends reading the book of Psalms—yes, the entire book. “No particular one—I enjoy them all!” he says.

**GOD’S WORD
IS A GIFT**

Scripture helped heal Chris’s heart and renew his spirit. God’s purpose ignited a new passion within his being. Now, as he prepares himself for chaplaincy, he can become a vessel through which God’s message of healing love can flow.

Because of you, a Bible was there for Chris when he needed it most. Thank you. Chris says, “I would not have been able to succeed and see myself in a positive light without this gift. I greatly appreciate it.”

God, thank you for bringing Chris through the battles he’s faced into a place of peace and security in you. Please enable those serving you through chaplaincy to speak words of life to everyone they encounter.

“NO MATTER
HOW DARK AND
FRUSTRATING LIFE
CAN BE, THERE
IS ALWAYS LIGHT
WHEN YOU LOOK
FOR IT AND WHEN
YOU NEED IT.”



Would you like to put God’s Word into the hands of more American Service members like Chris? AmericanBible.org/Military



LEAVE AN ETERNAL LEGACY

When you name American Bible Society in your Will, you create a legacy to bless future generations with the precious gift of God’s Word.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE REMEMBERED AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY IN YOUR WILL

3 easy ways to let us know:

- Mail back the prepaid envelope
- Call 800-549-3328
- Email GiftPlanner@AmericanBible.org

PHOTOS: Doug Nottage, American Bible Society



101 North Independence Mall East FL8
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2155
AmericanBible.org

Please remember American Bible Society in your Will.

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

American Bible
Society

Have You Named American Bible Society in Your Will?

Many faithful partners like you have already remembered American Bible Society in their Wills—ensuring that the work of sharing God's Word continues for generations to come.

If you have already taken that important step, we want to thank you by sending you a free, signed copy of American Bible Society President and CEO Roy Peterson's autobiography, *Set Free*. Supplies are limited, so act now!



OUR GIFT TO YOU

☐ **Yes!** I have named American Bible Society in my Will.

Please send my FREE copy of Roy's new book, *Set Free*.

3 easy ways to request your free gift:

1. **Mail** your completed form in the prepaid envelope inside the back cover
2. **Call** 1-800-549-3328 (toll-free)
3. **Email** GiftPlanner@AmericanBible.org

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL ADDRESS

 **AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY**

CP19091PGZZZZZZ