



LIVES CHANGED BY GOD'S WORD

Record

FALL 2020

COVID-19: an Urgent Need for God's Word

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AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

“I can do all things
through Christ who
strengthens me.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 (NKJV)



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ABOUT THE COVER

In 2020, COVID-19 forced Bible Society in Syria to temporarily close its Bible shops. However, it received approval at Easter to distribute Scriptures to children in towns and cities across the country. Thanks to your support, 28,000 kids in need of Jesus's peace received Bibles—many of them for the first time ever! Photo courtesy of Bible Society in Syria.

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 Bible Societies throughout the world cooperating to make Scriptures available to people everywhere in their own language.

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THE VIRUS AND THE VINE

*A message from Robert Briggs,
American Bible Society President and CEO*

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.... Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.” (John 15:1, 4 NIV)

Heading into 2020, American Bible Society staff rededicated ourselves to abiding in the true Vine of Jesus. Little did we know then how our renewed commitment to cling to the Lord would be put to the test in this season of pandemic and unrest. Christ's exhortation to remain in Him feels like a fresh challenge. Will we remain in Christ even as we fight a global pandemic and fight for racial justice? Will we remain in Christ even as we battle fears for our health and for our families? Will we remain in Christ even as the election season threatens to divide us? Yes, by God's grace, we declare that we will!

We believe Jesus is still the answer to every heartache in this broken world. He is our true hope for tomorrow. The stories in this COVID-19 Bible ministry relief issue of *Record* are testaments to the saving power of Jesus in all circumstances. Through Christ, Bible Societies—despite dire financial straits—are sharing Scripture with people in need of comfort in this crisis. Through Christ, people navigating grief and loneliness are turning to God's Word for the first time. Through Christ, partners like you are rallying to ensure God's Word goes forth for generations to come.

My prayer is that you too would remain in the true Vine. May Christ give you peace that surpasses your visible reality and supernatural hope to endure!

Yours in Christ,

Robert L. Briggs

P.S. I believe people need God's Word *right now*—but COVID-19 is threatening to close 88 of our Bible Society ministry partners. This could prevent more than 500 million people from ever receiving Scripture. Your gift can help today. Call 1-866-895-4448 or visit give.bible/relief

COVER PHOTO: Courtesy of Bible Society in Syria; OPENING SPREAD PHOTO: Courtesy of Bible Society in Jordan

TOP RIGHT PHOTO: Courtesy of UBS China Partnership; BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTO: Doug Nottage, American Bible Society

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COVID-19 VS THE CHURCH IN CHINA

YOU HELPED RESCUE PREACHER MU'S MINISTRY
TO A CHINESE ETHNIC MINORITY GROUP

By Laura Chan

Pu'er tea is rich and malty, harvested and then fermented for years before it ever makes it into a cup. A good tea collector knows that if you don't like the flavor at first, you should give it a couple years and try it again; it ripens as it ages. The principles for growing and refining good pu'er are similar to those for good ministry: be attentive and patient and keep the faith.

Unassuming, thirty-three-year-old Preacher Mu embodies these principles as he ministers to an ethnic minority group* in the tea's namesake city of Pu'er, China. Many Pu'er locals work the land—growing tea as well as coffee, rice,

sugar cane, and lots of fruits. Predominantly Buddhist with influences from shamanism, the people group believe in many gods. With few Christians and fewer churches, many in the region do not know that Jesus died to save them. Preacher Mu hopes to change that.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic called Preacher Mu's entire livelihood into question and called him to make a tough decision: would he preach the Good News or would he provide for his family?

Pastor Mu, his wife, his baby, and his parents, typically live on less than \$3,000 a year. He's

“ Even in the face of the challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and financial pressures in my life, I believe God will take care of me, and I don't have to worry.”

not salaried by the churches where he preaches as it's difficult for rural believers to financially support ministry staff. He deeply appreciated the small gifts some brothers and sisters from the church would give to support him, but he had to take up additional farm work—picking tea, mostly—to supplement his income.

COVID-19 hit the community hard—removing inhabitants' opportunities to sell produce at local markets and forcing them to downsize their farms. With congregants struggling to make ends meet and churches closed, all donations to Preacher Mu from congregants stopped. He worried he'd be forced to abandon his ministry to move to the city to find work in order to provide for his wife and new baby.

Your support was an answer to Preacher Mu's prayers. Thanks to you, Preacher Mu—and hundreds like him who serve ethnic minority groups across China—can continue sharing the Good News of the one true God. “I am thankful for your support, for now I can visit more brothers and sisters, and travel far to preach God's Word,” says Preacher Mu. “This has strengthened my faith to know that God will always provide for me as I serve Him faithfully!”

Searching for ways to continue serving through this outbreak, Preacher Mu has been hosting a small biweekly Bible study (fewer than 10 people, per China's gathering restrictions). “We realized that after three months without on-site church services, believers are really longing for a church meeting to hear the Word of God,” says Mu.

Although this has been a difficult season, Preacher Mu knows God will see him through, as He always has. Mu says, “Our relationship with God is very important, and it must be right. With that in proper order, even in the face of the challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and financial pressures in my life, I believe God will take care of me, and I don't have to worry.”

Preacher Mu keeps his focus now on the words of Christ in Matthew 9:37 that promise the spiritual harvest is plentiful. With him, we look forward to the day when many Chinese believers will stand before Christ's throne thanks to Preacher Mu's faithful service and your faithful giving. 📖

**Name retracted for sensitivity purposes.*

+ Please pray with us for the church in China to endure through these difficult times. Ask God to sustain pastors like Preacher Mu as they share the Good News.

LEFT PHOTO: Courtesy of UBS China Partnership

RIGHT PHOTO: Getty Images



5 Bible Truths to Declare when Fearful of COVID-19

The year 2020 has been filled with loss: loss of loved ones, loss of jobs, loss of community. More than ever, we need the comfort of God’s Word.

To that end, we’ve made a list of scriptural truths that you can declare whenever your situation feels overwhelming. If it seems like only God can solve your problems, that’s because He can.

I AM DETERMINED AND CONFIDENT IN GOD.

“Remember that I have commanded you to be determined and confident! Do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the LORD your God, am with you where you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

I FEEL GROUNDED IN GOD’S WORD AND LOVE.

“Hold firmly to the true words that I taught you, as the example for you to follow, and remain in the faith and love that are ours in union with Christ Jesus. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us, keep the

good things that have been entrusted to you.” (2 Timothy 1:13–14)

I TRUST THAT GOD IS ALWAYS WITH ME.

“Be determined and confident.... Your God, the LORD himself, will be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you.” (Deuteronomy 31:6)

I HAVE VICTORY OVER FEAR.

“For the Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, his Spirit fills us with power, love, and self-control.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

I KNOW I AM PROTECTED AND SAFE IN GOD.

“Whoever goes to the LORD for safety, whoever remains under the protection of the Almighty, can say to him, ‘You are my defender and protector. You are my God; in you I trust.’ He will keep you safe from all hidden dangers and from all deadly diseases. He will cover you with his wings; you will be safe in his care; his faithfulness will protect and defend you.” (Psalm 91:1–4)

 Find the full list of “20 Declarations for Coronavirus Crisis Prayer” and more free Bible resources at DisasterRelief.AmericanBible.org



EMERGENCY SPIRITUAL RELIEF

By Bran Van Deinse

War. Terrorism. Disease. Famine. Earthquakes, fires, and floods.

Throughout history, the Word of God has comforted people as they endure the ravages of a fallen world. Nothing brings peace in the midst of tribulation like the Bible.

Since our founding in 1816, American Bible Society has been on the frontlines of Bible ministry. Just as doctors, nurses, firefighters, and EMTs meet our physical needs when disaster strikes, we provide urgent spiritual relief through the Word of God. Partners like

you have always been at our side, praying and giving to show tangible love to neighbors in crisis.

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

ISAIAH 41:10 (NIV)

Together, we have been meeting urgent spiritual needs for more than 200 years. Because of your faithful partnership, American Bible Society has shared millions of Bibles and Scripture resources to people in desperate need. We believe God has uniquely called us to share His Word in times of crisis.

As we endure the COVID-19 pandemic together, let us remember our shared history of Bible ministry. This not our first pandemic. By God's grace, we have been able to provide spiritual first aid to the quarantined, sick, and spiritually isolated as far back as the Spanish flu of 1918. God has empowered us for a time such as this.

With this look back, we remember God's faithfulness and our partners' generosity over the years.



American Bible Society distributed millions of Scriptures to American soldiers during World War I.

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR 1861-1865

The Civil War was one of the first major American disasters faced by American Bible Society. God called us to share His love with a divided nation. We responded immediately, sharing millions of Bibles with soldiers during the war. When the conflict ended, we ministered to wounded veterans, along with countless civilians whose homes and livelihoods were destroyed in the war. We also had the joy of distributing the Word of God to newly liberated slaves.

WORLD WAR I 1914-1918

We sent our brave Troops more than 6 million Bibles and New Testaments during and after World War I. For many in the trenches facing

fear and death, these Scriptures solidified their faith. Our continued ministry brought God's enduring peace to millions of Americans struggling to rebuild their lives in the wake of the world's most devastating war.

"It is true that war uncovers the bestial and the devilish in man, but it is just as true that it also reveals the divine. In these days of darkness and sorrow and death, men truly 'seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him.'" —American Bible Society Annual Report, 1915

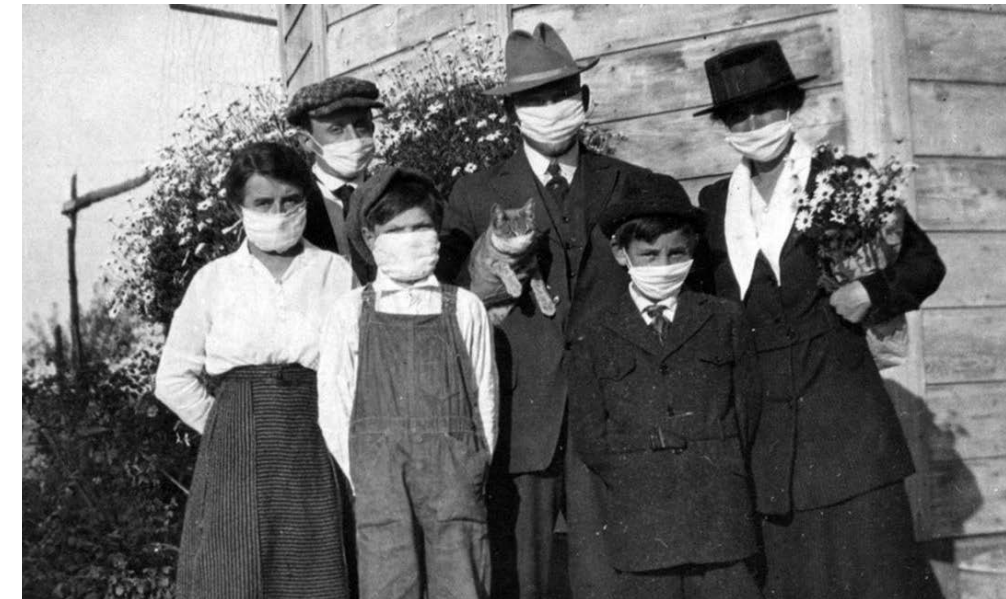
FLU PANDEMIC 1918-1919

The Spanish influenza pandemic claimed the lives of 675,000 people in the United States and around 50 million people worldwide. Like COVID-19, it overburdened hospitals, wreaked havoc on the economy, and forced churches to close their doors. During that season of lament, donors like you stepped in to share God's Word with a hurting world. Working directly with churches and Christian leaders around the nation, American Bible Society provided Bibles, New Testaments, and Scripture resources to millions of people in need—including those searching for God in their final hours.

"Literally thousands were comforted and saved reading God's Word, given them by the Bible Society. Many breathed their last during the 'flu' epidemic, with the little khaki Testament under their pillow, or on the table nearby, and went to meet God in peace." —American Bible Society Annual Report, 1919

THE GREAT MISSISSIPPI FLOOD 1927

The Great Mississippi Flood was the most destructive river flood in the history of the United States, displacing more than 630,000 people. America's Black community was hit disproportionately hard as more than 200,000 Black families were forced to flee their homes. Many had no other option than to live in tents



A century ago, during the 1918 flu epidemic, American Bible Society provided the comfort of God's Word to people fighting for their lives.

at relief camps, sometimes for years. During this period of crisis, American Bible Society was able to offer hope and healing through God's Word, sharing more than 12,000 Bibles and 50,000 Gospels.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION 1929-1939

The Great Depression was more than an economic and financial collapse—it was a crisis of the American spirit. More than 60 million Americans directly suffered the effects of the depression—losing their jobs, their homes,

“Many breathed their last during the ‘flu’ epidemic, with the little khaki Testament under their pillow, or on the table nearby, and went to meet God in peace.”

their savings, and their senses of security. Malnutrition plagued the poor, and many children went door-to-door begging for scraps of food. The spiritual impact of these years of destitution is impossible to quantify.

By God’s grace, American Bible Society was prepared to share the comforts of the Gospel. We worked with the Civilian Conservation Corp to share more than 250,000 New Testaments. Through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration’s literacy program, we were able to provide invaluable Bibles that helped Americans meet Jesus, the Light of the World, in the Word in their darkest hour.

“No one can measure the financial loss that has been entailed by this economic depression. Neither is it possible to measure the spiritual loss that is undergone when restless men and women are being deprived of that which brings spiritual balance: the revelation of God.” —American Bible Society Annual Report, 1933

WORLD WAR II 1939–1945

The Holocaust, Pearl Harbor, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: World War II was a time of unparalleled devastation. More than 85 million people were killed. Nearly

the entire world lived in fear. This global war and its parade of horrors exposed, more than anything else in our long history, the need for God’s guiding Word.

American Bible Society was called to the frontlines of spiritual relief. We shared more than 7 million Bibles, New Testaments, and Scripture resources during and after the war. We ministered to our brave Military and Veterans. We continued our long tradition of distributing Bibles throughout Europe. We took the Gospel to Japan, pointing people to Jesus in the wake of division and suffering. We put Bibles in churches, hospitals, orphanages, military bases, and thousands of homes around the world. Thanks to the eternal generosity of partners like you, God’s Word went forth in a time of desperate global need.

COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION 1991

For God’s people, the Soviet Union was a 69-year reign of terror. The USSR’s regime was marked by government propaganda, mass surveillance, and the imprisonment of dissidents—including journalists, scientists, and church leaders whose messages did not conform to the state’s narrow scope of acceptable opinions. Increasingly, religion was forced out of public life. Bibles were confiscated, ransacked, or destroyed. More than 100,000 Russian clergy were executed. Eventually, atheism was taught as a fact in public schools.



Former American Bible Society President Eugene Habecker handing out Scripture portions at Ground Zero following the 9/11 attacks.

Then, in 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed. For American Bible Society, this was an urgent opportunity to share the Bible with millions of people who had been forced away from its truth. We began the “Gifts of Love” program to distribute more than 30 million Bibles throughout Russia and Eastern Europe over the course of four years. It was one of our largest, most far-reaching ministry efforts to date. There is no telling how many millions of people discovered God’s love for the first time through this amazing work of the Holy Spirit.

9/11 TERRORIST ATTACK 2001

Never forget. September 11, 2001 lives in infamy. At the time of the terror attacks, American Bible Society’s headquarters was just a few blocks from Ground Zero, the World Trade Center buildings in New York. Consequently, we were among the first on the scene. As courageous police, firefighters, EMTs, and other brave souls rushed into danger to provide emergency relief, we were called to provide front-line emergency spiritual relief.

“COVID-19 is a medical crisis. It is a financial crisis. It is a mental health crisis. And it is a spiritual crisis. We are meeting this crisis head-on, as we have done for more than 200 years.”

American Bible Society prayed with and for thousands of New Yorkers—and the millions of people around the world grieving the loss of loved ones. We provided countless thousands of Bibles, New Testaments, Scripture resources, and devotionals in a time when people were desperately searching for peace. This attack hit close to home, and it revitalized our commitment to providing the hope of God’s Word in times of national crisis.

COVID-19 CRISIS 2020

Right now, millions of people are suffering in the wake of COVID-19. Thousands have died and left their loved ones to grieve in quarantine—often without even the comfort of a proper funeral. People have lost their jobs and businesses and are wracked with anxiety over affording groceries, paying rent, and managing the flood of monthly bills. Churches have been forced to limit or stop gathering together,

making many believers face the pandemic without their community of faith.

COVID-19 is a medical crisis. It is a financial crisis. It is a mental health crisis. And it is a spiritual crisis. We are meeting this crisis head-on, as we have done for more than 200 years.

Today, that means providing emergency relief for people suffering the manifold effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are distributing thousands of Bibles to those searching for God. We are sharing devotionals and prayer guides for those who need spiritual support in moments of anxiety, loneliness, or despair. But most importantly: we are equipping the church to bring healing through the Bible-based trauma healing ministry.

Bible-based trauma healing helps people work through their suffering in light of God’s grace and the power of His Word. Millions of people have found new life through this ministry—from Rwandans overcoming the horrors of genocide to Syrian refugees fleeing the terrors of Isis. Now, in response to COVID-19, we are training thousands of church leaders worldwide to provide this life-transforming ministry. As people confront the pain caused by this pandemic, the church will be ready. The church will respond in faith, offering Bible-based healing in today’s moment of crisis.

By God’s grace, we have been preparing for this moment for more than 200 years. For generations, God has worked through partners like you and through His humble servants in Bible ministry to overcome crisis after crisis—preparing us for such a time as this. 📖

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Will you join American Bible Society’s emergency spiritual response? Your gift will give God’s peace to someone who needs it.

Give today at:
give.bible/relief



PHOTO: Getty Images



American Bible Society staff member Scott Ross lives near financial partner Beverly Emil and was able to visit her during the pandemic to deliver much-needed groceries and to thank her for her faithful generosity. She sweetly agreed to pose for a photo.

Partner Profile

Couponing for the Kingdom

How one partner’s careful money management is allowing her to store up treasures in Heaven

by Dan Leeman

I’m just a simple person, living a simple life,” says Beverly Emil. In the world’s eyes, that might seem true. But from a Christian perspective, 84-year-old Beverly is a hero. Beverly is retired from a successful, forty-year career as a Registered Nurse for two hospitals in Minnesota and Colorado. Now a senior citizen, Beverly receives a comfortable retirement

income, but she lives frugally and is a big fan of couponing. What she saves, she gives. Beverly lives out Matthew 6:19–20, which says, “Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth ... Instead, store up riches for yourselves in heaven.” She has a handwritten list of 94 charities that she routinely gives to in order to see God’s will *done on earth as it is in Heaven*.

Frugality and tithing—that’s a powerful Kingdom-building combination.

Though a world traveler, Beverly does not own a car. She walks everywhere—to church, the store, the library—and even takes extra daily walks. “It keeps me in good health,” she says. Along her walks, Beverly collects discarded aluminum cans. These she crushes, bags, and carries to a recycling center. The coins she receives from this effort are collected in a mite box to support missionaries through her church.

Beverly loves her Bible. She reads everyday using a well-worn American Bible Society Bible reading guide. “I have used this guide for many years,” she explains. “I like it. It works for me.” The guide has led Beverly through the entire Bible annually for numerous years.

Because the Bible is so important to Beverly, she wants to share it with others. She worked with gift planning advisors at American Bible Society to establish a plan that allows her to provide income for many years for her favorite Bible charities—including American Bible Society. This tax-efficient arrangement allows Beverly to continue sharing the Gospel once she has gone home to Heaven. In her life and beyond, Beverly humbly and graciously serves the God she loves. Thank you, Beverly!

+ For FREE assistance on maximizing the impact of your giving through charitable gift planning, contact our team at **1-800-549-3328** or online at **absgift.org**.



The Faith and Liberty Discovery Center will tell the rich history of the Bible’s influence on America when it opens on May 1, 2021. As an American Bible Society supporter, you can get an exclusive sneak peek with a virtual tour of the center at: **advance.faithandliberty.org**



PHOTO: Scott Ross, American Bible Society



BIBLES ON THE BRINK

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M I N I S T R Y

By Laura Chan

n a typical Sunday morning in America, pews, auditorium chairs, and even movie theatre seats are filled with believers worshipping God. In the hallways before service, hugs and news are shared over coffee and, if you're lucky, donuts.

In early 2020, that all changed. When fellowship and hope were direly needed, churches were required to cancel services or move them online. Small group meetings were postponed. Kids' camps were canceled. The Church, built on community, felt distant.

COVID-19 waged war with the Church. It also waged war with global ministries like ours. American Bible Society shares God's Word through our global Bible Society network, but the pandemic has put severe financial strain on 60 percent of these vital Bible ministries. For many of our partners, there has been no government bailout to keep staff active in ministry, no grace period for paying the rent on Bible storage facilities, no emergency fund to cover Scripture distributions.

With 88 Bible Societies facing permanent closure, the future of international Bible ministry is at risk. If this pandemic forces Bible Societies to shut, the ensuing spiritual crisis will devastate tens of millions of people.

However, no matter how difficult this season gets, we trust God. The hymn "Blessed Assurance" comes to mind: "This child can face uncertain days because He lives." God is alive, and in these uncertain days, His Word remains a certain and solid foundation.

Thanks to your prayers and support, Bible Societies working in more than 200 nations had Scripture ready when COVID-19 struck. From America to Asia and from Argentina to Austria, Bible ministries have been sharing hope where it's needed most. Here, we've captured some of the miraculous stories of Bible Society heroes risking their financial security—and sometimes even risking their lives—to make God's glory known.



Moldovan Bible Society provided 300 food baskets and Bibles to families in two quarantined villages. One mayor fell on his knees with tears in his eyes to say, “Thank you very much!”

BIBLES FOR THE LEAST OF THESE

PEOPLE IN POVERTY

For those who cannot afford food, let alone a Bible, the financial crisis of COVID-19 has also provoked a spiritual crisis: *where is God?* In their darkest hour, many have found themselves without Scripture to turn to. In Guatemala—where nearly 60 percent of the population lives under the poverty line—the Bible Society responded to this great need for God’s presence. By partnering with humanitarian aid organizations, they were able to share groceries and 15,000 New Testaments with people who had been out of food and out of faith.

In Uruguay, the Bible Society was frustrated when the quarantine hit and they had no way to sell the 50,000 Bibles they had in stock. However, after praying, they realized God

might have a bigger plan. Recognizing they had a warehouse full of the Bread of Life just as people needed it, they asked God how they could bless their community. Trusting in the generosity of partners and risking their financial stability for the good of the Kingdom, they freely distributed those 50,000 Bibles to people in need in just two months!

PEOPLE IN CRISIS

Here at home, American Bible Society has been ensuring that people who have been devastated in our own country also receive the reassurance of Scripture. “We want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts!” says Pastor Steven Milazzo of Bethlehem Assembly of God Church in New York City. “We are taking bags of groceries to thousands of people, and every bag

of groceries has one of these incredible booklets on how to survive disaster—leading them to know God.” Pastor Milazzo was one of the thousands who helped get food and Scripture into the hands of Americans in need at the peak of COVID-19. Thanks to you, each food pack also included the Bible-based booklet, *Beyond Disaster: A Survivor’s Guide for Spiritual First Aid*, that helps people find God on the other side of crisis. (More than half a million copies of *Beyond Disaster* in 20 different languages are reaching hurting households this year.)

New Yorkers weren’t the only Americans to be connected to the hope of God’s Word in this pandemic. American Bible Society also teamed up with The Salvation Army to provide *Beyond Disaster* in grocery boxes to people in need in states like Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska. Through this partnership, from March to June, we provided more than 70,200 families with Scripture! We’re continuing to expand this partnership to ensure vulnerable populations across our nation receive the strength of Scripture.

PEOPLE FAR FROM HOME

On the other side of the world, in Jordan, God’s Word has also been speaking new life to refugees. More than 650,000 refugees live in Jordan—the majority fleeing war in their home countries. Many live in crowded camps with limited opportunities for employment or schooling, making them particularly vulnerable to the pandemic. When COVID-19 struck, Bible Society of Jordan acted quickly, distributing Scripture resources alongside food packages and COVID-19 protection gear. “We are so thankful for the food package, but seeing my son open up his Bible as soon as he received it was the biggest joy for me,” said one mother. “Thank you with all our hearts,” added a father who received a box of food. “We truly needed this package today more than ever.”

Like refugees, migrant workers are also separated from home and hope. Most work long hours for bottom dollar to send money home to sustain their families. In the Persian Gulf, it’s common for these workers to live in crowded buildings—sharing just one bathroom and kitchen with hundreds of others. Living in these conditions, it can be hard to hold onto purpose. With sickness looming and work sites closing, many have become despondent. Suicide rates are spiking.

Bible Society in the Gulf serves these communities, publishing and distributing Scripture in 60 languages. Through your support, at the beginning of 2020, more than 20,000 people in the Gulf received Scripture in their languages such as Tagalog, Telugu, Tamil, Urdu, Nepali, and Arabic. In times like these when migrant workers could be most fearful of their circumstances and their future, Scripture allows them to instead find solace in the Lord.



This year, 70,200 families received Scripture with their groceries through a partnership between American Bible Society and The Salvation Army.

Prasad is a migrant worker in Dubai who has seen God’s goodness firsthand. She says this pandemic is giving people a fresh chance to find God. “It is not corona but *karuna*, which means mercy, grace, and compassion in Telugu,” says Prasad. “God is giving us the opportunity to turn to Him.”

LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO JESUS

KENYAN CHILDREN

“Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so,” goes the popular children’s song. But some kids don’t have a Bible to reassure them of Jesus’s love. Some kids go to sleep every night wondering if anybody cares about them.

For Kenyan children who have been abandoned by their families and forced to fend for themselves at a too-young age, the statement

“Jesus loves you” is particularly profound. COVID-19 has put additional pressure on these “street children” who typically survive off scraps from dumpsters. When Kenya’s government closed restaurants and hotels to curb the spread of the disease, those establishments stopped throwing out their excess food. Janet, a young teenage mother living on the streets in Nairobi, Kenya, said, “We have been sleeping hungry because the rubbish bins have become empty.”



Despite restrictions, Bible Society in Syria was able to continue its children’s outreach at Easter—sharing the peace of Jesus with 28,000 children!

Thanks to the support of partners like you, Bible Society of Kenya was able to respond with both spiritual and physical nourishment: providing meals, screening the JESUS Film that tells the story of Christ, and starting Audio Bible listening groups. Through this ministry, these precious youth are receiving tangible care and learning that they are loved by God. Program Coordinator Susan Ndiang’ui says, “The feeding, interactive sessions, and sharing the Word through JESUS Film and Audio Scriptures has opened my eyes to see that a small act of love can open opportunities to be a blessing to the world. That is what Jesus would do.”

“Can you see how Jesus is sitting among the children, loving them with all His heart?”

SYRIAN CHILDREN

In the Middle East—a region that has been marked by violence and fear—God’s Word provides essential hope. Our network of Bible Societies there is led by tireless, local leaders—many of whom remain in-country despite risks to their own and their families’ safety. The Director of Bible Society in Syria, George Andrea, is one such believer who has stayed in Aleppo despite the ongoing fighting. This Easter, it was not his own peace on his mind but that of the children in the country—many of whom have seen the horrors of war firsthand. Despite Syria’s quarantine orders, the Bible Society staff were determined to share Jesus with kids who needed a reminder of the Prince of Peace. “We can’t disappoint the children,” says George. “Syrian children have so little.”

The Bible Society assembled a team of volunteers to mask up and distribute Scripture



Nearly 1,000 rural families received food packages and Scriptures through Peruvian Bible Society’s Bread of Life ministry that provides a daily meal and Bible lesson for at-risk children.

to 28,000 children. At one distribution, a young boy named Bechara asked what the books were about. “The story is about Jesus who loves you very much,” the Bible Society volunteer said, handing him his first Bible. “Can you see how Jesus is sitting among the children, loving them with all His heart?” A smile lit up Bechara’s face, and he ran to his mother with his new Bible to ask her to read it to him. Thanks to the Bible Society and your ongoing support, children in Syria like Bechara are finding joy in Jesus—even in the midst of conflict and fear.

PERUVIAN CHILDREN

Peruvian Bible Society typically runs a ministry called *Pan de Vida* (Bread of Life) that brings food and Bible classes to hundreds of at-risk kids living in remote areas. But when the quarantine began, access to these rural communities was restricted to stop the spread of the virus. The Bible Society prayed hard and got creative. They arranged distribution points where mothers could come to pick up supplies for the whole family and got a special government permit

to be allowed to travel to transport the goods. One mother had tears in her eyes as she told the Bible Society, “I used to sell in the street but no longer can. I had no food for my children. Thank you for the help and the Bible stories!”

Seventeen communities have been sustained to date, with 913 families receiving groceries and Scriptures. “I want the little Book!” cheered one group of children as the mothers arrived home. Let the little ones come to Jesus!

EVEN GREATER THINGS THAN THESE

The stories we’ve shared here are only small snapshots of the incredible Bible ministry happening around the globe. Be encouraged that God is still using you to do great things—even if this has been a difficult year for you.

“ God had to reach the hard-hearted like me through the pandemic.”

Through your gifts, people are finding life in Christ through Scripture. One such salvation story about an elderly gentleman named Sergey* recently came to us from our partners at Bible Society of Ukraine. Sergey is 79 years old and lives in Kyiv, Ukraine, on the 14th floor of an apartment building. Due to an illness that confines him to bed, he has not left his home for more than a year. This time in confinement has caused him to reflect on the meaning of life. He says, “I felt that there had to be something greater in life, but I always ignored those quiet

appeals of my soul.” When Bible Society of Ukraine brought Sergey his first Bible, it had a profound effect. “I have passed various churches thousands of times and was never interested in them. But I’ve never encountered the Bible before,” he said. God spoke directly to Sergey through Psalm 23. As a Bible Society volunteer read it aloud to him, tears rolled down his face, and he said, “God had to reach the hard-hearted like me through the pandemic.”

Sergey is one of countless thousands who have come to faith during this global pandemic. Thank God that—even in times of isolation and uncertainty—He is drawing people to life in Him through His Word!

It is for this ultimate purpose that hope-filled Bible Societies continue to share God’s Word—even as many are on the brink of collapse. Together, we believe we will get through this. Together, we believe God will use us for even greater ministry. Together, we believe God for the promise of Psalm 91:15: “When they call to me, I will answer them; when they are in trouble, I will be with them. I will rescue them and honor them.” *Come, Lord Jesus!* 🙏

*Name changed to protect privacy



WITHOUT YOU, THESE MAY BE THE LAST BIBLES BENINESE CHILDREN EVER RECEIVE.

More than 500 million people are at risk of never receiving Scripture. More than 60 percent of the world could lose its core Bible presence. American Bible Society shares the comfort of God’s Word through our Bible Society network, but the coronavirus pandemic has put 88 Bible Societies in critical financial condition.

Will you save these Bible Societies so they can continue sharing God’s Word with those who need it most?

Give today 1 of 3 easy ways:

- ✉ Mail the included form and your gift in the prepaid envelope
- ☎ Call 1-866-895-4448
- 💻 Visit give.bible/relief



PHOTO: Dag K. Smeemo



NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US

AS SICKNESS STRUCK,
ONE MALAYSIAN WOMAN
FOUND PEACE IN
GOD'S NEARNESS

By Laura Chan

“I could see the setting sun way beyond the high mountains.” Lillian Buran-Dorai scrawled the words across her prayer journal as tears rolled from her eyes. For Lillian, this scene didn’t represent a peaceful retreat; instead, it was her depiction of how far away God felt from her in her grief.

Lillian comes from Malaysia, which went into lockdown due to the coronavirus in mid-March 2020. As things shut down around her, Lillian’s world closed in on her. She got a call that her sister had been hospitalized with chest pains. Then, a nephew’s diabetes spiraled out of control and he too was rushed to the hospital. Every time Lillian’s phone rang, she feared the worst. She tried her best not to think about her other sister, a living time bomb of a tumor pressing on her brain stem.

Stuck at home, Lillian tried to pray but couldn’t get the words out right. She felt like she was carrying boulders of fear and anxiety. She identified with the words of the Psalmist, “How long must I endure trouble? How long will sorrow fill my heart day and night?” (Psalm 13:2).

When it seemed like she couldn’t bear another piece of bad news, more came: her eldest sister was diagnosed with end-stage pancreatic cancer. She was given less than six months to live. “Our hearts are broken and shattered to pieces,” says Lillian. “We are crying every day and calling God to intervene.”

God answered in an unlikely way—with a message of hope delivered through a fellow believer from Thailand. Lillian was invited to participate in an online Bible-based trauma healing group—a ministry that helps people lay their pain at the foot of the Cross and renew their relationship with Christ through Scripture.

In one session, Lillian received a message directly from God. “When our facilitator Peggy gently read Romans 8:38–39, the words jumped at me,” she says. “They were so apt and spoke right into my situation: ‘Nothing can separate us from His love.’”

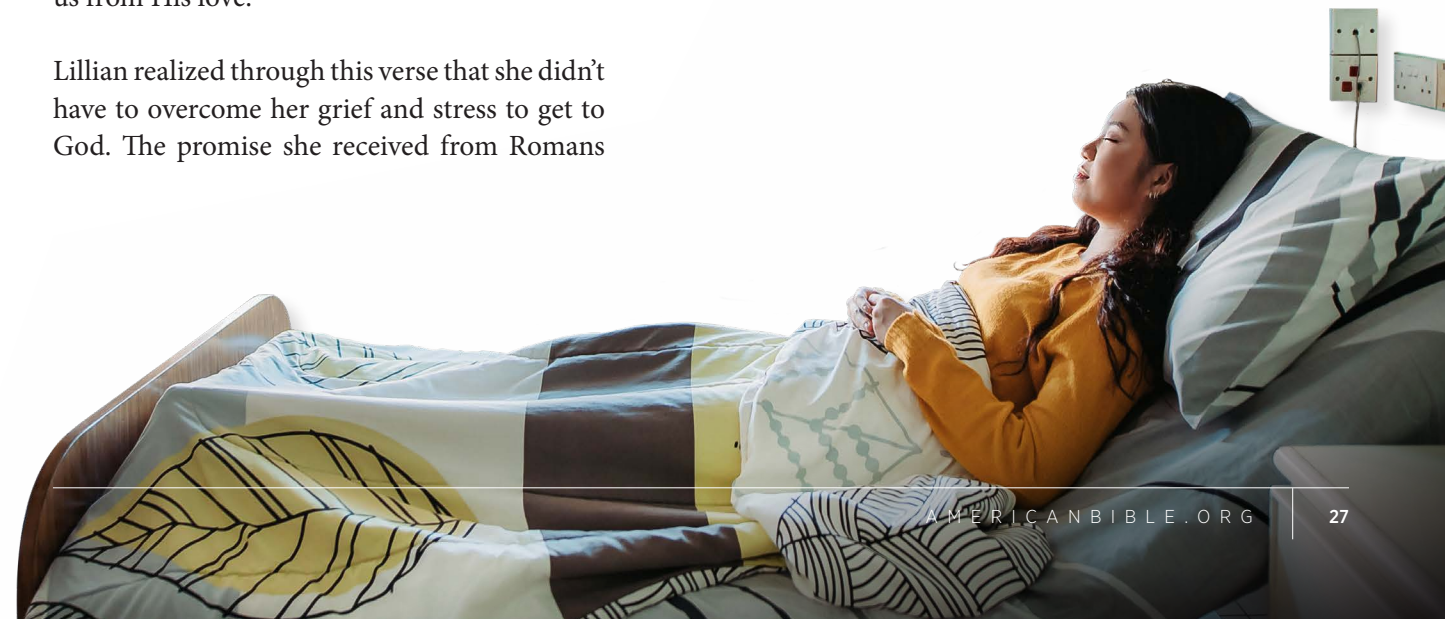
Lillian realized through this verse that she didn’t have to overcome her grief and stress to get to God. The promise she received from Romans

“I heard God speaking to me, ‘Put your burdens on Me. My yoke is easy.’ I felt the burden was lifted off my back as God Himself was carrying it for me.”

was that nothing could separate her from God’s love. “Nothing! Nothing! Nothing! Not the ocean, not the valleys, not the high mountains! Nothing in *all* creation!” she declared.

This truth from God’s Word came alive to her personally. “I heard God speaking to me, ‘Put your burdens on Me. My yoke is easy,’” she says. “I felt the burden was lifted off my back as God Himself was carrying it for me.”

Today, Lillian is grateful for God’s presence and for His healing. Her sister was only given six months to live, but six months and six chemotherapy treatments later, Lillian says she’s “more alive than ever.” Lillian continues to pray daily, reminding herself that nothing—nothing!—will separate her from God’s love. ■



PHOTOS: Getty Images

ONE BODY: RACE & THE CHURCH



Q&A with Rev. Dr. Nicole Martin on
how believers can react to racial unrest
in America

“It is through faith that all of you are God’s children in union with Christ Jesus.... You are all one in union with Christ Jesus.”

GALATIANS 3:26, 28

The Bible teaches us to love one another (John 13:34). It teaches us that we all belong to one body (1 Corinthians 12:26). It tells us to follow God’s command to be just, merciful, and humble (Micah 6:8). We believe that the Bible holds the answer to the deep racial wounds of our country. In these times of racial tension and loss, American Bible Society’s Bible-based trauma healing is helping church leaders guide people past their hurts and preconceptions to find truth in Christ. *Record* editor Laura Chan sat down with American Bible Society’s Vice

President of Church Engagement and Executive Director of our Trauma Healing Ministry, the Rev. Dr. Nicole Martin, to get her perspective on what the Bible says about caring for believers from other races.

Q We’ve been grieving with you as you recently lost your grandmother to COVID-19. How are you processing your personal grief in the midst of a national crisis?

A Honestly, I am still processing this loss. Those who have had to attend virtual funerals know that the grieving process can be extended when we cannot say goodbye in ways to which we are accustomed. This is an even deeper pain because it represents

an unfortunate collective experience of Black people during this crisis; *The Washington Post* reports that nearly one third of Black Americans know someone who has died from COVID-19. While there are many factors that play into this reality—like the social determinants of health, wealth gaps, communal living, public transportation, et cetera—I’m learning to allow my faith in God and confidence in God’s Word to clarify how I should feel and what I should do. God’s Word allows me to lament, grieve, and feel all that I feel. Simultaneously, God’s Word inspires me to act justly and think carefully about how I can ensure that more people don’t have to experience what I have experienced. Both of these take time and grace.

Q You often quote from the writings of the Rev. Dr. Soong-Chan Rah—and most specifically from his book *Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times*. Why do you think it is important for the Church to lament together, and what steps can people take today to initiate this process?

A In his book, *Prophetic Lament*, Professor Rah suggests that lament is the proper response of God’s people to the brokenness of the world. Lament acknowledges that there are some pains from our past that we have not yet overcome. In the current state of our nation, Christians can initiate lament that builds stronger unity among believers.

There are several steps we can take today. First, we can acknowledge that many Black Americans are living in a collective grief in the wake of the deaths of people like Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. We can listen to the stories and lived experiences of Black Americans, understand the historical

roots of their collective pain, and sit in solidarity as they suffer, as Christ teaches us. Second, we can learn from the Bible on how to express that lament individually and collectively. Like David cries out in Psalm 13:1 (NKJV), we can ask, “How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?” Third, once we’ve learned how to lament personally and collectively, we can find healing in Christ. As we heal as a community, we will be led to act justly for all.

Q Thank you, Dr. Martin. I’m sure some of this will be uncomfortable for us to do, but I think that’s part of your point: none of us should be comfortable when our brothers and sisters in faith are facing fear and persecution. What step would you suggest readers take right now?

A I’m grateful for this opportunity to share from my heart. If people are looking for more resources on a biblical response to race relations in the U.S., they can go to the abs.bible/justice website where we’ve posted resources like a small group curriculum and a webinar on conversations about race with diverse church leaders. And of course the most important thing any of us can do is look to the truths of Scripture. There’s a great resource on the abs.bible/justice website called “Jesus’s Parables on Justice” that has reflections from 30 pastors on what God’s justice looks like, what it demands of us, and how we can live out justice in our own communities. I invite all of us to pray for God’s healing, individually and collectively, so that we may live as one in Christ.

+ Find resources on a biblical response to race relations in America at abs.bible/justice

TOP PHOTO: Getty Images; PORTRAIT PHOTO: Doug Nottage, American Bible Society



IN MEMORIAM

“God blesses those people who grieve. They will find comfort!”

MATTHEW 5:4 (CEV)

in memory of
Dr. Donald Ames
given by Capt. Stephen and
Lucia Bailey

in memory of
Joyce R. Bell
given by Capt. Stephen and
Lucia Bailey

in memory of my mother and
my sister
June Felicia Bishop
given by Renée Bishop and
Waveney Bishop-Graham

in memory of my husband
Dean Blackwell
given by Carol Blackwell

in memory of
Elmer Buhrdorf,
Helen Buhrdorf, and
Wayne Buhrdorf
given by Thomas J. Johnson

in memory of
Marilyn Carter
given by Rebecca Carter

in memory of my husband
Robert Lynn Crout, III
given by Kathy Lawson Crout

in memory of my husband
Jeffrey S. East
given by April East

in memory of our family members
Mr. and Mrs. Clem R. (Frances)
Galan and Olga Aguillon and
Noemi Lagunas
given by CGF properties, LLC

in memory of
Leslie Gosnell and
Grace Gosnell
given by Ronald and Connie Bowman

in memory of
Jonathan Hanchett
given by Stephanie Hanchett

in memory of my wife
June Handwerker
given by Bob Handwerker

in memory of my daughter
Kim Handwerker
given by Bob Handwerker

in memory of
Rose Hendrickson
given by Dona L. Myers

in memory of
Arthur Howie and
Jeanette Howie
given by Ken Howie

in memory of my father and mother
Richard Alan Ledford and
Peggy Marie Rhyne Ledford
given by Ledford Family Trust

in memory of
Edna McLean
given by Alexander and Janet Ungaro

in memory of my twin sister
Janet Mirtschin
given by John Priebe

in memory of
Claudette LeMerdy Munch
given by a friend

in memory of
N.A. Palacio
given by Abraham D. Palacio

in memory of my wife
Rosemarie Pierce
given by Donald Pierce

in memory of
Buddy Replogle
given by Jim Miller

in memory of
W. Walton Stone
given by John S. Huggins Foundation

in memory of
Dr. Neil Walker
given by Capt. Stephen and
Lucia Bailey



Anna-Marie is a retired schoolteacher. She has made donations to American Bible Society for years. Now that her income is lower and her taxes are higher, however, Anna-Marie was concerned about how she would continue supporting her favorite charities.

Anna-Marie: *I feel fortunate that I've been able to support several Christian charities for so long. I believe in American Bible Society's Bible mission, and I wanted to continue giving to see people meet Jesus through the Bible.*

I started looking for ways I could save money and continue supporting missions. I talked to American Bible Society and learned that I could transfer money directly from my IRA to them!

An individual who is age 70 1/2 and older can transfer up to \$100,000 per year directly to charity.

Anna-Marie called her IRA custodian and requested a transfer of \$15,000 from her IRA directly to American Bible Society.

Anna-Marie: *The money in my IRA was just sitting there. I was thrilled to learn that a gift from my IRA could provide Bibles for waiting hands and open hearts!*

Contact our team at American Bible Society today to learn how you too can share God's Word with a gift from your IRA. Get free help from our Gift Planning experts:

- Call **1-800-549-3328**
- Email **GiftPlanner@AmericanBible.org**
- Visit **absgift.org**

ACT NOW TO SAVE ON TAXES

“Be generous, and you will be prosperous. Help others, and you will be helped.” *PROVERBS 11:25*

THANK YOU FOR SHARING GOD'S WORD

During these times of change and uncertainty, we want to pause to thank you for your partnership. Your gifts put Scripture in the hands and hearts of people around the world.

We believe that every person matters to God, so every gift that shares God's Word matters to God too. Thank you for sharing the life-changing message of the Bible.

MAJOR GIFT WITH MINOR EFFORT

Many people are discovering that they can make a big difference in the Bible cause with an IRA rollover gift. For an added benefit, consider designating American Bible Society as a beneficiary of your IRA.

REDUCE TAXES; INCREASE YOUR IMPACT

An IRA charitable rollover provides several benefits. It allows you to transfer up to \$100,000 from your IRA directly to a nonprofit this year. You pay no taxes on the transfer, and your gift counts dollar-for-dollar to share Scripture with those in need.

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:
866-895-4448 or **ABSDonor@AmericanBible.org**

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**WITHOUT YOU, THESE MAY BE THE LAST
BIBLES COSTA RICAN CHILDREN EVER RECEIVE.**

Will these be Costa Rican children's last Bibles? Or will you help? COVID-19 is threatening Bible Societies worldwide. Without funding, many won't survive. If you do nothing, people won't have God's Word when they need it most.

I want people to have the comfort of God's Word now.

Here's my gift of: ☐ \$35 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$150 ☐ Other \$ _____

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