

# Word **in** Action



**A teenage gangster planned a shooting, but instead found Jesus.**

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**How your support leads people to Jesus in Bahrain's labour camps.**

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**Happy birthday Bible Society! 220 years young! Let's look back ... and forward.**

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# Welcome to the Summer Edition

## EDITOR'S NOTE

### Brothers and sisters

King Charles has followed in the footsteps of his mother and become Bible Society's patron. I scrapped the intro I was writing so as to share this great news with you.

In my old intro I was writing about prayer and quoting 2 Kings 20 verse 5: 'I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I will heal you' (NIV).

Physical healing is wonderful, but as we know, Jesus goes one better than this. Wilson on the opposite page is an excellent example of spiritual healing.

Two of my friends recently had cancer diagnoses. The cancer has been seemingly overcome, but I keep praying for them, because they still need peace and hope. That's a good reason for keeping Jesus close at all times.

Who in your life needs prayer right now? On page 12 you'll see how you can share prayers with us and others. As a community of believers, let's lift countless healing prayers to God.

Let's pray for the King as he battles cancer. The King likely has many people around him offering comfort, but ultimate comfort can only be found in the peace and hope offered through our Lord Jesus.

God bless you all and thanks for making all this Bible work possible.

God bless you all.

Simon Bartz, Editor



## A CHAT WITH OUR CEO

### It's Bible Society's 220th anniversary. What's the most inspiring part of our history?

I think it's the intent of the Christians who started Bible Society. They were motivated by

a living faith. They believed that the Bible affected all of life and they practised that, for example, in prison and factory reform and the abolition of slavery.

### How does Bible Mission differ 220 years on?

The main obstacles have changed. Back then, about 10 per cent of the planet could access the Bible in a language they understood. Now it's more than 90 per cent, and Bible Societies have produced the majority of the translations. So today it's an appetite-and-understanding problem, more than an access-to-the-Bible problem.

### What do we learn from the past?

We can be inspired by the motivation and vision of our founders for the importance of the Bible, not only for an individual's vital relationship with Jesus, but also for change in whole societies. The faithfulness of the founders of Bible Society made a big difference in the world, and we can make a difference too.

### What do you think Bible mission will look like 220 years into the future?

There may not be so much need for linguistic translations then, but there will always be a need for cultural translations. Every generation has to engage with the Bible and it is vital there is a generational transmission of this understanding. We are living in a time where we've had a generational failure of transmission so now we are in a very difficult position because there is a huge amount of ignorance. This is our responsibility now – to teach the next generation.

Paul Williams, Bible Society's Chief Executive

Cover photo: Thanks to your support the Bible is translated into more than 60 languages in the Gulf so that migrant workers from all around the world, like this housemaid in Bahrain, can be provided with one in their own language. Photo credit: Bible Society in the Gulf

Word in Action design: Katie Tang

Online ordering: [shop.biblesociety.org.uk/wia](http://shop.biblesociety.org.uk/wia)

For all enquiries call 01793 418222

## Teenager wanted revenge for a murder but instead he found Jesus

### Your support of the Open the Book ministry in the slum areas of Guatemala City is leading young people away from gangs and towards Jesus through Bible storytelling.

WORDS BY BETH READ



Your support means Bible storytelling is changing the lives of teenage gang members such as Wilson in Guatemala City as they encounter Jesus through the Scriptures. Photos: Matt Cooper/Bible Society

'I heard the gun shot. I watched my brother bleed to death. I carry that trauma,' Wilson tells me at the infamous Etapa II detention centre in Guatemala City. He was 14 when he saw his elder brother gunned down in front of him.

Wilson couldn't eat or sleep after the killing. He joined a gang and plotted revenge.

'I had a lovely relationship with my brother. We worked together, earning a few quetzal (Guatemalan currency) for carrying sacks of rice. We even used to go to church together.'

Wilson shows me a photo of when he was given a Bible at church at the age of 5.

After his 23-year-old brother was killed, Wilson turned his back on God. He was sitting on a porch with a friend when the police came. They found a gun on his

friend. They were both taken into custody.

Wilson has the number 18 tattooed on his arm. This indicates an allegiance to the notorious 18th Street gang, which has a membership of up to 50,000.

### Seeking revenge

'Sometimes I left the house seeking revenge for my brother. But I heard a voice telling me don't do it and I now believe that voice was Jesus,' says Wilson, who celebrated his 15th birthday the day before my visit.

I was at the Etapa II detention centre with the Guatemalan Bible Society team. It was one of the regular Open the Book days at the prison, where the team dramatises Bible stories with the inmates often joining in. Wilson is a little too shy for that, but he always attends, absorbing the



Open the Book volunteers are buoyed by your amazing support of the Bible storytelling project in Guatemala. Here detention centre inmates listen attentively to a Bible storytelling volunteer.

stories that point to the hope and love and forgiveness that can only be found in Jesus.

'As soon as I heard Bible stories were being shared in the prison I wanted to come,' he said.

He tells me he particularly likes hearing stories about how God never abandons his children. Hearing him say this reminds me once again that Wilson is





## Cries from the dark answered by the Light

WORDS BY SIMON BARTZ

Thanks to you more and more migrant workers in the Gulf region, like these housemaids in Bahrain, are receiving Bibles and finding love and hope in Jesus.  
Photos: Bible Society in the Gulf

**When migrant workers arrive in the Gulf to take up low-paid jobs as housemaids or construction workers they are often entering a world of pain.**

Desperate to earn money to send back to their impoverished families in the Indian sub-continent, Africa or elsewhere, they put their physical and mental health at risk. It's been reported in the media that men endure harsh working conditions on construction sites and housemaids have intense workloads.

The good news is that more and more of them are finding peace and hope in Christ, and Bible Society supporters are crucial to this. Your kind giving provides Bibles to these people, your generosity trains church workers and Bible storytellers to help guide them.

The most recently completed End to End project engaged migrant workers from the Telugu community. Telugu speakers from India make up the largest expatriate community in Bahrain.

'It is a process for fulfilling the Great Commission by allowing unreached people to watch, listen, read, and experience the transformative power of the gospel. Together, we're bringing people into the kingdom of God through the word of God,' says Hrayr Jebejian, General Secretary of Bible Society in the Gulf.

Pastor John Wesley (what a wonderful name!) leads a pentecostal Telugu congregation mostly made up of domestic helpers and construction workers. They toil long hours to support their families back home while they live in abject poverty and hopelessness. John and his wife Kalyani visit 19 labour camps on

a regular basis to minister to these individuals.

'We receive many resources such as audio and printed Bibles, Scripture portions, discipleship through storytelling. Our volunteers are equipped to reach the unreached. We have many challenges at the camps – lack of permission to enter, unfriendly guards, antagonistic people who try to disrupt, and no space for meetings. Sometimes, we just stand outside in the open air. Kindly pray for the people being reached,' says John.

On the next page, people involved in End to End tell you what it's like in their own words, so you can understand more about the impact of your kind support.



Simon Bartz,  
Editor

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With the End To End project, every year we take one church and work with them throughout the year, disciple them and see how the church grows. It allows unreached people to watch, listen, read and experience the transformative power of the gospel. Together, we're bringing people into the kingdom of God through the word of God.”

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



Construction workers in the Gulf are receiving Bibles and finding Jesus.



To directly support our work in the Gulf go to [biblesociety.org.uk/gulf-wia](https://biblesociety.org.uk/gulf-wia) or scan the code



## Heartwarming testimonies from migrant labour camps in Bahrain

'I am from India. I got married at 13 and had my first child at 14. My husband is addicted to alcohol and he beat me up. To take care of my family and educate my two children I borrowed money from people and arrived in Bahrain. Life is hard here. I work in people's houses and some of them do not treat me well. I used to worry about everything and get angry but then I encountered the End to End project. I am illiterate, so I was very happy when they gave me an audio Bible. Listening to the word of God changed my life. I feel God speaking to me in my ear. I try to apply all the lessons I learned in my own life. I don't worry or get angry now because I know God loves me. The pastor and his wife visit us, listen to us and teach us the word of God.'

**Mariam**

'Our families are in India. We are allowed to go home maybe once every two years. We have little material possessions, but I have the costliest gift of all – my Bible!'

**Narasimha**

'We came to Bahrain to earn some money and send home so that our children will not be illiterate like us. Pastor told us that he would show us a film. We were

overly excited, thinking it may be one of the latest Hollywood ones. When we watched the Jesus film in Telugu, most of us were crying. We think our life is full of struggles and problems. After I saw the film, I realised that Jesus went through worse things, even torture. Then Pastor gave us audio Bibles. When I call home, I tell my children stories from the Bible. I have begun attending church, and I hope I will be able to be baptised soon. It is a joy for me to be able to learn about Christ and try to be like him.'

**Prasad**

'We went to minster to a group of ladies. One was having an anxiety attack. She was worried about her children back home while struggling to make ends meet. We prayed and laid hands on her after which she felt relieved and rested. We are thankful for God's intervention.'

**Kalyani Wesley**

**Pastor John and our colleagues in the Gulf send a big 'thank you' to Bible Society supporters for providing the Scriptures that lead more people to Jesus.**



# 220 years of Bible mission: thank you!

To mark 220 incredible years of Bible ministry, we look back through the decades – and explore the challenges and opportunities of today ...

WORDS BY CLAIRE SMITH



Rosita, 11, loves hearing Bible stories at Open the Book events at her school in Guatemala City. Her favourite story is God's creation in Genesis. Photo credit: Matt Cooper/Bible Society

It's 1800 and young Mary Jones sets out from her home in the Welsh mountains. She hears Bibles are for sale in Bala. So she walks, all 26 miles, to buy one with money she's been saving for years.

The story is legendary – but, still, it's amazing to consider the huge impact this teenage girl has had on the world ...

A few years later, inspired by Mary, Bible Society was formed. Since then, with support from you and others, we've produced most of the world's Bible translations and about 80 million Bibles are printed every year.

## More to do

But even after 220 years of fruitful ministry, our task is not yet complete. The landscape has changed beyond recognition since 1804 – but your support is as vital as ever.

Now, you can carry a whole Bible in your pocket (on a smartphone), but in England and Wales, 86 per cent of people never or hardly ever read the Bible. Christianity is

a minority religion, according to the 2021 census, and it's declining across Western Europe.

## Gospel opportunities

Despite this, opportunities for Bible mission are everywhere.

Here in the UK, there's real openness towards faith. A Bible Society survey showed that, rather than being hostile, most people are indifferent or even curious about religion. A quarter of adults in England and Wales even want to know more about the Bible. Around the world, the church is growing in places like Africa as more people have Scripture in their language.

## Bible engagement

So the task today is no longer about making the Bible available, *it's about Bible engagement.*

Our job is to help Scriptures become a channel for people to encounter the living God. We want Christians to put Bible mission at the heart of what they do, and we want the Bible to inform influential conversations about living a good life.

Your support is helping to meet the challenges and opportunities before us, including:

- Producing resources for Christians such as *The Bible Course* and *The Romans Course*
- Reaching people formerly excluded from the 'Bible-reading norm', like people in prison or with disabilities (see page 3)
- Scaling up the work to share the Bible with schoolchildren through storytelling
- Connecting with politicians and leaders to show the Bible has something to say about life

Thank you for being part of the Bible Society story. Please continue to support and pray for Bible mission in great anticipation for the decades to come.



Claire Smith, Freelance writer



A scene from a costumed re-enactment of the life of Mary Jones.



Revd Thomas Charles rewarded Mary Jones with three Bibles after she walked 26 miles to Bala in the hope of obtaining one. Photo credit: Bible Society



Queen Elizabeth II was our patron and in 1958 she visited us and took a look at Bibles that were about to be shipped.



Kua Wee Seng, who used to lead Bible ministry in China, at the Amity Printing Press in Nanjing. Photo credit: Clare Kendall/Bible Society



Thanks to your help, more than a million Bibles have been distributed by our colleagues in Ukraine since the war began. Photo credit: Ukrainian Bible Society

- 1800:** Mary Jones walks 26 miles through the Welsh mountains to buy a Bible in her language.
- 1804:** Bible Society founded by anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce MP, among others.
- 1853:** First 'one million Bibles for China' campaign.
- 1918:** 34 new Bible translations completed during World War I, and four Bibles a minute distributed, right through the war, to people in need.
- 1945:** 45 million copies of Scripture circulated during World War II, to soldiers on all sides.
- 1946:** United Bible Societies formed to coordinate global mission.
- 1952:** Queen Elizabeth II becomes our patron.
- 1977:** Bible a Month launched, to help faithful supporters give regularly.
- 1987:** We help establish China's Amity Printing Company, the world's biggest Bible-printing press.
- 1999:** Open the Book, Bible storytelling for primary school children, founded.
- 2015:** Digital Bible Library created, with the aim of hosting Scripture in every language by 2033.
- 2022:** More than £1m raised to provide Bibles following the outbreak of war in Ukraine.



50+% of the world's people have a whole Bible translation, thanks to Bible Society



600m more people will have Scripture in the next 20 years, through new translations



5.6bn people can read our Bibles online through YouVersion



100,000 people learn to read every year with our Bible literacy classes



155 Bible Societies around the world



Photo credit: Bible Society

Bible Society was founded because of Mary Jones' long walk for a Bible. And now you can put your faith into action and Step out for Scripture! You can sign up today at [biblesociety.org.uk/stepout](https://biblesociety.org.uk/stepout)

Whether you walk 5 or 50 miles, every pound you raise will help reach more people with the Bible.

As we're celebrating our 220th birthday, if you raise more than £220 as an individual, or £2,200 as a group, you'll receive a commemorative medal.



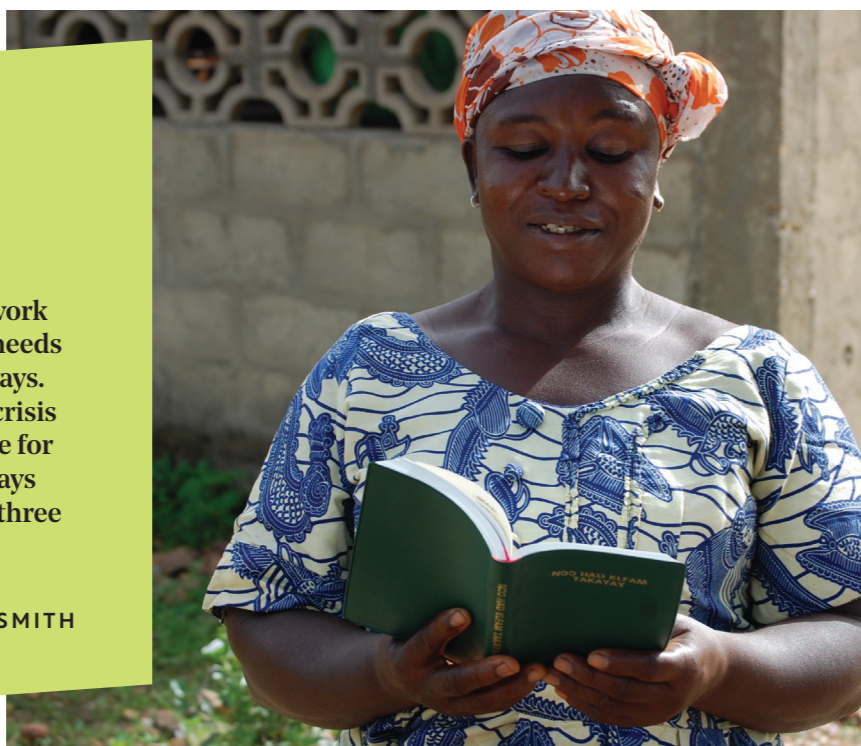
Sign up at [biblesociety.org.uk/stepout](https://biblesociety.org.uk/stepout) or scan the code.



## God's word at work in Africa

Your support is powerfully at work across Africa, meeting urgent needs and sharing the Bible in new ways. You're giving hope to those in crisis and introducing Jesus to people for the first time. Here are three ways you're making Jesus known in three different countries.

WORDS BY JAMES HOWARD-SMITH



### A new translation in Togo

Dozens of people who are passionate about God's word have twinned their Bible with the soon-to-be-published Kabiye Old Testament. Their donation of £60 supports translators and each donor receives a bookplate to go in their own Bible.

Kabiye is Togo's second national language, spoken by around a million people. Believers there love the New Testament, but when it comes to teaching the Old Testament, preachers are working with Scriptures in French (the official language) or Ewe (one of the national languages). 'It has been difficult to translate and transmit the Bible's message in Kabiye,' said Ruben, a church leader. 'It can be hard to explain traditions and why as Christians we shouldn't do certain things.' 'When the Bible is translated,' said Ruben, 'it will be easy to help Kabiye people understand how to live out their new lives in Christ for the glory of God.'

### Music in Mali

Mali is Muslim-majority, has low levels of literacy and a very young



Christians who speak Kabiye love the New Testament and they're longing to read the Old Testament in their language. Photo credit: Macaire Gbiki/Bible Society

population. It also has a distinct musical tradition. In the decades following Mali's independence, the National Instrumental Ensemble toured the world, bringing Malian music to new audiences. One audience these styles are beginning to reach is the country's Christian congregations. Up to now, churches have largely done without traditional music, which has only strengthened the notion that Jesus is foreign and irrelevant. With your support, Mali's Bible Society team is teaching folk musicians to sing Scripture in local dialects.

After a performance in the capital, Bamako, Pastor Thera André, said, 'It's touched me a lot. This programme must continue and reach all peoples and ethnicities in Mali so that everyone hears the holy words of God and participates in them.'

Baptist leader Dr Mohamed Ag Infa Yattara added, 'This kind of event would have been impossible before.'

### Emergency aid in Sudan

Sudan is chronically unstable. In 2011 it experienced an extraordinary demographic change when its southern states, where Christians were the majority, gained independence



The use of Malian folk instruments for worship and witness is revolutionising people's understanding of Scripture. Photo credit: Bible Society in Mali



Emergency support from you was given to Bible workers like these, who have been forced out of their homes in Sudan.

and became a separate country, South Sudan. This means Sudan is 97 per cent Muslim and a tough place to be a Christian, especially since last year when tensions erupted into civil war.

'I think this is the most difficult time I have experienced since I started working with Bible Society in Sudan,' said Revd Ismail Abdulrahman Kanani, who leads the team there. Some of his staff have been driven from their homes, others have fled violence and some have even been evicted. 'I am trying to connect all the staff from different locations, some in the country and others abroad.'

Earlier this year, supporters of Bible Society in England and Wales provided £10,000 as an urgent response to this crisis. Your practical support is helping Ismail hold his team together and restore their Bible outreach programmes.



James Howard-Smith, Digital Fundraiser



## Togo Population, 9 million

Togo is a founding member of La Francophonie, a group of nations in which French is a first, official or culturally significant language.

In 1961, Togo's first presidential election was won by Sylvanus Olympio with 100 per cent of the vote. Olympio was assassinated two years later.

## Mali Population, 22 million

Mali takes its name from the Medieval Islamic Malian Empire, having been called French Sudan under colonial rule.

It's home to Timbuktu, an ancient desert city that became an object of fascination for Europeans, who considered it an African El Dorado.

## Sudan Population, 50.5 million

The modern Republic of Sudan, south of Egypt, covers an area that the Bible calls Cush.

The Nile is Sudan's main source of water, and it runs right through the country.



# Finding God in the great outdoors

Andrew Ollerton discusses *The Map and the Mountain*, a new short film by Bible Society that captures his journey with God summiting a 4,067km-high peak in the Swiss Alps.

WORDS BY NOEL AMOS



Andrew and his team rest mid-climb beside a cross on an alpine peak where shepherds would worship. Because of your support, videos like *The Map and The Mountain* are reaching lovers of the outdoors with the gospel. Photos: Bible Society

**Paul's letter to the Romans is the theological equivalent of a mountain: majestic, challenging and complex. If you've taken *The Romans Course* or read Andrew Ollerton's book, *Romans: A Letter That Makes Sense of Life*, you'll know that. But you haven't seen that mountain physically climbed – until now.**

With the help of two expert climbers and a courageous videographer, Andrew documented his longest sustained multi-pitch climb as a way to share the gospel. Andrew weaves together teaching from Romans and what it means to follow Jesus as he crosses valleys, traverses glaciers, and reaches breathtaking heights. More than anything, Andrew

wanted this experience to highlight the relationship that exists between faith and the outdoors. 'Too often the Christian faith is synonymous with a sort of indoor religion,' Andrew says. 'I wanted to reach the outdoors community and ask, "What if faith was less like attending a church service, and more like going on an adventure?"'

### Winning the outdoor community

'For a lot of people Christianity has only ever been like a religious map, a moral guide, this ethical, abstract idea,' Andrew says. 'But what if the real experience of Christianity is the mountain, not the map?'

Andrew wanted to make the connection between faith and the outdoors more obvious for people who love to spend time in nature, but still see faith as separate from that – a one-dimensional experience. What if people who haven't given up on the idea that there is a God, and that their lives have a purpose, could see that God can be encountered in wild places and through the beauty of the world he has made?

### The living word of God

And what about the Bible? What if people who are turned off by formal, institutional religion could realise that the Bible isn't just a moral handbook, confined to religious settings, but the living, breathing word of God?

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What if faith was less like attending a church service, and more like going on an adventure?”

'I like the idea, even on camera, of people seeing the Bible read not in a church service or a school assembly, but on a ridge or in the snow,' Andrew says. 'The story of Scripture mostly unfolds in outdoor environments and can be engaged with outside of a church building.'

The hope, Andrew says, is that this video would be an encouragement that God is someone who can be found in creation. 'We hope people will watch it and share it with their friends or communities that are into the outdoors. Church groups or centres can watch it together and have a discussion off the back of it, then share it with people they've been out climbing, canoeing or skiing with who don't know Jesus yet.'



Noel Amos, Supporter Experience Officer

### Watch the video

Scan the QR code to watch *The Map and the Mountain* and share it with other outdoor explorers or visit [biblesociety.org.uk/wia-map](https://biblesociety.org.uk/wia-map)



The mountaineering team included Andrew Ollerton (left), videographer Andy Toovey (second left), Meg and Tamsin.

## A mountaintop miracle

'I wear contact lenses when I'm filming, and on the first night of our two-day journey I lost my contact lens in my eye,' Andrew shares. 'We tried to flush it out, but we couldn't get hold of it. When I woke up in the morning my eye was red and sore, and we all agreed I needed to go to hospital. I was gutted because I knew we didn't have a film – we hadn't been to the summit.'

'Andy put his hand on my shoulder and prayed a simple prayer, and when I opened my eyes something felt different. He looked at my eye and said that it wasn't red anymore. Within five minutes I had a new contact lens in – I still don't know what happened to the other one – and we turned around and started back up the mountain. It was a reminder to me that God is with us in these natural spaces just as much as he is in a church building.'

## Mountains of the Bible quiz



Five winners who send in the correct answers will be drawn out of Andrew Ollerton's Roman helmet (which he wore on the cover of the Summer 2023 edition of WIA) and receive a free pack of prayer cards from Bible Society.

1. On which mountain did Jesus sweat blood?
2. On which mountain does Jesus speak to the Samaritan woman?
3. On which mountain did the animals inside Noah's ark disembark?

Mark your entries **WIA QUIZ** and don't forget to include your name and address.

Email us your answers to [WIA@biblesociety.org.uk](mailto:WIA@biblesociety.org.uk) or send it by post to Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Swindon SN5 7DG



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

just a child himself, yet he has experienced so much in his life.

Etapa II houses up to 300 young men. Most are on remand awaiting trial, a process that can take up to seven years. Each cell holds between five and eight prisoners. The windows have no glass, just bars, so as we walk through we hear shouting from inside.

**Prison riot**

Five years ago the detention centre was in the news when two guards were killed in a prison riot.

The Bible Society team has built up a strong relationship with the prison officers and has been visiting regularly since 2011, bringing Scriptures, and more recently, sharing Bible stories through the Open the Book programme, which is supported by your kind giving in England and Wales.

Bible Society recently ran a football tournament at the

prison which was so popular that 100 boys took part. During the tournament a worship session was held and many of the young men are now attending weekly Bible study and praise gatherings. Again, all this work by the Bible Society in Guatemala is supported by your generosity.

I watched three Open the Book sessions in the courtyard. About 20 prisoners came to each one, accompanied by 11 guards. They'd start each session by sprinting up and down the courtyard, laughing together. Then there's a prayer and a talk about the topic of the week, which is always related to a biblical value, such as forgiveness. After a Bible story there is a Q&A session, followed by prayer requests. The boys usually pray for their families, for the trial they will face, and they also ask for protection and that they won't be transferred to one of Guatemala's harsher prisons. It ends with the Bible Society team giving each young man a

slice of Domino's pizza, which is a real treat.

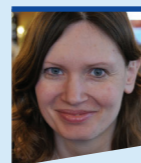
**'I want to save lives'**

Wilson tells me he doesn't seek vengeance for his brother anymore.

'Now I know that things like vengeance are in God's hands and my life is in God's hands too,' he says.

I ask him what are his hopes for the future.

'I want to be somewhere with better opportunities. I want to be a doctor so I can save lives,' he says.



**Beth Read,**  
Head of Supporter Relations



Wilson's future is now in Christ rather than violence thanks to your support of the Open the Book ministry.

Visit [biblesociety.org.uk/healing](https://biblesociety.org.uk/healing) to submit a prayer for healing. You can also join Bible Society staff and supporters in praying the other prayers that have been submitted.

Your prayer may also be featured in a booklet created later this year by Bible Society, so please let us know your first name and the town or area where you live.

You can also submit a prayer by writing to: Healing Prayers, c/o Howard Barker, Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Swindon SN5 7DG.

- Do you have a broken relationship that needs reconciliation?
- Are you interceding for a revival in your physical health?
- Has God placed the restoration of a certain people group on your heart?

**Wilson's been saved ... now let's pray for more healing**

**You've read how Wilson was healed in a jail in Guatemala when he experienced the living power of the Bible through Open the Book. But there are countless others who are still reaching out to grasp the end of Jesus' garment. Nations, communities, families and individuals are hurting. Will you take action and pray?**



**First ever dyslexia-friendly Bible completed**

Clair Natt, who has dyslexia, is delighted with the dyslexia-friendly Bible books. 'It has made such a difference to my faith and I am now enjoying reading the Bible,' she said. Photos: Alex Baker/Bible Society



For the first time ever, and thanks to your support, the whole Bible has been made available in a dyslexia-friendly format.

The Bible Society initiative began in 2015 with the book of Psalms and the Gospel of Mark, and it's now been completed with the recent publication of Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua.

People with dyslexia can struggle to read and write easily because they don't deal well with text on a page. Around six million people in the UK – one in ten of the population – are thought to have the condition. Reading the Bible can be particularly challenging as Bibles are often produced on thin paper in densely printed type.

**Reducing visual clutter**

The books in the dyslexia-friendly format are laid out like novels rather than in traditional columns and use shorter paragraphs. The larger, sans serif typeface with

more space between the lines helps to reduce visual clutter. The books use thick paper so words don't show through from the next page and a matt, rather than glossy, finish minimises light reflection.

Clair Natt, who has dyslexia, says: 'I struggled reading the Bible because the words are so small and the pages are really thin. I just found it really difficult to read; it's just too complicated for me to comprehend and understand.'

**A transformative experience**

Reading Scripture in the Good News Bible Dyslexia-Friendly edition has transformed her experience, she says.

'The Dyslexia-Friendly Bible's really helpful because it's more spaced out, the words are bigger and it's just easier to read. And it was broken down with pictures as well, which I liked.'

Bible Society's publishing director

Derek Hill said: 'We want to make the Bible available and accessible to everyone who needs it. We've committed resources to this project because we know it will benefit many people who find reading the Bible really difficult. Now they'll be able to discover its treasures for themselves.'

'People can collect the different books as individuals, or churches might decide to invest in a set. This is a really significant achievement and we're delighted to have reached this accessibility milestone.'

- The Dyslexia-Friendly range of Bible books follows guidelines provided by British Dyslexia Association.
- They can be ordered from our online shop at [biblesociety.org.uk/products/bibles/dyslexiafriendly](https://biblesociety.org.uk/products/bibles/dyslexiafriendly) (or call our Supporter Care team on 01793 418222).



## Your letters and comments



*I think the Bible Society people are like the disciples of Jesus – spreading the Good News across the world. Well done. Be happy in your work and carry on.*

**Patricia, Gloucester**

*Simon: Patricia, you are a wonderful example of a disciple of Jesus, because the kind giving of you and others makes all of this Bible work possible.*

*As a loyal supporter of Bible Society, I am appalled that there is not a mention of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the most important story in the Bible, mentioned in your Prayer in Action. Did you forget the dates?*

**Heather, Devon**

*Simon: I am very sorry about that omission. We didn't forget the Easter dates and there was Easter content in **Word in Action**. My feeble excuse is that I was writing that **Prayer for Action** at Christmas as we must prepare the magazine well in advance. Celebrating the birth of Jesus was more in my mind. We will try to ensure this doesn't happen again.*

*The Word in Action magazine is proof of dedication to the Bible mission. Very well done. I love the Prayer in Action leaflet – great thought has gone into these beautiful prayers.*

**Vivien, Maldon**

*I received some money from my late grandmother's estate and when I asked God to direct me to where I should send my*



*tithe he directed me to give ALL the money towards free Bibles to God's people. I am humbled that God loves me so much to make me a partner in this great work. Today is my birthday and I'm full of gratitude for God's mercy and provision. Through all life's challenges, I am grateful for another year. Simon Bartz – you're right – I too love the cover of Pastor Juan Fidel (Spring 2024 edition). I love his smile. The prison work, the housemaids and Kanti story from the Gulf, the work in the Middle East! The work with kids!!! This magazine is the best read I have had all year!! Bible Society, thank you!*

**Angela, Enfield**

*I enjoy reading Word in Action but I feel I should point out that the photo on page 12 of WIA (Spring 2024 edition) entitled 'Andrew Ollerton takes you to Rome to unpack Paul's message in The Romans Course' is actually taken in front of The Library in Ephesus, Turkey. Rome certainly lacks the verdant rural backdrop in the picture that Ephesus enjoys, although both places are well worth visiting!*

**Mike, Devizes**

*Simon: Well spotted Mike. I wish I could say I was just testing you. But instead I will say, 'Oops'. The Ephesus image was from Andrew's Bible Trek series. Check the Trek here: [biblesociety.org.uk/resources/bible-trek](https://biblesociety.org.uk/resources/bible-trek)*

Email us your thoughts at [WIA@biblesociety.org.uk](mailto:WIA@biblesociety.org.uk) or write to Word in Action, Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Swindon SN5 7DG

We may publish your comment together with your first name and your town, city or county. If you do not wish your comment to be published then indicate this by writing 'not for publication'.

We reserve the right to edit letters for style and length. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of Bible Society.

## One verse



**Beth Read**

**Head of Supporter Relations**

**I am always aware of the LORD's presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me. And so I am thankful and glad, and I feel completely secure. (Psalm 16.8-9, GNB)**

I come back to the Psalms over and over, and always find something new and inspiring. There's such honesty – anger, sadness, disappointment and joy. It's all there.

I particularly love these verses because they wash away the cares and worries of the day and remind me that, with God at my side, everything is going to be more than alright. David tells us about a joy and peace that isn't limited by the busyness of life and everyday ups and downs.

I shared this verse with a friend who was being interviewed live on TV about her charity work. She knew she would

be challenged but she said afterwards she felt as if God calmed her and gave her the strength to talk with passion about her amazing work.

I love the idea that no matter what life throws at us, God's presence brings us a deep down joy and peace that means our tongues just can't help but rejoice as we try to help the people and the world around us.

Photo: Beth at an Open the Book Bible storytelling session at a school in a slum district of Guatemala City.

## Bible people



**Noémie Foster**

**Mission Specialist: Sahel, Middle East and North Africa**

I was born and lived in France until I was 18 years old. My parents were missionaries and our house was always filled with visitors and stories from far-away countries, sharing how God was working in their contexts. This instilled in me a hunger to serve the Lord, and I always knew I wanted to work for his glory, whatever shape that might take.

I joined Bible Society in 2018, first in the fundraising team, and now in the international team.

Ever since its foundation in 1804, Bible Society's heart has always been to share the Bible with all peoples, nations, tribes and languages. This led to the creation of many local Bible Societies around the world, all run independently with their own local staff, serving the Church in their respective contexts.

My role is to work with these national teams to understand where their heart lies for Bible work and to develop programmes alongside them to grow local believers in the word of God.

While there are countless challenges working in the Muslim-majority settings of the Sahel and the MENA region (not least being interrupted by chicken noises or the local Imam call to prayer in the background of a phone call!), it has been a joy to serve my brothers and sisters



**It has been a joy to serve my brothers and sisters in difficult circumstances where Christians are persecuted for sharing their faith."**

in difficult circumstances where Christians are persecuted for sharing their faith.

I am always reminded of the 'one body but many parts' passage in 1 Corinthians 12, which comforts me in the knowledge that we are one in Christ, whatever hardships we might face.

As you read the encouraging stories from the Gulf in this edition of *Word in Action*, I pray the Lord would remind you of his everlasting love for his bride and would fill you with renewed awe and thanksgiving at his goodness and faithfulness day by day.





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