



# BIBLE A MONTH

APR/MAY 2022  
Issue 212

A Big Bible Distribution Day in Syria.

## FOCUS ON SYRIA Let light shine out of the darkness

EYEWITNESS  
REPORT

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We pray for 'loving  
and nice' people  
manning the  
checkpoints.

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Nabil Saad began working for Bible Society in Syria seven years ago, helping traumatised victims of violence look to Jesus for hope and healing. Nabil said, 'While doing that, I realised more and more how important sowing the seeds of the gospel is.' Your kind giving through Bible a Month now helps Nabil give more Bibles to more people in a country devastated by war. Here Nabil reflects on Bible work in Syria:

### Q How does Bible mission survive and flourish in Syria?

A 'It's all got to do with people. If we just sit behind a computer, I don't believe that Bible mission will make much of an impact. It's the personal touch that changes Bible Society from an organisation into a movement and makes the waves of God's love move in all directions. Our goal is all of this country and we are racking our brains and looking into the heart of Jesus to

see where we go from here.'

### Q How hard is it to stay in Syria?

A 'It's extremely hard. The war isn't over yet. People are still being killed. A Lebanese friend of ours says: 'If we in Lebanon are living in hell and you want to find where the people of Syria are living you must take the lift and go 14 stories below our hell!'

### Q How do you remain positive to overcome the obstacles facing Bible work in Syria?

A 'By looking into the eyes of Jesus. They are so bright and they glisten with tears, because he shows us how people all around us are like sheep without a shepherd. You might not understand this, but here Jesus is our only hope!'

### Q What are the challenges that you face when taking Scriptures to remote areas?

**A** 'We load our van with more than 20 boxes packed with Scriptures and books. At the several checkpoints we pass we might have to take out all of our boxes and show the contents. You must be prepared for this and keep your temper. So, we don't only pray for safety on the roads, but also for "loving and nice" people manning the checkpoints.

'One time it was really cold in the van and my wife was with me. She hadn't forgotten that it was our wedding anniversary, so out comes the cake, which she baked just before we took off. But what to cut it with? Yes, a screwdriver will have to do the job. And then something smashes against the windscreen and it breaks. We can hardly see the road because of snowfall, but we make it to the next town. We pray they have a glass windscreen for our particular van, and believe it or not, there is one, only one! Another miracle. Time to drive on. It's getting late. Where will we sleep? When we arrive at the home of a pastor, he finds a bed for my wife. As for me, despite the cold, I slept quite well, on a mattress of hundreds

of Bibles.

'The next day, you should have seen the faces of the people who had never seen such a variety of Scriptures and spiritual books. Something for everyone! Some of the books sold out and we started writing down the names of people who wanted copies.'

**Q When is the last time your job put a smile on your face?**

**A** 'Two weeks ago it was just so incredibly cold here at the Bible Society house in Aleppo. We contacted a man, Abu Sobhi, to install an old kerosene heater. We did enjoy the warmth! So, we asked Abu what he wanted in return and he said, "I would love to have an injeel (the word for Gospel)!" One of us went to get a large New Testament with the Psalms. Abu couldn't thank us enough. He was the only person in his entire apartment block with a New Testament. His smile made us warmer than the heater.'

If you want to hear more from Nabil, sign up to receive extra content through Bible a Month emails here: [biblesociety.org.uk/emailbam](https://biblesociety.org.uk/emailbam)



**Nabil Saad**  
Nabil Saad is Programme  
Co-ordinator for Bible  
Society in Syria.



So many children traumatised by war encounter the healing power of Jesus through Scriptures distributed by Bible Society.



Thanks to your support through Bible a Month this child – just like the girl on the your envelope – received a Bible Society Scripture book.

# Bible storytelling goes into schools in Kenya

## MISSION UPDATE



Photo: Bible Society/Tabitha Wairim

Children that have been marginalised in society read Bibles distributed by Bible Society at a school in Kenya.

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The initial plan is to take Open the Book into ten schools, reaching a total of 5,000 children. Schools with children from the most marginalised and poorest backgrounds will be prioritised.

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‘It is prudent to engage children with the truth, especially using dramatisations,’ said Anne Mwangi, Programmes Manager at Bible Society in Kenya. ‘That is how truths get passed on, just as it was and still is in some of our traditional cultures.’

Religious education at schools in Kenya has been dwindling for years, but all that’s about to change, thanks to your support through Bible a Month, and through the generosity of Open the Book storytelling teams in England and Wales sponsoring teams in countries such as Kenya.

**Lack of training and a scarcity of teaching materials have made it hard to teach the Bible in Kenyan schools. But now, thanks to your support, 276 volunteers have recently been trained in Bible storytelling across Kenya. And they will all receive teaching materials adapted to fit the context of Kenyan culture.**

Peris, a storytelling volunteer in the capital Nairobi, said, ‘One of the most amazing outcomes was seeing children

curiously peeping into the drama room to watch the demo Bible stories being narrated and acted out by their teachers.’

Kenya is an incredible country more than twice the size of the UK. It encompasses savannah, lakes, the dramatic Great Rift Valley and mountain highlands and is home to amazing wildlife such as lions, elephants and rhinos. The people here are eager to hear God’s word, with an estimated 85 per cent of the 55 million population describing themselves as Christian.

The initial plan is to take Open the Book into ten schools, reaching a total of 5,000 children. Schools with children from the most marginalised and poorest backgrounds will be prioritised.

‘We hope to see a school-going generation that is passionate about Bible-reading, knowledgeable about the Scriptures and to see lives transformed,’ Anne said.

**Find out more about the Open the Book Team Twinning initiative at [biblesociety.org.uk/TeamTwin](https://biblesociety.org.uk/TeamTwin)**

## Prayer pointers

Thank God for the enthusiasm of the Open the Book volunteer Storytellers in Kenya. Ask God to bless them with great inspiration as they tell Bible stories to children.

Ask God that more doors will be opened in churches and schools in Kenya so that the Open the Book programme will reach the whole of this amazing country.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will transform the minds and lives of children and their families as they hear the amazing stories of the Bible.

Ask God to also bless the Open the Book programme in other countries where it has recently started – in Albania, The Gambia, Ghana and Uganda.

# JOIN US TO CELEBRATE THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

Her Majesty the Queen has consistently testified to the importance of her faith in Christ. In her Christmas message in 2014, Her Majesty said, 'For me the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an inspiration and an anchor... Christ's example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people, of whatever faith or none.'

We all want to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and her life-long Christian witness. So, we would like to invite you to a celebratory evening in London or Swindon, to mark the Queen's jubilee year.

There will be two evening events. At both, Mark Greene, Executive Director at The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICCC), will be interviewed by journalists Robert Hutton (author of *Would They Lie to You?*) and David Williamson (deputy political editor of *The Sunday Express*).

The discussion intends to explore the biblical nature and character of the Queen's vision for her role; how she has expressed her faith in her conduct, and in the values and qualities she has demonstrated to the public for so many decades.

Details:

- 17 May at LICC, St Peter's, London, hosted by Bishop James Newcombe, Clerk of the Closet, who leads the team of royal chaplains that conduct services at the Queen's own chapel at St James's Palace

- 23 May at Gateway Church, Swindon, hosted by the Bishop of Swindon, the Rt Revd Dr Lee Rayfield. Both evenings are from 6.30 pm–8.00 pm.

Tickets are free and there is likely to be high demand, so if you are interested in attending please visit [biblesociety.org.uk/CelebrateJubilee](https://biblesociety.org.uk/CelebrateJubilee)

## ANSWER TO PRAYER



Chinese lay preachers have recorded video messages to express their gratitude to Bible Society supporters after being provided with free Chinese ESV Study Bibles.

The Study Bibles make a massive difference to their ministries as most of the 190,000 lay preachers in China have no theological background and little money to buy books. They are mostly farm workers who volunteer to enter the pulpit due to a lack of pastors. One lay preacher, Wang Sujun, said, 'The Chinese Study Bible helps me understand God's word better. It's the most precious gift for me.'

Lay preachers play a critical role in helping churches, as it is estimated there is just one ordained pastor for every 6,700 believers in China, nowhere near enough to shepherd one of the fastest-growing churches in the world. There are unlikely to be enough pastors in China for many decades so lay preachers will continue to play an enormous role. The regular giving of Bible a Month supporters makes a massive difference, enabling these hard-working preachers to receive the help they need when they need it.

You can watch the videos in the News and Articles section at [biblesociety.org.uk/latest/](https://biblesociety.org.uk/latest/) or go to [biblesociety.org.uk/csb](https://biblesociety.org.uk/csb)



Lay preacher Liu Shoutao

## YOUR STORIES & COMMENTS

You are part of a community of more than 20,000 people, committed to seeing God's word change lives around the world. Here's a snapshot of what some of you have to say!

### Jill

It is a blessing to give even a small amount to help others read the Scriptures in their own language, especially young people who can carry the light of Jesus to share with their friends.

### Mary

I still have fond memories as a child of my Bible Society cardboard money box with a large ship on to collect ha'pennies for Bibles. Now I am 82 and glad to still support you. I wonder how many others recall those ha'penny boxes.

### Geoffrey

Amazed by what is being done to take the Bible to those desperate to receive it.

### Ian

It's time to give more to a great cause.

We love to hear from you. Email us your thoughts at [bam@biblesociety.org.uk](mailto:bam@biblesociety.org.uk) or use the comments form attached. You can also find an online version of the prayer letter at [biblesociety.org.uk/bam](https://biblesociety.org.uk/bam)

To increase your monthly donation, please look at the blue insert card.

# SYRIA

Children in Syria know all about conflict, but now, thanks to your support through Bible a Month, more and more of them are also learning about the healing power of Jesus Christ. Reading the word of God helps many to deal with terrible trauma as they seek to build a brighter future.

Tens of thousands of Bibles and Scripture storybooks are handed out to children at Easter and Christmas distribution events every year. It's estimated that Scriptures handed out in any given year will be seen by at least 100,000 children. And more than 500 Sunday school teachers have been trained over the last few years.

'We're also seeing more and more parents asking for Scriptures to read for themselves,' said Bible worker Nabil Saad (see Eyewitness Report). 'Sisters and brothers of the children, who don't

attend church, come along and ask for Scriptures too. In some areas we see that the "ground" is being saturated by the word of God being sown as seeds in the hearts of people. It's an exciting time for the breathed word of God in Syria. And we need it.'

Despite the war, the work in Syria has spread. 'Now we've got teams of young people in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus,' said Nabil. 'You at Bible a Month help make this possible.'



## April prayer pointers

Thank God that so many people of all ages continue to open their hearts to the word of God in Syria. Praise the Lord that his light shines brightly even in the darkest places.

Pray for protection for Nabil and all members of the Bible Society teams in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus in Syria.

Nabil asks that you pray for a planned fourth Bible Society team in the very challenged and needy north-east region of Syria.

Nabil also asks you to pray for Abu, that the Holy Spirit will speak to him through his New Testament and Psalms (see Eyewitness Report).

# GUATEMALA

'As a pastor and as a Q'eqchi' speaker, I have always longed to have more tools to study the Bible in my language,' said Rigoberto Cho, who ministers in the Alta Verapaz area of mountainous Guatemala.

Recently, Pastor Cho opened his door to a visiting Bible Society team. 'I couldn't believe it. They gave me and my congregation the book of Matthew in our language,' he said. 'It's a great tool because it helps me to create study groups and to proclaim the love of God.'

Guatemala is the most populous nation in Central America at 17 million. More than 20 languages are spoken, especially in isolated rural regions. Through Bible a Month you are helping to put Scriptures into the hands of people like Pastor Cho in remote areas in a language they can truly understand.

Over a three-month period from last July to September, Bible Society team members made 32 visits to remote areas to distribute Scriptures to 5,850 children and adults. Those people now have portions of Scriptures in their own language for the first time.

Translators are working toward a complete a translation of the entire Bible into the Q'eqchi' language.



## May prayer pointers

Ask God to renew the strength and passion of the translators in Guatemala to keep translating the word of God into the language of people's hearts.

Pray that every child and adult who has received Bible material in their language will use it as a guide to walk with Jesus.

Pray for the churches in Guatemala support Bible Society's work in many communities.

Pray that pastors and their congregations will have their faith strengthened through every portion of Scripture translated for them.

# SYRIA



## FACTFILE



### Area

72,370 square miles, three-quarters the size of the UK



### Population

20 million



### Languages

Arabic (official), several others



### Literacy rate

86.4%

'Don't get tired of helping others. You will be rewarded when the time is right, if you don't give up.'

Galatians 6.9 (GNB)

# GUATEMALA



## FACTFILE



### Area

42,042 square miles, about half the size of the UK



### Population

17.5 million



### Languages

Spanish (official), with 23 officially recognised indigenous languages



### Literacy rate

80.8%

'Now go! When you speak, I will be with you and give you the words to say.'

Exodus 4.12 (GNB)