



Bible a Month

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Ukrainian soldiers warmly welcomed Bibles handed out by the Bible Society team after a battle in the Donbas region. Photos: Ukrainian Bible Society

Eyewitness Report

📍 UKRAINE

'Millions of people have been exposed to the word of God.'



Rostyslav*

works for Bible Society in Ukraine

Miracles that bring you closer to God

📍 UKRAINE

To live a year in a full-scale war wears you down, even if you are not on the front lines. The whole nation has been affected. The whole nation is mobilised, and no one can stay away or take a break from the war. We civilians have never been prepared to withstand this amount of stress, and emotions that fill you daily can ruin you.

But, like when you have your first child, you find strength you never thought you were capable of. In the ministry field, there is no greater motivation than knowing your every effort counts, every Bible given away is capable of changing someone's current condition and future. But it does wear you down, so we all are

looking forward to the day when the war is over, and we all can take a break.

'Witnessing those miracles that happen around you is something that brings you closer to God.'

The biggest fear for me is that the war lasts for too long, to the point that we all lose our pre-war identities due to the violence and tragedies we experience every day, and that the nation will just go into downfall. To avoid this, there is no other way, I believe, than to stay connected to the source of

humaneness and guidance – the Bible. Your support means many Bibles have been provided. Thank you so much.

Witnessing how fragile your life is causes you to turn your thoughts to God, to eternity, to spiritual things. Yet, witnessing those miracles that happen around you is also something that brings you closer to God. Finally, you are thankful for very basic things: light and warmth in your home, a good night's sleep or a quiet morning without sirens, being with family, fellowship with others and many more things.

I especially appreciate what is related to me and my family: a shot-down rocket fell just 500 metres away from my parents' home, destroying only an old barn; my wife and son have been welcomed by a great family in a foreign country whom we never met before; my ability to meet them from time to time; even the very fact that God has spared me and many people whom I

know from any serious illness since the beginning of the war.

As Bible Society, we are mostly concerned about having enough Bibles. Every time our teams head to the front line and recently liberated areas, the Bibles we take always run out way too soon. There is always someone left without the Bible. So thank you for your prayers and continuous support.

'Witnessing how fragile your life is causes you to turn your thoughts to God, to eternity.'

There are other practical needs: food, basic hygiene things, medicine and warm clothes. In many areas, people need flashlights, power banks and portable stoves.

As Bible Society, we always need more Bibles. The needs exceed our supplies. What's important is that

we have an incredible infrastructure of churches and organisations working with the victims of the war, so what we really need is to print more Bibles and they would be distributed in a meaningful way. We are sowing the seed as never before. Millions of people have been exposed to the word of God, who would never have been otherwise.

I have a special selection of Bible passages that help me in moments of discouragement. Philippians 4.6–7 is my number one favourite. It says, 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.'

Please do pray for peace in Ukraine, for the victims of war, the Church, the Bible Society and all ministers and volunteers. We know that everything is in God's hands.

*We use one name for Rostyslav for security reasons.



The Bible Society team gave these children sweets, toys and Bibles when we found them playing at a pretend checkpoint. One asked if the team had a spare power generator for their mum!



Eighty children aged 10 to 14 attended a Bible summer camp supported by Bible Society in Ukraine's Transcarpathia region. Many of them had lost parents or relatives.



'I may skip eating a meal, but I will not skip reading the Bible!' says Zheng Yuzhen.
Photo credit: UBS-CP

Mission Update



'Look, God loves me very much! I will treasure this Bible, I will read and keep it well.'

'Look, God loves me very much! I will treasure this Bible, I will read and keep it well,' Zheng said when she received a large-print Bible from her church with the support of Bible Society.

'I don't have to strain my eyes reading the Bible now!' said the 78 year old in Jilin province, China.

Zheng was born into a poor family and her father died when she was

'Captured tightly' by God



two. To escape poverty, she moved far away. But life was still hard. Her husband had epilepsy and she ended up toiling in a brick factory. 'After giving birth to my child, we had even fewer meals. I was feeling down every day,' Zheng said.

She hit rock bottom and even contemplated leaving her husband. But then a neighbour shared the gospel with her. In church, she didn't fully understand the sermon, but the Holy Spirit worked in her heart. Her mind cleared and she felt her burdens lift. She began cycling for more than 40 minutes from home to attend both morning and evening services. 'My heart had been captured tightly by God,' Zheng said.

'Before knowing God, I was never satisfied. I wanted someone who could comfort me and earn money. I didn't look up to my husband and often scolded him.'

But Zheng learned from the Bible that it was important to respect one's husband. 'Gradually, I discovered that my husband was actually very concerned about our family. He lived his life within his

means, didn't gamble and remained faithful to me. I started to pray for him, asking God to heal his illness. I took care of him wholeheartedly, read the Bible to him and, amazingly, his epilepsy was cured!'

When her husband saw the changes in Zheng, he too became a believer!

'Whenever I hear my husband praying, "Lord, your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path, please teach me to understand your will", my heart leaps with joy,' Zheng shared.

Zheng uses her new Bible when she leads a daily worship group. 'I will read the Scriptures many times beforehand and ask my husband when I come across difficult words that I do not know. And I'll write words with similar sounds next to the new words to help me remember. Thank you Bible Society supporters for making all of this possible!'

This content was adapted from an original story published by United Bible Societies China Partnership.

Answer to prayer



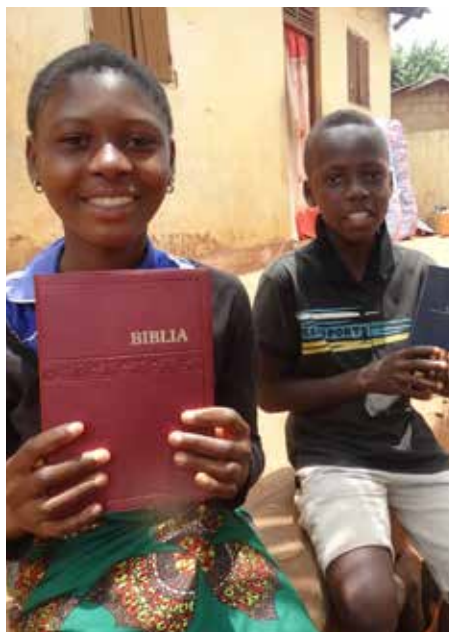
JULY PRAYERS

Thank God for the hunger for the Scriptures in Togo. Pray for each child who receives a Bible.

Pray for Victoire and her mother.

Pray for the team translating the Old Testament into Kabiye, a language spoken by more than a million people in Togo.

My first Bible, how marvellous!



Thanks to you, Victoire and her cousin Odilon received Scriptures in Togo. Photo credit: Bible Society in Togo

Poverty meant 13-year-old Victoire could never buy a Bible of her own.

She lives in the West African country of Togo with her mum. Her father left when she was a baby. Each day is a desperate struggle to make ends meet.

'Mum says she called me Victoire because my arrival in the world was a victory over evil,' says Victoire.

Like every vulnerable community across Africa, Victoire and her mum have been hit hard by the global economic crisis. 'Sometimes my mum says she has no money for me to take to school to buy lunch,' says Victoire. 'I eat something small before leaving so I don't go begging to my classmates.'

But Victoire knew one thing would make a difference in her life: the Bible. And she prayed for one. 'My friends at church who had Bibles seemed to be happier than those of us who didn't have one,' Victoire says.

Now Victoire has a Bible. 'I am overjoyed! It's such a precious gift that will help me grow in my knowledge of the word of God,' says Victoire, beaming with joy.

Thanks to your support, a total of 3,000 Bibles will be distributed in Togo through Bible Society's 'I have my first Bible, how marvellous' project.

Join us to celebrate Pentecost

Did you know that you are gifted by the Holy Spirit?

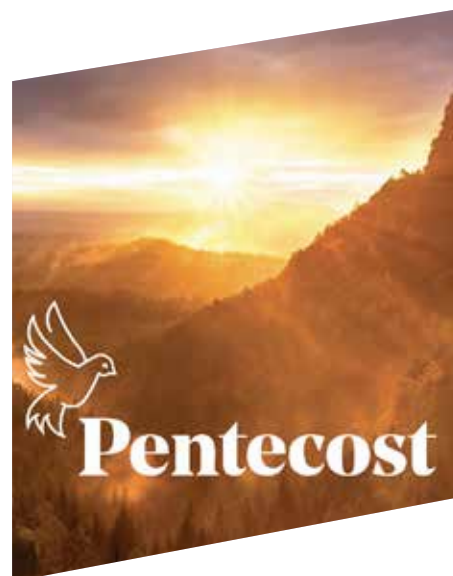
Join us for the great celebration of Pentecost and enjoy a journey unpacking how the Holy Spirit gifts each one of us with the tools we need to live out the Christian life in this world.

On each of the days of The Pentecost Reflection 2023 you will receive a short video reflection in which one of our amazing speakers will explore one of the seven major gifts of the Holy Spirit and apply what the Bible says about it to our lives

today. Each day concludes with an invitation to pray and a short prayer to help you.

You will become more familiar with these wonderful gifts and how to use them in your day-to-day life and, most importantly, you'll come to know the great Giver of Gifts all the more deeply.

Sign up now at biblesociety.org.uk/pentecost to receive your free daily devotional from Sunday 28 May to Sunday 4 June and grow in the gifts you need to walk more closely with Jesus.



Ukraine



This girl was given a Bible by our colleagues in Ukraine during a trauma healing session.
Photo credit: Ukrainian Bible Society

It's more than a year since the war in Ukraine began. With your prayerful support, our colleagues have been working tirelessly to bring the hope of the Bible, along with basic food and medical aid, to stricken communities.

Living close to death has led many Ukrainians (in what is a largely Christian country) to read the Bible. Since the start of the war,

our colleagues have distributed more than half a million copies of the Bible across the country. Your regular giving through Bible a Month has made this massive outreach possible.

The Bible Society team in Ukraine spends much of their time on the front line handing out Bibles and leading impromptu services as artillery fire goes off all around them. Our colleagues also work with churches to support Bible summer camps where children who have lost loved ones are comforted through trauma healing programmes.

Scriptures in Ukrainian and Russian have not only been distributed in Ukraine itself but also to refugees, including here in the UK, where churches have warmly welcomed Ukrainian families.

MAY PRAYERS

Heavenly Father, I pray for the people of Ukraine – those who are still living there and their families in foreign countries. Please give them your grace to cope and a welcoming spirit to host families. In Jesus' name, Amen. (Janet, Somerset)

Everlasting, loving God, we pray for peace in Ukraine, healing for the wounded, comfort for the bereaved, that families who have fled leaving behind loved ones will be reunited. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. (Allen, Derbyshire)

Those are two of more than a thousand prayers on our Ukraine Prayer Tree, which you can find here biblesociety.org.uk/bam-ukraine-pray or scan the code to the right.



China



Students at a seminary in China study Scriptures in Greek provided by Bible Society. Photo credit: Dag Smemo

Ninety million Bibles have been printed and distributed in China since Bible Society helped establish Amity Printing Press to print Bibles in Nanjing in 1987. And although 46 million is the Chinese authorities' estimate of the number of Christians in China, the real figure is much higher.

China has one of the fastest growing Christian communities in the

world. Many Christians live in rural areas, but now many young, urban professionals are also coming to faith.

This is all amazing! But because there are so many new believers, there are not enough pastors to guide them. There is an average of just one trained, ordained minister for every 6,700 Christians.

This is why, thanks to your amazing support, we are now increasing our focus on providing theological training and study resources for thousands of preachers and Bible students in China every year.

Through Bible a Month, you are providing Scriptures to reach more people with the gospel in China. You are also helping to support Christians with the guidance they need to engage with the Scriptures.

JUNE PRAYERS

Pray for churches in China in the post-pandemic era when gatherings are normalised and activities resumed. Pray for wisdom and guidance for church leaders and their flocks.

Pray for Chinese scholars in training overseas. May God help them complete their studies successfully.

Pray for spiritual protection for the Bible Society teams that focus on China as there are ongoing spiritual battles.

Pray for unity among Chinese Christian communities in the UK.

Ukraine

FACTFILE



AREA

233,032 square miles, two and a half times the size of the UK



POPULATION

43.5 million



LANGUAGES

Ukrainian (official), Russian



LITERACY RATE

99.8%



‘Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest.’

MATTHEW 11.28 (GNB)

China

FACTFILE



AREA

3.7 million square miles, 40 times bigger than the UK



POPULATION

1,411 million



LANGUAGES

Standard Chinese or Mandarin (official), many others



LITERACY RATE

96.8%



‘Trust in God at all times, my people. Tell him all your troubles, for he is our refuge.’

PSALM 62.8 (GNB)