

THE CROSS OF PEACE - UKRAINE

These men are volunteers in eastern Ukraine who were helping to deliver Scriptures and humanitarian aid to churches.

PHOTO CREDIT: ©UKRAINIAN BIBLE SOCIETY

"Are you a pastor-chaplain? Are you going to be with our guys? We really need you! Could you pray for us?"

These words were spoken by a young Ukrainian soldier aboard a train bound for the eastern front line. He had lost his leg in battle, undergone several surgeries, received a prosthetic in the US, and was now returning to the front. His plea reflects a deep hunger—not only for peace in Ukraine, but for the kind of peace that only God can give.

It is a hunger that the Ukrainian Bible Society encounters daily. Their team regularly travels with pastors and chaplains to the front lines where the need is immense, bringing encouragement and Scripture to soldiers like this young man.

The Bible Society continues to receive many requests for Bibles, New Testaments, and children's Bibles. In one instance, they delivered 300 children's Bibles to a military chaplain, with 800 more families still waiting for copies. They also held a special event for internally displaced people and the families of fallen heroes, where around 100 families each received a Bible and a children's Bible.

Hope and faith remain vital in a country scarred by war. On 4th March 2025, a striking symbol of that hope was unveiled in the city of Bohodukhiv, Kharkiv region, just 40 kilometres from the Russian border. "The Cross of Peace," a majestic crucifix of



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Dear Friends of Bible Mission,

Welcome to the Autumn issue of *The Word at Work*. Once again, it gives me great pleasure to share news from our partners worldwide, some of whom are working in conflict situations.

In Ukraine, the "Cross of Peace" symbolises the deep longing of the Ukrainian people for the war to end. At the same time, the hunger for God's Word continues to grow. Every day, the Ukrainian Bible Society receives requests for Scriptures, which are helping many find the true peace that comes from knowing Jesus Christ.

Meanwhile, the Bible Lands team, which comprises the Bible Society of Israel, the Arab Israeli Bible Society, and the Palestinian Bible Society, continues to sow seeds of reconciliation and peace amid the ongoing conflict. They are working under challenging conditions, bringing healing and hope to people by providing trauma-healing programmes and Scripture.

Closer to home, we are working with some of our Pacific neighbours, such as the Bible Society of the South Pacific and the Bible Society of Papua New Guinea, to help them build capacity and enable the mission there to be even more effective. They are facing many challenges, including poverty, illiteracy, and natural disasters.

This collaboration will ensure greater effectiveness of programmes such as translation, distribution and literacy, ensuring a greater reach of Scripture and that no one goes without a Bible.

As a supporter of the Bible Society, whether through financial contributions, prayer, or volunteering, you are an essential part of this mission. Thank you for everything you are doing to support the mission. We continue to be so grateful for your support.



A blue ink handwritten signature of Neels Janse van Rensburg.

Neels Janse van Rensburg
CEO

Recently, the Bible Society team visited a church in Krasnokutsk, Kharkiv Province, which runs a special service for local and displaced children. Here, it distributed children's Bibles, colouring-in books, and Bibles to older children.

PHOTO CREDIT: ©UKRAINIAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

БІБЛІЯ

СУЧАСНИЙ
ПЕРЕХІД

Jesus, now stands in the city's Alley of Glory. Created by American artist Sergey Melnikoff, who has Ukrainian heritage, the crucifix is made from 20,000 artillery shells and mines gathered from the once-occupied communities of Zolochiv and Derhachi.

The cross will soon tour fourteen towns across Ukraine before travelling through cities in Europe. Local authorities describe it as a symbol of resilience and hope, but it's more than that—it is the centre piece of a project to raise awareness for a new Mother Teresa Rehabilitation Centre in Albania. This centre will provide care for Ukrainian children who have lost limbs due to the war.

"Most Ukrainians long for peace, not merely the absence of war. They long for peace in the heart, the comfort that only the Lord can give," said the Ukrainian Bible Society's Acting Communications and Project Manager.

A NEW BEGINNING

For over thirty years, Peng Jingqin struggled with her faith, which under the pressures of work and daily life faded into the background. She went to church infrequently and when she did, she would sit down at the back, listening to the services without really understanding them. She resented her struggles and often questioned why God felt distant. At times, she even believed He had abandoned her.

But one night all that changed. Members of the church had gathered at the church to prepare to go on a pilgrimage. For the first time in years, Peng was there assisting with the preparations. Towards the end, she remained in the church, and she found herself crying and reflecting. It felt like someone had lifted a huge weight

Members of the Bible Society team meet with soldiers on the frontline such as this man, centre. After talking to him and praying with him, he willingly accepted a Bible.

PHOTO CREDIT: © UKRAINIAN BIBLE SOCIETY.



off her shoulders. That night marked a turning point in her life.

In the weeks that followed, Peng reconnected with her faith. A fellow believer encouraged her to read the Bible daily. At first, she struggled to understand God's Word, but over time, the words began to speak to her heart. Peng realised that God was speaking to her through the Bible, and that He had never abandoned her. It was she, in fact, who had been the one who was unwilling to return.

Peng began to see God's blessings in her life. She had a home, good health and children who loved her. Now, the Bible has become Peng's guide, helping her to navigate life's struggles and bringing her closer to God. Each morning, Peng now wakes with a longing to read God's Word. The more she learns, the more she desires to share it with others. Through the gift of a Bible, Peng has finally found her way home.

we recognise that the foundation of this hope lies in justice, forgiveness, peacebuilding and restoration through the Word of God," said the General Secretary of the Palestinian Bible Society.

In northern Israel, the Arab Israeli Bible Society (AIBS) staff are providing trauma healing programmes for needy church communities, even though many security concerns hamper daily life and ministry efforts. "Our commitment to biblical principles and kingdom ethics remains steadfast," said the Director of the AIBS, which oversees mission in northern Israel.

In southern Israel, the town of Eilat was a tourist city in times of peace. Now, it is home to thousands of migrant workers and refugees who have fled there from other towns.

The Bible Society in Israel has seized the opportunity to load up their "Movable" (mobile Bible vehicle) with Scriptures and

BIBLE LANDS UPDATE

Amid the ongoing conflict, the three Bible Societies in the Bible Lands are endeavouring to continue their mission uninterrupted. They have increased focus on trauma healing programmes and have joined hands with other relief organisations operating in the region to provide a holistic ministry to the impoverished and traumatised communities on both sides of the conflict.

The situation in the West Bank is dire, with over 45,000 displaced individuals currently residing in various areas, many of these experiencing displacement for the second time as they flee from refugee camps.

"As we strive to sow seeds of hope and restoration in these difficult circumstances,

In Israel, providing Scripture such as this New Testament in Hebrew is ongoing during the conflict.

PHOTO CREDIT: © BIBLE SOCIETY IN ISRAEL



travel to the town to reach out to local people.

"We are one in Christ and He is everywhere – and sometimes he is there through us – in Arad, Eilat or Tzukim, and in other small towns on the border with Syria and Lebanon," said Victor, Head of the Bible Society in Israel.

SCRIPTURE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 1.3 billion people worldwide live with some form of disability. But this number is more than just a statistic—it's a powerful reminder of the importance of creating Bible resources that are accessible to everyone.

Across the globe, Bible Societies have taken up this challenge by developing specially designed Scripture products tailored to meet the unique needs of people with disabilities. These initiatives have already helped thousands connect with the Word of God in meaningful ways. Some of these projects include:

Translating the Bible into various sign languages

Printing complete Braille Bibles in multiple languages

Creating easy-to-read versions of Scripture

Providing specialised materials for children with Down syndrome or autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

These efforts do more than just make the Bible accessible—they promote inclusion,

foster belonging, and bring about real transformation in the lives of individuals and their communities.

A powerful example of this work can be seen in Latin America, where Bible Societies from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Peru have formed the Special Needs Cluster. This group collaborates to promote Bible engagement among children with Down syndrome, ASD, and intellectual developmental challenges. They also develop strategies to support parents and equip local churches.

"In our projects, we must emphasize the family. The church is essentially a group of families," says Rolando Villena, Project Coordinator for the Bolivian Bible Society.

Blind and partially sighted children singing with Braille Bibles at a primary school in Kampala, Uganda. The Bible Society of Uganda is committed to reaching out to people with visual disabilities, providing them with Scripture in Braille, and encouraging them to learn Braille and participate in church and community life.

PHOTO CREDIT: @CLARE KENDALL



PRAY FOR MYANMAR

On 28th March 2025, a magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck Myanmar, claiming over 1,600 lives and leaving many injured. It was the most powerful earthquake to strike the country since 1912 and the shockwaves were felt as far away as Thailand, China, Bangladesh and India. Many buildings collapsed and there has been significant damage to infrastructure.

Fortunately, the staff of all the Bible Societies in the region, including Myanmar, Thailand, and Laos, are safe and there has not been any damage to Bible Society buildings. Nonetheless, for those most affected, this event could take years to recover from.

Dirk Gevers, the United Bible Societies Secretary General has requested prayer for those most affected by the earthquake.

-  **Pray for the survivors and affected communities. Ask for comfort, healing, and strength for those who have lost loved ones and those recovering from injuries.**
-  **Pray for the Bible Society teams. Pray for wisdom and guidance as they seek ways to assist survivors through relief efforts.**
-  **Pray for stability, recovery and resilience as communities work towards recovery in the region.**



HERE'S HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Would you prayerfully consider making a gift to audio and Braille Scriptures in Ecuador, Zimbabwe and Uganda?

IN MEMORIAM

Bible Society has learned of the passing of the following friends. Gifts towards the work of Bible Society's mission have been made in their memory. Their work of love goes on.

Mrs Beverley Prosser
Ron and Muriel Larsen
Reverend Masitone Sasagi
John William James (Jack)
Faye Anderson
Jonathan Henderson
David John Manuel

Murray Badger
Gerald Tisch
Jenny Ong
Alan Bowring
Roby Hawes
Mrs Maris Clay
Peter Foese

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THE LAST WORD

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

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Charities registration number: CC62927



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