

GOD'S WORD WHERE NEEDED MOST

Record

FALL 2016

GOD'S WORD FOR U.S. TROOPS

Page 14

Giving Thanks at Our Bicentennial

Page 20



Christmas Gift Catalog Inside!

Embarking on a Third Century Together



Dear Friends,

On May 12, American Bible Society celebrated the 200th anniversary of our founding. I can assure you that we did not fit all of those birthday candles on one cake! My heart was full of praise as we thanked God for two centuries of faithfulness. And none of it would have been possible without your sacrificial support.

Reflecting on our past has reminded me that our world is a very different place than it was in 1816. I often wonder what our founding president, Elias Boudinot, would think if he could sit in my office today. What would he make of the global turmoil in the news? How would he respond to the heartache in America's cities? How would he handle the ongoing opposition to God's Word in our culture?

But when I consider the 200-year history of American Bible Society, I realize that we have more in common with Elias than we think. The most important things haven't changed at all. Hebrews 13:8 reminds us that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." And his eternal Word is as powerful in 2016 as it was in 1816.

This issue of *Record* paints a beautiful picture of God's unchanging love from one generation to another. American Bible Society began providing Bibles to the U.S. military in 1817. And God's Word is still changing lives on the front lines for America's Armed Forces. I hope the testimonies of life-change from U.S. troops warm your heart as much as they do mine.

Across the ocean, a community in Botswana is reading the Old Testament in their heart language for the very first

time. A deeper understanding of God's story is changing their lives forever.

In addition to these stories, this issue of *Record* also includes a photo journal from American Bible Society's history. As you flip through these snapshots from the past, I invite you to join us in celebrating God's faithfulness for 200 years.

Our Bicentennial has made me especially thankful for you—our faithful financial partners. Since 1816, your support has brought more than 6 billion copies of Scripture to those who need it most. Isn't that incredible? Thank you for making that legacy possible through your generous service with American Bible Society.

As we embark on a third century of ministry together, let us remain united to the Habakkuk 2:14 vision of American Bible Society's founders: "But the earth will be as full of the knowledge of the Lord's glory as the seas are full of water."

May God use our humble efforts to fulfill that amazing promise in our lifetime.

Serving together,

Roy L. Peterson
President & CEO, American Bible Society

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Record

GOD'S WORD WHERE NEEDED MOST
FALL 2016, VOLUME 162, NUMBER 2

FEATURES

- 8 Scripture Translation for Life Transformation
- 14 Letters from the Front Lines
- 20 200 Years of God's Faithfulness

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 President's Message
- 3 Inbox
- 4 International Update
- 6 National Update
- 11 Partner Profile
- 12 Pray Around the World
- 13 Quiet Time
- 19 In Memoriam

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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 the United Bible Societies, a partnership of the Bible Societies throughout the world cooperating to make Scriptures available to people everywhere in their own language.

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China: Bringing God's Word to God's People



Jock Foo (right) travels throughout much of China, helping oversee the program that engages minority language groups with God's Word.

As a program manager for United Bible Societies China Partnership, Jock Foo travels a lot. One day, she might be zipping through China's mountains on a motorbike. Another day, she could be worshipping in a cave church.

But no matter where Jock finds herself, her mission remains the same. "We will go where the people are," Jock says. "Where they need a copy of the Bible." Jock and her colleague, Ng Hwee Hong, help oversee Bible translation projects for minority language groups in rural China. Jock says there about 115 million people in China whose heart language is not Mandarin. Of those, about 77 percent don't have access to Scripture in their native language.

"When you receive the Bible in your heart language, it is like God talking to you personally," says Jock. She explains that Bible translation sends a powerful message to minority language groups: "You're not left out. God has not forgotten you."

China Partnership also runs Bible-based literacy programs with the support of American Bible Society's financial partners—so that Chinese Christians can read God's Word for themselves. "Translation is when you convert God's Word into a heart language," explains Jock. "But literacy engages you with the Word of God."

But as much as Jock Foo helps equip Chinese Christians with God's Word, she insists that their spiritual vitality and faith end up blessing her. "Every time I visit them, I'm encouraged personally," Jock says.

To help bring God's Word to waiting Christians in China, visit
ABSRecord.com/China.

IRAQ:

Bible-based trauma healing participant ministers to refugees



An Iraqi trauma healing participant named Father Daniel (left) was featured in the March 2016 issue of "Christianity Today," (right).

In March 2016, American Bible Society and its ministry partner in the Middle East, Strategic Resource Group, equipped Iraqi leaders to lead Bible-based trauma healing groups in their communities. One participant from the session, a priest named Father Daniel, has led eight healing groups with 105 total participants since he was first introduced to the program.

"It has had a huge impact here ... We are doing great because we receive power from God," says Father Daniel,

who was featured in the March 2016 cover story of "Christianity Today."

Bible-based trauma healing combines Scripture and mental health best practices to help people bring their pain to God for healing. Thanks to American Bible Society's financial partners and local leaders, such as Father Daniel, victims of trauma in the Middle East are beginning to find spiritual and emotional healing in the pages of Scripture.

CENTRAL ASIA: God's Word is proclaimed through listening groups

End-to-End, a ministry that combines screenings of the JESUS Film, audio Bible listening groups and Bible distribution, grew significantly in Central Asia in the last year. More than 3,000 believers are gathering in small groups to hear the Bible read aloud, thanks to the generosity of our financial partners.

End-to-End, which is a ministry collaboration between American Bible Society, the Jesus Film Project™, Faith Comes By Hearing™ and local Bible Societies, has been working in the region to facilitate Scripture listening groups in three more languages. In addition, the project helped launch Scripture engagement programs in 14 cities, distributing more than 800 audio Bibles in a region where many people are unfamiliar with Christianity.



The End-to-End ministry uses small audio Bibles called "Proclaimers" to share God's Word.

To learn more about ministries like this one, visit ABS.US/Ministry.

MALAWI: Digital Bible Library reaches new milestone

The Lambya New Testament from Malawi became the 1,000th language uploaded to the Digital Bible Library on April 23. The Digital Bible Library serves as a central online space for the world's Bible translations to be digitized and distributed through print, audio, video and mobile devices. Through a network of ministry and financial partners, the Digital Bible Library is helping God's Word reach waiting people in some of the most hostile and remote regions of the world.

Every Tribe Every Nation—an alliance of Bible agencies, including American Bible Society—launched the Digital Bible Library in 2012. More than 4 billion people can now access God's Word in their heart language through this innovative resource.



The Digital Bible Library helps Lambya speakers in Malawi access God's Word faster than ever.

To read more ministry stories like this one, visit ABS.US/Stories.



This photo from United Bible Societies in Ecuador shows the relief effort in response to April's magnitude-7.8 quake.

ECUADOR: Bible Society provides relief after deadly earthquake

On April 16, a magnitude-7.8 earthquake struck northern Ecuador, killing more than 600 people and injuring 12,000 others. In response, United Bible Societies in Ecuador, with support from American Bible Society's financial partners, distributed food and water along with Bibles and children's coloring books. United Bible Societies in Ecuador is also mobilizing hundreds of volunteers to bring the hope and healing of God's Word to traumatized families.

WORLD ASSEMBLY: Bible Societies seek God's guidance for a new season of Bible ministry

Bible Society leaders from more than 150 countries gathered in Philadelphia in May for the 2016 United Bible Societies (UBS) World Assembly hosted by American Bible Society. Held every six years, the UBS World Assembly provides Bible Societies with a chance to rally around a common vision for sharing the life-changing message of God's Word as effectively as possible.

Participants discussed topics including Bible translation, engaging youth with the Bible and Bible-based trauma healing. "I prayed that God's Spirit would prevail here this week, and he has guided us," said UBS Director General Michael Perreau after the gathering. With God's Spirit guiding them, Bible Society leaders are sharing the Bible with those who need it most in their countries.



General Secretary of Bible Society of Ghana Erasmus Odonkor (left) greets Board Chair of Bible Society of Cameroon Jean Libom Ii Likeng (right).

Photo credits: Westfall Group, Christianity Today, British and Foreign Bible Society/Grace Smith.

Photo credits: United Bible Societies courtesy of Francois Sieberhagen, United Bible Societies in Ecuador/Victor Sosa, Cinema Cake.

Thousands Rally Around Prayer and God’s Word in Washington, D.C.

On July 16 nearly half a million people gathered on the National Mall in Washington D.C. for Together 2016—a day of unified prayer, worship and Bible-based teaching organized by the Christian ministry PULSE. Thanks to the generosity of our financial partners, American Bible Society helped participants engage with God’s Word through a mobile app designed specially for Together 2016. In the week after the event, 25,000 people subscribed to digital Scripture Journeys through the app, helping ensure that they remain rooted in God’s Word long after returning to their home communities.

“At a time of global, national and political turmoil, seeing half a million young people gather in D.C. to pray was incredible,” says American Bible Society’s Managing Director of Mission U.S. Jason Malec. “Our priority is to help them encounter the living Christ in Scripture ... What a profound opportunity.”



Nearly half a million people gathered on the National Mall for prayer, worship and Bible-based teaching at the Together 2016 event. Participants had the opportunity to download an app that could guide them in daily Bible reading.



A participant joins in a discussion about the Bible and race during February’s “Under My Skin” event.

LEADERS GATHER to Discuss the Bible and Race

On February 8, American Bible Society and Biblical Seminary hosted “Under My Skin,” an evening of discussion about race and the church. Coinciding with Black History Month, “Under My Skin” provided church and community leaders with a safe space to dialogue about the Bible’s vision for unity among Christians of all ethnic backgrounds.

“Under My Skin” did more than just raise awareness,” says Senior Manager of National Movements Arthur Satterwhite. “It helped participants become the agents of reconciliation that God calls us to be in the Scriptures.” American Bible Society plans to host more community dialogues like “Under My Skin” in the months ahead.

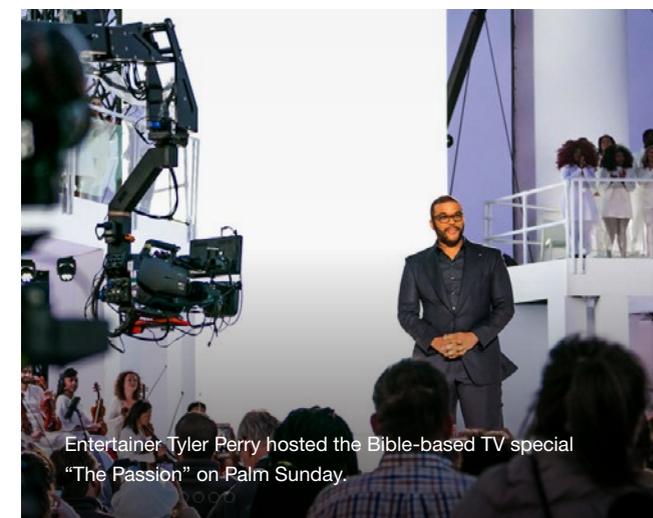
To watch video footage of the “Under My Skin” event, visit ABS.US/Dialogues.

Photo credits: PULSE, Joshua Wann.

TV SPECIAL Shares the Good Friday Story with Millions

On Palm Sunday, FOX aired “The Passion,” a live event that used pop music and an all-star cast, including Tyler Perry, Chris Daughtry and Seal, to tell the story of Jesus’ final hours. Viewers could then go online to find Bible resources, provided by American Bible Society, that included small group discussion guides, family devotionals and profiles of biblical characters portrayed on the TV program. In total, 6.6 million viewers tuned into “The Passion” and more than 49,000 people engaged with the story of Jesus through online Scripture resources.

To explore custom Scripture resources for “The Passion Live,” visit ABS.US/PassionLive.



Entertainer Tyler Perry hosted the Bible-based TV special “The Passion” on Palm Sunday.



Partners can now donate non-cash goods, such as farming equipment, to American Bible Society.

To learn more about non-cash donations, visit ABS.US/NonCashGifts or call 888-688-1720.

NON-CASH GIFTS Help Financial Partners Share God’s Word

A new Gift-in-Kind initiative allows American Bible Society’s generous financial partners to convert non-cash goods into financial support for the Bible cause. Financial partners can donate their unwanted items of value, such as jewelry, stock, vehicles, farm equipment and grain. American Bible Society will then use those goods to help provide God’s Word to those who need it most.

For two centuries, American Bible Society’s financial partners have helped countless people experience transformation through God’s Word. The Gift-in-Kind program provides a brand new way for people to share God’s life-changing Word with the world.

FAITH & LIBERTY DISCOVERY CENTER to Open in Philadelphia

American Bible Society is raising funds for a Faith & Liberty Discovery Center on the first floor and concourse of its Philadelphia headquarters. Through an immersive experience, the center will tell visitors the story of the Bible’s role in America’s founding in a fresh and exciting new way.

Every year, 40 million people from around the world visit the city of Philadelphia. Of those, 2.5 million visit historic attractions on Independence Mall, such as the Liberty Bell. As part of American Bible Society’s larger Bible advocacy strategy, the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center will seek to mobilize visitors to advocate for the power of God’s Word in communities across our nation.



An early rendering shows the location of American Bible Society’s Faith & Liberty Discovery Center.

Photo credits: Greenfish Labs, Thinkstockphotos.com, SaylorGregg.



The Kalanga translation of Genesis and Leviticus is transforming communities in Botswana.

SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION FOR LIFE TRANSFORMATION

In Botswana, a new translation of the Old Testament is helping the Kalanga people come to know and obey God.

When the Kalanga people, who live in the Kalahari Basin in Botswana, open their Bible, more than half of it is missing. With only the New Testament available in their heart language, this community of 150,000 people has access to the story of Jesus, but not the story of the prophets. They have the resurrection account, but not the Exodus account. They know the Sermon on the Mount, but not the Ten Commandments.

But recently, these gaps in their Bible

have begun to disappear. With support from American Bible Society’s financial partners, a team of Bible translators has spent the past six years translating the Kalanga Old Testament.

The project is slated for completion later this year, but the team has already translated and distributed Genesis and Leviticus, giving the Kalanga people access to Old Testament teachings for the first time. As they have engaged with these books, the Kalanga people have experienced a community-wide transformation.

Photo credit: United Bible Societies courtesy of Francois Sieberhagen.

Photo credit: Rhoda Gathoga.

“These two books were carefully selected by local churches,” says American Bible Society’s Senior Manager for Mission Global Rhoda Gathoga. “Genesis provides the foundational stories of the Bible, starting with creation. Leviticus helps churches learn what is morally right and wrong according to God’s law.”

Gathoga visited the Kalanga translation project in March of 2016 and saw God’s Word bearing fruit. “These Scripture Portions are already impacting the church communities,” she says. “For example, with a better understanding of false prophets in the Bible, churches have been more careful in their selection of new spiritual leaders.”

But for Kalanga translators, completing these two books of the Bible was no small feat. It required state-of-the-art software and extensive training from a translation coach, who worked with the team throughout the process.

“[The consultant] trained our translators very well, even in Hebrew and Greek,” says Alec Utilwang, secretary of the advisory board for the Kalanga translation.

Once the translations of Genesis and Leviticus were completed, church and community members pitched in to review the text, ensuring that a clear translation emerged.

“We want to use the Bible as the mode of transformation in our communities.”

SONNY ADAM CHILIWA,
KALANGA TRANSLATION TEAM

“We have different teams of reviewers, from village teams [to] church groups [to] young people,” says Bishop Moses Mputshana of the Kalanga Church of Christ. “To me personally, the translation project has made me a better leader ... since I now understand what the Bible says and can express myself

fully in my own language.”

But as Mputshana admits, he isn’t the only one benefiting from the Kalanga Old Testament; his community is changing, too. He says that the books of Genesis and Leviticus have inspired Kalanga speakers to abandon the practice of marrying multiple spouses.



Bible Translator Thuso Sithole works to translate the Old Testament into Kalanga—the heart language of his community in Botswana.

“While [polygamy] is not eradicated, the issue of multiple partners and unfaithfulness has reduced,” Mputshana says.

Another member of the Kalanga review team, Sonny Adam Chiliwa, hopes that God’s Word will help people turn from criminal behavior. “We want to use the Bible as the mode of transformation in our communities,” he says. “The Bible can help people both grow in their faith and change their behavior.”

As Chiliwa, Utilwang and Mputshana wait for the completion of the Kalanga Old Testament, they will lean on Genesis and Leviticus for wisdom. But they can’t wait for the quickly approaching day when their people will engage with every story in the Bible—from Genesis to Revelation.

Nick Hemming is a writer at American Bible Society.

To help share God’s Word with those who need it most, visit ABSRecord.com/GiveABible.

LEGACY OF A LIFETIME

200 years ago a single act helped change eternity for millions



single act can change the world. In 1816 — 200 years ago — God used one man's passion for the Great Commission to make history. Through his personal generosity, Elias Boudinot helped found and establish American Bible Society to share God's Word with the world.

With that single act, Elias not only made an impact on history ... he helped change eternity for millions. He formed a national Bible organization that is still impacting lives and eternity around the world.

American Bible Society has been placing Bibles in hands and hearts since 1816 thanks to friends and partners who help us distribute and engage people in God's Word. In fact, through estate gifts and gift annuity plans, one single action can leave a lasting legacy that impacts eternity.

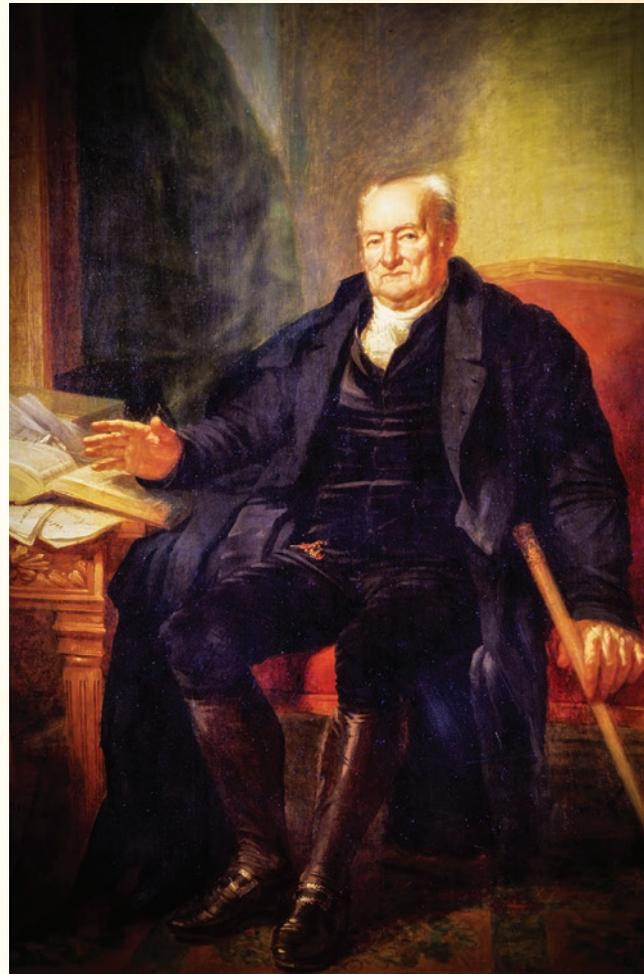
Through American Bible Society's gift annuity payment plans, you can secure your future with an income you can't outlive while providing God's Word around the world. And we also provide customized options to help fit your specific needs.

You may be surprised to know that American Bible Society actually wrote one of our nation's very first gift annuity agreements in 1843.

Since our groundbreaking launch of gift annuities more than 170 years ago, every payment has been made on time and in full — through domestic and foreign wars, panics, depressions, and stock market declines.

An American Bible Society Gift Annuity provides:

- A current income-tax deduction
- A portion of your income tax-free
- Higher payment rates than most CDs
- An immediate gift to share the Word of God
- The ability to make unlimited contributions to help meet your retirement income needs



Elias Boudinot, the first president of American Bible Society, helped establish the organization in 1816.

Through a gift in your will, or a gift annuity — one single act — you can impact your own life and help change eternity for the millions still waiting for the hope of God's Word. With your single action today, you can leave a legacy of eternal hope.

Go online to AmericanBible.org/GiftPlanning or call **800-549-3328** to start building your legacy today.

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SAVING AND SHARING FOR ETERNITY

Two American Bible Society financial partners prioritize generosity.

Joy and Tyne Bush will never forget the day they graduated from college. Maybe it's because the Bushes heard more than "Pomp and Circumstance" on their graduation day. They also heard wedding bells.

"We graduated at 10:00 in the morning and got married at 3:00 in the afternoon," Joy recalls. She says their decision to get married so soon was purely practical; they wanted to begin their life together quickly and affordably. "You hear about girls who dream about their wedding day," Joy says. "That was not me!"

But their joint graduation and wedding day exemplifies a practicality that Joy and Tyne embrace. "It was drilled in," Tyne says. "If you can't pay for it, you don't need it."

Joy agrees with her husband. "You come out of the womb with a tendency to be either a saver or a spender," she says. "We both tend to be savers."

But in addition to saving, the Bushes have also spent their lives practicing an eternal character quality: generosity toward God's kingdom.

"We want to invest in things that have an eternal consequence."

"I've always been very challenged by the story of the widow and her mite," Joy says. "The ultimate goal would be if someone could live on 10 percent and give away 90 percent ... that's certainly a goal to work toward."

In fact, the Bushes see their simple lifestyle as the bedrock of their generous lifestyle. "Neither of us want a lavish lifestyle ... We realize that you can't take any of it with you," explains Joy. "We want to leave something that will improve people's lives long after we're dead and gone."

To improve people's lives, the Bushes use a personal rubric to guide their charitable gifts. "Our criteria for giving are feed the hungry, heal the sick and spread the Word," says Tyne. "American Bible Society is high on the list in terms of spreading the Word."



Tyne and Joy Bush are passionate supporters of American Bible Society.

"We want to invest in things that have an eternal consequence," Joy says. She and Tyne support the work of American Bible Society through the Gift Annuity program. "Charitable gift annuities appealed to my financial spirit because the organization gets so much money up front," says Joy. "When you die, the organization gets the rest of it ... In the meantime you have regular income coming in."

And the Bushes give much more than dollars and cents in their quest to serve the hungry, sick and needy. Tyne serves men in prison. Joy tutors young students. And earlier this year, the Bushes served at a camp for people with disabilities.

It's all been part of the Bushes' lifelong task—saving money to serve others. "That's what really matters," Joy says.

Jack Newman is a writer at American Bible Society and managing editor of Record magazine.

You can also share the Bible with people around the world. Visit ABSRecord.com/GiveABible.

PRAY AROUND THE WORLD

Venezuela

Burundi

Greece

Cambodia

China

Fiji

Bible Societies around the world are helping to spread God’s message of hope and love with those who need it most. Here are prayer requests from a select group of Bible Societies that ask you to lift them up in prayer.

Venezuela

United Bible Societies in Venezuela requests special prayer for a Bible translation project. A team is working to bring the Old Testament to Venezuelans who speak the Piaroa language. Please pray that God would supply the necessary physical and spiritual resources for their translation team to bring all of God’s Word to this ethnic group.

Fiji

In February, one of the most powerful storms ever recorded in the Southern Hemisphere tore through the islands of Fiji. According to the United Nations, Cyclone Winston left 120,000 people in need of shelter. As the nation begins to rebuild and recover from this devastating storm, pray that God would bring physical and spiritual healing. Ask God to bless the efforts of Bible Society in the South Pacific as they share God’s Word with hurting people.

Burundi

Please pray for the African nation of Burundi, which has experienced violent political unrest in recent years. In addition to praying for peace in their nation, Bible Society of Burundi is asking partners to pray for God to bless the launch of the revised Kirundi Bible. Pray that God’s Word would encourage the people of Burundi in this difficult time.

China

Lift up United Bible Societies China Partnership as they undertake Bible translation projects for minority languages in China. While Mandarin remains the official language in China, there are also more than 400 minority language groups in the country, 77 percent of which have not been reached with God’s Word. Please ask God to bless the translators seeking to provide Scripture in the mother tongues of the millions still waiting.

Cambodia

Bible Society in Cambodia is seeking prayer for their Bible-based literacy program for students. In particular, the Bible Society is praying for God to protect staff and volunteers as they travel into remote parts of Cambodia to implement this literacy program. Please pray that the Lord would speak through his Word to these young students.

Greece

Pray for the Hellenic Bible Society in Greece as they minister to the thousands of Middle Eastern refugees pouring into Europe. They have partnered with local churches to distribute free meals and 20,000 New Testaments to refugee families. Greece is a nation already facing serious economic distress, including severe homelessness and an unemployment rate of 25 percent. Ask God to bless them as they bless needy refugees.

Photo credit: ThinkStockPhotos.com.

QUIET TIME

“Yes, grass withers and flowers fade, but the word of our God endures forever.”
Isaiah 40:8 (GNT)

SEPTEMBER

God’s Word of Wisdom

- 1 Luke 11:14-28
- 2 Luke 11:29-54
- 3 Luke 12:1-21
- 4 Luke 12:22-40
- 5 Luke 12:41-59
- 6 Luke 13:1-17
- 7 Luke 13:18-30
- 8 Luke 14:1-14
- 9 Luke 14:15-35
- 10 Luke 16:1-13
- 11 Luke 16:14-31
- 12 Luke 17:1-10
- 13 1 Corinthians 1:1-17
- 14 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- 15 1 Corinthians 2:1-16
- 16 Psalm 19
- 17 Psalm 37
- 18 Proverbs 1:1-33
- 19 Proverbs 3:1-35
- 20 Proverbs 4:1-27
- 21 Proverbs 17:1-28
- 22 Ecclesiastes 1:1-18
- 23 Ecclesiastes 2:1-26
- 24 Ecclesiastes 3:1-22
- 25 Ecclesiastes 4:1-16
- 26 Ecclesiastes 5:1-20
- 27 Ecclesiastes 7:1-25
- 28 Ecclesiastes 12:1-14
- 29 Job 27:1-23
- 30 Job 28:1-28

OCTOBER

God’s Word of Justice

- 1 Psalm 72
- World Communion Sunday*
- 2 1 Corinthians 11:17-34
- 3 Isaiah 3:1-15
- 4 Isaiah 5:1-30
- 5 Isaiah 9:8—10:4
- 6 Isaiah 24:1-23
- 7 Isaiah 26:20—27:13
- 8 Isaiah 30:8-26
- 9 Isaiah 32:1-20
- 10 Isaiah 33:1-24
- 11 Isaiah 34:1-17
- 12 Isaiah 58:1-14
- 13 Isaiah 59:1-21
- 14 Amos 1:1-15
- 15 Amos 2:1-16
- 16 Amos 3:1-15
- 17 Amos 4:1-13
- 18 Amos 5:1-27
- 19 Amos 6:1-14
- 20 Amos 7:1-17
- 21 Amos 8:1-14
- 22 Amos 9:1-15
- 23 Micah 1:1-16
- 24 Micah 2:1-13
- 25 Micah 3:1-12
- 26 Micah 4:1-13
- 27 Micah 5:1-15
- 28 Micah 6:1-16
- 29 Micah 7:1-20

- 30 Psalm 9
- 31 Psalm 10

NOVEMBER

God’s Word of Praise and Thanksgiving

- 1 Revelation 1:1-20
- 2 Revelation 4:1-11
- 3 Revelation 5:1-14
- 4 Isaiah 11:1-16
- 5 Isaiah 12:1-6
- 6 Luke 17:11-19
- 7 Psalm 46
- 8 Psalm 48
- 9 Psalm 50
- 10 Psalm 75
- 11 Psalm 81
- 12 Psalm 82
- 13 Psalm 104
- 14 Psalm 105
- 15 Psalm 106
- 16 Psalm 111
- 17 Psalm 115
- 18 Psalm 145
- 19 Psalm 146
- 20 Psalm 147
- 21 Psalm 148
- 22 Psalm 149
- 23 Psalm 150
- Thanksgiving Day*
- 24 Psalm 65
- 25 Psalm 66
- 26 Psalm 67
- First Sunday of Advent*
- 27 Matthew 24:1-28
- 28 Matthew 24:29-51
- 29 Matthew 25:1-30
- 30 Matthew 25:31-46

DECEMBER

God’s Word of Joy

- 1 Daniel 9:1-27
- 2 Nehemiah 8:1-18
- 3 Esther 9:20—10:3
- Second Sunday of Advent*
- 4 Job 42:1-17
- 5 Isaiah 7:1-25
- 6 Isaiah 8:21—9:7
- 7 Isaiah 44:1-28
- 8 Isaiah 45:1-25
- 9 Isaiah 48:1-22
- 10 Isaiah 62:1-12
- Third Sunday of Advent*
- 11 Isaiah 65:17-25
- 12 Isaiah 66:1-24
- 13 Jeremiah 23:1-8
- 14 Malachi 1:1-14
- 15 Malachi 2:1-17
- 16 Malachi 3:1-18
- 17 Malachi 4:1-6
- Fourth Sunday of Advent*
- 18 Mark 1:1-13
- 19 Matthew 1:1-17
- 20 Matthew 1:18-25
- 21 Luke 1:1-25
- 22 Luke 1:26-56
- 23 Luke 1:57-80
- 24 Luke 2:1-20
- Christmas Day*
- 25 John 1:1-18
- 26 Luke 2:21-52
- 27 Titus 1:1-16
- 28 Titus 2:1-15
- 29 Titus 3:1-15
- 30 Revelation 21:1-27
- 31 Revelation 22:1-21

Photo credit: ThinkStockPhotos.com.

Tell us how reading the Bible has impacted your life. ABS.US/MaterialsFeedback.

You can join our online prayer community at [Facebook.com/CircleOfPrayer](https://www.facebook.com/CircleOfPrayer).

LETTERS

FROM THE

FRONT LINES

▶ U.S. MILITARY MEMBERS SHARE HOW GOD'S WORD IS CHANGING THEIR LIVES

“How has God's Word impacted your life?”
As Army Specialist Miranda Smith* pondered

that question printed in the back of her camouflage Bible, memories from Basic Combat Training (BCT) swam into her memory. She would never forget those grueling days and nights on the plains of Oklahoma.

Miranda picked up a pen and began writing on the postcard tucked into the back of her Bible. “[This Bible] helped me stay connected to God during BCT at Fort Sill,” Miranda wrote. “It helped me meditate on the words of God daily; mostly in the evening. It helped me remain strong and not quit.”

When Miranda had finished writing, she tore the postcard from her Bible. And like thousands of U.S. service members had done before her, Miranda mailed the postcard to American Bible Society.

An Opportunity Like No Other

American Bible Society's financial partners provide free Scripture resources to U.S. Military service members, such as Miranda.

**Names have been changed to protect the identity of military members.*

The only request? Share a story. A self-addressed postcard in each Bible asks recipients to share how God's Word has changed their lives. The thousands of mailed responses are full of stories describing God's life-changing provision for the men and women serving our country.

"We have an opportunity to put God's Word into the hands of someone facing a pivotal and emotionally trying moment in their life," says Armed Services Ministry Manager David Keller. As a chaplain in the U.S. Army Reserves, Keller knows firsthand that the Bible is a crucial lifeline for men and women during challenging days.

"The Bible provides a breath of fresh air—the hope that people will cling to during difficult times," Keller says. For Keller and his team, postcards from U.S. troops help illustrate how this hope is making a difference in people's lives.

Radical Life Change

Project Manager Anne LoCastro is among the first to receive handwritten testimonies from U.S. service members. "When I receive them,

it reminds me of the scene from 'Miracle on 34th Street' when they dump out a bag full of letters in front of Santa," says LoCastro.

LoCastro says that some stories stick with her. "One man had not spoken to his father for years," she says. "Now he is reconciled to his father after reading through God's Word."

That's one of the most common themes in the postcards from U.S. service members: God's Word inspires radical life change.

"This [Bible] saved my life," writes a female member of the Army. "I learned that God is real and always there for me."

"I asked God to take away my heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh," writes a member of the Air Force.

LoCastro says that while spiritual darkness is prevalent in the military, Scripture resources provided by American Bible Society's financial partners help military chaplains share the light of God's Word when troops come to them for answers.

"Chaplains are very appreciative of these resources to help them, because it's a spiritual battle," LoCastro says.



◀ After receiving a Bible from American Bible Society, U.S. military members write and mail personal stories of spiritual transformation.

"I asked God to take away my heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh."

MEMBER OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE

Walking with God

But the postcards from U.S. troops make it clear: the battle belongs to the Lord. Countless men and women have shared how the Bible helped them break free from addictions to alcohol, drugs and pornography.

Many postcards reveal how God's Word inspires U.S. troops to devote themselves to daily Christian practices, such as studying the Bible, praying and attending church.

"I am reading the Bible every night and whenever I have my free time," writes one soldier in the Army. He cites Joshua 1:8 (GNT) as his inspiration for spending more time in God's Word: "Be sure that the book of the Law is always read in your worship. Study it day and night, and make sure that you obey everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

Reading the Bible on their own inspires some troops to share God's Word with their fellow service members. "I've started an almost nightly Bible study here at boot camp," writes a female Marine.

Even service members who grew up in the

church have found that God's Word breathes fresh life into familiar Christian practices.

"I have always been an active churchgoer," says one soldier. "But this [Bible] has made me live through Christ rather than just go through the motions."

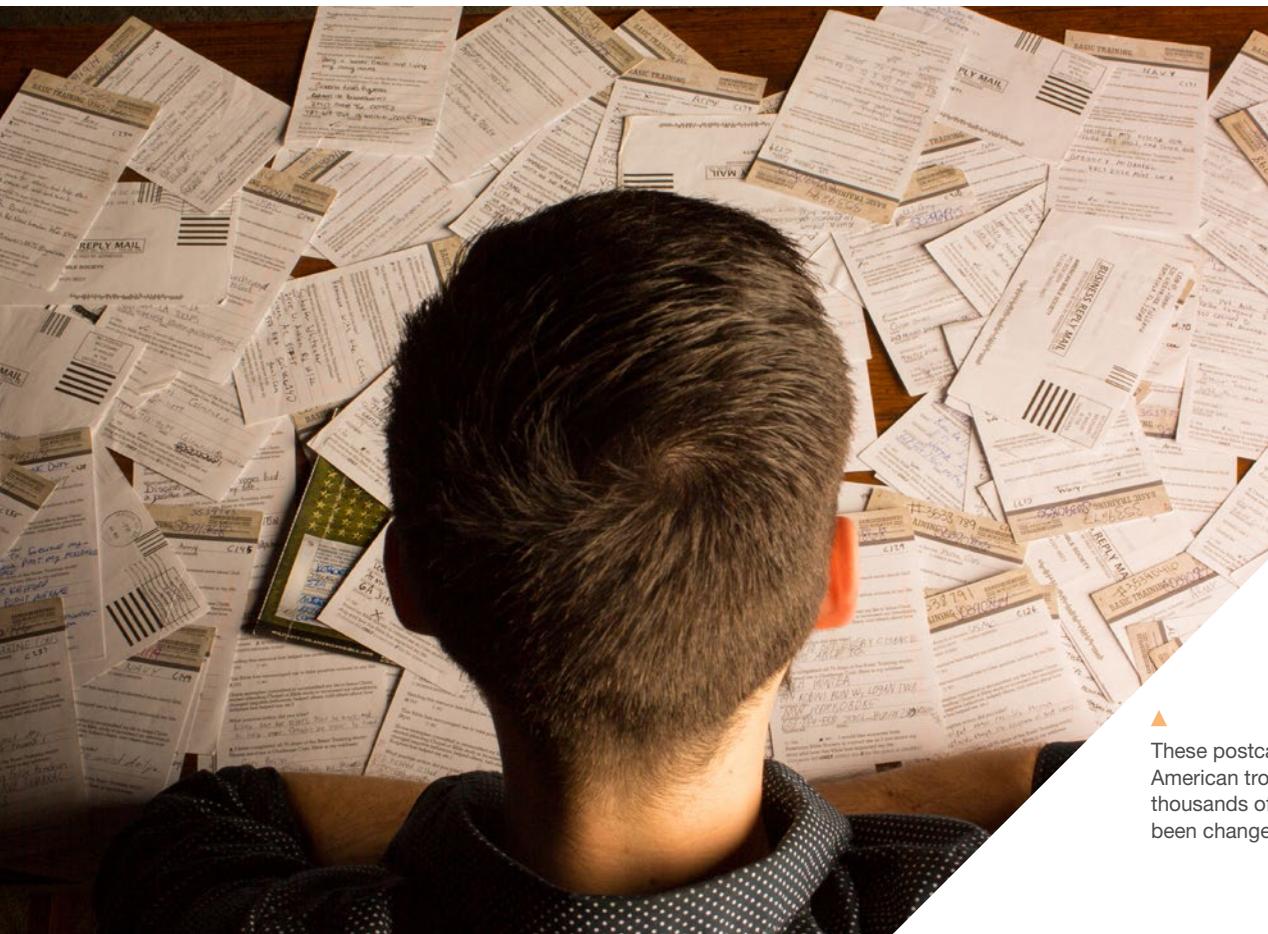
Relationships Made New

And as service members renew their relationship with God, their relationships with friends and family blossom as well. Husbands say they love their wives more deeply. Friends share that they care for each other more intentionally. Parents report that they're reading the Bible with their children more frequently.

"Every one of these cards is someone's life story," Keller says. "It's someone's journey with God that they're sharing with you."

If you were to thumb through a stack of American Bible Society's postcards from U.S. troops, you would find that each testimony is as unique as the person who sent it:

"Reading has taught me to treat others and myself with respect."



▲ These postcards from American troops represent the thousands of lives that have been changed by God's Word.

Photo credits: U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Krystal Ardrey (opening spread), Joshua Warm (page 16), Courtesy Photo/1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Red Bull Infantry Division (page 17).

“When they leave, we rest assured that they take God’s Word home with them.”

DAVID KELLER,
ARMED SERVICES MINISTRY MANAGER

“I stopped being a liar.”
“I’ve forgiven my attackers.”
“I started putting others before myself.”

One person at a time, God’s Word is changing the men and women who serve in America’s Armed Forces. Keller marvels at the way these simple postcards contain firsthand accounts of divine activity.

“They become sacred spaces,” Keller explains.

God Is Still Working

And while a postcard provides a snapshot of a person’s spiritual journey during their military service, the Bibles from American Bible Society’s financial partners help ensure that troops continue to walk with the Lord long after their military career is over.

“When they leave, we rest assured that they take God’s Word home with them,” Keller says. “God continues to mold them into the soldier, person, brother, sister, mom,

dad or friend that they’re going to be ... The Bible is a big part of that.”

As the Bible continues to change lives in the U.S. Armed Forces, Keller and LoCastro will wait for more inspiring stories to arrive from the front lines. And they have every reason to believe that their mailbox will be full again in no time.

“I know what the Scriptures can do,” LoCastro says. “God is still working.”

Jack Newman is a writer at American Bible Society and managing editor of Record magazine.

You can also share the Bible with people around the world. Visit ABSRecord.com/GiveABible.

Custom Scripture resources make it easy for U.S. military members to engage with God’s Word—both on the front lines of battle and with their families back home.



Photo credit: U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Jordan Castellan.

Photo credit: ThinkStockPhotos.com.

IN MEMORIAM

“The Lord is my protector; he is my strong fortress. My God is my protection, and with him I am safe. He protects me like a shield; he defends me and keeps me safe.” *Psalms 18:2 (GNT)*

My husband,
Daniel Anderson
Given by Marilyn Anderson

Gary S. Bailey
Given by Stephen M. Bailey
and Lucia H. Bailey

Leonard Barstead
Given by Mark Barstead

Richard Englander
Given by Geof Morin

Dell Fitzgerald
Given by Jimmy P. Fitzgerald

My sister-in-law,
Gloria Jean De Grandchamp
Given by Dolores M. W. Hill

My husband,
Raymond J. Haas
Given by the Estate of Irene Haas

My sister,
Lorraine Hebert
Given by Dolores M. W. Hill

My wife,
Denise Jordan
Given by Thomas A. Jordan

Jack McIlrath
Given by Friends and Family
of the McIlrath’s

My Mother
Given by Susan Lichtenberger

John Otte
Given by Donald J. Bruggink

June A. Roads
Given by Debra Roads

My husband,
David Stonebraker
Given by Andrea D. Stonebraker

Ingrid Trobisch
Given by Family Life Mission and
the Trobisch Family

Jeanette Young
Given by J. K. Canelon

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 *American Bible Society Record*. For further details about the memorial process, please write to:
Partner Care, American Bible Society, 101 North Independence Mall East FL8, Philadelphia, PA 19106-2155



PRINTING GOD'S WORD

The men shown here are making book covers at American Bible Society's former Astor Place location.



ARMED SERVICES MINISTRY

Since distributing 65 Bibles to sailors on the U.S.S. *John Adams* in 1817, American Bible Society has provided nearly 60 million free Bibles and Bible resources to military members and their families. This photo shows service members in World War I.

FIRST PRESIDENT

American Bible Society's founders included passionate leaders of the emerging nation. Elias Boudinot (1740–1821), the founding president of American Bible Society, also served as president of the Continental Congress and director of the U.S. Mint.



BIBLE DISTRIBUTION

American Bible Society distributed Bibles in African American communities in the post-Reconstruction Era.



200 YEARS

of God's Faithfulness

American Bible Society celebrated its bicentennial anniversary on May 12, 2016, thanks to generations of generous financial partners and the abiding faithfulness of God. These snapshots from

the past show how God has worked through American Bible Society throughout 200 years of ministry. While much has changed in the world since 1816, one thing has remained the same: God's unfailing Word.



WESTWARD EXPANSION

As the United States expanded, American Bible Society's reach expanded too. Here, American Bible Society members Mr. and Mrs. Bowie and their dog Ted distribute Bibles from the Pacific Agency, which was headquartered in San Francisco.



◀ **GOOD NEWS FOR MODERN MAN**

The full Good News Bible was published by American Bible Society in 1976. Artist Annie Vallotton (1915–2013) illustrated the Bible, which was originally called “Good News for Modern Man.”



▲ **HELEN KELLER**

Making God’s Word available in a format everyone can understand is a guiding aspect of American Bible Society’s mission. Here Helen Keller sits with American Bible Society’s first Braille Bible. When American Bible Society presented the standard Braille copy of the Bible to Keller in 1931, she gifted American Bible Society with her raised-letter Bible from 1908.



◀ **SHELTER AND STRENGTH**

After 9/11, American Bible Society published and distributed the Scripture Portion “God Is Our Shelter and Strength,” which offered spiritual comfort in the aftermath of the trauma. Here former American Bible Society President Eugene Habecker hands out the Scripture Portions at Ground Zero.

▶ **A THIRD CENTURY BEGINS**

Today, God is continuing to work through American Bible Society and its partners to accelerate Bible translation, help people in the U.S. engage with Scripture through relevant cultural channels, including social media, and bring the healing power of God’s Word through Bible-based trauma healing to those who have experienced great pain.



You can also share the Bible with people around the world. Visit ABSRecord.com/GiveABible.

Lifelong Giving

As the son of a missions-minded pastor, David Gowan spent much of his childhood on the go. “We moved around to different locations for pastoral work,” says David, who spent his childhood in South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska and Arizona. But despite the constantly changing landscape, one foundation remained firm for David and his family: the Bible.

“We had daily devotions with the Bible and prayer every morning,” says David. “The Bible played quite a prominent place in my life.”

David even recalls giving his first financial gift to American Bible Society at a young age. “My mom was the Sunday School superintendent,” he says. “She would take an offering for American Bible Society every month.”

“The Bible played quite a prominent place in my life.”

Today, David’s financial support of American Bible Society looks a little different than when he used to place coins in an offering plate as a child. But David’s heart to share God’s Word hasn’t changed a bit. “I took out several small gift annuities,” he says. “They were small, but they were intentional.”

Since then, David and his wife have taken out larger gift annuities in support of American Bible Society. “There are several advantages, he explains. “Not only are you supporting a great cause ... one that won’t return void as Scripture says... but there are tax benefits. And the annuity gives good returns nowadays.”

And David says he appreciates the organization’s reliability. “American Bible Society is a long-time organization and has proven its ability to make payments,” says David. “It’s well respected by many people.”

Just as he appreciated the stability of daily devotions as a child, David is grateful for American Bible Society’s steady commitment to help him share God’s Word with the world.



David Gowan uses charitable gift annuities to share God’s Word with the world.

For more information about how you can increase your giving and save money for the ones you love:

Call: **800-549-3328**

Email: **GiftPlanner@AmericanBible.org**

Visit: **www.ABSGift.org**

Provide Income • Reduce Taxes • Maximize Eternal Impact



Generate lifetime income for you... help change eternity for millions!

Through American Bible Society's Gift Annuity payment plans, you can help secure your future with an income you can't outlive while providing God's Word around the world. And we also provide customized options to help fit your specific needs.

An American Bible Society Gift Annuity can provide:

- A current income-tax deduction
- A portion of your income tax-free
- Higher payment rates than most CDs
- An immediate gift to share the Word of God
- The ability to make unlimited contributions to help meet your retirement income needs

DETACH



Please contact me about gift annuity plans!

Yes! I want to learn more about how to secure my future and impact eternity for others through God's Word.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE ZIP _____

PHONE _____

AGE OR DATE OF BIRTH _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

DETACH
PP17092PGZZZZZZ

To learn more about gift annuities:

1. Go online to AmericanBible.org/Annuity
2. Call our toll-free number now at **1-800-549-3328**.
3. Return the coupon on the left to:

Planned Gift Programs

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101 North Independence Mall East FL 8

Philadelphia, PA 19106-2155

 **AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY**

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