



SCRIPTURES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN IN HAITI

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Despite facing extreme poverty, violence, and atrocities, the Haitian Bible Society (HBS) remains committed to its mission of spreading the Word of God and providing solace to those who need it most. For several years now the country has been in a state of crisis with major disruption to daily life being caused by armed gangs who attack everything from infrastructure to individuals.

Amid Haiti’s ongoing political, economic, and social challenges, the Haitian Bible Society is working to bring Scriptures to the most vulnerable members of society — the children.

PHOTO CREDIT: ©HAITIAN BIBLE SOCIETY

“The situation is getting more complicated day-by-day,” reports Magda Victor, General Secretary of the HBS. “Gangs, kidnappings, murders, riots, and the destruction of homes are just some of the things people must contend with,” she says.

There are few places in Haiti that are safe. For example, if you travel out of the capital, Port-au-Prince, you run the risk of meeting armed bandits. Within Port-au-Prince, gangs are burning down houses in neighbourhoods and forcing people to abandon their homes. The sounds of sporadic gunfire can be heard across the city day and night.

Bible Society is also under fire as its offices are in an area that Magda describes as lawless. “Every morning, the streets of Port-au-Prince are full of dead bodies. We do

Dear Friends of Bible Mission,

Welcome to the Summer issue of *The Word at Work*. We look forward to partnering with you in the mission this year. We value each one of you, and your gifts are essential to the Bible Society's cause.

In this issue, you will find stories about countries and projects you have helped support. Life there may be grim, with war and violence often the daily reality for many. Yet, through the Bible, people find courage, strength and hope to carry on.

Thank you to those of you who supported our children's appeal in 2023 helping teenage mothers in Guatemala. Also, I want to thank our Bible a Month Regular givers who have previously provided Bibles for school children in Haiti and, last year, provided Bibles and relief aid to Internally Displaced Persons living in camps in Nigeria.

At the heart of everything we do is the Bible. This year, our theme is **"The Bible is Truth."** This will be reflected in all our mission programmes with a focus on Bible engagement and growing people's confidence in the creditability of the Bible.

Like you, I am saddened by the events that have unfolded in the Bible Lands since Hamas's horrific attack on Jewish people on 7 October 2023. The Heads of the Bible Societies in the Bible Lands continue to need our prayers and support, so we are starting the year with an appeal to assist them in bringing the comfort of God's Word to people there. Thank you once again for everything that you do to support the mission!



A blue ink handwritten signature of Neels Janse van Rensburg.

Neels Janse van Rensburg
CEO



A teenage girl with items she has received from Bible Society.

PHOTO CREDIT: ©CÉSAR ALMARAZ

not know when this faucet of freely flowing blood will stop, nor do we know if we will become victims to this never-ending cycle of violence," says Magda.

It is a tragic situation and one that Magda has asked for our prayers for. But despite the chaos, the HBS is continuing to reach out to youth with Scriptures. "Every day the field to be sown with the Word of God becomes larger in this time of unprecedented distress," says Magda.

Recognising that children are most affected in times of crisis, the HBS has prioritised reaching out to schools, where the education system often lacks resources for teaching

religion. Despite numerous obstacles, the HBS has successfully organised distributions of booklets and Bibles in over twenty schools across the west, north, and north-east departments of Haiti. Already, the project has touched the lives of 10,000 schoolchildren, with a goal to reach 20,000 by the end of the year.

Miranda, a nine-year-old student from Ecole Baptiste de Logos in Ouanaminthe, shares her gratitude for receiving the "100 Steps Family Bible." "I like David and Goliath which is my favourite. What I also liked were the activities to do at the end of each story. I would like to thank the Haitian Bible Society for this special gift," says Miranda.

HELPING TEENAGE MOTHERS IN GUATEMALA

Guatemala is a country that has very high levels of sexual violence, especially against indigenous girls. It also has one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Latin America, with one in three girls becoming a mother before the age of eighteen. Through its "Children having children: Healing with the Word of God to nourish with love" project, the Bible Society of Guatemala is reaching out to teenage mothers with workshops to provide them with emotional, spiritual, and psychological healing.

Thanks to your support, in the first two trimesters of 2023 Bible Society provided

trauma healing assistance, supplements, biblical training on motherhood, and Bibles to 113 teenage girls in 18 workshops. Some of these girls are living in home shelters while others are living in notorious gang zones.

The topics that are addressed in the workshops include helping the girls to learn about their identity, improving their self-esteem, and managing their emotions in this new phase of their lives. They are encouraged to face up to the new reality that they must now take care of another human being.

"Since I went to the workshops, I stopped feeling lonely. I understood that I am not the only one going through this situation. My desire is to continue studying and make my parents proud and give my son a good future. Thank you for these workshops and for my Bible," one participant said.

"Being a mother so young has been very difficult, but when Bible Society came and I listened to what they say in each workshop, my soul was strengthened. The love of God

has given me strength to continue," said another.

The girls are provided with a kit of clothing and baby items, such as baby formula and nappies. This is important because most of the girls are minors, and they do not have the financial resources to support themselves and their babies. Bible Society has also carried out one training for pastors, teaching them how to care for the child mothers and providing them with biblical portions to distribute to them.



18
Bible workshops.



113
teenage mothers attended.



619
Bibles, portions, and workbooks provided.

BIBLE LAUNCH IN UKRAINE

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In late September 2023, the Ukrainian Bible Society launched the Contemporary Ukrainian Bible translation at St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, only 240 kilometres from an active theatre of war. The event was attended by the heads of Christian denominations, state officials, chaplains, and other honourable guests.

The head of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, Metropolitan Epiphanius, expressed sincere joy at having this translation completed as it is something that the Orthodox Church and all Ukrainian Christians have been waiting for, for a long time. He marked how profound the work on this Bible translation was and expressed confidence that people would be using it, reading it, and finding inspiration in it.

The guests who attended the launch of the Contemporary Ukrainian Bible at St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv.

PHOTO CREDIT: ©UKRAINIAN BIBLE SOCIETY



The launch was also attended by Mr. Rostyslav Karandiev, the Acting Minister of Culture, on behalf of the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Mr. Denys Shmyhal – signifying how significant this event is within the country.

“It is in such times of war, that the whole nation understands the great importance of their mother language. I am convinced that everyone reading this Eternal Book in the living mother language would find special meaning and personal sense, would get to know the Word of God, and find comfort and answers to today’s difficult challenges. I sincerely congratulate all the participants of this great project on its completion and wish them abundant God’s blessings, spiritual inspiration, and trust in a happy future,” said Mr. Karandiev.

“Our sincere prayer is that God continues speaking to the hearts of our nation through His Word in this translation!” said a Ukrainian Bible Society representative.

People from an Internally Displaced Persons camp in Nigeria with Bibles.

PHOTO CREDIT: ©BENJAMIN MORDI

BIBLES FOR NIGERIA’S IDPS

Thanks to the support of our Bible a Month Regular Giving members, the Bible Society of Nigeria (BSN) has distributed relief materials and Bibles to more than 700 families in two Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in Northern Nigeria.

Prior to distributing the resources, BSN staff visited the camps to assess the needs of the people. During these visits, they explained to expectant parents and children that the Macedonian Call project was initiated to reach out to families in underprivileged communities nationwide, with a particular focus on Internally Displaced Persons camps, and those residing in slums.

The magnitude of the displacement crisis in Nigeria is significant, as highlighted by the Displacement Tracking Matrix, which reports a total of approximately 2.3 million internally displaced persons living in hundreds of IDP camps scattered across the country, as of



June 2023. These individuals are victims of various challenges, including insurgencies, clashes between farmers and Fulani herdsmen, and natural disasters such as flooding.

Recently, BSN staff distributed relief materials and Bibles to 472 beneficiaries in Abuja, North Central Nigeria, and 315 individuals in Adamawa, Northeast Nigeria. The recipients expressed immense joy and gratitude upon receiving these items, providing them with a source of solace and inspiration. Additionally, students were equipped with school bags, notebooks, and pens, to provide support for their education. Parents received crucial relief materials such as toiletries, beverages, and food items, addressing their immediate needs. All interested parents and students were provided with second hand clothing.

Previously, BSN has donated similar items to IDP Camps located in various parts of the country, including Adamawa, Benue, Edo, Kogi, Plateau, Delta, Taraba States, and Abuja, among other places.

The Chikun Camp Commander and Chairman of Save Life Community Development Association (SLCDA), Adams Sule, wrote his heartfelt thanks to Bible Society:

"The donation of Bibles has not only provided spiritual nourishment but has also served as a source of strength and inspiration to the IDPs, reminding them that they are not forgotten and that there is still hope for a better tomorrow. The Word of God has the power to heal and restore, and your contribution has undoubtedly made a significant impact on the lives of these individuals. I believe this gesture will raise ministers in the community," he said.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Would you prayerfully consider making a gift to support Bible mission in the Bible Lands and bring comfort to people who are suffering there?

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.

Warren Edmeades
Cynthia Gladys Priem
D E Watt
Bill Watt
Marianna Minhinnick
Jack O'Carroll
Iris Nicholls
Anya Phillips

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THE LAST WORD

My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life. Psalm 119:50 (NIV)

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