

# GOD'S WORD LIVING & ACTIVE

2015  
STEWARDSHIP  
REPORT





Dear Friend,

There are people around the world who wake up every morning with one question on their minds: How can I change someone's life by helping them deepen their relationship with Christ?

I am so grateful to work alongside these people, who serve as our faithful partners. As I reflect on the past year, it is crystal clear that our mission is about people. With the support of an extensive group of global partners, we saw God work in amazing ways: a pastor in Rochester launching a Bible-reading campaign, a team in Zambia translating the Bible in record time, a woman using Scripture to restore hope for Syrian refugees. Each step of the way, partners like United Bible Societies, YouVersion and the JESUS Film® worked with us to make the Bible available and alive in the most difficult circumstances.

In Romans 12:4-6, the Apostle Paul discusses our role in the body of Christ. While our responsibilities differ, we live and work in union with Christ: *"We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body"* (GNT).

As we seek to see lives changed with God's Word, we see ourselves in this passage of Scripture: one part of one body, joined together with people like you and partners from around the world. Without your generosity and God's amazing grace, our work could not continue.

Thank you for your friendship, support and prayer as we seek to serve God's Kingdom together.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Roy Peterson  
President & CEO

"As we seek to see lives changed with God's Word, we see ourselves in this passage of Scripture: one part of one body, joined together with people like you and partners from around the world."

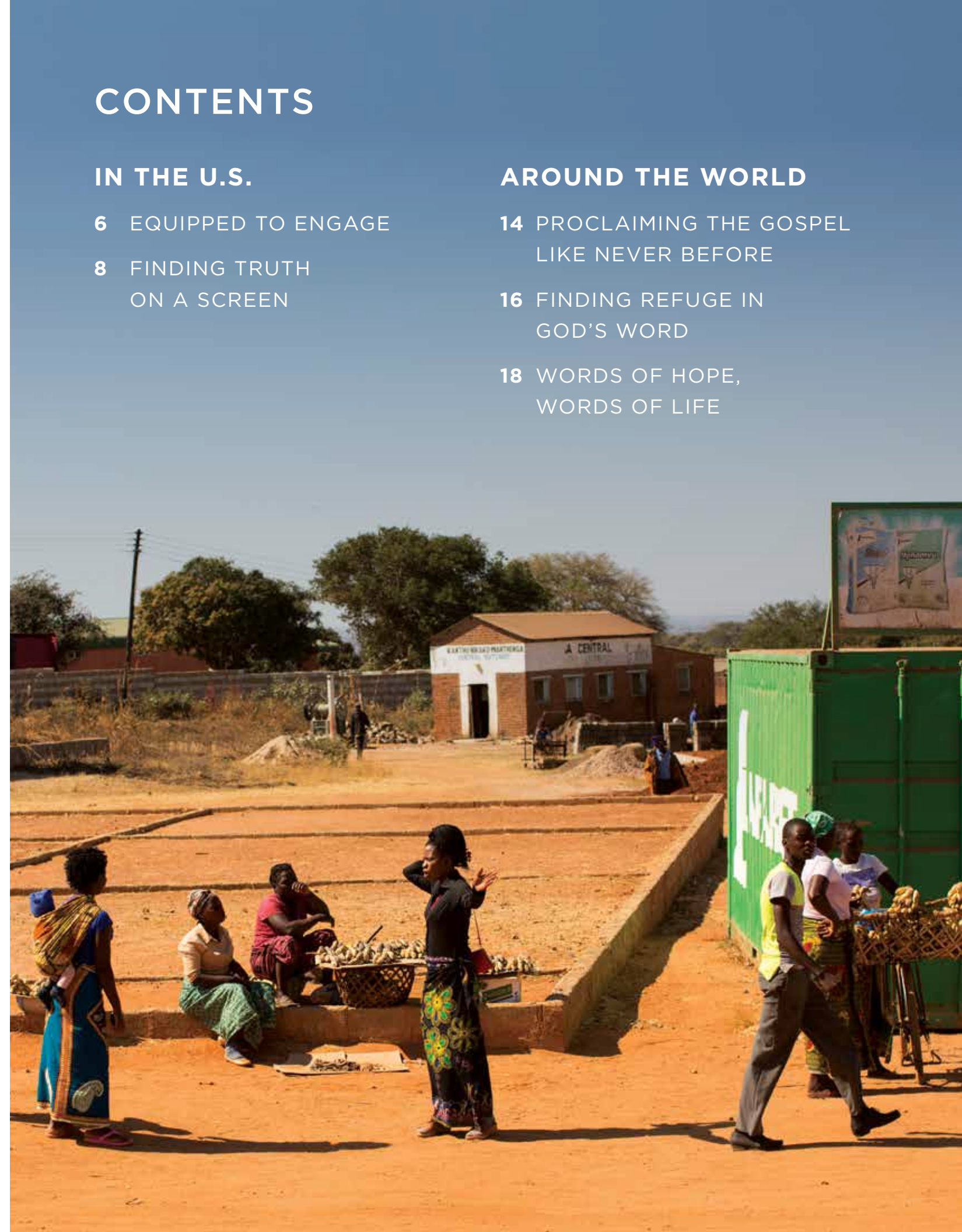
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# REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

At American Bible Society, we envision a nation where millions of Americans engage with Scripture on a daily basis. And we envision a world where cities and cultures have been transformed by God's Word.

But in the past five years, the number of Bible skeptics in America has more than doubled (10 percent to 21 percent), according to the 2015 State of the Bible survey. Bible engagement has also declined (20 percent to 17 percent) during that same span of time.

Despite these discouraging trends, we see God laying the foundation for a resurgence of Bible engagement in the United States. That's why American Bible Society collaborates with partners to make the Bible available and alive for a new generation of Americans.

By working with our partners to transform cities and cultures with God's Word, we long to see 100 million people in the U.S. actively engaging with Scripture by 2025.

"If the LORD does not build the house, the work of the builders is useless; if the LORD does not protect the city, it does no good for the sentries to stand guard." — PSALM 127:1 (GNT)

2011

**BIBLE ENGAGED**

62M 

Number of Americans who read the Bible multiple times per week

**BIBLE SKEPTICAL**

31M 

Number of Americans who believe the Bible is just another book of teachings, advice and stories

2015

**BIBLE ENGAGED**

54M 

Bible engagement is rapidly declining

**BIBLE SKEPTICAL**

67M 

Bible skepticism is rising

2025

**BIBLE ENGAGED**

100M 

We envision a nation where 100 million people read and reflect on the Bible at least four times per week

We will deploy a nationwide advocacy campaign to transform how Americans think about the Bible

We will equip urban leaders with targeted Bible resources, ultimately working to restore U.S. Cities with God's Word





## EQUIPPED TO ENGAGE

How American Bible Society's resources empower leaders to build Scripture-engaged communities

**P**eter Englert had a problem. As the discipleship pastor of Browncroft Community Church in Rochester, N.Y., he had seen a decline in Bible engagement among members of his church. Englert knew his congregation needed Scripture in order to grow in their faith. He just didn't know how to make the Bible accessible to them on a regular basis.

And Englert isn't alone.

Today, just 28 percent of Americans regularly read the Bible, according to the 2015 State of the Bible study. Like Englert, many pastors and ministry leaders don't know how to make a dent in this declining trend. That's why, with the help of financial partners, American Bible Society has committed to equipping church leaders—from army chaplains in North Carolina to pastors in Phoenix, Az.—with the Bible resources, training and support they need to help their communities experience a transformation through God's Word.

For Englert, this support arrived in the form of a Bible reading plan, which he received from American Bible Society's Scripture Engagement team. He used the plan to spur Bible engagement in his church, establishing "Read 365," a daily email reading campaign. Every morning, Englert sends a prayer, memory verse and Scripture reflection to members of his church. And every morning, hundreds of recipients open the email and engage with God's Word.

Church and ministry leaders like Englert across the country have learned about new ideas, tips and research to spur Bible engagement through a blog launched specifically for leaders. This steady flow of information—from the latest Bible engagement stats to tips for reaching millennials—has empowered leaders to form effective Bible-reading strategies in their local churches and communities.

"...he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ."

— EPHESIANS 4:11b-12 (GNT)



Pastors and church leaders from across the country use resources from American Bible Society to spur Bible engagement in their community.



### Bible Engagement: *Vital for Spiritual Growth*

Over a period of four years, the Willow Creek Association polled more than 1,500 churches representing more than 400,000 people. Their conclusion:

**The Bible, more than anything, moves people forward in their love for God and others.**

"By equipping a community of like-minded, Scripture-focused leaders with creative ideas and inspiration, we're seeing the Bible come alive in communities nationwide," says Randy Petersen, executive editor of the blog. "It's all about giving them content relevant to their specific needs."

This leaders-focused approach has also provided for the Bible-reading needs of chaplains in the U.S. military. As service members navigate life away from loved ones, they desperately need the hope and peace found in God's Word. To fulfill this need, Armed Services Ministries equips chaplains with free Bible resources, including custom Bibles, devotionals for soldiers, Scripture apps and more.

These resources have empowered chaplains to change lives through God's Word, explains Art Pace, executive director of Armed Services Ministries. "Every month, we receive scores of notes from service members and veterans telling us how their lives have been changed from our Bibles and Bible resources," Pace says. "Whether on land or in the air, God's Word is saving, healing and encouraging the lives of these great Americans."

For many leaders, Bible engagement has long seemed like an uphill battle. But now, with resources and shared knowledge, they are equipped to share God's Word with the people around them, one reading plan, one blog and one Bible resource at a time.



### JOIN US IN PRAYER

- **Pray for pastors like Peter Englert.** Ask God to ignite a renewal of Bible engagement in U.S. churches, driven by pastors like Englert who long to build a Bible-engaged congregation.
- **Pray for church leaders from across the country.** Ask God to prompt leaders with the question, "How can I help my church engage God's Word?"
- **Pray for military chaplains.** Ask God to provide for the unique needs of military chaplains through custom Bible resources.



## FINDING TRUTH ON A SCREEN

How American Bible Society uses online tools to help Americans engage with God's Word

The blog post went live at 9 a.m. Immediately, readers chimed in on the comments section: "Amen!" a woman wrote. One man vowed to share the post. Another woman told the story of her two grandchildren, who live in an emotionally abusive home. Others praised God for the reminder of hope and healing found in Scripture.

The blog post, "6 Bible Verses for Broken Hearts," was one of three articles that appears weekly on American Bible Society's Bible blog. It had just been shared on Facebook, and it was a hit. Over the next eight months, it would engage 26,670 readers. But people weren't just reading words on a screen. Men and women around the world were engaging with the truths found in God's Word.

And it's not an uncommon trend. Just like these men and women, millions of Americans regularly turn to the Internet for wisdom and encouragement from the Bible. Whether reading a blog post about God's grace or comforting a friend on Facebook, people are connecting with Scripture on a screen. That's why providing relevant online content—from Scripture blog posts about the Bible and relationships to online discussion guides about movies

"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

— JOHN 8:32 (GNT)

15K

Readers engage with the Bible blog each week

14.1K

Readers visit the Bible blog from links on Facebook each week

5.4M

Total American Bible Society Facebook audience in the U.S.

and TV series—is critical. This Bible-focused content meets people in the midst of their online culture and answers the questions they ask on a daily basis.

On the Bible blog and Facebook, this engagement happens one post at a time. Each article or post introduces thousands of readers to messages grounded in Scripture. As people encounter God's Word, they engage by leaving comments for other readers. These comments have helped create a community of believers who regularly encourage, support and pray for one another. While the blog itself provides hope through the Bible, the readers who engage with the blog provide hope by making personal connections.

Through additional online resources, American Bible Society provides a launching point for readers to engage with popular culture. When the film "Exodus: Gods & Kings" hit theaters last year, viewers could explore the book of Exodus while discussing the film's portrayal of Moses' life. When the TV series "A.D.: The Bible Continues" launched on NBC, viewers could follow each episode through a series of blog posts that offered biblical references, discussion questions and takeaway points.

Online resources like these make it possible to read, engage and discuss the Bible any time of day, any place there's an Internet connection. Now, finding God's Word is as easy as finding words on a screen.



### Driven to Tell A Different Story

*A vision for a national Bible discovery center*

Now located in the heart of historic Philadelphia—just steps from Independence Mall and the Liberty Bell—American Bible Society is planning to build a historical attraction for visitors of the city. Through Scripture and interactive experiences, the proposed 40,000 square-foot facility would help millions of people discover the role of the Bible in the founding of our nation.

#### Potential Impact and Opportunity

- **2.5 million** people visited Independence Mall in 2014
- **51%** growth in tourist visits to Philadelphia since 1997
- **198** official museums and historic sites in Philadelphia
- **0** museums and historic sites in Philadelphia feature the Bible



#### JOIN US IN PRAYER

- **Pray for Collaboration.**  
Pray that Americans would use online Bible resources to discuss, connect and grow.
- **Pray for Opportunity.**  
Pray that God would continue to unveil effective methods for reaching Americans with the Gospel message.
- **Pray for Restoration.**  
Pray that God would restore broken lives through increased access to his Word.



“The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword.”

HEBREWS 4:12a (GNT)

# ACCELERATING GOD'S WORD FOR ALL

**M**ore than one billion people lack access to a full Bible in their heart languages. People in Zambia, India and around the world long to hold their first Bibles and experience the life-changing message of God's Word. To turn this dream into a reality, American Bible Society and its partners are paving the way to a world where all people have access to a Bible they can read and understand.

Through the Nida Institute for Biblical Studies, American Bible Society implements Bible translation research and best practices around the globe. By accelerating these translation projects in cities, villages and communities worldwide, we are attempting to open 100 percent of languages to Scripture engagement in the next 10 years, empowering every person on the planet to encounter Christ in the pages of Scripture.

"On with it, then, and finish the job! Be as eager to finish it as you were to plan it, and do it with what you now have."

— 2 CORINTHIANS 8:11 (GNT)

**1985**

Full Bible translation took 34 years



**1995**

Full Bible translation took 27 years



**2005**

Full Bible translation took 23 years



**2015**

Full Bible translation can take 12 years



**2025**

With the support of our partners, we hope to open 100 percent of languages to Scripture engagement






Nyanja Bible Translator Rev. Emmanuel Mwale (left) works with Gift Nyirenda (right) the head of the Bible Society of Zambia translation team to translate the Bible using online tools.

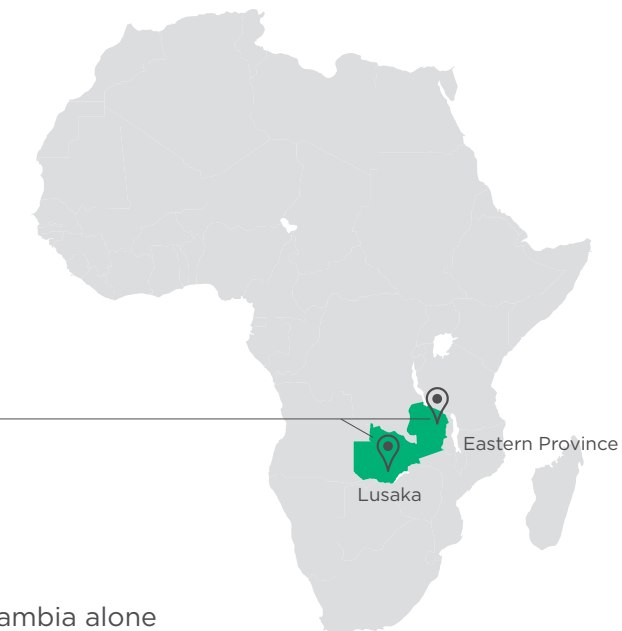
### DIG DEEPER

15M   
people in Zambia

70   
languages spoken nationwide

2.2M   
Nyanja speakers in Zambia

8   
translation projects active in Zambia alone



## PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL LIKE NEVER BEFORE

How a translation team in Zambia plans to reach thousands with God's Word

In the dark of the night, Rev. Leonard Kambale Phiri rises from his bed. He wakes his wife and stirs his three children. Once awake, his family engages in a daily custom: they pray.

As he bows his head, Rev. Phiri has plenty to share with God. In addition to serving as the pastor of a 200-member church, he represents one of three men in Zambia dedicated to completing a Nyanja translation of the Bible.

For years, more than two million Nyanja speakers have waited for a translation in their heart language. Many of them have resorted to reading a hard-to-understand Chewa Bible, a more complex version of Nyanja. But once Rev. Phiri's team completes the translation project, Nyanja speakers will be able to read and understand the Bible in their heart language.

"The Chewa Bible we are using is difficult to understand, I must confess," Rev. Phiri says. "But with this [new translation], the message is becoming simpler."

To complete the Nyanja Bible, Rev. Phiri meets with a pair of translators in an office in Katete, a small town in Zambia's Eastern Province. The simple but critical equipment located inside—a printer, generator and laptop with internet access—is the result of a collaboration with

Every Tribe Every Nation (ETEN), an alliance of financial partners and leading Bible agencies from around the world.

By using the latest technology available, ETEN shares tools, resources and best practices to accelerate translation projects in Zambia and across the globe. Thanks to these advancements, Bible translators like Rev. Phiri hope to translate a full Bible in 12 years; in the 1980s, the process would have taken nearly 35 years to complete.

In the coming weeks, ETEN plans to provide Rev. Phiri and his team with another resource: a set of bikes. After spending three-and-a-half hours praying in the wee hours of the morning, Rev. Phiri takes an expensive and time-consuming trip to the office in Katete, traveling 20 miles by foot and public transportation. A bike will drastically reduce his travel time, provide free transportation and

enable him to spend more time working with the translation team.

Using these tools and resources provided by ETEN, Rev. Phiri and his fellow translators hope to print and publish the Nyanja Bible in the next three years. By doing so, they will equip millions of Nyanja speakers—and millions of future Nyanja speakers—to experience the life-changing message of God's Word in record time.

Today, when Rev. Phiri bows his head to pray, he speaks Nyanja. When he counsels members of his church, he speaks Nyanja. But when he reads the Bible, he reads in Chewa. By translating the Bible into Nyanja, Rev. Phiri will ensure his congregation—and congregations throughout Zambia—no longer have to interpret God's Word. Instead, they will have the opportunity to read, study and cherish the Bible in their heart language.

"Yes, grass withers and flowers fade, but the word of our God endures forever."  
— ISAIAH 40:8 (GNT)



### JOIN US IN PRAYER

- **Pray for Accuracy.**  
Pray for Rev. Phiri and his translation team as they seek to produce an easy-to-understand Nyanja Bible.
- **Pray for Efficiency.**  
Thank God for the equipment and tools the Nyanja translation team has to complete the translation.
- **Pray for God's Provision.**  
Pray for the eight translation projects currently in progress in Zambia. And pray for the \$36,000-\$52,000 needed to fund each project.






## DIG DEEPER

2.7M  refugees who have fled Syria

600K  Syrian refugees live in Jordan

50%  percentage of Syrian refugees living in Jordan who are children



## FINDING REFUGE IN GOD'S WORD

How a Jordanian woman equipped Syrian refugees to start anew

For the past three-and-a-half years, Margaret has walked beside hundreds of Syrian refugees, listening intently as they share stories of violence, heartbreak and abuse.

She has supported women who watched their homes burn to the ground. She has encouraged mothers who survived a brutal assault while attempting to cross the border into Jordan. And she has comforted Syrian daughters who have endured abuse, often at the hands of a friend or family member.

But for Margaret, encouragement, support and comfort only represents the beginning of the healing process. In December, Margaret attended a Bible-based trauma healing class, made possible by the generosity of American Bible Society's financial partners.

Through the course, Margaret and more than 40 participants learned to practice a four-stage healing model based on a foundation of Scripture. In the first stage, leaders empower participants to identify their pain. The second and third stages equip refugees to share their hurt and forgive their oppressors. In the final stage, refugees learn to bring their pain, suffering and heartbreak to the cross of Christ.

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





— PSALM 62:8 (GNT)

While working with a local organization committed to helping Arab women reconcile with God, themselves and their community, Margaret uses her training to share God's Word with those who long for a peace-filled future.

"We get them to the church, and we talk to them and listen to them," she continues. "We let them talk about their problems and what they need—not for food or clothes, but what they need to live [better] lives."

Now, when Syrian women cross the border into Jordan, dealing with deep emotional and physical wounds, Margaret can share the healing power of God's love. When she does, these women—the woman who watched her home burn to the ground, the mother who survived assault, the child trying to cope with abuse—find the strength to start anew.

### FOUR STAGES OF BIBLE-BASED TRAUMA HEALING

-  **Identify**  
source of pain (*Psalm 34:18*)
-  **Share**  
hurt with others (*Psalm 32:3*)
-  **Forgive**  
oppressors (*Colossians 3:13*)
-  **Release**  
suffering to Christ (*Isaiah 53:5*)

### JOIN US IN PRAYER


- **Pray for Healing.**  
Pray for the women, children and men suffering with deep emotional wounds in the wake of war in Syria.
- **Pray for Strength.**  
Lift up program facilitators like Margaret as they use God's Word to mend broken hearts.
- **Pray for God's Provision.**  
Pray for the \$80,000 needed to fund training and equipping of trauma healing facilitators in the Middle East.




Thousands of Ghanaians, like the girl pictured here, lack access to the life-changing message of God's Word.

**DIG DEEPER**  
THROUGH END-TO-END:

1,500   
Bibles distributed in Ghana alone

60   
Bible listening sessions active nationwide

194   
people regularly attend these sessions

58   
people in Ghana have committed their lives to Christ



## WORDS OF HOPE, WORDS OF LIFE

How a three-phase evangelism model equipped a Ghanaian woman to encounter the Gospel

Aisha\* grew up in a Muslim family. Sheltered from Christianity for most of her childhood, she had never encountered the Gospel—until she stumbled upon a showing of the JESUS Film® near her home in Kumasi, a city in southern Ghana. While Aisha watched Jesus nailed to the cross, tears streamed down her face. The story captivated her.

As Aisha would later realize, this showing of the JESUS Film was part of a three-phase evangelism model called End-to-End. The model reaches people in unreached regions of Asia and Africa by sharing the Gospel in three ways: through viewings of the JESUS Film, Faith Comes By Hearing® (FCBH) listening groups and Bible reading programs led by local Bible Society partners. By presenting the Gospel in these formats, people with low literacy skills—and people with high literacy skills—can engage with the Gospel together.

When Aisha had finished watching the film, a missionary came by her side and explained the Gospel in detail. Aisha listened to the missionary explain Jesus' death and resurrection—and ultimately, his love for her.

At the end of their conversation, Aisha committed her life to Christ. But because of her Muslim upbringing, her decision came with dire consequences. Her fiancé

left her. Her family disowned her. And her community rebuked her. But Aisha knew God's Word could provide peace. "The Bible was my only hope," she says.

So Aisha continued to the second and third phases of End-to-End, traveling 12 miles to attend Scripture listening sessions hosted by FCBH. When she had listened to the New Testament for the first time, Aisha "felt inner peace." But local missionaries knew she would need a way to engage with God's Word after the listening sessions ended. So, at the conclusion of the program, they handed her a Bible in her heart language, a provision from American Bible Society's generous financial partners. The opportunity for Aisha to hold, read and cherish her own Bible made a life-changing impact on her life.

"My life before was a life of depression and exclusion," Aisha says. "Ever since I received this Bible, I have been strengthened. I know I shall overcome my challenges."

Now, Aisha can continue to grow in her relationship with Jesus Christ by watching, hearing and reading God's Word. To Aisha, they are words of hope and words of life.

*\*Name has been changed for security reasons*

"So then, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through preaching Christ.

— ROMANS 10:17 (GNT)



### JOIN US IN PRAYER

- **Pray for First-Time Bible Readers.** Ask God to reveal himself to Bible readers as they encounter his Word for the first time.
- **Pray for Listening Session Attendees.** Ask God to reveal his love and grace to those who have yet to hear the Gospel.
- **Pray for God's Provision.** Pray for the 60 listening sessions currently taking place in Ghana. And pray for the \$20,000 needed to give participants their own Bible.

# A LEGACY OF FAITHFULNESS

How wonderful it is to see a messenger coming across the mountains, bringing good news, the news of peace! He announces victory and says to Zion, "Your God is king!"

—ISAIAH 52:7 (GNT)

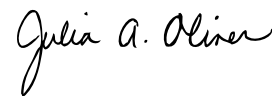
Dear Friends,

As American Bible Society nears 200 years of making the Bible available and alive to those who need it most, we praise God for you, our faithful financial partners, in this work. We know that no Bible translation, Bible-based Trauma Healing program nor outreach to our nation's military heroes is possible without you. You have answered a call to the ministry of God's Word through your prayers, support and engagement with Scripture.

Today, we look forward to a future made possible by the generosity of past and present partners who provided funding through planned giving, sacrificial annual gifts and many other ways. We praise God that together, we can serve him by making 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.

We are pleased to report that 100 percent of current gifts to American Bible Society directly support Bible ministry. Our strategic reserves continue to honor the stated intents of financial partners and underwrite operating costs. We pledge thoughtful and honest stewardship of the resources provided so that all people may meet God in the pages of Scripture.

With gratitude,



Julia A. Oliver, CPA/PFS, CGMA  
Chief Financial Officer

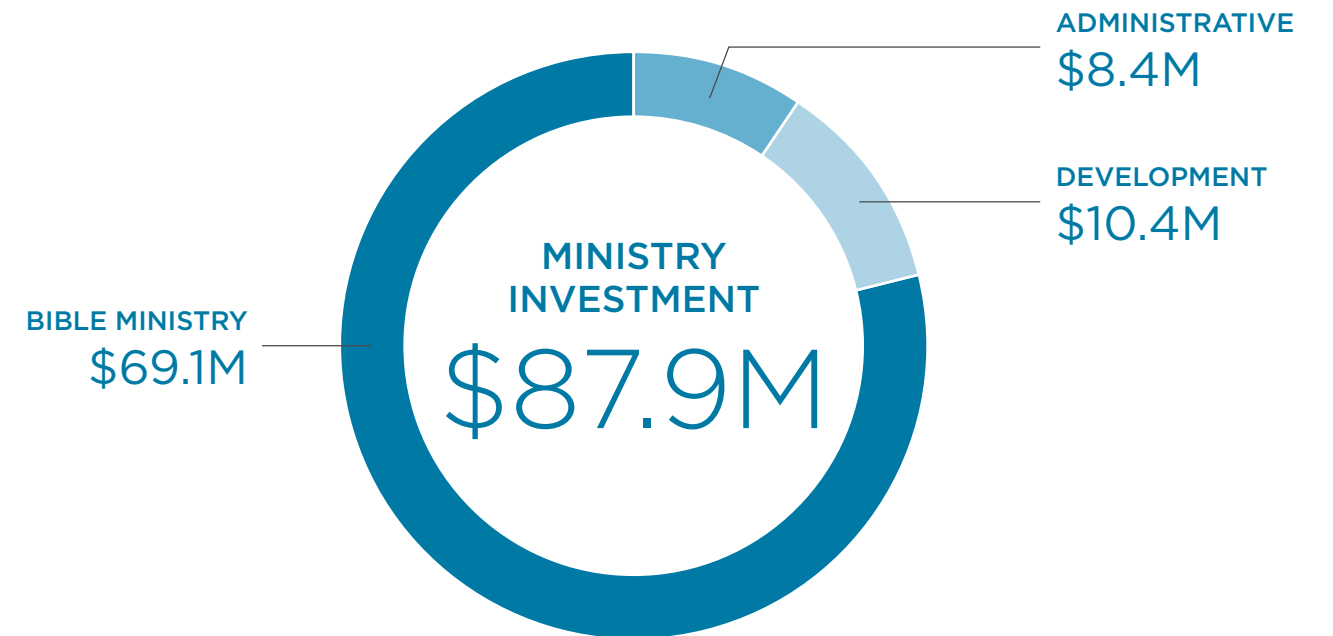
**100 percent of every dollar invested** went directly to Bible ministry in the past year.



American Bible Society complies with ECFA's Seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship™, which are drawn from Scripture and are fundamental to operating with integrity.

# GENEROSITY REPORT

For the year ended June 30, 2015 (\$ Millions)



Downloads of the American Bible Society financial information (Form 990s) are available at AmericanBible.org. As required by the Internal Revenue Service, audited financial statements (the source for this summarized presentation) are available upon request, as well as on the American Bible Society website.

In the last year, American Bible Society also earned net proceeds of \$274.7M from the sale of its headquarters building in New York.

# BOARD MEMBERS

Beginning July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

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*Chairman of the Board,  
Co-founder and Co-owner of  
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**Elizabeth Peale Allen**

*Vice Chairman of the Board  
Chairman of the Board of Guideposts*

**Cheryl Holland**

*Recording Secretary/Treasurer  
President of Abacus Planning Group, Inc.*

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*Vice President of Ministry Investment,  
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*President & CEO of AvantGarde*

**Pieter J. Dearolf**

*Founder of Dearolf & Mereness LLP*

**Tessie Güell DeVore**

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*Executive Director of Administration for  
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**James Eastman**

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**Harvey Hoskins**

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**Roy Peterson**

*President and CEO of  
American Bible Society*

**The Rev. Paul A. Soukup S.J.**

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at Santa Clara University*

**Frank M. Taylor, III**

*Medical Director of the Clinical Laboratory  
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**David J. Trobisch**

*Director of the Green Collection,  
Museum of the Bible*

**Darrell L. Whiteman**

*Executive Director, Overseas Ministries  
Study Center*

**Angela Williams**

*Executive Vice President, General Counsel  
& Chief Administration Officer, YMCA of  
the USA & Pastor, Fellowship Community  
Church of Chicago*



MAKING 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**

[AmericanBible.org](http://AmericanBible.org)