

ISSUE 1 | 2021

word@work

**YOUR
GIFTS
HELPED
MORE
PEOPLE
HEAR GOD
SPEAK
IN 2020**



“The Mighty One,
God, the LORD,
speaks and summons
the earth from the
rising of the sun to
where it sets.”

—Psalm 50:1 (NIV)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

How a kidnapped Christian
in Syria forgave her al-Qaeda
captors | **Page 3**

Why Pastor Zhou cried
when he received Bibles
in China | **Page 5**

Discover how Shirley has
overcome adversity and
disability | **Page 7**



Canadian Bible Society
The Word. For Life.

Rupen's Reflections

■ If you're like me, you entered 2021 feeling weary and stressed.

Constant uncertainty makes us anxious while changing restrictions distance us from family and friends.

We are beginning to hope that a vaccine will deliver us, but many of us know people who were taken ill or even died from COVID-19, and many others who are suffering financially.

Yet millions of people also have been awakened to their spiritual hunger. They crave greater meaning, restored relationships, and inner healing.

I never presume that I know God's larger plan. But it seems clear that we have an enormous opportunity to help anxious people hear God speak.

This newsletter reminds us that God's Word is transformational for every person and that the promises of Psalm 23 – "He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake . . . He restores my soul" were written for the worst of times.



Thank you for helping people hear God's voice.

Please continue to journey with us. The coming year seems likely to be one of unusual movement in people's hearts.

Together we embrace His Commission, knowing that He will "never leave us or forsake us till the end of the age."

With appreciation,

Rupen Das
Executive Director

"Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me." —Psalm 23:4 (NIV)



Canadian Bible Society
The Word. For Life.

10 Carnforth Road, Toronto, ON M4A 2S4

Tel: 416-757-4171 | **Toll Free:** 1-800-465-2425

Fax: 416-757-3376 | **Email:** info@biblesociety.ca
www.biblesociety.ca

TO DONATE:

CALL TOLL FREE: 1-800-465-2425

DONATE ONLINE: biblesociety.ca/wawjan21

MAIL TO: 10 Carnforth Road, Toronto, ON M4A 2S4



**Canadian Centre for
Christian Charities**
ACCREDITED MEMBER

ethical and operational standards. The CCCC seal is evidence that we are committed to integrity and excellence in ministry.

We are a member of the Canadian Centre for Christian Charities. This means that we adhere to high

Maria's journey to radical forgiveness

■ Coming of age during Syria's Civil War, Maria had gotten used to fear so thick you could touch it. Neighbour turning against neighbour. Empty city streets and emptier hearts.

Then at 23 years old, she and her mother were kidnapped by Jabhat al-Nusra, a Syrian offshoot of al-Qaeda. They were held captive for nearly two years.

Faith grows despite captivity

Despite their horrific situation, "It was clear to us that God was with us from day to day," Maria says. "God saved us through all these difficulties. And he used us as witnesses!"

Maria and her mother tried to show their faith through actions. When their captors derided Maria and her mother, they returned kind words. When their faith was mocked, they silently prayed, "Forgive them, Father."

"God saved us through all these difficulties. And he used us as witnesses!"

In the darkest of circumstances, God was present.

"We told the guards about our faith," Maria shares. "We tried through our lives to show them what



Christian faith really is. They had only heard of Jesus, but I had the opportunity to testify of Jesus' love and that God loves all people. This was something completely different from the Christianity they had heard of but not experienced."

Maria found purpose in her suffering

In that moment, the harsh strain of captivity faded. Maria found a greater purpose behind her suffering. When Maria and her mother were finally released almost two years later, their guards told them, "We have learned to become fond of Jesus because of you."

Although Maria knew God's comfort during her captivity, she wasn't exempt from emotional fallout from what she'd endured. Syrians like Maria who have

experienced the physical and mental atrocities of war need the comfort of the God of Scripture.

Helping others overcome trauma

Maria knows the hard questions a hurting heart asks in the middle of the night. That's why she, already a certified psychologist, chose to be trained to facilitate Bible-based trauma healing groups.

Today, Maria works as a trauma healing facilitator in Syria where she can help others find healing through God's Word. And she uses her experiences to tell others that God can use a journey of suffering for His good.

Thanks to your support, approximately seventy women and five hundred children participate in these Bible-based trauma healing groups in Syria each month.

Your gifts help bring healing through Scripture

The Trauma Healing ministry uses the restorative power of God's Word. The Bible-based curriculum combines basic mental health concepts to help participants identify their pain, share their suffering, forgive their oppressors, and bring their pain to the cross of Christ for healing.

HEARING GOD IN YOUNG HEARTS

Samira's life was changed by God's Word

■ In Niger, West Africa, where many live under the pressure of poverty, violence, and terrorism, children often act out. Samira* was one of those children.

"My life was a life of disobedience and rebellion against my parents," she admits. But Samira found hope through the JESUS Film — and the audio Bible resources she received.

"It is through this Bible outreach that God has made a great transformation in my life and I will never forget it," Samira says. "By listening to the Word of God, my life of disobedience has changed into a life of obedience. Without this Bible, I could be a lost girl."

* Some photos and names in this newsletter have been changed for personal privacy and security reasons.



HEARING GOD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YOUR OWN LANGUAGE

"I feel like someone is speaking from deep inside my heart."

■ Loan lives in a Muong community in the mountainous region of northern Vietnam. One Christmas, she accepted her son's invitation to attend church.

"I didn't really understand the message because the preaching was in Vietnamese," she says. "But when we went home my son retold the Christmas story to me in our language, Muong. At that moment, I gave my life to Christ."

Recently, when Loan received her own copy of the Muong New Testament, she burst into tears. "I feel like someone is speaking from deep inside my heart when I read this translation," she explains through her tears.

"I can't believe the peace I feel. God really cares for me and my people. His Word has really touched my heart."

HEARING GOD IN RURAL CHINA

Your gifts empower people like Zhou to share God's Word

■ As the Bible distribution team was leaving a church in China, they noticed a man standing against the wall crying. When asked why, he simply pulled out a well-used Bible in ancient script.

The man, Zhou, explained that eight believers in his family have been sharing the Bible. Zhou's tears were of joy, not sadness, because friends like you provided Bibles for his people!

Zhou, a local preacher, said the need for Bibles has always been so great in his church and the surrounding region. "We never have enough," he says. "All I can do is save money and then go to a distant store to buy what I have money for. Then I bring a Bible back to give to someone who is waiting. How can my people grow in their faith unless they have a Bible to read when they go home?"

"If you give me 500 Bibles, I can give you 500 souls back," Zhou says.

Thank you for your gifts that help address the urgent shortage of Bibles in China. That's why every Bible placed in the hands of someone like Zhou today is critical.



"I will put my Spirit in you and you will live...Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken..." —Ezekiel 37:14 (NIV)

HEARING GOD WHEN COVID-19 THREATENS

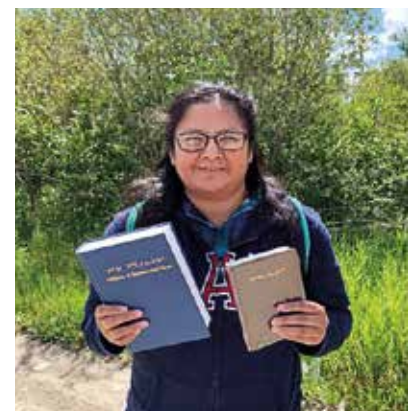
A hunger for God's Word in Pikangikum

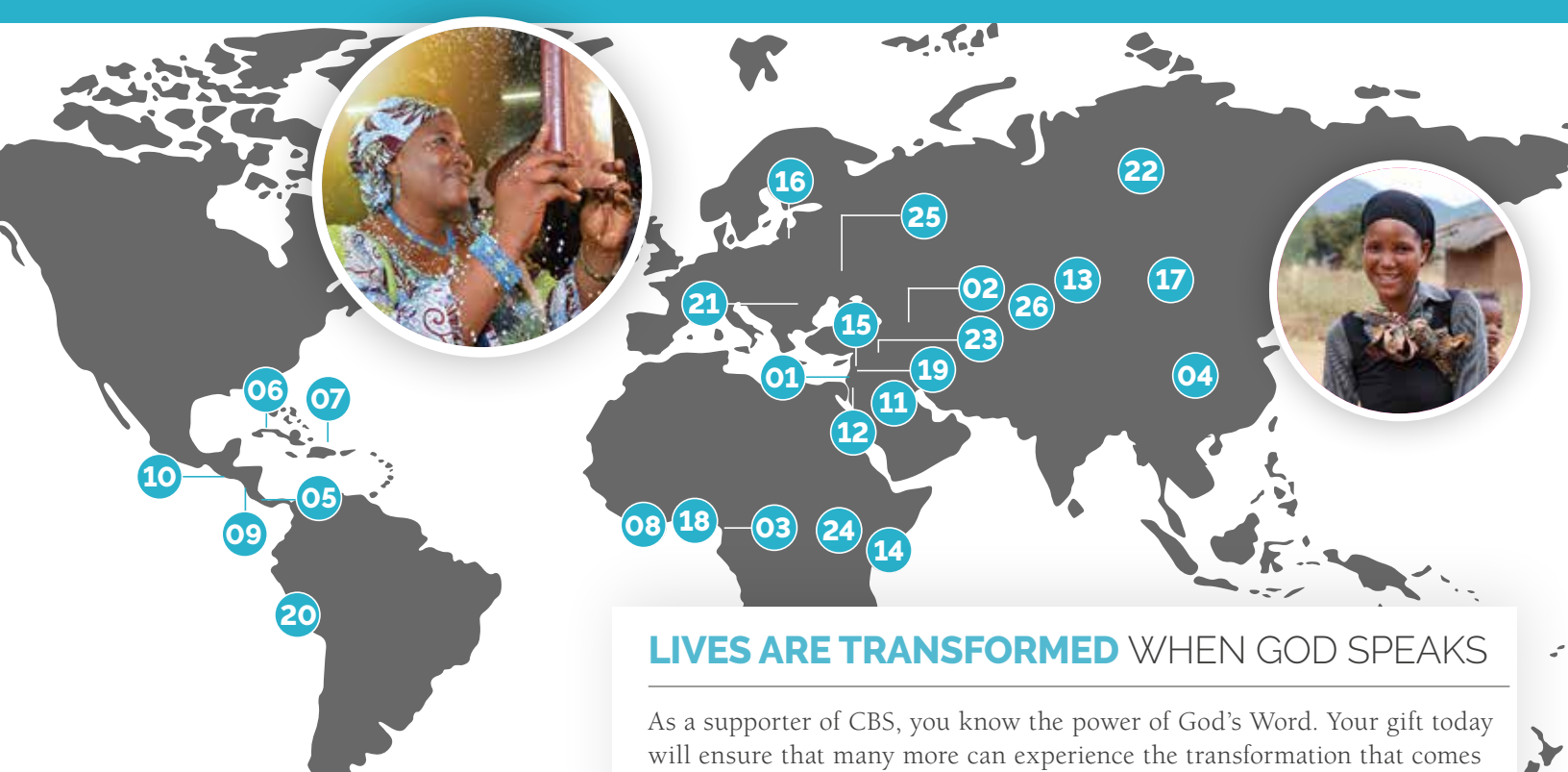
■ COVID-19 has brought many difficulties to northern fly-in communities like Pikangikum in Northwestern Ontario. In response, the Canadian Bible Society was able to partner with First Peoples Voices to offer the hope of God's Word. With your support, we shipped eleven cases of Ojibwe Bibles and New Testaments to Pikangikum.

The ministry couldn't keep up with handing out the Bibles and had

22 requests within a few hours of their arrival. Colleen Estes has been a missionary there for 23 years and has never seen such a hunger for the Gospel. She says, "Since no outside ministries are allowed on the reserve, the Indigenous are using their gifts at many outdoor gatherings which is new for them."

Thank you for your partnership in sharing the Gospel message with Indigenous communities!





LIVES ARE TRANSFORMED WHEN GOD SPEAKS

As a supporter of CBS, you know the power of God's Word. Your gift today will ensure that many more can experience the transformation that comes from hearing God speak through His Word! Here are 26 of the 44 projects we are working on this year.

2021 Global Projects

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 01 Arab-Israel – Magdalena: Empowering Women & Families through Scripture Engagement | 09 Guatemala – Bringing message of God's Word to young victims of sex trafficking | 18 Nigeria – Meeting the Scriptural needs of those who are displaced |
| 02 Armenia – Scriptures for Children in Need | 10 Honduras – The Most Violent Country Of The World Needs The Word Of God | 19 Palestine – Trauma Healing Palestine! |
| 03 Cameroon – Bringing God's Word to teenage mothers and young victims of sexual exploitation | 11 Iraq – Serving the persecuted church with Scriptures | 20 Peru – Sharing God's Word with Children Through Breakfast |
| 04 China – Bibles for China, including translations for ethnic minorities and visually impaired | 12 Jordan – God's Word to Refugees | 21 Romania – Sharing God's love with children with Down syndrome |
| 05 Cost Rica – Scriptures in Spanish Braille for Adult Children | 13 Kazakhstan – Large font Bible portions in Russian to people with visual disabilities | 22 Russia – Russian Sign language New Testament |
| 06 Cuba – A Bible for every Cuban with Engagement Strategies | 14 Kenya – Bibles to visually impaired school-going children | 23 Syria – Trauma Healing through Scriptures for Syrian community |
| 07 Dominican Republic – Your Father is God | 15 Lebanon – Trauma Healing for Iraqi and Syrian refugees | 24 Uganda – Scriptures for people with visual disabilities |
| 08 Ghana – Rescuing vulnerable teenage girls from sex trade with God's Word | 16 Lithuania – New Testament translation into Lithuanian Sign language | 25 Ukraine – Word of Hope to crisis families |
| | 17 Mongolia – Mongolian Standard Version translation | 26 Uzbekistan – End 2 End audio Bibles |

TO LEARN MORE VISIT: www.biblesociety.ca



Your gifts help people hear God speak

As a supporter of CBS, you know the power of God's Word. And so many people are still waiting to hear God speak to them. Your gift today will help change lives by helping more people hear God speak through His Word!

Meet Shirley from Costa Rica

■ My journey began in a dysfunctional home. My father was an alcoholic and a compulsive gambler. When I was 8, his gambling debts threw our family into deep poverty. My parents were forced to work many hours away from home, and most of the household duties fell on me as a child.

Facing the challenge of disability

However, I was also born with a degenerative eye disease that leads to total blindness. That made simple tasks very difficult and more time-consuming for me. But my mother was harsh and didn't understand my condition. You can imagine the conflict that caused.

So when I was 16 I decided to get married to get out from under my parents' roof. By then, my eyesight had deteriorated. I could hardly see anything at all, but I took care of my family. About three years later, after

the birth of my second child, I lost my sight completely. Then tragically, my husband died just seven months later.

In order to raise my kids, I had to go back to live with my mother while I looked for work. I didn't realize it at the time, but God was transforming my life and my children's lives.

First, I found a job as a receptionist at a time when companies seldom hired people with disabilities. Then I got a scholarship to study at university. And most importantly, I met Christ through a wonderful woman at the Christian daycare where I took my children.

Shirley's beautiful gift

That was the first of many beautiful gifts that God brought into my life. Then, through the Bible Society I received God's Word, first in audio form and then in Braille.



When I first began to read the Gospel of John in Braille, I would reread each passage over and over again, discovering the great love of God that had brought me out of my darkness into His wonderful light.

Today, I have the joy of working as a project manager at the Bible Society. Now I'm able to help others with visual disabilities get a Braille Bible so they too can hear God speak into their lives. Thank you for your support that helped me grow closer to Christ and help encourage others in their faith.

Thank you for blessing a child this Christmas

We're delighted that donors like you helped provide 2,715 ornaments and 11,000 illustrated Bibles for children this Christmas. Through this generosity you've helped children like Fedna and Vlad:

Haiti - Fedna, 7. *"When I will get back home, I'm going to read the book and lend it to my siblings. Because I know it will make them happy. I love Jesus! And I want to learn more about Him."*

Ukraine - Vlad, 10. *"Thank you for the Bible! It is very useful to read it. It is as useful to our soul as water is to our bodies. We water a tree and it grows so we would also grow if we read the Bible! I will read it together with my granny!"*



Help people hear God speak in times of crisis

In difficult and dangerous places like Syria, where people are persecuted for their faith, help them hear God speak. You can help provide the hope, comfort, and strength that comes from God through His Word.

YOUR GIFT HELPS PROVIDE HEALING TO THE PERSECUTED WHO NEED GOD'S WORD



Yes, I want to help those who are persecuted.

Here's my gift of:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE

Kindly return this form with your gift so that your donation can go to work immediately. If project needs are met, gifts will be used where needed most. Make your cheque payable to Canadian Bible Society. For tax purposes, a receipt will be issued for all contributions. Charitable Registration No. 11882 9647 RR0001.

METHOD OF PAYMENT

☐ I have enclosed my cheque payable to: Canadian Bible Society

I prefer to use: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ AMEX

NAME ON CARD (PLEASE PRINT)

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

EXPIRATION DATE

CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS



Canadian Bible Society

10 Carnforth Rd., Toronto, ON M4A 2S4
1-800-465-2425 www.biblesociety.ca