

IMAGINE

Inspiration & Updates from the Canadian Bible Society



FAITH & ART

The Biblically Inspired Paintings of Josh Tiessen

*Preserving Canada's Indigenous Languages
Translation Brings Joy in Angola
Ann Voskamp on Hope After Brokenness*

Now to him who is able to
do immeasurably more
than all we ask or

I M A C

GINE

**according to his power that is at
work within us, to him be glory in
the church and in Christ Jesus
throughout all generations, for
ever and ever!**

Amen.

EPHESIANS 3:20-21

IMAGINE

ISSUE ONE | 2024

*IMAGINE a future where everyone can hear God's voice.
With dedicated partners, the Canadian Bible Society is realizing the vision of making the Bible accessible
in the languages closest to people's hearts, in a format easy for them to use, and with help to understand it for themselves.
Together, we are fulfilling God's call to unite people of every nation, tribe and language.*



ON THE COVER:
"Whale Hymn" by Josh Tiessen

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CONTENTS

INSIGHT

- 8 *Letter from Rev. Dr. Rupen Das*
President of Canadian Bible Society
- 10 *Bible Society Spotlight*
News, Developments and Resources
- 12 *Infographic: Global Scripture Translation*
Progress Update
- 14 *Faith That Shaped a Nation*
The Legacy of Scripture in Ottawa's Parliament Buildings

IMPACT

- 20 *They Received The Word With Joy*
Bible Translation in Angola
- 26 *Preserving Culture, Proclaiming Truth*
Indigenous Bible Translation in Canada
- 32 *Leaving a Lasting Impact Through Legacy Giving*
Alana Walker Carpenter and Kevin Carpenter

INSPIRATION

- 36 *Exploring Faith Through Art*
The Paintings of Josh Tiessen
- 44 *Scripture and Song*
Interview with Worship Leader and Songwriter Brian Doerksen
- 50 *In Brokenness, Abundant Light*
A Devotional Meditation by Ann Voskamp

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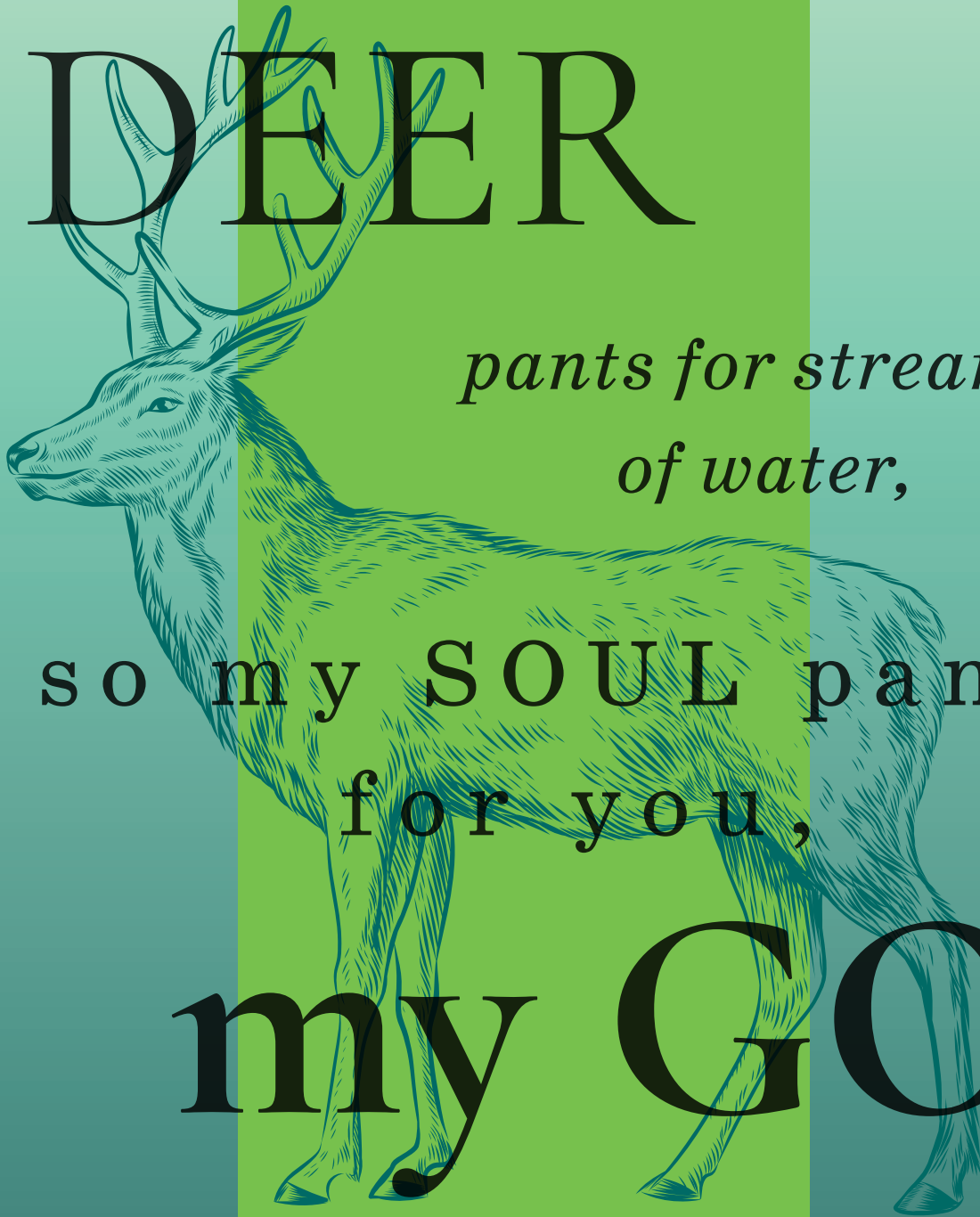
DEER

*pants for streams
of water,*

so my SOUL pants
for you,

my GOD

PSALM 42:1



INSIGHT

ISSUE ONE

IMAGINE

2024



-
- 8 LETTER FROM RUPEN
 - 10 BIBLE SOCIETY SPOTLIGHT
 - 12 GLOBAL SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION UPDATE
 - 14 FAITH THAT SHAPED A NATION



Letter From Rupen

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Imagine*, our new magazine designed to connect you more closely with the life-changing work you make possible through your faithful support of the Canadian Bible Society (CBS).

CBS is having an incredible impact both in Canada and around the world. From providing Bibles to the persecuted church in the Middle East to supporting sign language Bible translations in Cuba, Bolivia, Lithuania and Thailand, your generosity is opening doors and transforming lives with God's Word.

In this premier edition of *Imagine*, you will read about exciting developments in Angola, where a new Scripture translation is making the Bible accessible to speakers of the Umbangala language for the first time. You will also learn about Indigenous translations in Canada that are preserving languages and engaging communities with Scripture.

The challenges facing us today are great, but so are the opportunities. Our recent research into Canada's spiritual landscape reveals some issues of concern but also reasons to be hopeful. One exciting revelation from our most recent study is that younger Canadian believers are more committed to the teachings of the Bible than the older generations! Now more than ever, people need to hear God speak through His Word. And that's why your partnership is so vital.

So, as you turn these pages and "imagine" all that God is doing through CBS, I hope you'll be encouraged and inspired. Your prayers and generous gifts are truly making a difference. Thank you for being part of this critical Kingdom work. It's a joy and a privilege to serve alongside you.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rupen Das', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rev. Dr. Rupen Das
President, Canadian Bible Society

Bible Society Spotlight

New developments, events, and resources



Bible Society of Ukraine Brings Hope Amidst Ongoing Conflict

As the war in Ukraine agonizingly drags on, the Bible Society of Ukraine continues its vital ministry, providing spiritual support and humanitarian aid to those affected by the conflict. Despite constant shelling in cities like Kharkiv and Kherson and recent attacks on Kyiv, the Bible Society's staff remain committed to their mission. A team of chaplains and volunteers regularly visit the front lines, offering pastoral care. The chaplains read the Scriptures and pray with those who need spiritual comfort.

In addition to distributing Bibles, Bible Society staff also distribute essential supplies like fresh food and water to those in need. Their work also reaches the many Ukrainian children who courageously continue going to school despite facing daily war trauma. The Bible Society of Ukraine expresses gratitude for the continued prayers and support from the Canadian Bible Society, which enables them to persist in their crucial work during these difficult times.

New Study Reveals Shifting Landscape of Christian Beliefs in Canada

A new report, “Still Christian(?) What Canadian Christians Actually Believe,” offers fresh insights into the faith beliefs of the 53.3% of Canadians who identify as Christian. Conducted by Cardus with the Angus Reid Institute and supported by CBS, this February 2024 survey reveals some surprising trends:

- Even “religiously committed” Christians don't always adhere to core beliefs.
- Younger Christians appear more committed to faith teachings than older generations.
- Personal beliefs often diverge from official church doctrines across denominations.
- Significant differences exist between traditions:
 - 20% of Evangelicals believe all religions are equally true, compared to 54% of Catholics and 57% of mainline Protestants.
 - 81% of evangelicals believe in Jesus' historical resurrection, versus 48% of Catholics and 55% of mainline Protestants.

The title “Still Christian(?)” reflects both the disconnect from traditional teachings and individuals' continued connection to the faith. This study provides valuable data for religious leaders and organizations, offering a nuanced picture of contemporary Canadian Christianity and prompting important discussions about religious identity in an evolving landscape.

Download the report:
<https://biblesociety.ca/cardusreport>





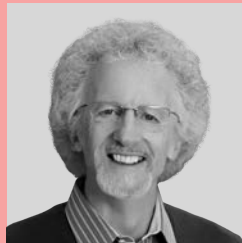
Inspiring Christian Voices Featured on "Scripture Untangled" Podcast

Our podcast "Scripture Untangled" continues to engage listeners with thought-provoking discussions on faith and Scripture. This innovative series features interviews with influential voices from diverse backgrounds, offering fresh perspectives on Biblical interpretation and application. Recent episodes have welcomed an impressive lineup of guests, including those featured on this page.

By addressing the complexities and challenges of understanding Scripture, the podcast serves as a valuable resource for those seeking to deepen their faith and Biblical knowledge.



Ann Voskamp



Philip Yancey



Ben Heppner



Brian Doerksen



**Natalie Grant &
Bernie Herms**



Tim Barnett



Steve Bell



Os Guinness



**Archbishop
Angaelos**



Rick Tobias

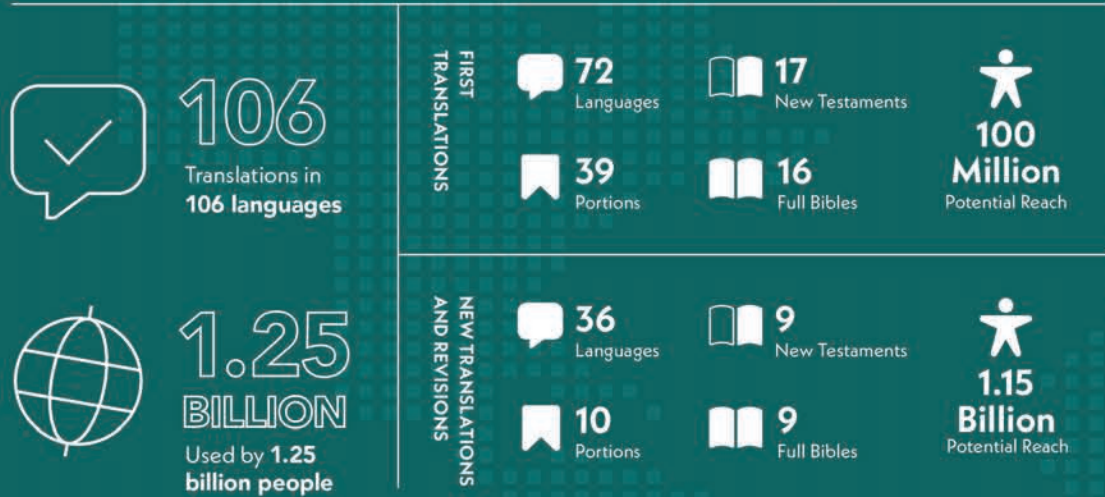
Listen/Subscribe by using
this QR code or visiting:
www.ScriptureUntangled.ca



Global Scripture Translation: *Progress Update*

The Canadian Bible Society is part of United Bible Societies, a fellowship of 150 Bible Societies with a footprint in 240 countries and territories committed to the work of Bible translation, publishing, distribution and engagement. Together, we are on a mission to make the Bible available and accessible in every language on earth. These infographics reflect the latest progress toward this goal.

TRANSLATIONS COMPLETED BY BIBLE SOCIETIES IN 2023



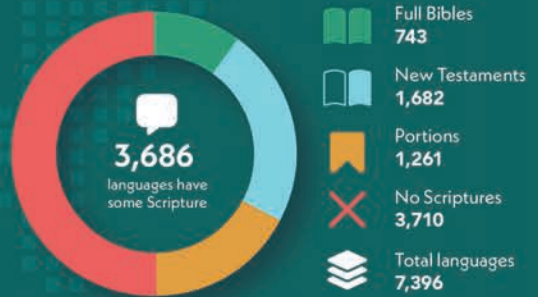
BIBLE TRANSLATION LANDSCAPE

JANUARY 2024

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE SCRIPTURE IN THEIR LANGUAGE?



HOW MANY LANGUAGES HAVE SCRIPTURE?



COUNTRIES WHERE CBS IS SUPPORTING BIBLE TRANSLATION



ANGOLA

Old Testament translation in the **Umbangala** language
Full Bible translation in the **Ngangela** language



BOLIVIA

Bolivian Sign Language Bible translation



CHINA

Multiple translations for **ethnic minorities** in China



CUBA

Cuban Sign Language Bible translation



GUATEMALA

Guatemalan Sign Language Bible translation



LAOS

Study Bible in the **Hmong** language



LITHUANIA

Lithuanian Sign Language Bible translation



NICARAGUA

Nicaraguan Sign Language Bible translation



PERU

Old Testament translation and New Testament revision in **Matsigenka**



SRI LANKA

New Revised Study Bible in the **Sinhala** language



THAILAND

Thai Sign Language Bible translation



TOGO

Old Testament translation in the **Nawdm** language



UGANDA

Study Bible in the **Runyankole-Rukiga** language



VIETNAM

Full Bible translation in the **Nung Chao** dialect

IMAGINE

FAITH THAT SHAPED A NATION

THE LEGACY OF SCRIPTURE IN THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS





Canada's Parliament Buildings, standing proudly on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, are more than just architectural marvels. They are a testament to the nation's rich Christian heritage, with Biblical references and imagery woven intricately into their very fabric. These sacred truths, embedded within the architecture, serve as a cornerstone of Canada's values, reflecting the Christian principles that have guided the country's journey since its inception.

The Peace Tower, rising majestically in the middle of the Centre Block, is perhaps the most iconic symbol of Canadian democracy. It also bears some of the most prominent Scriptural references. On its southern face, a portion of Psalm 72:1 is carved: "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son." This inscription serves as a reminder that justice and fairness, as outlined in God's Word, should be the foundations of governance.

The eastern face of the Peace Tower displays another significant Scriptural reference: "He shall have dominion from sea to sea." This passage, taken from

Psalm 72:8, is particularly noteworthy because it inspired Canada's motto, "a mari usque ad mare" (From Sea to Sea), and the country's official name, the Dominion of Canada. This Scriptural foundation underscores the vast expanse of the nation and its aspirations for unity across its broad geography, all under God's dominion. Approaching from the west, visitors encounter the timeless wisdom of Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." This inscription serves as a call to national leaders and citizens alike to seek God's vision for the nation, emphasizing the importance of divine guidance in governance.

Beneath the Peace Tower lies the Memorial Chamber, a solemn space dedicated to honouring those who made the ultimate sacrifice for Canada. Here, the Book of Remembrance contains the names of fallen soldiers, a poignant symbol of their bravery and the cost of the freedoms Canadians enjoy. The chamber's stained glass windows further reinforce Biblical themes of peace and justice with passages such as "He maketh wars to cease" and "Judgment shall return unto righteousness."



These Biblical references are not confined to the Peace Tower alone. Throughout the Parliament Buildings, there are numerous examples of Scriptural influence. The Library of Parliament, with its stunning Gothic revival architecture, features intricate wood carvings and stained glass windows that often incorporate Biblical motifs and symbols.

The Senate Chamber, often referred to as the Red Chamber, contains its own set of spiritual references. The ceiling is adorned with paintings representing various virtues, many of which draw inspiration from Biblical teachings. Similarly, the House of Commons, or Green Chamber, features symbolic representations that often have roots in Scriptural traditions.

The inclusion of these Scriptural elements by Canada's founders was not merely decorative. Rather, it was a deliberate choice to embed core Christian principles such as justice, fairness, and service to others into the very heart of the country's governance. These timeless directives continue to echo through generations, serving as a constant reminder of the wisdom and ethical standards found in God's Word.

As Christians walk through these halls, they are surrounded by living reminders of the country's Biblical foundation. The Scriptural inscriptions and imagery serve as a bridge between Canada's Christian past and its future, connecting contemporary governance to timeless ethical standards and wisdom traditions found in the Bible.

In an era of rapid change and evolving societal norms, these Scriptural references in Parliament continue to resonate with believers. They invite Canadian Christians to reflect on their spiritual heritage and the enduring Biblical principles that have shaped their nation. More than just words carved in stone or painted on glass, they represent the very essence of Canada's Christian identity—a commitment to Biblical justice, peace, divine guidance, and a visionary approach to building a nation that honours God.

These Biblical inscriptions stand as a powerful testimony to the enduring influence of God's Word in shaping the values and aspirations of the Canadian nation. They remind us that, as Christians, we are called to be salt and light in our society, influencing our nation's course with the timeless truths of Scripture. As we contemplate these sacred words embedded in the very seat of our government, may we be inspired to pray for our leaders, engage in our civic duties with Christian wisdom, and work towards a Canada that continues to honour its Godly heritage.

**Use this QR code to watch the video
"Faith That Shaped a Nation" and
download a free copy of the book
"Tracings of the Canadian Soul."**



On the walls of the Parliament Buildings' Centre Block in Ottawa, numerous Scripture passages are on display, as well as sculptures and stained glass windows inspired by Biblical themes.

This embedded art reflects the minds and hearts of those who built our nation and of those who later built our Parliament. The roots of those early declarations continue to nourish traits in our national character that we cherish today. A selection of the Bible verses on display in the Parliament Buildings are listed below.

PEACE TOWER,
EXTERIOR EAST WINDOW:

*He shall have dominion also
from sea to sea.*

Psalm 72:8

SOUTH WINDOW:

*Give the king thy judgments, O God, and
thy righteousness unto the king's son.*

Psalm 72:1

WEST WINDOW:

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

Proverbs 29:18

BELFRY LARGEST BELL, NO. 53:

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth
peace, good will to men.*

Luke 2:14

EAST WINDOW

“THE CALL TO ARMS”:

*Thanks be to God
who giveth us the victory.*

1 Corinthians 15:57

Acquit ye like men be strong.

1 Corinthians 16:13

WEST WINDOW,

“THE DAWN OF PEACE”:

He maketh wars to cease.

Psalm 46:10

MARBLE PANELS,

SOUTH WALL:

*If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there;
if I lay down in the bowels of the earth,
thou art there! If I take the wings of the
morning and dwell in the uttermost parts
of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead
me and thy right shall hold me.*

Psalm 139: 8-10

CABINET ROOM,

TYMPANUMS OVER DOORS:

*Love justice, you that are
the rulers of the earth.*

Song of Solomon 1:1

OPPOSITION BOARD ROOM,

TYMPANUMS OVER DOORS:

Fear God; Honour the king.

1 Peter 2:17

The WICKED

r u n

when no one is chasing them,



but an HONEST

person is as

BRAVE

as

a

LION

PROVERBS 28:1

IMPACT

ISSUE ONE

IMAGINE

2024



-
- 20 ANGOLA BIBLE TRANSLATION
 - 26 INDIGENOUS TRANSLATION IN CANADA
 - 32 LEGACY GIVING TO SUPPORT THE BIBLE CAUSE

A photograph of a priest in white vestments performing a ritual. He is seen from behind, holding a chalice in his raised right hand and making a sign of the cross with his left hand. The scene is outdoors on a dirt ground under a blue sky with light clouds. In the background, a group of people, including children in white school uniforms and women in traditional blue and white patterned dresses, are watching. Some are holding umbrellas. The overall atmosphere is one of a community gathering or religious event.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH JOY

The Life-Changing Impact of
Bible Translation in Angola

by Amanuel Mengistu
Photography by Philip Maher



Celebrating the launch of a new Bible translation in Angola

Located in southwestern Africa, with a 1,600-kilometer coastline along the Atlantic Ocean, Angola is a country rich in natural beauty and mineral resources. After many decades of Portuguese colonial rule, the country gained independence in 1975 but soon plunged into a civil war that lasted until 2002. This war left the country in ruins, with an estimated 1.5 million people dead and millions more displaced. Over the past two decades, Angola's economy has grown rapidly, mainly due to oil exports, but high levels of poverty persist, along with pervasive social inequality.

Angola is home to several ethnic groups with distinct cultures, traditions, and languages. Portuguese was introduced during colonial times, and local Angolan languages were undervalued. Portuguese remains the country's only official language and is the language of the elite. As recently as the 1990s, school children were punished for speaking local languages. This attitude has changed as government leaders recognize the value of retaining the nation's linguistic heritage. As Dr. José Pedro, the director of the Language Institute of Angola's Ministry of Culture, said in a recent interview, "Angola cannot develop only with Portuguese. The use of local languages is necessary for the development of the country."

The fact that the Bible had not been translated into Umbangala was used to justify discrimination.

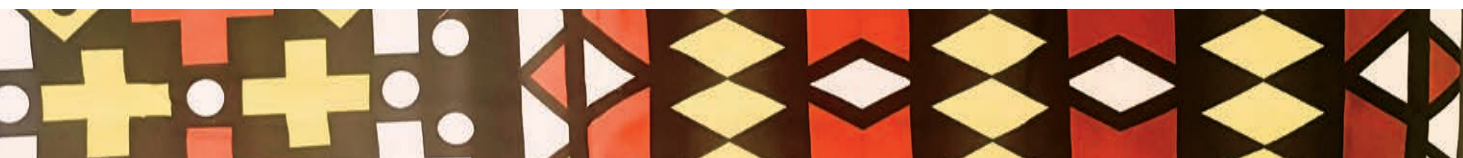
However, not all Angolan languages are viewed the same. The languages of the most populous ethnic groups—such as Umbundu, Kimbundu, Kikongo, and Chokwe—are widely spoken, while the languages of ethnic minorities have long been marginalized. The speakers of one language in particular, Umbangala, have suffered from linguistic discrimination. Until recently, Umbangala-speaking Christians have had to learn other languages in order to participate in church services. Some were even forbidden from singing or praying in their native tongue, being given the outrageously hurtful reason that God didn't understand Umbangala. The fact that the Bible had not been translated into Umbangala was used by some people to justify this type of discrimination.

For over 20 years, Umbangala-speaking believers prayed that God would provide them with a Bible of their own. These prayers were answered in 2022 when the Umbangala New Testament was released by the Bible Society of Angola. For people like Venancio Quisado, pastor of an Umbangala church in the town of Trinta, this was a dream come true. "Having the Umbangala Bible will help a lot with the growth of the church among the Umbangala people," he says. "There were many parts of Scripture we did not understand, but now we properly understand it."

IMAGINE



Conceição Antonio Zonda



A NEW WORLD OF UNDERSTANDING

Imagine living in a society where you feel stigmatized for speaking your native language in public. For 22-year-old Conceição Antonio Zonda, this is part of the daily reality of living in Angola and being from the Umbangala community. As a devout Christian, she is eager to share her faith. However, she says, “Sometimes I feel embarrassed to do it due to the stigma of speaking my language.”

Conceição was born into a family of eight children in an Umbangala village. She later moved to Trinta, a town just outside Angola’s capital city of Luanda, where she lives with her aunt. She dreams of someday becoming a nurse and helping to support her family, who, like most families in Angola, struggle with poverty. Despite the burden of responsibility she carries, Conceição is joyful, with a bright smile and an easygoing manner.

*“I can now hear God’s Word
in the same language my
parents speak to me.”*

Conceição is fluent in Portuguese, but her mother and father only have a limited understanding of Angola’s official language. When the Bible Society of Angola released the Umbangala New Testament, the result was transformative for Conceição and her family.

“I was so happy to read the Bible in Umbangala,” she says with a smile. “I can now hear God’s Word in the same language my parents speak to me.”

She had been reading the Bible in Portuguese, but having God’s Word in her native language opened up a new world of understanding. Conceição can now read the Umbangala New Testament to her mother, who is illiterate. Previously, she was only able to interpret what she could understand from the Portuguese version of the Scriptures.

She now encourages other bilingual young people from her community not to neglect their mother tongue “so we can teach our mothers and grandmothers who do not understand Portuguese.”

The Bible Society of Angola urgently needs funding to translate the remainder of the Umbangala Bible. This work will help combat illiteracy and linguistic discrimination against this marginalized community. Most importantly, providing access to the Bible in Umbangala will open doors for evangelism.

“I believe many [people] of my parents’ and grandparents’ generations would have been saved if they’d had the Bible in their language,” Conceição says. “It would have helped immensely because many of them did not know or understand God’s Word.”

BRIDGING THE GAP

Ventura Kitumba faced a tremendous challenge a few years ago. He was the pastor of a church in Angola that served speakers of Umbangala. While he was able to read and understand the Bible, most of his church members could not. This was not just because many of the church members were illiterate, but due to the fact that there was no Umbangala translation of the Bible.

For several years, Pastor Ventura—who can speak and read multiple languages—served as an informal translator during his sermons. “I would read the Bible in Portuguese or Chokwe, and then I would [explain] in Umbangala,” he says. This method of on-the-fly translation allowed listeners to understand some Scripture passages, but it was very limited and a significant hindrance to ministry.

Eventually, Ventura was recruited to join the Bible Society of Angola’s project to translate the Bible into Umbangala. Alongside a team of three other translators, Ventura worked diligently for years with the support of a translation consultant from United Bible Societies.

IMAGINE



Ventura Kitumba

A TRANSLATOR'S JOURNEY

The Umbangala Bible translation team is led by Domingas Ita, who gave up dreams of a career in medicine to dedicate her life to Scripture translation. When she was growing up in the Lunda Norte province of Angola, Domingas often felt sad while attending church. Although she appreciated hearing the gospel message, she wondered why the Bible was never taught in her family's language.

Domingas eventually moved to the capital city of Luanda, where she completed high school and enrolled in university to study medicine. While she was still in her first year of studies, a phone call changed the trajectory of her life.

"[My friend], who was also an Umbangala speaker, always noticed me complaining and lamenting the lack of Umbangala in the church, and he agreed with my concerns. When he called, he said, 'It seems that God has heard you, because the Bible Society of Angola is now in need of an Umbangala translator.'"

Domingas had never heard of the Bible Society, but she eagerly contacted the office and was eventually recruited to lead a four-member Umbangala translation team. Domingas eventually gave up her dreams of attending medical school to focus her attention on completing the Umbangala Bible.

After years of diligent effort, the Umbangala New Testament was finally released in 2022, to much celebration from Umbangala-speaking believers.



Domingas Ita

Domingas gave up her dreams of medical school to focus on completing the Umbangala Bible.

"We were crying at the sight of the Word of God written in our own language," Ventura recalls of the launch ceremony. "We were reminded of the people who laboured over the years to write portions of the Bible on paper, on sheets of notebooks, just to make some Umbangala people understand the Scriptures."

Domingas and her colleagues are now busy translating the Old Testament in order to deliver a complete Umbangala Bible in the next few years.

When recalling all of the sacrifices made and the work that remains, Domingas has no regrets. "I felt that this was a call I had to answer," she says. "If we don't translate the Bible, who will do it?"



PRESERVING CULTURE, *PROCLAIMING TRUTH*

HOW BIBLE TRANSLATION IS LEADING TO
SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL RENEWAL IN
CANADA'S INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



The Canadian Bible Society is committed to ensuring that everyone can connect with God’s message through the Bible in their own language. As part of this mission, CBS has been invited to collaborate on projects to translate the Bible into Indigenous languages alongside various partners. This work is crucial at this time due to the growing demand for the Bible within Indigenous communities and the effectiveness of using Bible translations to support language reclamation efforts.

This effort is in line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s calls to action regarding languages and cultural preservation. Producing high-quality translations of the Bible specifically addresses the call to promote the learning and usage of Indigenous languages. According to Edna Elias, a member of the Inuinnaqtun Scripture revision project team, “Our church is now one of the places where Inuinnaqtun is spoken; therefore, this translation holds value.”

CBS is involved in several Indigenous Bible translation projects across the country, including the translation of the Old Testament into Inūpīaq and a revision of the Inuktitut Bible. In 2023, CBS also launched a translation project to bring the Scriptures to the Blackfoot people and published a long-awaited translation of the Bible in the Mohawk language.

Mohawk Bible Translation Completed

Last summer, CBS celebrated the completion of the Mohawk Bible, marking a milestone in Indigenous language preservation. This collaborative effort involved partnerships with the Mohawk Council of Kanesatake and the United Church of Canada. The project was made possible largely through the dedicated efforts of an 83-year-old man named Harvey Satewas Gabriel, who worked on the translation for over 24 years. This translation project continued earlier efforts dating back to 1804, when the Gospel of John was translated and published by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Eighty years later, the four Gospels were translated by Harvey’s great-grandfather, Chief Sosé Onasakenrat of Kanesatake.

Harvey’s involvement in Bible translation began in 1980 when he was asked to deliver Mohawk Scripture readings at his church. Driven by his faith and a deep commitment to preserving the Mohawk language, Harvey devoted the next two decades to diligently translating the Bible. Over time, others joined his efforts, including his daughter and granddaughter. Despite facing obstacles, Harvey drew inspiration from his great-grandfather’s earlier work and stayed committed to the mission of bringing God’s message to the Mohawk community.

HARVEY SATEWAS
GABRIEL CONTINUED
THE TRANSLATION
WORK STARTED BY HIS
GREAT-GRANDFATHER
IN 1884.



Harvey Satewas Gabriel with his daughter Cheryl and granddaughter Taylor

In 1999, a new project to complete the Mohawk Bible was launched with the collaboration of CBS and various churches. With this additional support, a new translation team was formed to accelerate Harvey's efforts. The project finally culminated when CBS published the completed Mohawk Bible in August 2023.

Blackfoot Bible Project Started

The Blackfoot Bible project was officially launched in 2023, when Wycliffe received an invitation from the Blackfoot Christian community and subsequently invited CBS to collaborate. While portions of Scripture were first published in Blackfoot in 1890, and more translation work has been done since then, the current partnership aims to support the vision of Blackfoot elders and church leaders to provide Scriptures and liturgical resources that can be easily used in worship services and religious ceremonies.

Bishop Sidney Black, former National Indigenous Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, has expressed concern that, unless something is done to preserve the Blackfoot language, it could fade away with the passing of this generation of Blackfoot speakers. This Blackfoot Bible project is expected to help younger people in the community engage with the Scripture while connecting with their Blackfoot identity and heritage.



At a recent Blackfoot translation workshop conducted by CBS and Wycliffe, participants shared how impactful it is to hear Scriptures in their language. One attendee mentioned, "Listening to Blackfoot brings back memories of my youth when I spoke the language fluently."

Others shared how translating the Scriptures could lead to spiritual revitalization in the community. "When we bring this back to our people, we're bringing back our identity," said one participant. "The church needs to bring it back to our people so they can start on their spiritual journey again."

SOME FEAR THAT THE
BLACKFOOT LANGUAGE
COULD FADE WITHIN A
GENERATION IF IT IS
NOT PRESERVED.





Chief Sosé Onasakenrat of Kanesatake, great-grandfather of Harvey Satewas Gabriel, who translated the Gospels into the Mohawk language in the 1880s

A Timely Investment in Reconciliation and Revival

The commitment to supporting Indigenous Bible translation is part of CBS' broader mission to make Scripture available and accessible to all people in Canada and beyond. These projects are bringing the message of the Bible to communities worldwide while also promoting language preservation and cultural rejuvenation.

As Canada continues to grapple with the painful legacy of its treatment of Indigenous peoples, the work of Bible translation has never been more important. Supporting CBS in this mission means being part of a movement of reconciliation, healing, and spiritual revival that can transform Indigenous communities from the inside out.

Gifts to CBS not only help accelerate the pace of current Bible translation projects but also lay the groundwork for future initiatives, ensuring that every person in Canada has the opportunity to engage with God's Word in their heart language. As stated in Romans 10:15, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

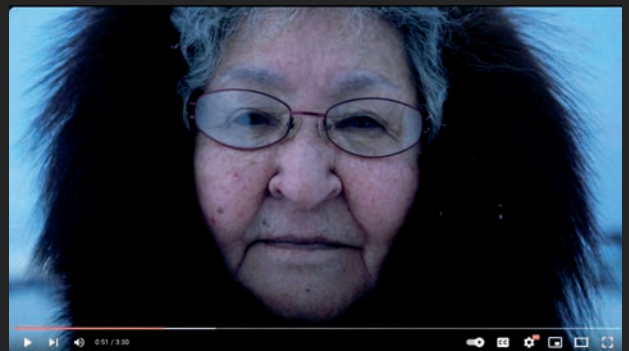


CBS' Data Donation Boosts Inuktitut Communication Initiative

The Canadian Bible Society recently collaborated with the Government of Nunavut on a groundbreaking project to aid language reclamation through technology. By donating translated texts, CBS has helped create translation and text-to-speech software for both the Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun languages. This initiative, part of the Preservation and Promotion of Inuktitut Through Technology: MS Translator project, has significantly contributed to making these languages accessible on digital platforms.

The impact of this collaboration has been far-reaching. The Government of Nunavut reports that the Microsoft Translator, enhanced by CBS' data donation, is now facilitating communication between unilingual youth and elders, assisting paramedics in emergency situations, enabling government employees to communicate in their preferred language, and even helping teachers write report cards in Inuktitut. This project exemplifies how CBS' work extends beyond spiritual contexts, playing a crucial role in preserving and promoting Indigenous languages in everyday life.

Inspiring Short Film Highlights Iñupiaq Women Translators



Mourning the loss of their language and wanting to preserve it for their children, a team of women and a group of older Iñupiaq women began translating the Old Testament. They are now supported by translation specialists from CBS. Use the QR code below to watch an inspiring short film about their story.





Alana Walker Carpenter and Kevin Carpenter

Supporting the Bible cause through legacy giving

by Emily Andrews

Before 2018, Kevin Carpenter and Alana Walker Carpenter had a draft of their will set aside, unfinished. Then, Alana suffered a serious head injury.

“Our mindset was, ‘We’ve got to get this [will] done,’” says Alana. “This is non-negotiable. What if I had passed away? Everything would’ve been, quite frankly, a mess.”

The Carpenters curated a list of causes close to their hearts and on which they planned to focus their philanthropic attention. Recently, the Canadian Bible Society, where Alana now serves on the board of governors, has been added to that list.

Alana is also the chief executive officer of Intriciti, inspiring business leaders to integrate their faith and business. In 2023, she founded the Canadian Centre for the Integration of Faith and Business (CCIFB).

Alana says investing in people is their passion: “We love our nation; we love the people within it. Living an authentic life with Jesus—there is no greater gift.” For the Carpenters, legacy giving at CBS is one sure way to ensure that others will benefit from the gift for years to come.

“I didn’t want the Bible to become obsolete, and I felt that [CBS] was

where I wanted to invest,” says Alana. “Since then, I just see how leading-edge they are in all four pillars of their organization.”

As both board secretary and donor, Alana has witnessed the broad impact of CBS from a unique vantage point. Of the organization’s four pillars—translate, publish, distribute, and engage—the one she’s most passionate about is engagement.

CBS has been putting the Bible into Canadians’ hands for more than a century, working with a diverse network of ministry partners to help people discover God’s Word.

“With CBS, there’s nothing off the table. All ideas are welcome,” says Alana. “I’m really encouraged with the direction we’re headed. CBS is everywhere. We’re engaged in the culture.”

For Alana, growth isn’t just about numbers; it’s about substance. From devotionals and study Bibles to the “Scripture Untangled” podcast, CBS’ wide range of resources brings Scripture to life for all ages and backgrounds. Presently, Alana is working with dozens of leaders across Canada to develop a leadership Bible, which will feature study notes on 100 different topics related to leadership throughout Scripture.

LEGACY GIVING ENSURES THAT OTHERS WILL BENEFIT FROM THE GIFT FOR YEARS TO COME.

“I can even imagine this Bible going into the hands of a leader that isn’t a Christian,” says Alana. “It wouldn’t be your typical hotel Bible.”

Another way CBS connects with others, Alana says, is by utilizing leaders like retired minister Rev. Dr. Andrew Stirling, who serves as a CBS ambassador. Rev. Stirling engages audiences across the country with his deeply personal speaking style and love for CBS. Kevin compares Rev. Stirling’s service to that of a missionary—casting vision, building relationships, and engaging new partners in Kingdom work. His message as a CBS ambassador represents everything the Carpenters believe in: making the living Word of God accessible to as many people as possible.

On a personal level, Alana says that her ongoing involvement with the Bible Society has challenged and stretched her faith. Whether she’s reading Scripture or listening to a podcast, she says CBS inspires her to wrestle with complicated issues through the lens of the Bible.

CBS’ commitment to partnering with churches and parachurch organizations inspires the Carpenters to give. As Alana sees it, they aren’t giving money. They are giving the hope of a relationship with Jesus.

“It’s our desire to bless those around us who could put these gifts to good use,” says Kevin. “We know there are visions for making things better. We can help contribute even after we’re gone.”

The Carpenters have a heart for both the local church and the next generation. They have experience working with students and serving with their local church, sponsoring refugees in their transition to new homes in Canada. Alana also recently participated in a panel discussion for next-generation leaders in Ottawa, leaving her filled with hope for Canada’s future. As long as the work of CBS continues, she believes a younger generation will rise up to take ownership of their faith and transform their culture for the better.

Alana encourages believers to give cheerfully, knowing they are stewards of the gifts God entrusts to us.

“We don’t own any of it,” says Alana. “So, I just asked myself the question: why not? Why wouldn’t you give? Maybe there’s a fear that my gift isn’t going to be big enough. But every gift matters, right? Every gift matters.”

Resources for Legacy Giving

By including the Canadian Bible Society in your will, you’ll have the opportunity to leave a legacy and continue the furthering of God’s Kingdom while still providing for your family.

SAMPLE BEQUEST STATEMENTS

An easy way to include CBS in your will is to simply use the wording from one of our sample bequest statements.

Free to download at:
bbiblesociety.ca/legacy-giving

ESTATE PLANNING ASSISTANCE

Advisors with Purpose is a Christian ministry that offers free consultations to help you examine your estate and consider how to leave a legacy that reflects your life while taking care of the people and causes that matter to you the most.

To learn more: call 1-866-336-3315 or email plan@advisorswithpurpose.ca

LEGACY GIVING EVENTS

CBS hosts free live events, webinars and phone seminars throughout the year in partnership with Advisors with Purpose.

My
SHEEP

listen to my VOICE

I KNOW them,



and they

FOLLOW ME.

JOHN 10:27

INSPIRATION

ISSUE ONE

IMAGINE

2024



-
- 36 THE ART OF JOSH TIESSEN
44 BRIAN DOERKSEN ON SCRIPTURE AND SONG
50 REFLECTIONS ON BROKENNESS FROM ANN VOSKAMP



EXPLORING FAITH THROUGH ART

Josh Tiessen's hyper-surrealist paintings explore divine truths



Josh Tiessen is an inspiring artist whose paintings evoke the beauty and mystery of deep spiritual truths. His hyper-surrealist paintings feature intricate details that capture viewers' attention and invite them to explore the deeper meanings behind each piece.

Born in Russia and raised in Canada, Josh showed an early talent for art. By his teenage years, he was already gaining recognition in the art community. By the time he reached adulthood, Josh's artwork had earned him numerous awards and accolades. His work has been shown in over 100 exhibitions around the world, including the National Gallery of Canada.

Josh's art draws inspiration from a wide range of sources, but his Christian faith is a primary influence. As he states, "The Bible has been a guiding influence in my artistic practice." Several of his paintings, including those featured on the following pages, directly reference Bible verses in their titles. In this regard, he sees himself as part of a long tradition of artists who have found inspiration in Scripture, from Renaissance masters such as Michelangelo to modern artists like Andy Warhol.

Josh Tiessen's artwork blends natural elements, such as animals and trees, with symbolic imagery to create scenes that are both hauntingly beautiful and thought-provoking. He creates images that evoke a sense of awe and wonder, often prompting viewers to pause and reflect.

In his own words, Josh explains his artistic mission: "I have endeavoured to draw together two strands—spirituality and art—as a way to inspire greater appreciation for the natural world, motivate environmental stewardship, and provide hope in anxious times." This approach is evident in his paintings, which often juxtapose the beauty of nature with symbolic elements that hint at deeper spiritual and environmental themes.

As an artist, Josh Tiessen stands at the intersection of faith, environmental consciousness, and contemporary art. His unique blend of hyper-realism, surrealism, and spirituality not only captivates audiences worldwide but also serves as a powerful example of how the timeless truths found in the Bible can inspire and enrich modern visual expression.



CAN THESE BONES LIVE?

Oil on Baltic Birch, 31 x 31 x 2 inches (Framed), 2016

He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

Ezekiel 37:3



CAN THESE BONES LIVE?
Oil on Baltic Birch, 31 x 31 x 2 inches (Framed), 2016





CREATION LONGS
Acrylic on Canvas, 24 x 36 x 2 inches, 2012

For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.
Romans 8:19



AGNUS DEI

Oil on Baltic Birch, 65 x 105 x 2 inches (Framed), 2020–2021

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Isaiah 53:7



WHALE HYMN

Oil on Baltic Birch, 36 x 48 x 2 inches, 2015

Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths.

Psalm 148:7



Scripture & Song

Brian Doerksen reflects on the Bible's
influence on his life and songwriting

by Harriet Compston



“I am looking for a Scripture that sings,” Brian Doersken tells me. “I wait for that ‘aha’ moment when I realize that a certain Scripture is just what I need in this moment and season. Someone can be speaking on a Scripture and a seed gets planted with a sense that I should be singing this. Or I’ll be reading a book, going for a walk, or praying for someone, and a Scripture will come to mind. The seed is planted, and I’m off on my next writing adventure.”

These writing adventures have led to Brian penning some of the best-known contemporary worship songs: “Come, Now is the Time to Worship,” “Refiner’s Fire,” and “Faithful One,” to name but a few. Every week, these songs are sung in churches and Christian gatherings across the globe. His songs have blessed and encouraged millions of believers worldwide.

Brian’s love of Scripture started with his mother. “I have so many vivid memories in my childhood and teen years of her sitting on the couch with the Bible open in her lap ... and why this mattered to me was the connection to the way she lived her life. Kindness, wisdom, patience ... She was the real deal in every way, and one of the main reasons was that what she was reading impacted everything about her life.”

It was at the age of 15 that Brian encountered the “potency of Scripture” for himself. At the same time, he began to explore his love of music, which runs in the family. His father was in a local gospel quartet and led singing at their church. By the age of 16, Brian had also started leading worship. However, he initially only sang other people’s songs. All that changed after he married, aged 19, his childhood sweetheart Joyce in 1985.

A few years into their marriage, the couple were on holiday on Vancouver Island with their first daughter, Rachel, who was just a few months old. Brian recalls: “Shortly after we returned from a walk, Rachel was on a blanket on the floor in the cabin, and she put her arms up as if to say, ‘Daddy, would you pick me up and hold me again?’ I put down my book and picked her up. As I held her, I was suddenly overcome with emotion ... tears of joy began to flow for the love I felt for my daughter and for the gift of her life. And then I had this thought ... this is the kind of relationship I have longed to have with God, whom Jesus calls ‘Abba.’”

Brian began to pray, “asking God for a revelation of His affection.” He explains: “Just as my daughter could experience me holding her close, I wanted to experience Father God holding me. And then came the whispered invitation. ‘Why don’t you write this into a song ... your own song that you can sing to Me?’ My initial reaction was, ‘I’m not a songwriter.’ But the whispered invitation remained. So eventually, I picked up my guitar, which I had brought on the trip, and began to write what would become the song ‘Father I Want You To Hold Me.’”

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Brian kept his song a secret. However, a few months later, he was at one of his church’s weekly home groups, where the discussion centred around God’s fatherly love. As the gathering was winding down, Andy Park (who would eventually write worship songs like “In The Secret”) said to Brian, “I feel like you have a song that would be a good way to wrap up.” He eventually agreed and sang ‘Father I Want You To Hold Me.’

“It seemed to touch the people there,” Brian recalls. “I remember reflecting on how special and new this experience was; that I had written a song in private to express something that I really needed to say to my Maker, and it seemed to speak for other people as well.”

A few months later, Brian was on a worship team with Andy Park, ministering at a John Wimber conference in Alberta. During a session focused on how the love of God can heal father wounds, the speaker asked Andy to close with a song.

“Andy responded by pointing at me and saying, ‘Go sing that Father song you shared at our home group,’” Brian recalls. “Being shy, I started shaking my head. Andy persisted, encouraging me that it would be all right, and so I agreed.”

Brian continues: “I began to tentatively play and sing. People all over the conference centre began to weep as the song touched them. They were weeping because, in that moment, the song was singing for them; it was expressing their vulnerability and need for Father-love.” Afterwards, the song was published by Vineyard Music, and Brian’s career as a songwriter was launched.

The song “Refiner’s Fire” followed in 1990 – which came from a “God encounter” at a traffic light when Brian says he heard the melody and lyrics almost audibly. This has happened twice, he shares. The second moment was when he and Joyce had moved to the UK to train songwriting worship leaders in the late ‘90s. It was a challenging time. He and Joyce had tried to launch a musical, but it collapsed. The couple lost \$1 million and found themselves on the verge of bankruptcy. The couple had also just discovered that their youngest son had Fragile X syndrome and would require specialized care for the rest of his life.

Brian recalls walking the streets of London and suddenly feeling an electric sensation around his body. Despite barely hanging on to his faith, Brian recalls looking at the heavens before rushing home and over to the piano to plunk out a melody. That was to become “Come, Now Is the Time to Worship,” – which he says marked “the beginning of his rebirth.”

The book of Psalms has played an important role in Brian’s life, particularly in “years of disorientation.” In 2010, he founded, with three close friends, the SHIYR Poets. SHIYR is a Hebrew word for “singing” and this group of “singing poets” have thus far recorded three volumes of Psalms in sequence.

Brian explains: “The ancient psalms express the human longing for God with poetic artistry and emotional force. They release the voice of praise and resonate with the universal cry of pain. Most modern Bibles focus Psalms translation on theological accuracy. However, the Hebrew poetry focused not just on the meaning of the words, but also on their sound. The psalms are also perhaps the most emotionally healthy comprehensive expression of spirituality ever written. These are songs of desire and desperation ... songs that demand justice for the oppressed ... songs that honour the innocent praise of children ... songs about everyday things like sleep.”

“THE PSALMS ARE
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Bible translation plays a big part in songwriting, Brian explains. “To write and sing Scripture well, we need to be aware and accepting that by singing Scripture, we are interpreting it, and we need to give ourselves that breathing room as we interpret and paraphrase the text so that it sings. We don’t have to only sing the literal words of a specific translation because we’re afraid to change anything. Remember none of us are singing the original words to start with – those words were written and transcribed millennia ago in an ancient language, so every translation we are using as a source is already an interpretation.”

Looking forward, Brian and his son-in-law have launched some online songwriting training courses at www.unlockingyoursongs.com. In between doing live events, he’s recording an album of songs, “Love For A Lifetime,” themed on faithful covenantal love to mark his and Joyce’s 40th wedding anniversary. He’s also preparing to release the 30th anniversary of “Father’s House” (his first solo album) in October. A Christmas movie (“a musical of sorts”), which he is writing, is in the works too.

Yet, in the midst of it all, Brian is a family man at heart. Now living in an old farmhouse in Abbotsford, British Columbia, which his parents bought when he was 4 years old, Brian and Joyce have four adult daughters and two adult sons, who both have Fragile X syndrome. Brian is still one of the primary caregivers for his 25-year-old son, Isaiah. “Looking after Isaiah and spending time with him ... spending time in my rose beds on our property ... those will always be some of the precious things to me.”

To learn more about Brian Doerksen, visit:
www.briandoerksen.com

Use this QR code to watch or listen to Brian’s interview on CBS’ podcast, “Scripture Untangled”:





IMAGINE



IN BROKENNESS, ABUNDANT LIGHT

How the light of God's truth reaches our darkest places

by Ann Voskamp

*“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so
that we might die to sins and live for righteousness;
“by his wounds you have been healed.”*

1 PETER 2:24

Sometimes you can feel the crush of it on your brittle rib cage. Great grief isn't made to fit inside your body. It's why your heart breaks. If you haven't felt this yet, it is likely, by His severe and surgical mercy, that someday you will.

There's absolutely no tidy pattern as to who gets pain and who gets peace. How had I not seen that the brokenness of this world is so all-encompassing that it encompasses all of us?

The wheat stands behind the orchard, turning itself into pure gold.

This is the deal we all get: guaranteed suffering. It is coming, unstoppable, like time.

There are graves coming, there is dark coming, there is heartbreak coming. We are not in control, and we never were. One moment you're picking up balls of crusty, dirty socks strewn across the bedroom floor, and the next moment you're picking up the pieces of your shattered life.

How do you live with a broken heart?

All the wheat looks like an onyx sea. The trees at the edge of the field reach up like a lyric scratched across the sky. It's like that line of Hugo's from *Les Misérables*: “There is a spectacle grander than the sea, and that is the sky; there is a spectacle grander than the sky, and it is the interior of the soul.” How does the interior of your soul live with broken things, through broken things?

Jesus died crying.

Jesus died of a broken heart.

Those words were still warm on His cracked lips: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” The movement of a life of faith is always toward answering that singular question. Read the headlines. Read the obituaries. Read people’s eyes. Isn’t the essence of the Christian life to answer that one, nail-sharp question: *God, why in this busted-up world have You abandoned me?*

I can see that question hanging over our farm table, up in the gable, from that framed canvas of a thousand little broken squares of color. In the semiabstract painting, there’s no tidy pattern, just light and dark bleeding into this subtle suggestion of Jesus hanging on the cross. He’s hoarse with the begging, for Himself, for us: “God, why have You abandoned me?” And He surfaces in the patches of color, the broken brushstrokes, the silhouette of Him visible in the chaos—Christ entering all this chaos.

There is the truth: Blessed—lucky—are those who cry. Blessed are those who are sad, who mourn, who feel the loss of what they love—because they will be held by the One who loves them. There is a strange and aching happiness only the hurting know—for they shall be held.

And, by God, we’re the hurting beggars begging: Be close to the brokenhearted. Save the crushed in spirit. Somehow make suffering turn this evil against itself, so that a greater life rises from the dark. *God, somehow.*

I was eighteen, with scars across my wrists, when I heard a pastor tell a whole congregation that he had once “lived next to a loony bin.” I’d looked at the floor when everyone laughed. They didn’t know how I had left my only mama behind the locked doors of psychiatric

wards more than a few times. When they laughed, I felt the blood drain away from my face, and I’d wanted to stand up and howl, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”

I’d wanted to stand up and beg: When the church isn’t for the suffering and broken, then the church isn’t for Christ.

Because Jesus, with His pierced side, is always on the side of the broken. Jesus always moves into places moved with grief. Jesus always seeks out where the suffering is, and that’s where Jesus stays.

***Blessed are those
who feel the loss of
what they love —
because they will
be held by the One
who loves them.***

The wound in His side proves that Jesus is always on the side of the suffering, the wounded, the busted, the broken.

I believed this then and believe it now and I’d say I know it to be true—but there is more than believing; there is living what you believe. *Do I really?*

What I wanted that Sunday when I was eighteen, sitting in a church of laughter mocking the hurting, was for all the broken to say it together as one body, to say it for the hurting and broken and to say it to each other, because there is not even one of us who hasn’t lost something, who doesn’t fear something, who doesn’t ache with some unspoken pain.

I wanted us to say it to each other until it is the bond of a promise we cannot break:

The body of Christ doesn’t offer you some clichés, but something to cling to—right here in our own scarred hands.

His body doesn’t offer some platitudes, but some place for your pain—right here in our own offered time.

His body doesn’t offer some excuses, but we’ll be an example—right here in our bending down and washing your wounds.

And we are His and He is ours, so we are each other’s, and we will never turn away.

But instead I’d heard preached what Jesus never had—some pseudo-good news that if you just pray well, sing well, worship well, live well, and give lots, well, you get to take home a mind and body that are well. That’s not how the complex beauty of life breaks open.

The real Jesus turns to our questions of why—why this brokenness, why this darkness?—and says, “You’re asking the wrong question. You’re looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here.” “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.”

There’s brokenness that’s not about blame. There’s brokenness that makes a canvas for God’s light to be lavishly splashed across the darkness. There’s brokenness that carves windows straight into our souls.

Brokenness cracks open a soul so the power of God can crack the darkness in the world.

Excerpted from: “The Way of Abundance: A 60-Day Journey into a Deeply Meaningful Life,” published by Thomas Nelson

Bible Resources for Healing from Brokenness

The Bible is full of encouragement and wisdom on how to deal with life's biggest challenges. Canadian Bible Society is actively involved in helping people find emotional healing and wholeness through Scripture engagement.



ABOUT ANN VOSKAMP

Ann Voskamp is a blogger and New York Times best-selling author of books including "WayMaker," "The Broken Way," "The Greatest Gift," and "One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are." She lives on a farm in Ontario with her husband and seven children.

Ann recently appeared on Canadian Bible Society's "Scripture Untangled" podcast, in an episode titled, "Is God Still Good When Tragedy Happens?"

Use the QR code below to watch or listen to Ann Voskamp's interview on the "Scripture Untangled" podcast:



CARING FOR THE WOUNDED HEART

Our Caring for the Wounded Heart groups, led by trained and dedicated leaders, provide safe and sacred places for people in need of counselling and emotional healing. The Bible-based curriculum includes basic mental health concepts to help participants identify their pain, share their suffering, bring their pain to the cross of Christ for healing, and, for cases where the trauma was caused by the actions of another person, learn to forgive their oppressors.

'I've been carrying this for so long... I have never had a place to express this before. I feel like I can breathe.'
— Sarah, Trauma Healing Program participant

Find out more at:
biblesociety.ca/caring-for-the-wounded-heart/

OVERCOMERS: BIBLE-BASED 12-STEP PROGRAM

Overcomers is a Bible-based, 12-step recovery and support program that leads people to freedom from life-controlling issues such as behavioural addictions, substance abuse, and emotional challenges. For those looking for a safe and encouraging community to walk with them toward hope and freedom, Overcomers offers in-person and online groups.

Find out more at:
biblesociety.ca/overcomers/



Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

For,

*“All people are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of the Lord endures forever.”*

And this is the word that was preached to you.



“HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE
FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING
GOOD NEWS!”

Romans 10:15



Canadian
Bible Society