



YOUR MONTHLY MEMBER'S REPORT **MARCH 2024**

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh, once among the world's poorest nations, grappled with overpopulation and natural calamities. Despite recent strides in poverty alleviation, the progress hasn't reached its seventy-five ethnic groups, including the Santal, Chakma, and Garo. The Bible Society of Bangladesh is bridging this gap by providing Bibles in their heart languages.

The Garo, migrating from Tibet circa 400 BC, now comprise about 100,000 people in northeastern Bangladesh. With an 80% literacy rate and 99% Christian identification, they speak six main dialects. Bible Society distributed the full Bible in Achik and the New Testament in Abeng. Collaborating with a local church, they conducted a programme for 100 Garo youth, including the distribution of New Testaments.

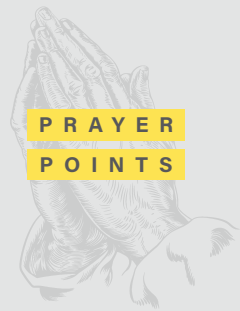
The Chakma, approximately 500,000 strong, inhabit the Chittagong Hill tracts. While predominantly Buddhist, seven percent identify as Christian, including individuals like Sunil whose journey to Christianity began in high school.

"When I was in high school, I enrolled at a Buddhist temple to become a Buddhist monk, but I left. In college I met a friend who invited me to go to church with him. The pastor shared with me about Jesus and gave me a Bible to read. I was touched by John 3:16. I was baptised, and I became the only Christian in my village. In 2002, despite strong opposition from villagers, we were able to build a church in my village," says Sunil.

Similarly, the Santal, a Hindu-majority tribe, see about eight percent identifying as Christian. In 2022, the Bible Society reached 6,000 individuals from these three ethnic groups, including pastors, youth, and believers, with Scripture. Your gift to Bible a Month Regular Giving will help to provide Bibles for these people groups this month.



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Pray for freedom from persecution for Christians in Bangladesh who comprise only one per cent of the population.

Give thanks that churches have impacted communities through relief work, and this has caused the church to grow especially among unreached groups.

Pray for local church partners and that those who receive Bibles will grow in their understanding of God's Word.

Pray for the economy which is underdeveloped, has little infrastructure and few natural resources and sees most people working in agriculture or textiles.



Scan to get a look at our latest Prayer Booklet!

FURTHER BIBLE MISSION PROJECTS



URUGUAY

Christianity was brought to Uruguay by the Franciscans who sought to convert the indigenous population. In 1830, Uruguay's constitution established Catholicism as the state religion. However, in 1917 a new constitution separated the church and state.

Today, Uruguay is the most secular country in South America with high rates of depression, suicide, abortion, and divorce. Twenty-seven per cent of the population is living below the poverty line. During the COVID-19 pandemic, state assistance such as meals in schools for children ceased. Therefore, families began turning to community soup kitchens and churches for food. Through its 'Breakfast with Jesus' project, the Bible Society of Uruguay is providing fortified chocolate milk powder and Scriptures to churches, so they can provide morning tea activities for impoverished children.

Photo Credit © Bible Society of Uruguay



LEBANON

In the fourth century, Saint Maron founded a monastery in Lebanon. In the eighth century, the Maronites fled into the mountains of Lebanon to escape persecution where they remained isolated for centuries. Today, the Maronites are Lebanon's largest denomination.

Recently, Lebanon has been facing multiple crises, including a fiscal crisis, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the aftereffects of the Beirut blast, and ongoing fuel shortages. It hosts more refugees per capita than any other country in the world. Partnering with Christian schools, Bible Society is reaching out to youth with its "Healing the Wounds" project, which helps teenagers to navigate negative emotions, including loneliness, anxiety, and sadness, etc.

Photo Credit © Bible Society in Lebanon



SYRIA

Under the Ottoman Empire, many Syrian Christians emigrated from Syria, with 800,000 arriving in the U.S. between 1899 and 1919. This pattern of migration continued with the number of Christians declining from 25 per cent post World War II to four per cent in 2021. Currently, the largest number of Christians in Syria are found in Damascus and Aleppo.

The Bible Society of Syria is nurturing the faith of Christian children by running children's activities including playing, acting, and dancing, and distributing children's Scriptures. It is endeavouring to bring joy and hope back into their lives along with increasing their knowledge of God's Word. The Scriptures are distributed at Easter and Christmas, two key events in the Christian faith.

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SOUTH AFRICA

In the 17th century, Christianity reached South Africa with the arrival of the Dutch. In the 19th century, missionaries from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Scandinavia, and the United States arrived. Today, 85 per cent of South Africans profess Christianity. However, South Africa is facing many issues including poverty and high HIV/AIDS rates.

Leveraging off its bicentenary which it celebrated in 2020, the Bible Society of South Africa undertook the ambitious goal of distributing two million Bibles, with a focus on providing Scripture for Grade 7 learners (12 – 13-year-olds). This age group has been chosen because they are entering their teenage years, a time when they need God's guidance through His Word.

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