



Pray for the children who will hear the stories that they and their families will be impacted by the Word of God.

Give thanks that the Albanian Church is maturing from the infancy stages of the 1990s, but pray for training for church leaders to reduce biblical ignorance.

Pray for Albania's economy as it remains one of Europe's poorest countries, with growth hindered by inadequate energy and transportation infrastructure, corruption, and high emigration rates.

Pray that in the midst of a pragmatic and tolerant attitude towards religion, Albanians will be drawn into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

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

## ALBANIA

In the first century AD, St. Paul first brought Christianity to the region that is now known as Albania. Over the centuries, Albania came under the sway of many empires, including the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, and later the Ottoman Empire until it gained independence in 1912.

In 1913, the partitioning of Albania occurred under the terms of the Conference of London. In the 1920s and 1930s, the self-styled King Zog 1 ruled the nation, but he was forced into exile following Italy's invasion of the country in 1939. Between 1944 – 1985, the country came under the rule of communist dictator Enver Hoxha. He sealed Albania off from the outside world, and suppressed all forms of religion.

In 1992, the first democratic government was elected. Since 1998, Albanians have enjoyed freedom of religion, although many have only a nominal faith. Today, 57 percent of the population identify as Muslim, and 17 percent identify as Christian.

The Interconfessional Bible Society of Albania is undertaking the translation of the New Testament into Albanian Gheg, a dialect spoken predominantly in the north. But their efforts extend beyond translation.

Last year, the Bible Society orchestrated three summer camps aimed at children, both Christian and non-Christian. These camps serve as a platform to acquaint children, aged six to thirteen, with the teachings of the Bible. Each day, dedicated staff share Bible stories, which the children enthusiastically reenact. The camps also offer many other activities, including games, songs, dancing, and sports like football, ping-pong, and tennis. Your gift to Bible a Month Regular Giving will help to support this project this month.



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## FURTHER BIBLE MISSION PROJECTS



### IRAQ

Once known as the “cradle of civilisation,” modern Iraq occupies what was once ancient Mesopotamia. In the first century AD, Saint Thomas is said to have brought Christianity to Iraq. It was adopted by Assyrian communities who today are some of the oldest Christian communities in the world.

Prior to the Gulf War (1990 – 1991), there were one million Christians in Iraq. After the US-led invasion in 2003 the number fell to 800,000 and has continued to plummet.

Today, Christians make up only one per cent of the population. The political and geographical nature of the country mean that the Bible Society of Iraq needs to maintain two offices, one in the north and one in the south in Baghdad to serve Christian communities.

Photo Credit © Bible Society of Iraq



### GULF STATES

Over 70 per cent of Kuwait’s three million residents are foreign workers, many of whom suffer from mental health issues, due to harsh working and living conditions, abuse, and non-payment of wages. Unfortunately, worker suicides are far too common. Amid this many are turning to Christ. Migrant churches are passionate about teaching these communities, but their leaders often lack theological training.

The Bible Society in the Gulf (BSG) is providing training for migrant church leaders by providing seminars on biblical topics and distributing Bibles. For example, it recently conducted a workshop for forty-six Telugu leaders entitled, “The church – the family of God.” It covered topics such as the importance of the church, and how to have a more successful, mature church.

Photo Credit © Bible Society in the Gulf



### LIBERIA

Liberia is a country of 5.5 million, where 68 per cent of the population live in poverty in the rural areas. In the cities the literacy rate is 46 per cent, but in the rural areas it is only 34 per cent. However, 85 per cent of the population identify as Christian.

The Bible Society in Liberia is running its End-to-End programme in rural areas, which includes Faith Comes by Hearing (FCBH), an audio Bible listening programme, teaching literacy skills, and Scripture distribution. Participants are also encouraged to join a church.

The End-to-End programme is a proactive way of engaging people with the Bible in rural areas, as well as encouraging them to read and write in their own language.

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### SLOVENIA

Slovenia has a Christian tradition dating back to the 8th century when Slavic tribes accepted Christianity. For centuries, Austria dominated the country. In 1918, it became a part of the Yugoslav Federation. In 2004, it became a member of the European Union. Today, the country has religious freedom, with a traditional Catholic culture that is rapidly giving way to secularism, agnosticism, and New Age beliefs.

To foster Bible engagement, Bible Society is partnering with churches (mainly the Catholic Church but also other churches), to establish Bible study reading groups. Participants receive a journaling New Testament which includes Bible helps. The aim is to not only encourage Bible engagement but to assist church leaders, many of whom are burdened and under resourced.

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