



A million Bibles for Iran's million believers

For Christians, Iran has been one of the most exciting stories lately. It's certainly one of the toughest places on earth to follow Jesus, but the underground church movement is vibrant and growing. Nahid wants to get more than a million Bibles into Iran in the next four years.

Nahid isn't based in Iran, though. She works in the US, or wherever in the world she and her laptop happen to be. She's Iranian but can't go to Iran because Bible Society was expelled in 1990. Historically the population is overwhelmingly Islamic, but things got very difficult for Christians when the pro-Western monarchy was replaced with a clerical dictatorship in 1979. Bible Society, then led by Nahid's father, struggled through the 1980s.

'My father wanted to print Bibles in Iran,' Nahid says. 'He was not allowed. The new authorities were offended by the claim that Jesus is the Son of God. They wanted that removed. My father would not allow that. He fought and he won. He was able to print Bibles in Iran until February 1990, when everything stopped.'



Pressure increased on churches that held services in Farsi, Iran's main language. 'One by one, the pastors were killed,' Nahid says. The Government denied involvement in the killings, but it is a criminal offence in Iran to convert from Islam. The intended effect is to confine Christianity to the traditional churches of Iran's ethnic minorities, like the Armenians and Assyrians. It hasn't worked.

There are now hundreds of thousands of Christians in Iran, and some guess a million or more. The country's rapidly growing evangelical churches, illegally holding services in Farsi, are full of people who have converted from Islam. Nahid raves about these numbers. 'Even the Government admits that Christianity is growing and Islam is shrinking! Persecution has made the Church stronger. When life is good, you forget God. But pain draws you to God. Young Iranians are turning away from Islam, and many of them want to know Jesus.'

Nahid dreams of returning to Iran to give out Bibles freely. 'It won't be soon, but we know it will happen. We've got to be ready.'

For now, Nahid and her small team have a thriving ministry among the Iranian diaspora. Iranians are leaving their country in huge numbers, especially under the current presidency. (A recent poll found that 93 per cent have seriously considered leaving.) It's obviously much easier to share the Bible with Iranians outside Iran, and Nahid is also ministering directly through social media. The team has a primetime livestream that's reaching all kinds of Iranian emigrants, just about anywhere in the world. 'It's my turn to host on Tuesdays,' Nahid says.

The livestream has run for four years, taking prayer requests and seeing many people set free. 'A lady asked us to pray for her son to be freed from addiction,' Nahid recalls. 'And two years later she wrote to tell us he's free.' It's not always Christians who send their prayer requests. Sometimes it's just Farsi-speakers who come across them on social media.



Nahid asks you to pray for her team. She's the only full-time staff member. Five others are employed, and she has about 70 volunteers.

Ask God to provide mightily so that more and more Iranians would open up God's word and find the peace they're craving. Keep Iran's abundance of refugees in your prayers. They're leaving a desperate situation and they're looking for safety anywhere they can find it. As refugees they're extremely vulnerable and could be

returned to Iran at any time. Pray that exile is an opportunity for them, both to build a new life and to find God.

Will you also pray for Nahid's impossible goal of getting a million Bibles into Iran? In spite of all the restrictions she faces – finance, logistics and persecution – let's believe that God will somehow make this possible, so the amazing momentum of the Iranian Church will only increase.

The Quiet Revival: Gen Z leads rise in church attendance

This is an exciting time for Bible mission. Bible Society's latest research shows key opportunities to engage spiritually open young people in England and Wales, along with an interest among Christians and non-Christians worldwide in learning more about the Bible.

Church decline in England and Wales has not only stopped, but the Church is growing as Gen Z leads an exciting turnaround in church attendance.

Church attendance has risen by 50 per cent over the last six years, busting the myth of church decline. The findings come in *The Quiet Revival*, a survey commissioned by Bible Society and conducted by YouGov.

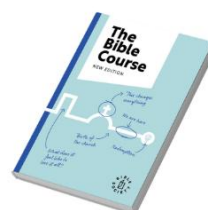


The Quiet Revival shows that the most dramatic church growth is among young adults, particularly young men. In 2018, just 4 per cent of 18–24-year-olds said that they attended church at least monthly. Today, says *The Quiet Revival*, this has risen to 16 per cent, with the attendance of young men increasing from 4 per cent to 21 per cent, and young women from 3 to 12 per cent.

The Bible Course New Edition is here!

This new and improved, free small group resource will help you and your church discover how Bible characters, stories, and themes are connected – from Genesis to Revelation.

- Eight sessions with films, and the *Digital Hub*
- Hosted by Dr Andrew Ollerton
- Inspiring personal stories



Sharing Jesus at Immanuel Church in Jaffa

With the support of generous donors like you here at home, Bible Society in Israel has been sharing God's word in churches and on the streets. This is their response to the crisis the country is experiencing – to love Israelis and plant seeds of change through the message of the Bible.

Victor Kalisher, a Jewish believer in Jesus, leads the team based in Jerusalem. 'We are using a big van that we fill up with Scriptures and outreach resources,' he said. 'We call it MoBible – our Mobile Bible Unit. We share the only true and lasting hope and comfort, the living word of God.'

The team has a range of resources to share, from Old Testaments to special Messianic editions of the Psalms to New Testaments – whatever people are open to receiving. These Scriptures use Modern Hebrew, and it's your support that funds their translation, publication and distribution.



A favourite place for the team's outreach in the city of Tel Aviv is Immanuel Church, a prominent spired building, which is home to a Lutheran congregation that holds services in Hebrew and English. Victor explained: 'Israelis pass through this historic building and are attracted by it. However, many of them think of it as representing a foreign religion that's irrelevant and even hostile to Jews.'

Victor described a recent encounter at the church. A visitor found an open Bible on an altar, between a cross and a temple menorah, and was captivated by what he read inside. He approached Victor and requested a book 'with the same content.'

'This man continued to visit the church,' Victor said. 'After a while, he told us he's amazed at what is happening to him just from reading the Old and New Testaments. Even his friends can't recognise him anymore! The peace and love he experiences through reading the word has already changed him inside. What a joy to see the word of God in action!'

Setting free the hearts of prisoners

Prisoners in England and Wales are coming to faith in Jesus. Your support is putting the Bible into their hands and growing their confidence in its healing power.

That means you're a key part of a Bible Society ministry that goes back to the beginning. In the early 1800s, Bible Society supporter and prison reformer Elizabeth Fry worked tirelessly to improve the lives of inmates. Today, you are getting more and more Bibles to prisoners and giving them a second chance, with Jesus.

‘Prisoners are drowning, spiritually and morally,’ said Revd Tim Wright, chaplain at HMP Stocken. ‘The waves are high and their heads are going under. But the Bible gives guidance, purpose and direction. Thank you. You are changing the lives of prisoners in remarkable ways.’



In prisons right across England and Wales, chaplains say the Lord is at work and lives are being changed. And the amazing thing is, you are part of it – because your support is not only putting Bibles into these prisoners’ hands, but helping them engage with it.

‘There’s a real hunger and thirst from the men,’ says Revd Tim. ‘Imagine hosting a Bible study at your house, opening the door and seeing 30 people standing there. That’s happening in prison! I’m having to put men on the waiting list for Bible study groups.’

Your support has delivered hundreds of Bibles to HMP Stocken, so every prisoner who attends Bible study receives a copy of their own. Revd Tim has also run *The Bible Course* three times. Thank you for loving people at their lowest. You are making new life possible for prisoners.

Powerful prayers for peace

Bible Society supporters responded in huge numbers to requests for prayer by Bible workers on the front lines. While war continues in Gaza, in the same week Bible workers in Nazareth and Kyiv said that attacks came close to their homes. Christians in Iran requested prayer for freedom, safety and opportunities to serve their Muslim neighbours.

Thank you for loving these global brothers and sisters, for sharing their vision and for supporting their transformative work.

Victor Tendeng leads Bible Society in Senegal.

‘With deep compassion, I join in the prayers of our brothers and sisters on behalf of those enduring turmoil in Iran, Israel, Ukraine and other conflict zones. I lift up the Bible Societies in Nazareth, Kyiv and beyond. May the Lord protect them and bless their ministry in the midst of suffering. May the Word of God continue to cross borders, bind wounds and bring enduring hope. I pray:

- That the Lord would pour out his peace upon nations torn by war, breaking the chains of fear, vengeance, and hatred
- For true and lasting reconciliation among peoples, rooted in love and justice
- That leaders be clothed with wisdom, the weak with courage, and the grieving with a peace that surpasses all understanding
- That the Church, in all its diversity, remain united and bold – shining Christ’s light in the darkness



Thank you, for changing the lives of children and adults through offering God’s transformative word.
Your support and prayers are much appreciated.