

BIBLE FOR LIFE

NEWSLETTER
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Feature story:
In China, Chen Guangcong's
long wait for a Bible is over



A SKILL FOR NOW. AND A MESSAGE FOR HER FUTURE

CHINA

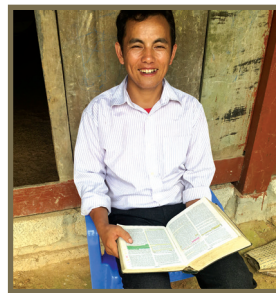
Chen Guangcong has a verse to share with you, something that is helping her face the future in rural China. She learnt it shortly after she began reading the Bible for herself.

28-year-old Chen runs her own small nail salon. She became interested in the local literacy programme after she followed her mother-in-law, a woman she clearly adores, to church.

Which is why that verse is so important to her. Chen knows that while people like her mother-in-law won't always be around, God always will. That's the way to guard your heart for hard times ahead.



***"Above all else, guard
your heart, for everything
you do flows from it."
Proverbs 4:23***



BIBLES BRING LITERACY, SO LOCAL OFFICIALS GIVE GREEN LIGHT

VIETNAM

When Pastor Vũ began leading his church in Vietnam, his greatest barrier wasn't any local officials or the fact that he had never studied theology — it was the opposition of his own father. He explains that, "My father said if I serve the church he will ring the police. But I have a calling so I must serve my people. If it means prison, so be it."

Pastor Vũ Van Tien received his first Bible in 1999, but it is long gone now. A friend of his needed it more. It is that attitude of service that has allowed Pastor Vũ's church to flourish — it now has exactly 888 members.

While some might say that was lucky, others would argue God is changing lives through his word. Through our partners in Vietnam, Bible-based literacy programmes are now being offered through several churches, with the approval of local officials.

Pastor Vũ explains that, "recently a Christian was voted into a local position and he said the church was able to bring literacy to the illiterate." It looks like that brave official was persuasive. Pastor Vũ says that the local officials are satisfied that the Bible is bringing the literacy skills that the community needs, so he said, "Now they just leave us alone to do the classes."

Where does his fearlessness come from? In part, it is because he, and others, can see how positive the word of God is in his life and the lives of others, "The men in my family drank a lot. Their lives weren't good and I wanted my life to be different. I did not want to be 'like father, like son.' I wanted to be like my Heavenly Father."

For this pastor, there is no looking back, "The Bible taught me I need to serve. The Hmong people need me to tell them what is in the Bible — that can change their lives." A change that begins when local people learn how to read the Bible for themselves.

Note: Pastor Vũ is the name he uses in public communication, to protect him and his church.

LEARNING TO READ AND FORGIVE FOR THE FIRST TIME

CAMBODIA

Ros had two kinds of disabilities when she began our Bible-based learning programme in Cambodia.

First, she could not read. Second, she would not forgive. Certainly, she had reason to be resentful. A mother in her 30s, she lives with the loss of one of her three sons. On learning that God is good and that he loves us, her life

changed in unimaginable ways. She says, "Before I believed, I never forgave. But now I have learnt to forgive others." However, there was an additional surprise in store for Ros, on top of God comforting her through her loss. A week after coming to faith Ros discovered she was pregnant.

"Be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you." - Ephesians 4:32

LIFE CHANGED WHEN ROS LEARNT ABOUT GOD'S FORGIVENESS



THE LIFE-TRANSFORMING POWER OF READING

MOZAMBIQUE

BIBLE FOR LIFE funds literacy programmes in rural Mozambique, and for many, these classes are the only opportunity to learn how to read and write. The difference it makes for people who, until now, haven't even been able to read road signs, is extraordinary, as you can hear from one local grandmother, Maria.

"For the very first time in my life, I am learning to read and write. Now I can write my own name. I don't need someone else to do it for me. Isn't that amazing! I know the letters of the alphabet and I can even read some signs. This will change my life. I am 45 years old and I have nine children and six grandchildren. My husband died many years ago and I spend most of my time finding food to feed my family. I didn't know how to read or write before I came to the literacy class. What a joy it is for me. Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity".



BIBLES MEAN CHILDREN AREN'T LEFT BEHIND

SOUTH AFRICA



In the economically disadvantaged schools of South Africa, only 20% of primary schoolchildren will go on to finish high school. This hampers a nation trying to lift itself out of poverty. BIBLE FOR LIFE is backing a project that will supply 150,000 Bible-based booklets free of charge in all 11 of the languages spoken in South Africa. Along with the teaching programme, these will promote basic literacy among pre-school children up to Grade 2 and provide a Bible when they graduate the programme. The principal of the Impendulo Day Care Centre in Hlomsisa, Ms Dudu Mathubo, says this can give her children a real chance for the future.

"I can see how these little ones develop and hopefully when they go to school they will not be behind. Above all, I play a part in introducing them to the Bible at a very early age."

TEACHING CHILDREN IN A WAR ZONE

SYRIA & LEBANON



Abu Mazen is one of two million Syrian refugees now living in Lebanon. He decided to pull his nine-year-old boy out of school because he believed it will be time to go back home any day now. However, when his family were offered Bible-based literacy classes, Abu Mazen said yes. He could see it would help prepare his boy for school back in Syria. Your support means we will be able to give the gift of literacy, and the Bible, to 2,000 children whose education has been halted by civil war in Syria.



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