

# GraceNotes

A Monthly Newsletter of Grace Christian Church

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## GROWING IN GRACE “The Best-Selling Book of All Time”

April 16<sup>th</sup> is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of America’s most enduring mail order clubs – The Book of the Month Club (BOMC). Founded in 1926 by Harry Scherman, the original goal was to bring best-selling books to rural areas that didn’t have libraries. The BOMC is now the longest running book subscription service in the U.S. Today there are 300,000 members.

The BOMC centennial gives pause to think about the best-selling book of all time. That happens to be the Bible. It is estimated that approximately 6 to 7 billion copies of the Bible have been sold/distributed in the last century. A third of those have been distributed by Gideons International and the United Bible Society.

Billions of Bibles being sold/distributed is an exceedingly noteworthy and praiseworthy milestone among the people of God. No other book is even close to the Bible’s popularity. The second best-selling book of all times comes in at 200 million and that is Charles Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities. Based on an average thickness of 1.5 to 2.5 inches, 7 billion Bibles would stack 200,000 miles, reaching all the way to the Moon. Of course, and obviously so, the sell and/or distribution of Bibles alone does not automatically mean the content and message have been read, absorbed, and applied. The American Bible Society’s 2021 survey reported that 41% of Americans claim reading the Bible at least three times a year. Around 16% claim reading the Bible every day.

The stats are both good and bad when translated into actual numbers of people. For example, the 16% reading the Bible every day represents 62 million people. That’s an impressive number of souls reading God’s Word by any standard of reckoning. However, the percentages also mean that over half of all Americans rarely, if ever, read the Bible. That represents nearly 200 million people, which intimates of a dominant culture that is decidedly secular (at least insofar as Bible reading, or lack thereof, is an indicator). It is also part of the backstory of two worldviews – one Biblical and one secular – on a collision course. At the interface of the collision is where the opportunities for evangelism and mission are found.

So how are those opportunities seized for God’s kingdom? The Apostles Paul and Peter tell us how. Paul says, “*Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season*” (II Tim. 4:2). Similarly, Peter says, “*Always be ready to give account for the hope that is in you*” (I Peter 3:15). Both apostles rightly subsume the presentation of Bible truth at the leading edge of faith-sharing.

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