

SOWER

WINTER 2019

*The book that
gives new
life to China's
poor*



**BIBLE
SOCIETY**

圣经

Greg Clarke says goodbye



Dear friends,

By the time you receive this, I will have stepped down as CEO of Bible Society Australia as of the end of June. It has been an immense and unique privilege to lead the organisation through the implementation of its nationalisation in late 2010, the acquisition of *Eternity* (2011), Centre for Public Christianity (2012), Koorong (2015), Acorn Press (2017) and Morning Star Publishing (2018). I feel particularly honoured to have been here during the 2017 bicentenary of what is Australia's

longest living organisation.

I feel even more blessed to have seen Bible mission accelerate around the world. Since I began, the number of complete Bibles translated into new languages has risen from 470 to 690, in just eight years. The word of God is reaching every tribe and nation, faster than ever before. It is a real possibility that all language groups will have Scripture in my lifetime. I've imagined that day since I was a kid flipping through my parents' mission magazines.

In Australia, we have provided Scripture in more Indigenous languages, including Nyoongar

in the west, Pitjantjatjara in the middle and Kunwinjku in the north of Australia. We have, during that time, sold about two million Bibles and given away more than two million Bibles or Scripture portions. We held two national exhibitions: *The Book That Changed Your World* for the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible in 2011, and *Their Sacrifice* to mark the centenary of Gallipoli in 2015. And we have experimented with dozens of ways to reach Gen Y and Gen Z with the Bible.

Australians have donated about \$70 million to Bible mission



Left: Greg Clarke with Liberal MP Kevin Andrews, former BSA Board chair Richard Grellman and Army chaplain Charles Vesely at *Their Sacrifice* in 2015; reading the Book of Daniel in Pitjantjatjara, right.

though Bible Society since 2010. We are a generous mob, especially our elders. As I hand over leadership, the donor baton also needs to be passed on to the next generation. Can I ask you please to show this edition of *Sower* to someone 20 years younger than yourself?

During my time as CEO, we have either published or supported three winners of the Australian Christian Book of the Year. We've produced an internationally acclaimed documentary, *For the Love of God: How the Church Is Better and Worse Than You Ever*

Imagined. We've pumped out news, podcasts, social media and magazines. Publishing, in digital, audio, video and print formats, is the lifeblood of successful Christian mission and essential to our future. We have to keep inventing and reinventing ways to communicate the living word to new audiences. We've been doing this since Moses was carrying stone tablets and Gutenberg built his printing press. For our times, the Lord has provided the internet to hurry the task as the Day of the Lord approaches.

I want to thank the numerous former and current Board

members, staff, prayer supporters, donors, volunteers and partners who make this work possible, and urge you to continue supporting this essential Christian ministry.

"The word of God is living and active" (Hebrews 4:12). May it be living and active in each of us, until our dying breath and beyond. My heart is full of thankfulness to God for each and every one of you.

Dr Greg Clarke, CEO
Bible Society Australia

Urgent need for the Book of Life

2700* people come to faith daily in China, but there are never enough Bibles. Bible Society's Melissa Lipsett was in Shandong recently and saw first-hand the deep hunger for the word.
**Based on conservative estimates.*



300 people crammed into this little church in Shandong.



Vehicles crowd the laneway.

Something exciting was happening, that was clear. As we bumped our way up the tiny laneway in a village in China's Shandong province, every available space on either side was filled with tiny farm vehicles and motorcycles. In front of us we could see a rough wooden cross rising above a tiled roof. It signalled that we had arrived at a small rural church, where **hundreds of believers had gathered to receive a new Bible or to replace one so old it had pages missing.** They were all waiting expectantly, and the excitement was palpable as we

made our way in through the little courtyard to join the 300 in the tiny church.

We were welcomed, songs were sung, prayers were said (including The Lord's Prayer in perfect unison), but it was the tears that moved me the most. Tears of joy, tears of gratitude, tears because the gift of a Bible was the most precious gift we could possibly give. One woman held her Bible to her heart and declared exactly that: "The Bible is the most precious book to me. Through it I see God."

I saw God that day too. I saw him in the faces of people for

whom life is very hard and who look to him for their strength. I saw him in the tears of elderly women who held my hands tightly as I passed them the precious gift of his word, and who told me that life was better now that they had learnt to read using the Bible. I felt him in the gnarled hands of the menfolk who reached out eagerly for the Book of Life, too. I saw him also in the eyes of the young woman who refused to take a Bible, even though hers was very torn and worn, knowing that someone needed it more than she did, someone who didn't have one yet. **And she's right, because all**



These Christians in rural China are overjoyed to receive a new Bible. 3.34 million Bibles have been approved for printing and distribution by the Church in China. All that's missing is the funding for Bible paper this year.

across China there are millions of people who haven't got access to a Bible yet. With the rapid growth of the church in China, it's not unusual to see people spilling out of the worship hall into the church courtyard. Rural villagers walk for hours to attend services. And all these new believers need Bibles.

Thanks to Bible Society Australia donors, and donors worldwide, funds were raised to produce 1.26 million (out of the target of two million) affordable Bibles for distribution in China last year. But there is still a huge shortage. This year, 3.34 million Bibles have been approved for printing and distribution by the Church in China. **The only thing that's missing is the funding for Bible paper.**

New readers' pride

The tiny room was crowded with smiling women. Clearly, they were very pleased with themselves. And no wonder. Each was a new reader, having learnt their new skill from the Scripture literacy class facilitated by the rural church. At first, they were shy about demonstrating their literacy prowess but, with encouragement, they opened their booklets and read to us. As they reached the end of a passage, they grinned broadly. One woman said, "I learnt

how to read and write, and it has made my life better."

Precious jewels

Nationally, on average, there is one ordained Protestant pastor to 6700 Christians. There is a great need to train pastors at Bible seminaries and provide lay preachers with Bible resources.

Kong Jinxiang a volunteer lay preacher in Shandong province, was immensely grateful to receive a set of Bible resources thanks to the generosity of donors like you. "Receiving these Bible reference materials is like receiving precious jewels," he said.

Rev Melissa Lipsett, Chief Operating Officer, Bible Society

\$40 pays for paper to help put Bibles into the hands of 20 Chinese Christians.

\$100 teaches five Christians to read and provides each with a Bible. (This gift is tax-deductible.)

\$172 Would you feel able to partner with nine others and give a special gift of \$172 each? This will help provide a whole roll of paper, and print Bibles for 860 Christians.



GIVE NOW

Please call **1300 BIBLES (1300 242 537)**, use the donation form on the back page or visit **biblesociety.org.au/sowpaper**



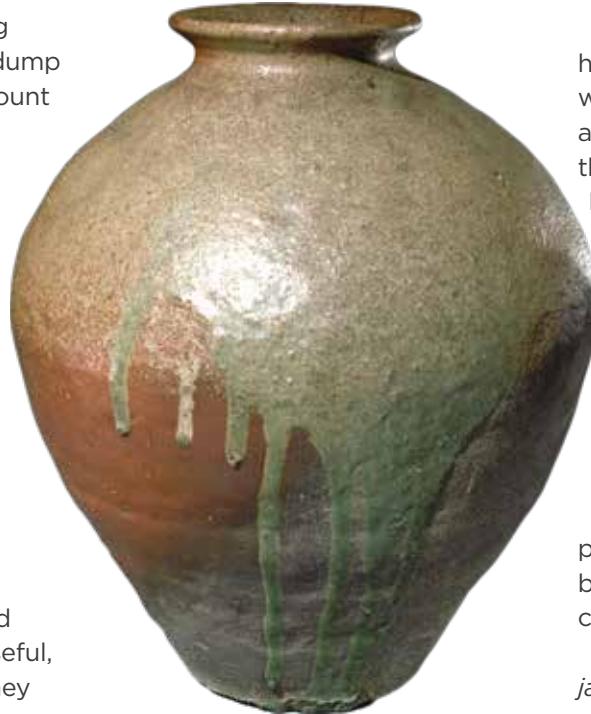
Devotion

The secret beauty of fragility

I can remember fossicking through an old rubbish dump in Western Australia's Mount Magnet when I was young. We were on the hunt for old bottles. My fossicking friends had a good collection of interesting bottles. Sadly, I did not find a complete bottle that day, but I did see plenty of broken glass!

It is not surprising that there was a lot of glass in a town settled in the mid-1800s. Tin cans were only just getting going, so what else was there to store food and liquid in? They were useful, cheap and universal, but they were fragile. A little bit like our takeaway coffee cups. In New Testament times, the clay pot was the useful, cheap and universal food and liquid storage container. They were also fragile, so modern archaeologists often find acres of broken pottery.

Paul picks up the idea of being a clay pot in 2 Corinthians 4 to describe the shape of the Christian life. It is a little surprising



wikimedia/ Cleveland Museum of Art

that Paul should choose a clay pot to describe himself. Indeed, he was a gifted man and we know how much he has shaped the entire world through his actions and writings. I wonder why he should choose such a cheap, universal and fragile article, when something costlier and more durable would be better.

Yet Paul is a realist. He knows himself and those he works with. He knows his own frailty and limitations. A beautiful thing emerges as Paul writes. Recognising reality frees Paul for great things rather than paralysing or disheartening him. He has hope, he finds perseverance, he holds out life amid death, and is "renewed day by day" even when suffering. He is far more durable than his "clay pot" status would indicate. And this is Paul's point. He is beautiful and durable because the contents of his vessel can be seen for what they are.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. (2 Cor 4:7 NIV)

The treasure is nothing less than knowing God through Jesus. A pot can conceal or lock away a treasure. Maybe this is why Paul did not seem to mind getting a bit chipped or cracked along the way. It just made the glimpses of the treasure greater!

Bishop Matt Brain, author of Wise (see page 26).



Brighter, lighter Holi Baibul

The Kriol New Edition Bible is welcomed at Katherine Christian Convention in the Northern Territory in May.

Over 800 people gathered in the Northern Territory town of Katherine for the 52nd Katherine Christian Convention in early May. This year's convention included the Dedication of the New Revised Edition Kriol Bible. It has been over 10 years since the first edition Kriol Bible "Holi Baibul" was dedicated at KCC in 2007.

The dedication event began with a song by Marjorie Hall, who along with her husband William worked as Kriol translators on both the first and second edition Kriol Bibles. Marjorie explained that her original song, written for the dedication of the first edition, shared her experiences as a translator and how much she loved to read the Bible in Kriol.

Another translator, Estelle, had written a song for the revised edition Bible and she spoke briefly about the translation revision workshops and how the Kriol translation team discussed what they wanted included in the new Bible, what the cover should look like, which words should be changed, and so on. After she spoke, all those who had been involved in the workshops and the revision came up on stage and sang Estelle's song.

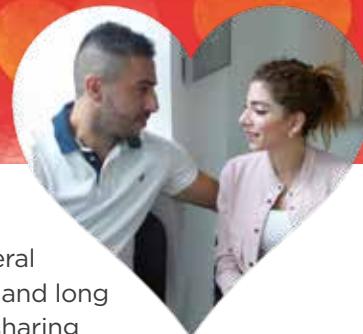
As the song was sung, Bible Society's Louise Sherman opened the box of Bibles and began to pass the new Bibles out to the translators. To conclude the dedication, translation consultant Dr Carl Gross was asked by the Kriol team to pray the final

blessing over the Bible.

The new edition is significantly lighter in weight than the previous edition and contains two new sections. In the front, a complete Daily Bible Reading Guide to the New Testament and key passages of the Old Testament, and at the back Bible Helps (including a topical index with readings for funerals, Easter and Christmas).

Several other Kriol resources were also made available for the first time. A Kriol Children's Bible Story Book perfect for Sunday School lessons was released along with several other children's story books in Kriol, a Gospel of Mark puzzle book and an audio recording of the complete New Testament available in Kriol for the first time.

God's love: hope in the midst of despair



Joanna* was an orphan from Nazareth in Galilee, the town where Jesus was raised. At 30 years old, she seemed to have everything going for her in life. Beautiful and educated to university degree level, she was married with two young children aged seven and five.

Yet Joanna was deeply depressed. She could not find work and slept for most of the day. She was unhappy with herself and in her marriage. She felt she wanted to get a divorce. More than that, she was so sad and confused that she felt she

had nothing to live for and tried to commit suicide several times. Fortunately, hope came into Joanna's life in the shape of Dina Katanacho, Director of the Arab Israeli Bible Society.

This Bible Society serves the Arab Israelis, a minority group that especially needs support in view of their unique cultural/religious mix within Israel.

When Dina met Joanna, she listened to her problems, then without hesitation Dina told Joanna that Christ could change her life.

"I encouraged her to try Christ.

After several meetings and long hours of sharing the word of God with her in a personal way, Joanna decided to invite Jesus into her life. She wanted to put all of her problems into his hands. We prayed together and tearfully asked the Lord for extra mercy," Dina writes.

After this, Dina invited Joanna and her husband Gabriel* to a Marriage Enrichment class that Bible Society holds at Bible House and they went, despite discussing divorce plans seriously.

"Through several meetings with



Marriage Enrichment classes held at Bible House in Nazareth are helping couples restore their marriages in light of the wisdom and truths of the Bible.

the couple, Gabriel also invited Jesus into his life. But they had many issues in their marriage. The class empowered them to address several old problems in new ways. It allowed them to invite Jesus to be Lord of their marriage, not only Lord of their individual lives.”

Not only was their marriage restored but they were introduced to other Christians in their community which provided them with further blessings.

“They now see the Bible as a source of hope, salvation and a great manual for a successful marriage,” says Dina.

Joanna says her favourite verse of the Bible is “God is love” (1 John 4:8) because for the first time she feels totally accepted and loved as a whole person without any conditions. She is no longer depressed but lives a life transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit, as are her husband and her whole family.

Give thanks for the vital work of the Arab Israeli Bible Society in the lives of people such as Joanna and Gabriel in Galilee and do please consider if you might be able to support this work.

**Names changed to ensure privacy.*

GIVE NOW

Please call **1300 BIBLES** (1300 242 537), use the donation form on the back page or visit **biblesociety.org.au/sowsupport**



A girl in Jefferys Bay, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, receives isiXhosa Bible-based literacy materials.

Let a new believer strengthen your faith

BIBLE FOR LIFE is a regular giving programme that sends hope to hard places. It also sends you impact stories with insights and encouragement from people whose lives are being transformed by this work. Here, Greg Clarke explains why his family is getting behind it.

Although I'm stepping down

as Bible Society CEO, I am stepping up as a BIBLE FOR LIFE supporter. It's our newly refreshed regular giving programme. I jumped at the chance to become its very first supporter, not simply because of the lives it changes across the world - but because it is good for me too.

BIBLE FOR LIFE brings

together *Bible A Month* and *Literacy For Life*. Through your regular giving, it supports the translation, production, distribution and subsidy of Bibles across the world. It also supports engagement with the Bible, through literacy classes, trauma healing and Scripture-with-aid projects. Every part of it

is exciting and I want to be right there in the front row.

WHY I JUMPED AT THE CHANCE TO JOIN

As a father of five, one part of BIBLE FOR LIFE close to my heart is the work at Hospital La Mascota. This is Nicaragua's only hospital for children with cancer. In a country where poverty and hardship are all too common, we are doing what we can to help these children undergoing treatment. As well as practical help, Bible Society equips volunteers to offer spiritual support to families.

Our work is strongly supported by the hospital and recognised as the only religious organisation with unrestricted access. We were able to share 1716 free Bibles to patients and their families last year. For many, it was their first.

It is not just a one-way action. Partnering with BIBLE FOR LIFE means I keep in touch with the work of the global church. With this new way of supporting the great mission of Bible Society, I know I will be encouraged and challenged in my own faith - as I see others grow in theirs.

HOPE IN HARD TIMES

BIBLE FOR LIFE brought hope to Luz Marina and her family. A

sugarcane harvester from a rural village, Luz had never been to Nicaragua's capital city. When her daughter Camila was diagnosed with leukemia they travelled to La Mascota and during their stay in hospital, were blessed with free Bibles, material and additional aid by Bible Society.

"We entered as an emergency and were transferred to the area of children with cancer. I came to think that I would not go out with my child alive. After seeing part of the work of the Bible Society and participating in the prayers that the pastors do, it filled me with faith in God, a God I used to flee from, but in this situation I have learned to depend on."

I haven't had to face the challenges Luz has faced, though I have my own! I do know that if Luz can depend on God who has made himself known in the Bible, then I can do the same. While I may never meet her, hearing her speak makes me want to trust God more in my life.

There are more than 30 global mission projects, and more than 20 in Australia, being powered by BIBLE FOR LIFE. Your support will change lives and it will encourage your faith too.

To join BIBLE FOR LIFE or get more information, visit biblesociety.org.au/bibleforlife



When Camila was diagnosed with leukemia and had to stay at La Mascota Hospital in Managua, the family was blessed with free Bibles, all provided by Bible Society supporters, through our local partners.



Helping the young overcome

Bible Society Australia may be more than 200 years old but, when it needs to, it can behave as though it began yesterday. Just like a start-up – or the TV show *Shark Tank* – Bible Society is developing new ways to engage young “census Christians” with the Bible and create good reading habits that will lead to deep Bible engagement over time.

A study in 2010 revealed that **70 per cent of young people (aged 13-24) in Australia have never read the Bible.** Only 4 per cent read the Bible daily, another 6 per cent read it weekly while 15-20 per cent read it occasionally.

Unsurprisingly, most of those

who read the Bible regularly attended church services and youth activities such as a Bible study group. Most also had parents and friends who attended church regularly.

However, the responses of young people in the survey revealed that **young people – whether Christians or not – saw problems in reading the Bible and taking its teaching seriously.** These barriers involved questions about the nature of the Bible as a whole (a book that is “hard to believe”), the content in the Bible (seeing the Bible as myths and fables that are exaggerated, contradictory and fragmented),

and the value of the Bible (seen as boring and difficult to understand, irrelevant and problematic in contemporary issues, a harmful tool).

A common thread for young people was their desire to pose critical questions. They want to share their opinions in a space that is safe and receptive. And they want to make their own decisions about the value of religious faith and the Bible.

Apart from these barriers, the reality is that for most young Australians the Bible is not something





Bible trust barriers

they have ever considered – it is not on their radar. Most Australians, and most young people, do not think much about religion at all.

With this background in mind, **Bible Society Australia has set out to foster habits of Bible engagement among young people in formats that they don't find onerous.** While this is a work in progress, there are plans to develop Bible engagement material for mobile phone apps and various social media platforms.

This year, the well-supported Masterclass series for Christian

senior high school students will be held again. The pictures on these pages are of Masterclass events in 2018. This year, Masterclass is being extended to include an evangelistic youth event in Perth. This YouthQ night on August 9 will be aimed at Years 7-12 and will feature two speakers, a testimony and a Q&A session. Youth group members will be encouraged to “bring a non-Christian friend” with

them to the night.

Also, in response to requests from chaplains and teachers, Bible Society is developing videos to help students defend criticism of biblical texts. The aim is to give students a solid foundation to articulate in their own spheres of influence why they trust the Bible.

Would you be willing to support our efforts to reach the young?

GIVE NOW

Please call **1300 BIBLES (1300 242 537)**, use the donation form on the back page or visit **biblesociety.org.au/sowtrust**



A favourite memory of Dorothy Russell (with white bag) is joining a Mary Jones walking tour in 2013.

Celebrating 200 years of volunteers in Tasmania

Volunteers have always formed the backbone of Bible Society work in Tasmania, the state that is celebrating its bicentenary.

“During its earlier years Bible Society was often described as a grassroots organisation,” observes former state director Allan Harris. “Local people felt Bible Society belonged to them and that they had a part to play in the outworking of the larger vision.”

The volunteer spirit is alive 200 years later in Dorothy Russell,

Graeme Perry and Patrick Fabian. Representative across generations – Dorothy being in her 80s and Patrick in his 30s – these volunteers are committed to Bible Society work and find joy in it.

“I was brought up in Dublin,” Dorothy shares. “My parents were keen Christians. One of my earliest memories is of going with my mother to Bible Society events when I was a little girl.”

When Dorothy married, she and her husband moved to Tanzania with the British Colonial Service

and met Bible Society supporters there. On one occasion, Dorothy recalls, “We were in East Africa, in the south of Tanzania, a remote country area. A Bible Society man came down and planned to show a film of Bible Society work. We booked a hall and we went along to help them set up three hours before. The place was already full, with people battering at the windows, wanting to get in ... this was in 1961 and watching a film was such a novelty for them.”

Dorothy continued her support

of Bible Society after moving to Tasmania in 1965. Another favourite memory is the Mary Jones tour she took in 2013. Dorothy was one of 22 Australians to take the tour, and together they raised \$23,000 for Bible work by walking in Mary Jones' footsteps.

After visiting Aberystwyth in Wales to see Mary Jones' Bible, "we went to Bala and stayed there while people did the walk. It was quite rough, so those of us who were older stayed put and did other things! We had such wonderful fellowship there."

Dorothy, who can be found every week volunteering in the Bible Society office, says, "The whole idea of providing the Bible for people is incredible. The statistics around translation and distribution are amazing. In Africa we had first-hand knowledge of people getting Bibles in their language for the first time – it's so exciting. The recent development of literacy classes has my interest too ... they are such a worthwhile thing to support."

Graeme Perry is an equally passionate volunteer who has been involved in fundraising through Bike for Bibles since 1988. Since then, Graeme has done a ride every year, either as a cyclist or a roadie assisting with the ride. This level of involvement is even

more impressive since in 1999 Graeme had a serious accident – he was hit by a 4WD while training for a ride and broke his leg and his arm. Yet he was back in the saddle at the end of the year for a three-hour ride, and in 2000 he was a roadie for the Perth to Sydney ride.

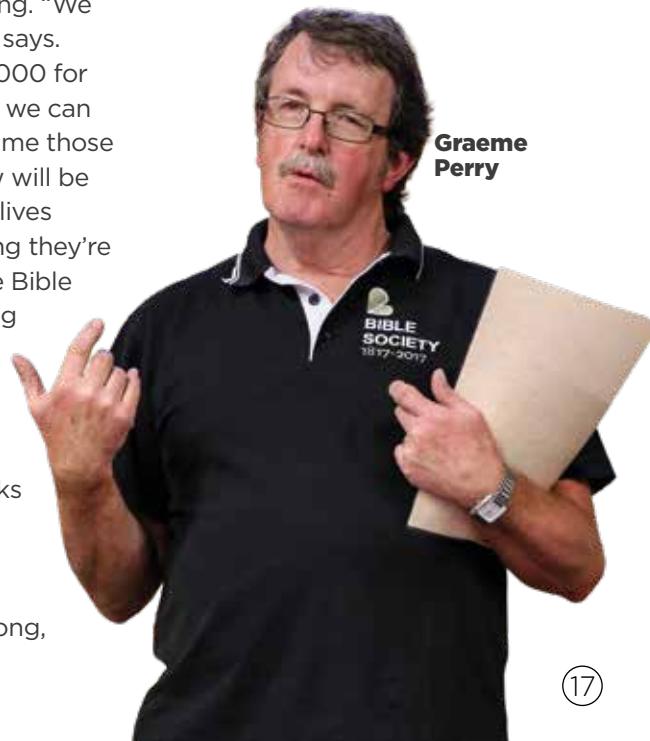
Graeme says that while he's riding, he spurs on other cyclists with Philippians 3:14-15, to strain towards what is ahead, press on towards the goal. "When we leave in the morning, if we have a 160km day, I say to everyone, 'focus on the first 40-60km to morning tea.'"

Graeme is passionate about the goal of their fundraising. "We ride for literacy work," he says. "This year we raised \$48,000 for ladies in Bangladesh, and we can know that in 18 months' time those ladies that can't read now will be able to. They'll have their lives changed and the first thing they're going to be reading is the Bible and you can't get anything more important than that."

Patrick Fabian, the Ulverstone Bible Society Branch Chairperson, works with the group each year to run a project launch event, a prayer breakfast, a Festival of Word and Song,

and a local Bike for Bibles event on the Turners Beach bike track. Each event includes people from all the local churches and focuses on fellowship, food, and learning about and supporting Bible Society work. He also sees the literacy programmes as worthwhile and can see that people around the world are really benefitting from the work.

Patrick has a plaque on his desk with 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. He finds it to be a good reminder, in Bible Society work and in life in general, that "we have all come from different backgrounds, but our praise should be to God for the great things he has done for us."



Graeme Perry



Nepalese women in three villages are learning to read.

Joy in signing their names

The striking photograph above shows a group of women sitting on the ground in a house, clothed in the colourful dress of their rural village in the Sunsari District of southeastern Nepal, with their heads bowed, learning how to read. It's a lovely picture of women happily absorbed in learning. They are women of all ages and some have their children with them.

In Nepal, women usually stay at home caring for the children but, amazingly, since literacy classes became available, fathers

have been volunteering to look after their children so that their wives can become literate. That's because they know that when the mothers learn to read and come home, they will teach the whole family.

The Bible Society of Nepal Education Project has full support in the villages and communities because it presents an exciting opportunity for adults to learn in their local village.

It's currently available in three rural villages, but there are plans to extend the programme to other villages, as word gets around.

There are 30 students in the class in a village in the Sunsari District of southeastern Nepal. One is Mina, a mother of five who is aged 45 and yet cannot read. She is excited about attending the literacy class. Her heart's desire is to be able to read and write her name. She yearns to read the signs on the roadside and on the way to the market.

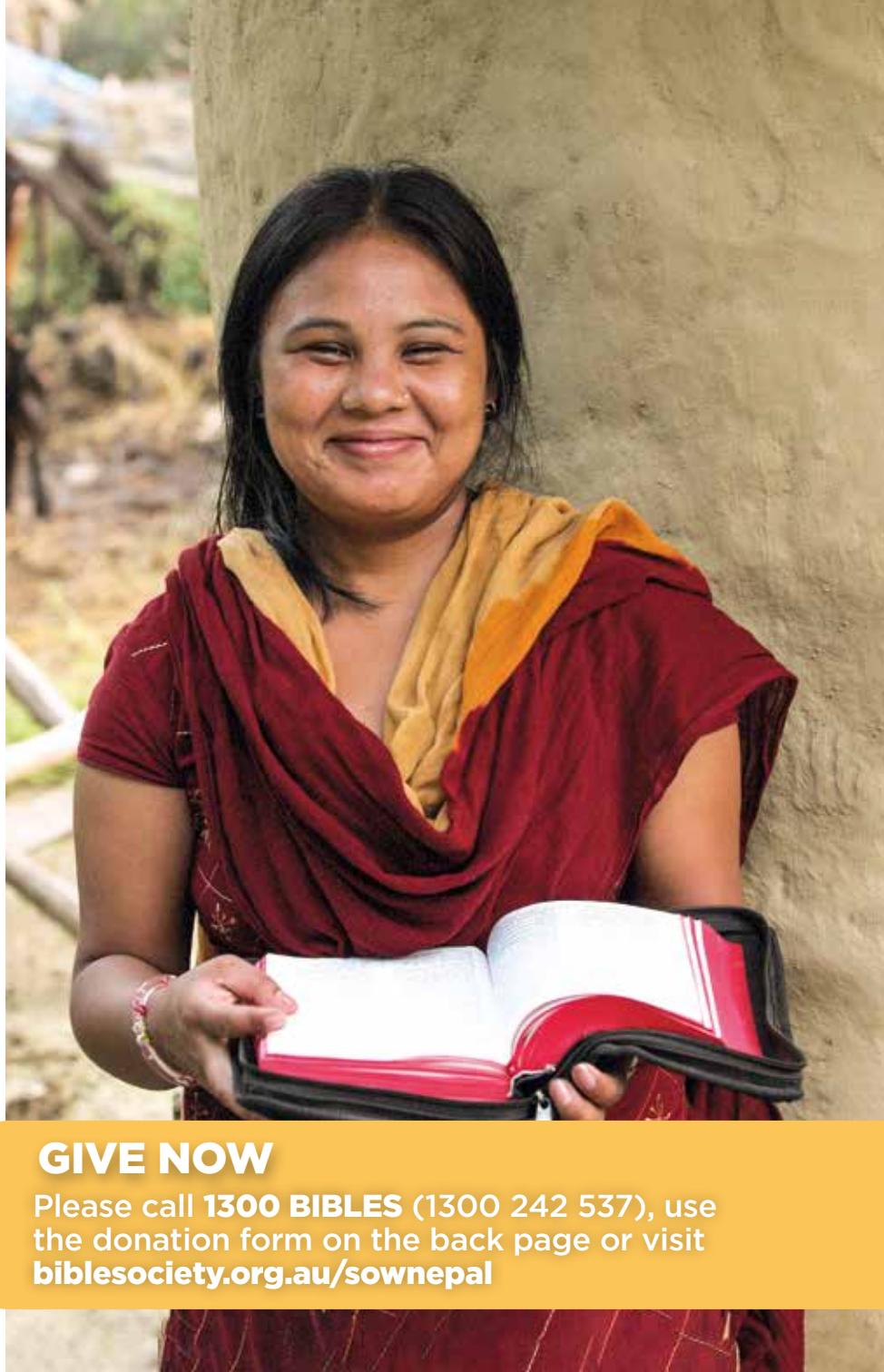
When Mina attends local women's groups in her village and other important meetings, she hates having to use her thumb print as a signature. She wants to write her own name.

At first, Mina struggled, but has kept going to the literacy class. And now she is improving her writing and reading skills. Imagine the joy she is feeling!

The project officer who coordinates the literacy programme reveals that her favourite Bible verse is from Jeremiah 29:11: “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” This verse is important as it reminds her to depend on God daily and in every situation. The class is open to everyone, but all the literacy teachers are Christians. It is hoped that the literacy classes can act as a bridge to share the gospel among them. Each student is offered a Nepali Bible. By learning to read it they will discover that they too are part of God’s plans.

The project officer and her teachers ask for prayer for wisdom as they teach and seek ways to build relationships and share the gospel. Pray also that students can keep attending class as some have family responsibilities.

The students are grateful to you as Bible Society donors for this opportunity to learn to read and transform their lives. Will you help more Nepalese women to read God’s word?



GIVE NOW

Please call **1300 BIBLES** (1300 242 537), use the donation form on the back page or visit biblesociety.org.au/sownepal



Hymnfest season

Winter is Hymnfest season for Bible Society and this year we are raising funds for Bible Society's projects in Indigenous ministry. If you are in Perth, come and celebrate well-known hymns and contemporary Christian music with an orchestra, choir and other special guests on Saturday, June 22 at 7.30pm, Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, 497 Marmion Street, Booragoon, WA. Get your tickets at perthhymnfest19.eventbrite.com.au or call **1300 242 537** or email events@biblesociety.org.au

Greg Clarke will be the guest speaker at a free concert of uplifting music by choir, orchestra and vocalists on Saturday, June 15, 7-8.30pm at Wahroonga Seventh-day Adventist Church, 183 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga, NSW. No booking needed.



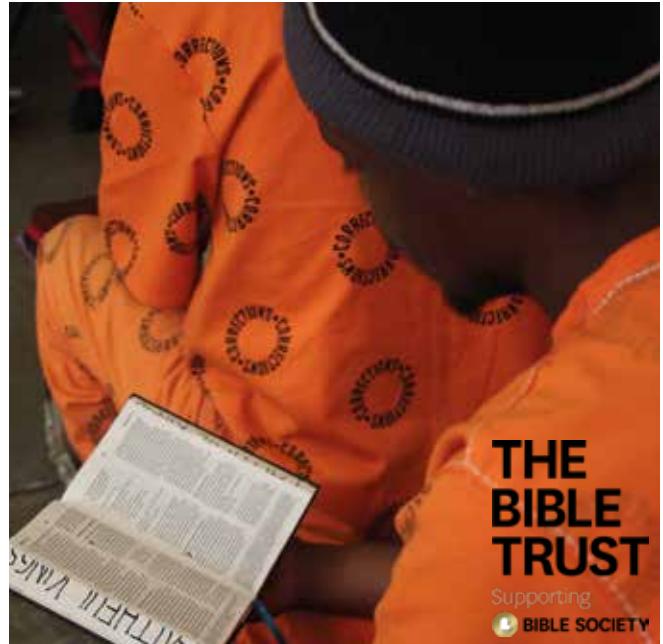
Hiking for chaplains

From September 27 to October 1, a group of supporters in Western Australia will put on their hiking boots and hike a section of the Bibbulmun Track to raise funds for Australia's chaplains. The Bibbulmun Track is a long-distance walking track stretching 1002km from Kalamunda near Perth to Albany, through some of the most beautiful areas in the state's southwest. In this 22nd year of Bible Society's Bibbulmun Track Hike, hikers will be raising funds to help Bible Society Australia provide free Bibles to chaplains serving in hospitals, emergency services, prisons and the armed services. Hikers keen to do their part have covered different sections of the track over the years, raising \$122,000 for Bible work while enjoying the great outdoors.



The great walk of China

Winding its way across the north of China, from the Yellow Sea to the Gobi Desert, the Great Wall of China is one of humanity's most impressive accomplishments. From September 21-29, a group of Bible Society supporters will challenge themselves by trekking on remote and unrestored paths, between mountains, through local villages and across rolling farmlands. After their five-day trek, they will visit Beijing, exploring the ancient history of the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven, and experiencing the poignancy of Tiananmen Square. They will also have a very special opportunity to visit the world's largest Bible printing company, Amity Printing, where millions of Bibles are printed each year.



Bible Trust winds up

The Bible Trust, formerly known as the Trustees' Deposit Fund (TDF), which generated funds to support Bible Society's work, is being wound up. This is because tougher economic conditions and regulatory conditions have undercut the rate of return and reduced its effectiveness. Since it was set up in 1965, the Bible Trust has earned an average interest rate of 4-5 per cent annually. Members have the option of requesting a refund of their investments or donating the funds to Bible Society for mission work. Bible Society is grateful that many trustholders have prayerfully decided to donate generously from their Bible Trust account. Even adult children of trustholders who have died have been supportive of their parents' desire to give to Bible Society.

Prayer points

June - September

June 16-22

Syria: Please pray for encouragement for the 60 young Sunday school teachers from 14 villages being trained in Hama, just 35km from the village of Al Skeilbiyyeh where a big rocket fell on a monastery, killing five people and injuring six.

Australia: Please pray for the donor support team as the end of the financial year approaches, to give the team strength, perseverance, good health.

June 23-29

Australia - *Eternity*: As the dust settles from the federal election, please pray that *Eternity* will continue to encourage Christians at a time when many feel challenged by a more hostile Australia.

Vietnam: Ask for development of several projects for the hard of hearing, illiterate people and ethnic minorities, and for relationships with churches.

June 30-July 6

Australia: Give thanks for the leadership of Dr Greg Clarke over the past nine years. Pray for him as he transitions from BSA to a new ministry opportunity.

Peru: Pray for the “Bread of Life” and “End to Violence” projects to help children grow up healthy, safe and knowing the Bible.

July 7-13

Australia - Indigenous: In NAIDOC week, celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, pray for the launch of a new website aboriginalbibles.org.au. This site seeks to make available in various forms all the translated

Scripture and Christian resources published in about 50 Australian Indigenous languages.

Malaysia: Please pray for the sale, delivery and distribution of Arabic/English bilingual Bibles for migrant ministry. Thank God for the Bahasa Malaysia formal translation of the Bible.

July 14-20

Australia - Centre for Public Christianity: Pray for the team’s many speaking engagements over the winter months, that they will clearly communicate the truth, beauty and goodness of the Christian story and equip Christian leaders to do public Christianity well.

International: Give thanks that 5.6 billion people now have access to the full Bible in their language, but with half of the world’s languages still having no Scripture, pray for United Bible Societies to meet this next challenge.

July 21-27

Australia - Youth: Please pray for the students attending the upcoming ten Masterclass events being held around the country and via livestream in August and September. In today’s world of ‘fake news’, insta-fame and conflicting narratives about personal identity, living out the Christian faith is not always easy for young people.

Ghana: Pray for the Bono Bible translation project and other ongoing Bible translations. Pray for the preparation towards the World Assembly that will be hosted by Bible Society of Ghana in 2022.

July 28-August 3

Egypt: Please pray for the renovation of Bible World. The tour was written and produced 10 years ago and there is an urgent need to update it.

Taiwan: Pray that the TCV Study Bible, the

Aboriginal Bible and the Study Bibles series are all published. Ask for more churches to participate in the Handwritten Bible project.

August 4-10

Turkey: With the “Trauma Healing” project going well thanks to the efforts of local facilitators, pray for opportunities to hold more workshops in major cities to train and reach more people.

Austria: Please pray for the children and teenagers who visit the Bible Centre. Pray for refugees and inmates who receive a Bible in their mother tongue.

August 11-17

Madagascar: The Malagasy Bible Society is at a crossroads, facing many challenges. Please pray for strengthening of local infrastructure to increase Bible distribution and implementation of the 2018-2022 strategic plan.

Namibia: Please pray for the work of the Bible Society in a very volatile economy. Pray for funds for the translation of the new Bible into Oshiwambo.

August 18-24

Australia: Please pray for a great time of singing God’s praises at the Hymn Singing and Vegetarian Banquet on August 31 at the Devonport Seventh Day Adventist Church in Tasmania.

Sweden: Please pray for the launch of the New Testament in Simplified Swedish. Ask that the Adventures of the Bible project, which has reached 35,000 public school students, may continue.

August 25-31

Slovakia: Thank God for successful Bible projects that reach marginalised people: the Romany, the visually impaired and the hard-of-hearing.

Denmark: Please pray that work on a new

translation of the Bible into contemporary Danish will open many new eyes to the biblical message.

September 1-7

Slovenia: Please pray that the new missionary programme, “Spiritual Growth with the Bible,” will be useful to Slovenian people.

Lithuania: Thank God for the amazing success of the “Living Pictures” photography contest that helped teenagers to learn about the Bible and creatively share their faith with their peers.

September 8-14

Chile: Please pray for peace, especially in the Araucanía region, where an Old Testament translation project into Mapudungun is in progress.

Colombia: Ask for lasting peace with the new agreement between the government and the largest insurgent group in Colombia.

September 15-21

El Salvador: Pray for all the children participating in the “Fear Not” programme who are putting the teachings of the Bible into practice against a background of increasingly insane violence.

Australia - Publishing: Please pray for two books to be launched by Acorn Press – *Metanoia* by Anna McGahan and *Woven* by Joel McKerrow – that they will bring Christian stories to the general public.

September 22-28

Eritrea: Thank God for the launch of the first New Testament in the Blin language and for its distribution by camel to remote villages.

Vanuatu: Praise God for the long-awaited revised Havakinau New Testament, which is bringing hope to Havakinau speakers in Vanuatu as they rebuild their lives after being evacuated from Ambae.



Friendship

By Caitlin Orr

*Assistant Minister
Watsons Bay Anglican*



A Shared Future

By the team at
Ganggalah Church

*Ganggalah is an
ACC Church in Tweed Heads*



Wise Like Christ

By Matt Brain

*Bishop
Anglican Diocese Bendigo*



Signpost

By Jacqueline Grey

*Dean of Theology
Alphacrucis College*

Week One

JUN 17 – JUN 23

MON 17 Gen 2:18-25

TUE 18 John 15:9-13

WED 19 1 Cor 13:4-7

THUR 20 John 15:13-14

FRI 21 John 15:15-17

SAT 22 Isa 41:8-10

SUN 23 Prov 18:24

Week Three

JUL 1 – JUL 7

MON 1 Ps 139:13

TUE 2 Gen 37:31

WED 3 Gen 39:20-21

THUR 4 2 Cor 10:4

FRI 5 Joel 2:1

SAT 6 Jer 17:8

SUN 7 Jer 29:11

Week Five

JUL 15 – JUL 21

MON 15 2 Cor 4:1-2a

TUE 16 2 Cor 4:2b-3

WED 17 2 Cor 4:4

THUR 18 2 Cor 4:5

FRI 19 2 Cor 4:6

SAT 20 2 Cor 4:7

SUN 21 2 Cor 4:8

Week Seven

JUL 29 – AUG 4

MON 29 Isa 7:14

TUE 30 Isa 9:6-7

WED 31 Isa 11:1-2

THUR 1 Isa 11:6

FRI 2 Isa 40:3-5

SAT 3 Isa 42:1-3

SUN 4 Isa 52:13-15

Week Two

JUN 24 – JUN 30

MON 24 Prov 17:17

TUE 25 Prov 27:6-10

WED 26 Prov 16:28

THUR 27 Prov 22:24-25

FRI 28 1 Pet 4:8-9

SAT 29 2 Sam 1:25-26

SUN 30 Heb 13:1-3

Week Four

JUL 8 – JUL 14

MON 8 Gal 5:23

TUE 9 Gen 45:4-5

WED 10 Col 2:2

THUR 11 Ps 91:1-2

FRI 12 John 6:35

SAT 13 Gen 12:3

SUN 14 Gen 50:20-21

Week Six

JUL 22 – JUL 28

MON 22 2 Cor 4:9

TUE 23 2 Cor 4:10

WED 24 2 Cor 4:11-12

THUR 25 2 Cor 4:13-14

FRI 26 2 Cor 4:15

SAT 27 2 Cor 4:16-17

SUN 28 2 Cor 4:18

Week Eight

AUG 5 – AUG 11

MON 5 Isa 53:1-3

TUE 6 Isa 53:5-6

WED 7 Isa 53:7

THUR 8 Isa 60:1-3

FRI 9 Isa 61:1-2

SAT 10 Isa 61:3

SUN 11 Isa 61:10

In a world that is broken and lonely, how do we think about friendship? Through this series we will see that friendship is a great gift from God to his people. We will see that the Bible points people to Jesus and helps them grow in obedience to him.

For 2019 NAIDOC week, celebrating the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, this series weaves the theme of "Voice, Treaty, Truth: Let's work together for a shared future" through the characteristics of the pandanus tree, historical accounts of the Indigenous people and God's covenant promise through Joseph, a rejected but royal seed.

Have you ever wondered what made St Paul tick? What drove him to achieve so much for Jesus? Despite his passion and energy, his real power came from a treasure within. Outwardly he was as ordinary as a takeaway cup but inwardly he was being renewed each day ... and the same can be true for us.

Throughout the Old Testament we can see signposts that point us to Jesus Christ. The book of Isaiah offers numerous such signposts. Reading Isaiah through the eyes of the New Testament can give us new insights into the life of Jesus, and also to the life of discipleship to which we are called.



Divine Judgment

By Roy Williams

Author of Mr Eternity



Fatherhood

By Rick Pekan

BSA Church & Community Relations Coordinator (WA)



A 'Selfie' Faith?

By Melissa Lipsett

BSA Chief Operating Officer

Week Nine

AUG 12 – AUG 18

- MON 12** Rom 2:1-3
- TUE 13** Acts 10:42
- WED 14** Psa 139:1-4, 7
- THUR 15** Gal 2:16
- FRI 16** Heb 11:6
- SAT 17** James 2:19
- SUN 18** Gal 5:6

Week Eleven

AUG 26 – SEPT 1

- MON 26** James 1:2-5
- TUE 27** James 1:6-8
- WED 28** James 1:9-12
- THUR 29** James 1:13-15
- FRI 30** James 1:17-18
- SAT 31** James 1:19-25
- SUN 1** James 1:27

Week Thirteen

SEPT 9 – SEPT 15

- MON 9** John 13:1-5
- TUE 10** John 13:1-16
- WED 11** Matt 4:18-22
- THUR 12** Rom 12:9-13
- FRI 13** 1 Pet 4:8-11
- SAT 14** Micah 6:8
- SUN 15** Matt 5:13-16

Week Ten

AUG 19 – AUG 25

- MON 19** John 15:10
- TUE 20** 1 John 4:17-18
- WED 21** Luke 12:4-5
- THUR 22** 2 Cor 5:10-11
- FRI 23** Luke 13:23-25
- SAT 24** Isa 55:6
- SUN 25** Rev 21:6-8

Week Twelve

SEPT 2 – SEPT 8

- MON 2** James 2:1-4
- TUE 3** James 2:8-13
- WED 4** James 2:14-17
- THUR 5** James 2:18-22
- FRI 6** Deut 6:5-9
- SAT 7** Deut 6:20-25
- SUN 8** Prov 22:6

Week Fourteen

SEPT 16 – SEPT 22

- MON 16** Mark 8:34-35
- TUE 17** Matt 5:38-42
- WED 18** 2 Cor 1:3-4
- THUR 19** Eph 2:8-10
- FRI 20** Jn 17:6-8; 20:21
- SAT 21** Matt 25:34-40, 45
- SUN 22** Matt 20:25-28

Everyone will face final judgment by God. We know God's judgment will be fair but what will divine justice entail? Will the unsaved include good people of other faiths? What about people never exposed to the gospel? What about children who die young? I have grappled with these issues for the 21 years since my conversion. I hope this series may stimulate reflection, discussion and prayer.

One of the many descriptions of God in the Bible is that of a father, and it repeatedly refers to the Father's love for us which has no bounds. Some experience glimpses of this love through an earthly father while others experience pain, abandonment and confusion. This series encourages fathers and father figures to tap into God's unconditional love for those around us.

Have you ever taken a "selfie"? The rise of social media has made selfie-taking and posting immensely popular, but has this contributed to us being somewhat self-obsessed? Do we live in a selfie culture? This is about as far as you can get from the life of service that Jesus modelled and calls us to.



We know you love reading the Bible. If you would like to engage in our full Bible devotional series, why not sign up to receive our Daily Bible emails? Each morning in your inbox you will receive commentary on each day's reading along with a question to ponder and a prayer point.

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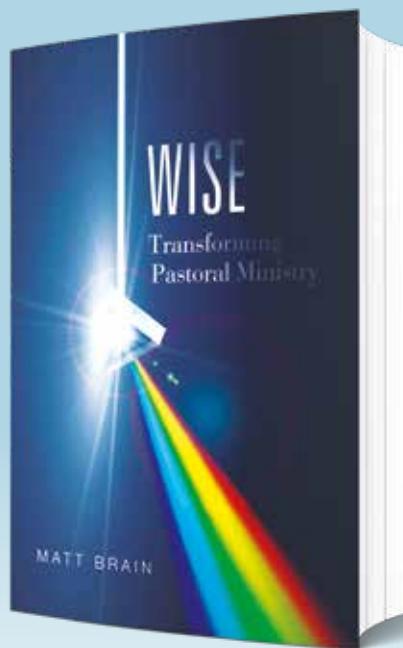
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Bible Societies around the world



Bible quiz a Thai hit

An annual Bible quiz in Thailand has proved unexpectedly popular. More than 1000 children and teenagers eagerly anticipate the quiz each year, which has now expanded from primary to high schools. “Now those high school children who have graduated are asking when we’ll take the quiz to colleges,” says Bible Society’s Dr Seree Lorgunpai. Almost half of the participants are not from Christian families but their parents support their Bible learning.



Photo: Layton Thompson

Change in Malawi

In Malawi, a Bible Society project to distribute children’s Bibles through Sunday Schools is reaping delightful rewards. A church in Bantyre that received a consignment last year has seen the number of children attending Sunday School swell from about 80 to 250 as a result. “This project could change Malawi,” Bible Society’s Joseph Khondowe says. “There will be more children in churches and their Bible knowledge will be deeper.”



Hope in Colombia

Young people in Colombia have grown up against a backdrop of violence. The Colombian Bible Society believes that the Bible brings hope and healing. To make it as easy as possible for busy young people to engage with God’s word at home or on the go, it has created a multi-platform resource. A Daily Encounter with God consists of a printed Bible with daily readings and QR codes that link to the readings online in text or audio format.

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**BIBLE
SOCIETY**

Bible Society Australia is a not-for-profit interdenominational organisation. It’s a member of the United Bible Societies, a fellowship of 154 organisations working in more than 200 countries. Our mission is to achieve the widest possible effective and meaningful distribution of the Bible; also to help people interact with it and to have their hearts lightened by the Bible’s message of unconditional love in Jesus Christ.

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