

# BIBLE FOR LIFE

NEWSLETTER  
**ISSUE #01**  
JULY 2019

**Feature story:**  
*In South Pacific, our partners complete a Bible translation for the Maumi people*



## WORD OF LIFE FOR WARRIORS OF THE PACIFIC

### SOUTH PACIFIC

**Around the time the Bible Society was formed in Australia, the idea took shape that our nation would be a base for missions to the South Pacific.**

Under God, that's exactly what happened. Australia printed the first scriptures for Tahitian people in December 1814, and the first Bible portions were printed for Maori people here in 1827. The very first Methodist mission to Fiji set off from Australia in 1835.

Today the connection between Australia and the islands is thriving. Pacific Islanders are increasingly influential in our churches, from Anglicans to the Uniting Church. There are 50 predominantly Pacific Islander parishes in Sydney's Uniting Churches alone — 30 of them Tongan.

Australia's Bible Society is still playing an active role in the Pacific. Earlier this year, our partners in Fiji completed a fresh translation of the *New Testament* for the Maumi people, a minority who were once the feared warrior class of those islands.

The traditional Maumi chief, through his spokesman, wanted Bible Society's supporters to know how grateful he was, "On this day, I not only thank them for the wonderful work, I also plead with them to please finish this good work that you have begun, by translating our Bible in full, with God's help."

What effect will this have for local people? We know God's word brings life wherever it goes. However, local people expect that it will definitely bring new life to the local language.

One local, a primary school teacher said, "The majority of the Maumians today do not speak in our dialect. We speak mostly in the Bauan language, but with this initiative, I am sure most of us will want to bring back our language in our everyday conversation."

**Above, staff of the Bible Society of the South Pacific in Tailevu. Credit: Jovesa Naisua**



### A CHRISTIAN FOR 25 YEARS, MAN HA WEN HAS FINALLY RECEIVED HER FIRST BIBLE

#### CHINA

**Officially, there are 46.5 million Christians in China. Unofficially, numbers sit at 100 million. One of them is a ninety-year-old woman by the name of Man Ha Wen (Ma Wen).**

Man Wen heard the gospel and became a Christian 25 years ago. Living in a poor farming district, Man Wen could not afford to buy a Bible of her own. However, when she recently heard about a rural

church that was distributing Chinese-language Bibles, Man Wen got up with her daughter at 3am — whatever it took to make sure she didn't miss out.

When asked what verse speaks to her most, she began to weep. **"Where it says Jesus was crucified for my sins."**

Millions of Chinese Christians are still waiting for their first Bible. With your support, Bible Society hopes 3.34 million more will be given their own copy of the Bible this year.

By supporting printing and distribution, we allow the Chinese Church to offer Bibles at an affordable price. And for those who can't afford one, a Bible for free.



# A TINY MINORITY ON THE BRINK

## ARAB ISRAEL

Recently, our partners at the Arab Israeli Bible Society (AIBS) hosted a Bible study group for women looking at the topic of self-esteem. One woman, Naziha, was blown away when she heard the Bible explained and has recently become a Christian.

***"I was so encouraged from this meeting to see myself through the eyes of God,"*** said Naziha. The children in the local community of Arab Israel Christians are also hearing from the Bible. A new app called "King of Peace and His Young Followers" is giving hope to people who are often overwhelmed by conflict.

Thankfully, generous BIBLE FOR LIFE supporters like you are making it possible for AIBS to continue this life-giving work. AIBS has been able to support congregations struggling to fund church activities and the basic wages of pastors.

AIBS is also facilitating Bible-based courses on topics such as parenting, reconciliation and women's rights. Some of these courses have deeply impacted those who have attended.

***Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. – John 14:27***

# A "SHINING LIGHT" TO SOUTHEAST ASIA



## Vietnam

***"I drank and smoked a lot but Jesus freed me from those bad habits through his word. In John 3:36... I can see that God's love is true and his promise has come. I want to shout that we are loved by the Almighty God."***

In 2015, Bible Society established a translation project across Southeast Asia. Since then, thanks to your support, and the support of others around the world, the project has reached out to eight of the minority language groups in Vietnam by offering them the Bible in their own language.

Deacon Dieu Nghin's tribe was one of those minority language groups. Not having the Bible in his heart language made him feel distant from God. However, with the recent translation of the Bible in his tribe's language, his life has changed. "I drank and smoked a lot," he said, "but Jesus freed me from those bad habits through his word. In John 3:36... I can see that God's love is true and his promise has come. I want to shout that we are loved by the Almighty God."

Each translation project involves a translation consultant, translators, and local community members who meet together regularly. One pastor spoke of how he relearned English and French so that he could consult commentaries and better understand the meaning of the text. Many of these contributors take time off from their usual work and travel long distances from rural villages.

Pastor Yea Laily has seen the impact of the clearer translation in his community. He says that

***"When the Bible was published in my language, it was like a shining light for my people, helping them to understand the Bible more"***

# CHINA'S MOST POPULAR BIBLE TURNS 100



## CHINA

**When William Wright heard that the plan for a unified Chinese translation of the Bible had been approved by local authorities, he was at a loss for words.** As a representative of the British and Foreign Bible Society, standing among translators from 16 different nationalities, many with tears streaming down their faces, he simply said: "My heart is too full to permit my mouth to sing"

Twenty-nine years later, in 1919, the largest Bible translation project in the history of the Chinese Protestant Church was completed.

Imagine William's joy if he could have seen the enormous growth the Chinese Church would have over the next century or the ways in which the Chinese Union Version would shape Chinese language and culture.

Alongside Bible distribution to The Chinese Church, with your support, Bible Society partners with Chinese academic institutions to run academic seminars that promote Biblical scholarship and a greater understanding of the value of Christianity in China.

One participant in these workshops, Ms. Wu Jing, said she has been given new insight into the relationship between religion and society. After hearing from Ephesians, she said that she now understands the essence of Christianity is love, which spurs believers to reach out and serve their communities. Many participants have come to appreciate the positive contributions of Christianity in society..

This was Conrad Solomon's experience. He was brought up in poverty and hardship and while just a teenager, joined a gang. He was imprisoned for hijacking, but prison was no respite from the gang-related violence. While serving his time, Conrad became a high ranking gang member, organising stabbings and strikes.

However, everything changed when Conrad contracted tuberculosis. In hospital he was given his own Bible by the prison ministry supported by Bible Society. For the first time, Conrad read the word of God. He says, "It was in my hospital bed that I gave my life to the Lord, and when I went back to the housing section, I was a changed man. I started serving God."

Conrad is now a discipleship course facilitator, sharing the gospel with many more inmates who have never heard the good news. In 2018, 7,580 inmates registered for the Bible discipleship course and 6,293 inmates received Bibles of their own.

**Thanks to your support, many more inmates like Conrad are turning away from a life of brutality and crime to one where they know the forgiveness of their saviour.**



# FROM GANG MEMBER TO FORGIVEN DISCIPLE

## SOUTH AFRICA

The prisons of South Africa are brimming with inmates. At any one time, they detain around 160,000 people. These are dark places. With your help, though, Bible Society is reaching those who languish inside.



BIBLE  
SOCIETY

**THANKS FOR  
SUPPORTING THESE  
NON-TAX DEDUCTIBLE  
PROJECTS**

[www.biblesociety.org.au/life](http://www.biblesociety.org.au/life)



BIBLE  
FOR LIFE