

SOWER

WINTER 2018

**“I want to work
and do something
more important
with my life,” says
Abed, a refugee
from Syria.**



**BIBLE
SOCIETY**

A lamp to their feet A light to their path



For long-time Bible Society supporters Bill and Jocelyn Ross, the Bible really has proved to be “a lamp to their feet and a light to their path,” as they have navigated the roads God has taken them.

After studying and marrying in Canberra, Bill and Jocelyn ministered for a few years in Albury, NSW, before moving to the far north of Western Australia in 1970 and beginning a life-long ministry there.

They began in the town of Kununurra and the patrol district of the East Kimberley, with the Bush Church Aid Society.

Since then, the Rosses have served in Dampier, Bluff Point, Wickham and Port Hedland over a period of 45 years.

In Kununurra, their association with Bible Society became central to their own ministry, as their paths crossed with Trevor Booth,

the Flying Bible Man, who became a great asset.

“I’d go with Trevor in his plane and catch up with people on the stations. I was flying with Trevor when the Bible Society made a film about his work in the East Pilbara. What I remember the most about the filming was the constant flies in our eyes! ... it was a wonderful experience”

When the Rosses moved to Dampier, a Pilbara port town, Bill again engaged in patrols with Trevor at several stations in the West Pilbara, and Barrow Island.

“I always carried with me a small range of Bible Society products. I guess you could say I was a bit of a colporteur in those days!” Bill recalls.

When Bill was

chaplain to construction workers on a dam, Trevor Booth went with him to visit the workers. “He had a good film to show in the workmen’s mess service. On one occasion the sound system wasn’t working – but it didn’t matter, because Trevor narrated the film! He had shown the film so many times, he knew the dialogue by heart.”

Trevor also assisted with the



**Bill and
Jocelyn Ross**



Freely / Wilmer Edson

Dear friends,

We are Bible believers, yes, but how can a book change lives? The answer has many parts to it.

One is the concept of equity: it is simply just that everyone should have equal access to the word of God. It can be economically challenging, linguistically demanding and physically exhausting. But it is right and just that we continue to pursue our goal of all peoples and languages having access to the Bible. When a new people group receives the Bible, they feel like they matter: now God speaks directly to them.

Second, the very process of translating the Bible changes communities. We are often told about the spiritual transformation occurring in translating groups, families and villages as they pore over God's word, their eyes opening wide to the truth that sets us free. Sometimes, this deep dive into the word is so good that no one wants the translating to end.

And third, the book does its best work when people know just how valuable it is. In the West, we seem to have forgotten this.



We've lost connection with the very teachings that brought us what we treasure: neighbourly love, justice mixed with mercy, a sense of purpose, a moral compass. But around the world – in countries such as those featured in this *Sower* – people see the Bible for what it is. It liberates; it excites; it enlightens the worried and confused. They are hungry for it.

Bible Society is one of the oldest mission agencies in the world, and we are always adjusting to the needs of our times. We are still finishing the job of Bible translation and provision. But we are also playing the role of championing the Bible, especially in Australian society where people can get hold of it, but they don't know why they should bother.

We know why it is worthwhile, because we see with our own eyes and in our own hearts the way that God's word turns lives around. Thanks for believing in this with us!

Dr Greg Clarke, CEO
Bible Society Australia

children's ministry in schools in places around the countryside, and supplying Bibles and Scripture resources.

"To always have a supply of Bibles – 4000km from Perth – was amazing," says Bill.

Bill says, "the Bible has always been at the heart of my ministry, in preaching and teaching and what I have to say to people when I visit them at home or in hospital or in the course of life."

There is nothing else really that I have to say – the only worthwhile thing is what I have to say from God's word."

Bill and Jocelyn count it a privilege to have supported the *Bible A Month* regular giving programme since its inception. Bill says it's encouraging to know that, "as small as our offering is able to be, a lot of Bibles have gone into a lot of hands."

Help move life forward for young refugees



Hayyan Chahoud dreams of being an engineer and going back to Syria, but his life is on hold in Lebanon.

On the fringes of a town north of Tripoli in Lebanon, Syrian refugees are huddled together in a refugee camp, trying to maintain hope and dignity in the face of boredom and despair.

A chilly breeze blows from the distant snow-covered mountains over the camp, which houses about 1100 refugees in about 350 densely packed tents.

It's ramshackle and messy, but this has been home for up to five years for these 250 families, most of whom fled their city after seeing their homes destroyed in the armed conflict.

Having fled the war, they are living in limbo – unable to work legally in Lebanon but unable to return home until the situation is stable. There is a sense that everyone is waiting, waiting – but for what?

As women in headscarves sit at the doorways of their sturdy UNICEF tents, the narrow alleyways teem with children.

The younger children are taken to nearby schools in minibuses but the **teenagers don't attend school so kill time by chasing a soccer ball or playing war games on wasteland nearby.**

Many of the teenage boys are forced to work in the nearby

market gardens or in construction in town to supplement their family's income.

These are the lost youth of Syria, a generation stripped of childhood and forced to abandon education in the horrors of war.

At an age when youth in other parts of the world are expanding their horizons through learning, life is frustratingly on hold for these teenagers.

Fifteen-year-old Abed el-Ilah and 13-year-old Hayyan Chahoud have lost their parents. Their father died in Lebanon from cancer; their mother died in Syria from a heart attack.

Abed is haunted by memories of their uncle, captured, tortured and killed in Syria.

"There was a lot of suffering in my heart," he says with a bleak stare. "I saw a lot of people dead and suffering because of the war. It was so hard for me to see all this."

Abed and Hayyan do not attend school but they dream of a better life in the future.

"I would like to be a builder," says Abed. "I want to work and do something more important with my life."

Hayyan was a small child when a tank destroyed the family home, but he shares his brother's

Life on **II** old



Playing with a guitar brings moments of joy that lift the spirits.



Syrian refugee Akram*, 12, in his tent, dreams of being a doctor.

\$48 will teach a young refugee to read in a Bible-based literacy class.

\$84 will equip 12 literacy students with Scripture to help life move forward again.

\$126 provides Scripture and practical aid to Iraqi and Syrian refugees.

dream of going back to Syria and rebuilding their house.

“I am not working now, but my dream is to be an engineer one day,” he says.

Everyday life in the camp is not easy. Medical care and even powdered milk is in short supply. Many mothers, says the camp chief, cannot afford to treat their children. “When their children cry, they cry,” he says.

He wishes he could do more to help the refugees in his care. He is delighted that Bible Society in Lebanon is ready to start literacy classes in the camp to teach illiterate teens to read and write.

As well as acquiring vital skills, they will meet Jesus because in every lesson they will learn to read

from the Bible.

“This project will help the children study here in the camps. It will prepare them for a better future back in Syria. Education is a light in life. It will increase the creativity in their lives,” he says.

Bible Society in Lebanon aims to teach 6000 young refugees to read and write over the next three years.

“Because this is a biblical literacy programme, the other goal is to give them the truth

through the word of God,” says Joe Eid, Programmes Coordinator, Bible Society of Lebanon.

Please, will you help young refugees to restart their lives by teaching them to read God’s word? Your gift will also bring Bible storytelling to camps in Lebanon, distribute Scripture booklets to children, and provide Bibles and practical help to Syrian and Iraqi refugees.

**Name changed for security.*

GIVE NOW

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



Devotion

Suddenly, your prayer will be answered



Pixabay / TheVirtualDenise

I foretold the former things long ago, my mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. Isaiah 48:3

When my grandfather died recently at the grand age of 94, his death notice in the local newspaper informed readers that he passed away “suddenly, but not unexpectedly.” This phrase grabbed my attention. At first I thought it to be an oxymoron. Yet the more I pondered it, I realised that “suddenly, but not unexpectedly” is often the

way God operates in our lives. You might have experienced this yourself: God speaks to us through his word, this creates faith and expectation, and then for the longest time it seems as if nothing happens! It’s like a seed that is dormant in the soil. God teaches us to value his blessings by making us wait for them in persistent prayer and expectation before he gives them. Then, suddenly he acts and performs his word. To doubters, it may be a coincidence. To bystanders it may well be unexpected; but to the one standing in faith,

although it comes suddenly, it is not unexpected because faith awakened by God’s word created expectation. We see it in the Bible: the disciples in the upper room were in one accord waiting for what Jesus had promised – and then, suddenly ... ! What happened for the disciples can also happen for us: suddenly the word will come to pass. Suddenly the promise will be fulfilled. Suddenly provision will come. Suddenly the prayers will be answered. Suddenly, but not unexpectedly.

Lars Halvorsen, Senior Pastor of C3 Church, Darwin.

Bible at the front line



CEO of the Bible Society Greg Clarke presents Chief of Army Angus Campbell with the new-look camouflage Army Bible.

CPL Julie Whitwell

Soldiers in the Australian Army can now “put on the full armour of God” by carrying the brand-new waterproof New Testament in their pocket or their webbing (belt kits and slings that hold ammunition and other vital kit).

This means that when they put their lives on the line in service of their country, they have the words of eternal life close to their hearts.

Every new soldier who joins the defence force is offered a copy of this new edition of the Army New Testament, containing pictures of soldiers in action, a message from the Chief of the Army and an overview of the main



message of the Bible by Roger Marsh, coordinating chaplain at the Kapooka Army Recruit Training Centre near Wagga Wagga in NSW.

“We find that they are readily taken and so pretty much a New Testament is placed into the hands of every soldier in the Australian Army,” says Martin de Pyle, Senior Staff Chaplain at Army Headquarters in Canberra, who was involved in creating the new edition.

“The chaplains of the defence force are incredibly grateful to the Bible Society for the provision of these resources, which we believe to be the most important resource that any soldier,

man or woman, in any of the services can have.”

Bible Society also distributes a special waterproof New Testament for the RAAF as well as supplying full Bibles to the armed forces and other frontline chaplains through its Scripture grants programme.

Rochelle Wainwright is a hospital chaplain who loves being able to give out the Bibles she receives from Bible Society.

In her two days a week at the Children’s Hospital, Westmead and three days at Allowah Presbyterian Hospital in Sydney, she knows that God can be with families even when she can’t.

“I can underline the passages so that in the middle of the night



Rochelle Wainwright



Hannah Johnson



Edwina Soh

when they can't sleep, they can hold on to that psalm and they can find comfort in their anxiety ... I can't be there in the middle of the night, but God can.

"I can't have families putting their hope in me and my visit because I'm human and I can't be there every day. **My role is to point them to God, who will always be there.**

"If a family can feel like God is speaking to them, God who created the world is speaking to them in their suffering, that is the best that we can bring to families – God and his word, not ourselves."

Hannah Johnson of Sports Chaplaincy Australia is another frontline chaplain who is grateful

to have the word of God available to remind athletes that their value as an athlete has nothing to do with their purpose.

"The reason I do it is I see the need for our athletes to be seen as people, not just performers," she says.

"So if I come alongside them and journey with them – and hopefully do my best to reflect Christ's love to them – they will come to know that they are more than a performer and that they can go after their dreams but with an understanding of who they

actually are in Christ."

Edwina Soh loves leading Bible study at Presbyterian Ladies' College, Sydney, knowing she is working in a mission field of eternal worth.

"There are a lot of kids who don't know Jesus. What an opportunity!"

Will you help put Bibles into the hands of chaplains in the armed forces as well as in other frontline ministries right across our land?

(Your donations to ADF chaplains are tax-deductible.)

WILL YOU HELP?

Please call **1300 Bibles** (1300 242 537) or visit **biblesociety.org.au/sowchaplain**

A man with a beard and dark hair is wearing a headset with a microphone. He is looking down and to the left. He is wearing a black t-shirt with a white graphic. The background is a room with colorful, draped fabric. There is a red velvet curtain in the foreground, and a blue and white striped fabric hanging from the top. The lighting is soft and even.

Final miracle brings Indigenous recording home

Naphtali “Tjilya” Scobie records the words of Jesus in the Gospels of Mark and Luke.

The Pitjantjatjara New Testament audio recording is finally a reality, allowing the word to go out in audio format among the Pitjantjatjara people of Central Australia. This recording will now be mastered with sound effects and musical backgrounds and should be released later this year. The final recording session was the voice of Peter read by Pastor Phillip Wilyuka from Titjikala, at 9:45 on the Thursday night before Easter.

Recording had been tight during the last weeks with key people called away to funerals and a looming deadline for Dan and Kay Finley (the team from Faith Comes By Hearing) to return to the US, but God had a miracle waiting.

“During final proofing, we found two lines had been accidentally deleted from the narration of Acts, but Deborah, who read it, had returned to her home nearly 500km away some weeks before,” reveals Paul Eckert, Bible Society’s long-serving Production Coordinator in Remote and Indigenous Ministry Support. “I rang her to see if she could return but she was looking after her sick mother and unwell herself.

“However, on the last day of proofing, I received a phone call

from her from the Alice Springs airport – she’d come in on the Flying Doctor escorting her mother for an operation. So she was able to redo those missing lines. We praise God for taking care of so many details during the 18 weeks it took to do this huge task. It’s hard to believe it’s finished.”

After completing the first half of the audio recording in Adelaide last year, recording resumed in Alice Springs in late January. The recording involved more than 50 Pitjantjatjara people reading different biblical characters.

Ann Eckert, former Bible Society and Wycliffe Bible Translator, joined her husband Paul in Alice Springs coordinating the household for the team and readers and writing progress reports.

“One thing that saddens us is how many excellent readers now struggle with fluency having been compromised by ill health,” she wrote in week three. “Yet they are the senior ones whose voices will be respected.”

In early March, she expressed her appreciation for the “fine Aboriginal Christian people in this recording project.

“The readers report that the

words they record are also helping them and encouraging them in their walk with Christ.”

By March 16, it’s clear that completion of the recording “rests on the shoulders of Pitjantjatjara men exclusively as all of the parts women could do have been completed.” The week of March 23 was discouraging, with readers of Peter’s words and Satan’s words delayed by funerals.

“Dan and Kay will have to extend their stay and adjust their flights by six days.

“As we approach Easter, the health of our dear co-translator of 28 years fails ... she has now entered into the next phase of eternal life. But oh, how we shall miss her ... She had finished her race and had remained faithful.”



Makinti Minutjukur reads 2 Corinthians.



A sound foundation

Melissa Lipsett with children using Bible-based booklets that promote literacy at a school in South Africa

In a country of stark dichotomies, Bible Society is evening up the odds in early childhood literacy by donating attractive and engaging Bible-based literacy resources to those in dire need.

Children in South Africa's many extremely poor communities face significant challenges in education. Most attend daycare centres where they are not exposed to any reading or writing skills. Many of these children do

not have the privilege of attending the Reception Class (Grade R) before formal school, and so they are already behind when beginning school. This contributes to the more than 80 per cent of South African children who do not reach the highest levels of school.

Melissa Lipsett, Bible Society Australia's chief operating officer, supported the work in South Africa last year, and was overwhelmed by the needs of the people. "In my first time

in the country, I was terribly confronted by the level of poverty experienced in the coloured and black townships. I was desperately disturbed by the inequalities I saw – wealthy suburbs immediately adjacent to squatter communities, where people were shockingly impoverished. And in those impoverished



communities, teachers were desperate for resources.”

At schools in these communities, Melissa observed that each classroom had very large numbers of children. It was not unusual to see one teacher with 40 children in a class. The teachers were dedicated and passionate but restricted by the lack of resources.

It is into this environment that Bible Society is supplying Bible-based literacy resources, free of charge, to schools and daycare centres. The goal is to promote basic literacy as well as Bible literacy among underprivileged preschool children, helping them to reach a sounder level of education when they start schooling. The resources include posters, flash cards, children’s booklets and teachers’ manuals.

Commenting on the teachers’ reactions, Melissa says, “The fact that Bible Society is providing first and second Bible readers to every child in every class was remarkable to them. **Despite the large numbers in each classroom, every child was able to receive their own booklet.**”

Melissa recalls one daycare centre in Cape Town. Originally developed on a rubbish tip, the impoverished community was relocated by the government into

an isolated, barren wasteland. An Afrikaans woman in the community started a daycare centre on site, so that children under school age had somewhere to go during the day. Every child attending this centre has received a Bible-based literacy booklet from Bible Society, and is being taught literacy.

“The resources themselves are beautiful!” says Melissa. “Very user-friendly and currently available in 12 languages, including English. This means that the children can become entirely fluent in their own tongue, and that the teachers can use a resource with a couple of different languages simultaneously.”

The potential and impact of this project is many faceted. As Melissa acknowledges, **“education is the best thing we can do for impoverished communities, to help them break out of the cycle of poverty.” This project is also introducing the Bible to young children.**

Melissa points out that South Africa is still much more openly Christian than Australia, and there is very good acceptance of this resource in government, as well as in the schools. It has received high accolades among education specialists, while also providing schools with the Scriptures.



Every child at Bluewater Bay Daycare is given a Bible reader.

GIVE NOW

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

Celebrating 200 years!

Bible Society Australia in 2017

 GET MORE DETAIL ONLINE
<http://biblesociety.org.au/sow2017>

2017 was a successful year in which God's Word was translated and distributed worldwide. As we celebrated 200 years of Bible Society work in Australia, people engaged with the Bible, and awareness of the Bible and its life-changing message was elevated.



AROUND THE WORLD

CHINA: BIBLE DISTRIBUTION



620 000

Bibles for China's Millions

EGYPT: LITERACY

8 500 STUDENTS



participated in
Bible based
literacy classes

CAMEROON: BIBLE-BASED TRAUMA HEALING PROGRAMME

1200

 **young women**
learnt at least 5 income
generating activities

SOUTH AFRICA: 'IF YOU CAN READ YOU CAN LEARN'



62 000

kids developed
literacy skills using Bible
based resources

MONGOLIA: BIBLE DISTRIBUTION



VAN

purchased to deliver
20 000 BIBLES

CAMBODIA AND LAOS: LEARNING THROUGH LITERACY

600+

Bible Based
literacy classes
with **7 000+**
participants



NICARAGUA: HOPE AND SMILE FOR CHILDREN WITH CANCER



33 900+

Bible portions for outpatient
clinic children & their families

33

INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

IN 23 COUNTRIES



AROUND AUSTRALIA

KOORONG + BIBLE DISTRIBUTION

500 000
Bible and Scripture portions distributed

MASTERCLASS YOUTH EVENTS

2 089
students attended

REMOTE AND INDIGENOUS MINISTRY SUPPORT

Distribution of 1000+
English & Indigenous language Bibles

7 250+
Children's Bible resources

SCRIPTURE GRANTS

137 500
FREE SCRIPTURES & RESOURCES
distributed to schools, chaplains in prisons, detention centres & hospitals



BICENTENARY EVENTS

National celebration of the Bible reached
100 000+
people Australia wide

PUBLISHING

20 publications completed including

2017 Christian Book of the Year
Our Mob, God's Story: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists share their faith

Australia-wide bestseller
Mr Eternity: The Story of Arthur Stace

ETERNITY NEWS

Each month reaches
300 000
people in print and
250 000
people digitally

CENTRE FOR PUBLIC CHRISTIANITY (CPX)

208 public talks
34 mainstream media articles
84 000+ podcast downloads

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES CONFERENCE HELD IN SYDNEY

208 delegates from
90 countries

SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

6 000 PEOPLE participated in Easter and Christmas text message campaigns

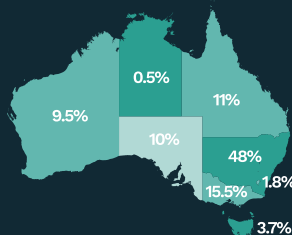
250 000+ copies of 'Really Good News of Christmas' given away

FINANCIALS

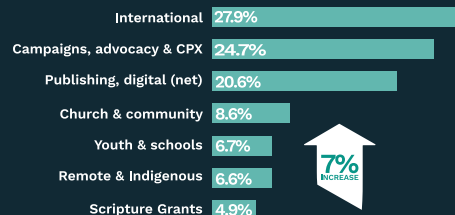
TOTAL DONATIONS & BEQUESTS

\$10.6 million
74 CENTS
of each dollar raised supported mission

DONATIONS BY STATE



MISSION EXPENDITURE: \$7.8 million



GROWTH & GOVERNANCE EXPENDITURE: \$1.8million

21% INCREASE
COMPARED TO 3 YEAR AVERAGE
WE'RE INVESTING TO DO MORE!

FUNDRAISING AND PROMOTION EXPENDITURE: \$4.5 million

26% INCREASE
COMPARED TO 3 YEAR AVERAGE
BUT IT'S HARD WORK!



“A wonderland of all things Christian”: there are books for every taste at Koorong’s flagship store in West Ryde, Sydney

A slice of bookworm heaven

As Koorong turns 40 this month, Kylie Beach recalls growing up with a place that seemed to be a little slice of heaven on earth.

For a church kid who loved to read more than anything, a visit to Koorong felt like the Christian equivalent of being asked to fetch something from the teacher’s craft storeroom – each seemed a wonderland of abundance.

But at Koorong, instead of coloured paper, paint bottles and pipe-cleaners, I encountered an abundance of Bibles, devotionals,

Christian novels, theological resources and Christian living titles. What more could a bookworm church kid want?

I could spend hours standing in front of Koorong’s immense wall of Bibles. Could I find the translation I wanted, with the annotation I needed and a cover that I loved? Was it better to get a conservative-styled Bible that had parallel translations and a comprehensive index? Or should I get the cool new one tailored for tweens? Could I convince my mum to buy me a Bible case with

a zip that went all the way around so that I didn’t keep losing my pen between the car and church?

At Koorong, there seemed to be a book on every topic, with the wisdom of the Christian community through the ages collected in one room.

I left the store with books on prayer, sharing my faith, and friendship. Sometimes I took home the writings of church fathers and medieval mystics. Other times, it was fiction or a biography that chronicled the extraordinary lives of people such

as Joni Eareckson Tada, Corrie Ten Boom or my faith hero, Adrian Plass, of *Sacred Diary* fame.

My mum also viewed Koorong as a wonderland of all things Christian, stocking up on cards, resources for new Christians, and kids' books for non-Christian friends' kids (in her suburban version of Bible smuggling).

Yet it was the devotional section that was my favourite.

I had always seen my parents working through devotionals, whether in their own quiet times or in Bible study groups. They were classic Australian Baptist types who read the Bible with a pencil in hand. And what better way to reflect on the Bible than with a devotional from Koorong?

As a teenager, I learned to pay attention to the Holy Spirit's nudge in my spirit, and then to head to Koorong to find a devotional that would guide me.

My mum told me that she regarded Koorong to be her “first line of defence” when she found herself lacking biblical understanding. As a young married woman, I followed her lead by finding books on how to be a good Christian wife, most of which curiously seemed to have pink and mauve covers. Now these purchases were a bit hit and miss but they taught me that the

Christian faith could be expressed in different, equally genuine ways, and that I could always learn something from a Christian, even if I didn't agree with them on everything.

In later years, when I worked as a college trainer at Hillsong, we continually ordered books from Koorong to be delivered to our office. Then, in late November, when most of our student body had headed home for the holidays, we would indulge ourselves with a trip to Koorong in person and during work hours.

I'd find that Koorong had lost none of its magic. Again, I'd lose hours in front of the wall of Bibles and get lost in the immense range of Christian living titles. I'd stock up on gifts for my kids, scour the shelves for academic resources, swing past the devotionals, before meeting my colleagues at the café to compare purchases.

When I recently heard that Koorong was turning 40, and that we are the same age, I realised that, even though it was just a bookstore, Koorong featured in my memory as if it were a wise, faithful character in a story.

And that's exactly what Koorong has been to me. A faithful, wise, small slice of bookworm heaven on earth.



Pixabay / Samueles

A labour of love



On an isolated island in the Pacific nation of Vanuatu, sisters Colinette and Annie Gaviga are completing the final draft of the New Testament in Hano, the language of the Raga people of Pentecost Island. Over 20 years in the making, the Hano translation project has spanned generations.

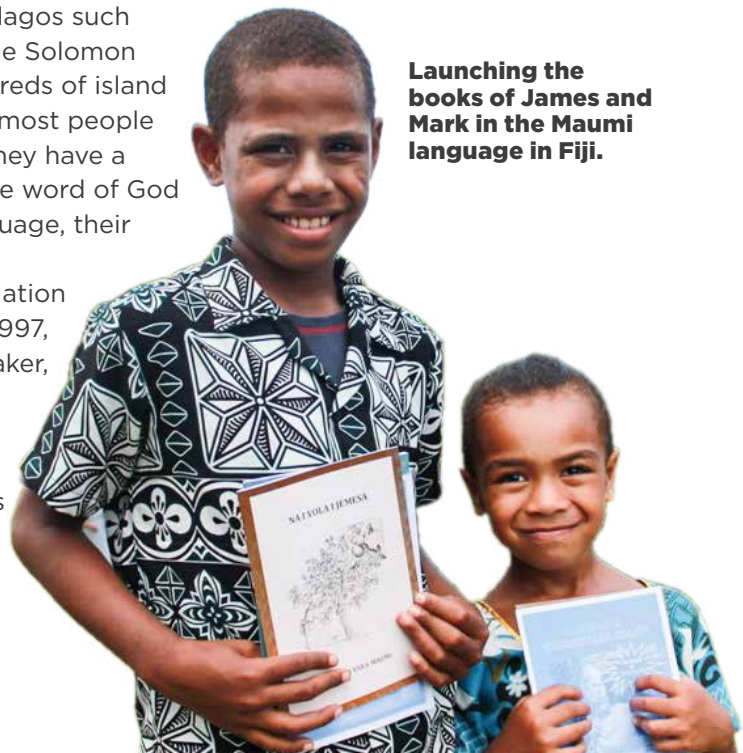
Bible Society is working in the South Pacific to encourage the spiritual life of the people, by providing Scripture translations and revisions as well as Scripture products throughout the South Pacific. The Bible Society of the South Pacific is the world's most complex Bible Society. Based in Fiji, it encompasses 16 Pacific Island nations. Some

of these nations, such as Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, have the full Bible. But archipelagos such as Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands have hundreds of island languages. While most people are multilingual, they have a deep desire for the word of God in their heart language, their everyday speech.

The Hano translation project began in 1997, when a Hano speaker, Mark Gaviga, approached John Harris, then Bible Society Australia's Director of Translation, about the possibility of a Hano Bible

translation project. John agreed and soon the Hano project began

Launching the books of James and Mark in the Maumi language in Fiji.





John Harris helps Annie and Colinette Gaviga check the last words of Revelation in Hano at the Bible Society office in Port Vila, Vanuatu. Daughters of Hano translator Mark Gaviga, they are continuing their father's work.

through the Bible Society of the South Pacific with John as the translation consultant.

That year, in the mountain village of Lavusi, Mark Gaviga, with John's help, began the Hano translation – eating, sleeping and translating in Mark's one-room house. Everything was handwritten in exercise books. Mark's little daughters, Colinette and Annie, were curious onlookers.

Many other small languages still lack Scriptures. Bible Societies struggle to support these remote projects.

Translators are voluntary and helped with only occasional visits by busy translation consultants. Theirs is often a difficult and

lonely task fitted in between tending their gardens and other village responsibilities.

Mark persisted as long as he could, and then help came from an unexpected source. His eldest daughter, Colinette, took over the task. As the New Testament neared completion, it needed to be keyboarded before a final consultant check. God's hand was evident here when Colinette's younger sister, Annie, began to work as a translation

clerk for the Bible Society in Vanuatu. There, in Port Vila, Annie was able to keyboard the whole text. John came out of retirement to go to Vanuatu to carry out the final check before printing. Three people who were there at the beginning in the little house in Lavusi came together to complete the work at the end.

Will you help us continue to translate the Bible into other small island languages in the South Pacific?

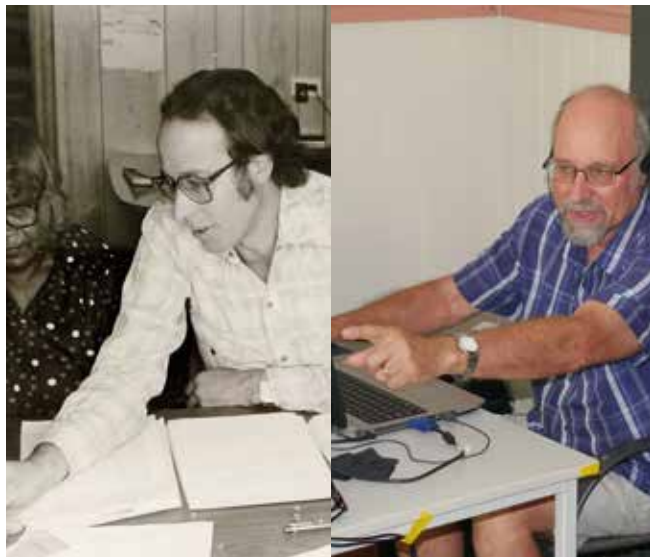
GIVE NOW

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



Bibles for Bubs

Hillmen Li and Zac Liang were delighted to receive a Bible storybook from Bible Society CEO Greg Clarke for their baby daughter, Evie. The Bibles for Bubs project is a five-year introduction to the Bible for nearly 2500 babies born in Bible Society's Bicentenary year (from January 1, 2017 to March 7, 2018). After receiving a Bible storybook, each child will receive a birthday card every year for five years, while the parent receives a guide with suggestions for fun activities and other ways to introduce their little ones to the Bible and nurture their faith. When the children turn five, they will receive a CEV Big Rescue Bible, which is a full Bible and designed to see them through their primary school years. Please pray for the families and all of the children receiving these Bibles, that this special gift kick-starts a lifelong passion for God's word.



Paul Eckert bids goodbye

Paul Eckert has spent almost 40 years overseeing the Pitjantjatjara Bible Project, translating the Bible into the Aboriginal language of Central Australia. In May, he hands over the reins of the project, as he retires. In his time with Bible Society, Paul and his wife, Ann, have seen the publication of the full New Testament in Pitjantjatjara, and recently completed an audio recording of the New Testament with Pitjantjatjara voices. The Old Testament translation is also well on its way. Paul spent many years living in Pukatja in the APY Lands of remote northwest South Australia with his family, working with local Christians on the translation. Translator Yanyi Bandicha said: "Wiru mulapa paluru palyanu. Ngayulu pulkara pukularinyi waarka wiru paluru palyanu." ("It really is wonderful what Paul has done for us. I'm overjoyed by this great work he has done.")



Good Book Talks

Why is it that the book that has shaped the world is so often left on the shelf? Bible Society Australia is presenting The Good Book Talks on topics that get to the heart of why the Bible is still relevant today. Far from being outdated, the Bible remains deeply embedded in Australian culture, ethics and the way we live our everyday lives. Highly engaging speakers including Greg Clarke and Justine Toh, above, will give talks in four locations to challenge our assumptions and deepen our understanding of the Bible. These talks are suitable for both doubters and those who are already persuaded that the Bible is as relevant today as it always was. Why not come along and bring that sceptical neighbour, friend or family member? Newcastle: August 8, Geelong: August 27, Sydney: August 30, Hobart: September 4. Visit biblesociety.org.au/thegoodbooktalks



The source made visible

A grand prize of a \$32,000 “Land of the Bible tour” for four, provided by Christian Fellowship Tours, goes to the winner of the Invisible Book competition, which encourages today’s storytellers to show the biblical ideas behind the great texts studied at school, especially Shakespeare. The one whose video tells it best will win a 17-day tour of Israel and Jordan, walking where Jesus walked and seeing significant places in the gospel stories. Christian Fellowship Tours is an Australian-owned family company that provides faith-based holidays for Christians. It has partnered with Bible Society to help make what has become an invisible book – the Bible – visible again to today’s young people. There’s still time for young filmmakers to get their short, fun video in before the competition closes on June 30. Find out more at theinvisiblebook.com.au

Prayer points

June – September 2018

June 3-9

Nicaragua: Please pray for peace and spiritual renewal in Nicaragua, following an outbreak of violence and lawlessness during protests against government changes to social insurance.

Australia – Koorong: Thank the Lord for four decades of Koorong! Australia's largest retailer of Christian books and media is turning 40 this week.

June 10-16

Australia – Centre for Public Christianity: As screenings continue of CPX's documentary *For the Love of God: how the church is better and worse than you ever imagined*, pray that it reaches those who need to hear the truth of the gospel.

China: Please pray that the huge demand for Bibles in China can be met, despite reports that Bibles are being removed from online stores and bookshops. Pray for Bible Society Australia's special appeal to maintain printing and distribution of Bibles in China.

June 17-23

Refugees: More than 80 per cent of the world's refugee population is found in developing countries. Please pray for these countries including Pakistan, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Kenya and Ethiopia.

Cuba: Please pray for Cuba's newly elected president, Miguel Diaz-Canel, and for positive change in one of the world's most oppressive regimes.

June 24-30

Sudan: Please pray for Christians in Sudan who

face intense oppression and persecution. Pray for protection and opportunities to share the Bible. Pray also for church leaders to stand strong amid pressure that extremists place on their churches.

Syria: Please pray for a peaceful solution to the Syrian civil war. Pray that innocent civilians suffer no more and those affected find healing in God's word.

July 1-7

Australia – Mission: Bible Society Australia has partnered with the United Evangelistic Council to create *Ignition*, a resource to fund and equip evangelistic youth events across Australia. Please pray for wisdom for those involved.

India: Pray that every Bible reaches its destination and those who need it. Pray also for the government of India and for laws to be changed to allow Bibles to be delivered in all states.

July 8-14

Algeria: Please pray for persecuted Christians in Algeria where even casual conversations about faith can be grounds for blasphemy charges.

Egypt: Praise God that despite persecution, Christians in Egypt remain unwavering in their faith, compelling a "multitude" to come to Christ.

July 15-21

Iran: Pray for the growing Christian community in Iran, that they would be allowed to share their faith and the Bible openly. Many Christians have been prosecuted and sentenced to lengthy jail terms in Iran, with others awaiting trial.

Australia – Content and Publishing: Please pray for Catherine Fuertes, who has recently begun the task of coordinating Bible production for BSA. Pray that the Scriptures she arranges to publish and print will be effective in spreading the message of Jesus.

July 22-28

Vietnam: Please pray for Christians in Vietnam who have limited access to the Bible. Since there is no Bible printing in Vietnam, many Christians have little knowledge of the truths of the gospel.

Kyrgyzstan: Give thanks that the Bible Society of Kyrgyzstan received its licence as a religious organization in March, allow them to continue ministry in Kyrgyzstan and open new opportunities.

July 29-August 4

Australia – Church Relations: Following a meeting with Bishop Daniel of Sydney’s Coptic Church, pray for a closer friendship between Bible Society Australia and the Australian Coptic Movement.

Namibia: Praise God for a newly translated version of the *Khoekhoegowab* Bible, 14 years in the making. The new version, replacing the 1966 edition, is more consistent with the language being used in Namibian schools.

August 5-11

Australia – Church Relations: Please pray that the day-to-day efforts of our teams will bear fruit. Pray that many more churches will welcome Bible Society Australia as we seek to serve all denominations in the furtherance of his kingdom.

Romania: Please pray for the Inter-confessional Bible Society of Romania as it works with parents of Down syndrome children. Pray that God’s word will provide encouragement, direction and comfort.

August 12-18

Congo: Please pray for Bible-based trauma healing programmes for abused women in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Pray for those being trained to lead the programmes, which incorporate biblical wisdom with best practices in mental health.

Australia – Events: Please pray that the many Thank You events staged by Bible Society Australia will be well supported.

August 19-25

Netherlands: Praise God that the Bible has recently been voted the most important book for the people of the Netherlands. Pray for the readers of a Christian magazine for children called *A/ef* and for *BibleBasics*, a new Dutch Sunday school programme.

Ghana: Please pray for the Bible translation project in Abron, also known as Bono. Pray for preparations towards a World Assembly to be hosted by Bible Society of Ghana in 2022.

August 26-September 1

Australia – Content & Publishing: Please pray for *Character Reborn* by James Pietsch, published by Acorn Press this month. It challenges Christian educators to consider how they might share the good news of Jesus with the wider community.

Puerto Rico: Please pray for a fiscal plan to cut debt, prevent austerity and reduce child poverty in Puerto Rico. San Juan’s Catholic Archbishop and the Puerto Rico Evangelical Bible Society leader are lobbying for a kingdom-focused plan.

September 2-8

Australia – Mission: Please pray for our Literacy for Women in Africa project. Bible Society Australia is part of a collaborative project to bring Bible-based literacy to women from ethnic minorities in Malawi, Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

North Korea: Please pray for the Christian church to persevere and multiply amid persecution from the North Korean regime. Pray also for the spreading of God’s truth through Bibles, radio and returning refugees.



Refugees: God's Concern

By Justin Whelan



The Body of Christ, God's Team

By Tim Argall



There is More!

By John Kelly



Education in the Resurrection Age

By James Pietsch

Week One

JUN 3 – JUN 9

SUN 3 Ps 137:1
MON 4 Exod 23:9
TUE 5 Heb 13:2
WED 6 Ps 146:9
THUR 7 Gen 21:9-10
FRI 8 Matt 2:13-15a
SAT 9 Isa 56:3a, 6-7

Week Three

JUN 17 – JUN 23

SUN 17 Matt 14:22-33
MON 18 Josh 6:1-20
TUE 19 Heb 11:24-27
WED 20 Neh 1:1-11
THUR 21 Gen 45:1-7, 12-14
FRI 22 1 Tim 4:4-16
SAT 23 Dan 6:16-28

Week Five

JUL 1 – JUL 7

SUN 1 Eph 3:20-21
MON 2 Gen 37:9-10
TUE 3 Job 11:7-9
WED 4 Mark 10:29-31
THUR 5 Mark 9:22-24
FRI 6 Prov 18:21
SAT 7 Jer 1:9-10

Week Seven

JUL 15 – JUL 21

SUN 15 Matt 11:4-6
MON 16 John 11:21-27
TUE 17 Acts 23:6-8
WED 18 Rom 6:5-8
THUR 19 1 Cor 15:3-5
FRI 20 2 Cor 5:16-21
SAT 21 Eph 2:4-6

Week Two

JUN 10 – JUN 16

SUN 10 Luke 10:29
MON 11 Ruth 2:10
TUE 12 Luke 17:18
WED 13 Ezek 22:7
THUR 14 Matt 25:35,43
FRI 15 Rom 5:8
SAT 16 2 Cor 5:20

Week Four

JUN 24 – JUN 30

SUN 24 1 Tim 1:12-17
MON 25 Luke 5:1-11
TUE 26 John 3:22-36
WED 27 Acts 15:30-41
THUR 28 Luke 23:32-43
FRI 29 Jer 51:15-17
SAT 30 Mark 1:9-19

Week Six

JUL 8 – JUL 14

SUN 8 Matt 18:3-4
MON 9 Acts 16:1-3
TUE 10 John 16:33
WED 11 2 Cor 4:16-17
THUR 12 Isa 43:18-29
FRI 13 Ps 78:5-7
SAT 14 Eph 2:4-7

Week Eight

JUL 22 – JUL 28

SUN 22 Col 1:15-18
MON 23 Col 3:1-3
TUE 24 Col 3:12-14
WED 25 1 Pet 2:9-10
THUR 26 2 Pet 1:5-7
FRI 27 Rev 21:3-5
SAT 28 1 Cor 13:8-13

How we treat refugees and vulnerable foreigners is never far from the centre of God's concern. It's also a perennial debate in Australia. In this series we go beyond the classic texts to delve deeper into the heart of God's desire for how we treat those who come to us seeking safety, and for how we define who is "in" and "out" of our society.

As the drama of the FIFA World Cup unfolds across Russia, Tim Argall explores the notion that a winning team requires players with different abilities, skills, attitudes and approaches. Building on Paul's picture of the church in 1 Cor 12:21-31, this series explores how God's "team" is blessed by the role of each player.

These Bible devotions follow the theme of the Hillsong conference in Sydney from July 10-13. God has more for us than we could ever imagine, and these passages from the Bible, together with reflections based on the new book by Brian Houston, Hillsong's Global Senior Pastor, explore what God has for those who follow him.

Many of us are engaged in teaching, nurturing and supporting those around us. How do we go about this task? Is there something that goes beyond just imparting information to transform the whole character? In the New Testament we find many descriptions of the character virtues that we are to "put on," as a means of becoming people of the new creation.



Pilgrim Theology: The Psalms of Ascents

By Melinda Cousins



"Grow Up"

By Ben McEachen



The Bible and Literacy

By Roy Williams

Justin Whelan is an education manager, Asylum Seeker Resource centre.

Tim Argall is a soccer player and coach for 30 years at community, representative and elite levels.

John Kelly is a graduate of Hillsong College and prepares small group study materials for discipleship and fellowship programmes for Hillsong Australia.

James Pietsch is the Principal at Inaburra School in Sydney, and author of *Educating for the Kingdom*.

Melinda Cousins is a Baptist pastor and Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at Tabor Bible College.

Ben McEachen is a graduate of Moore Theological College and deputy editor of Eternity News.

Roy Williams is a lawyer and author. He has written two bestsellers: *God, Actually* (2008) and *Mr Eternity: The Story of Arthur Stace* (2017).

Week Nine JUL 29 – AUG 4

SUN 29 Ps 120:5-7
MON 30 Ps 121:5-7
TUE 31 Ps 122:1-3
WED 1 Ps 123:1-3
THUR 2 Ps 124:6-8
FRI 3 Ps 125:4-5
SAT 4 Ps 126:4-6

Week Eleven AUG 12 – AUG 18

SUN 12 Eph 4:11-16
MON 13 Matt 8:23-27
TUE 14 Prov 27:17
WED 15 1 Cor 3:1-3
THUR 16 Heb 5:11-14
FRI 17 Heb 6:1-6
SAT 18 Rom 15:1-5

Week Thirteen AUG 26 – SEP 1

SUN 26 John 1:1-2
MON 27 Deut 31:24-26
TUE 28 Ezra 7:10
WED 29 Isa 53:3
THUR 30 Dan 5:12
FRI 31 Luke 1:1-4
SAT 1 Luke 4:16-17

Week Ten AUG 5 – AUG 11

SUN 5 Ps 127:1-2
MON 6 Ps 128:4-6
TUE 7 Ps 129:2-4
WED 8 Ps 130:2-4
THUR 9 Ps 131:1-3
FRI 10 Ps 132:13-15
SAT 11 Ps 133:1, 134:1-2

Week Twelve AUG 19 – AUG 25

SUN 19 Luke 8:11-15
MON 20 Phil 2:12-16
TUE 21 Acts 6:4-5
WED 22 1 Cor 14:20
THUR 23 2 Pet 3:14-18
FRI 24 Col 1:9-14
SAT 25 Heb 10:19-25

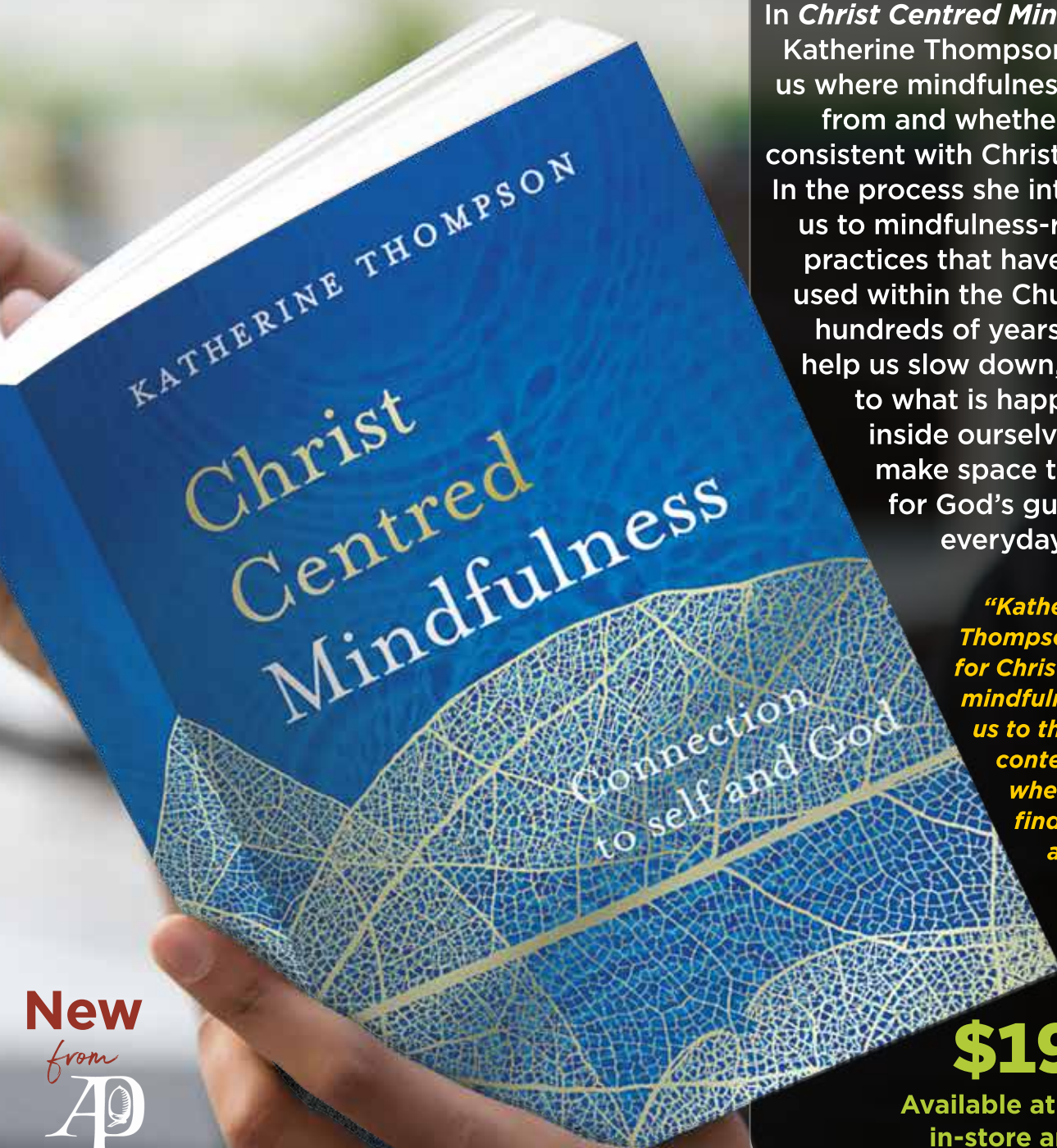
Week Fourteen SEP 2 – SEPT 8

SUN 2 John 8:8
MON 3 John 19:19-22
TUE 4 Acts 8:27-28
WED 5 Col 4:16
THUR 6 Rom 2:14-15
FRI 7 Rev 20:15
SAT 8 2 Tim 3:16

Psalms 120-134 seek to redefine our identity as members of the pilgrim community, anticipating where God is taking us and experiencing the full range of life experiences and relationships along the way. And they invite us again into relationship with the God who is present in every part of the journey and yet drawing us ever onwards in Christ.

A lot of emphasis is placed on making the leap from childhood to being an adult. The Christian faith also shares this element of maturing and developing. A steady yet sometimes overlooked part of our Christian faith is "growing up" – and it's not just a solo pursuit. Christians are called to help each other in maturity – a lovely feature of the family of Jesus Christ that should encourage us all.

The reading and contemplation of God's word is a vital aspect of worship for all Christians. Today, the Bible has been translated into thousands of everyday languages. This has been a key step in taking Christianity to all nations of the world, just as Jesus commanded (Matt 28:19). Through reading God's word in their "heart language," many have come to know God.



In *Christ Centred Mindfulness*, Katherine Thompson shows us where mindfulness comes from and whether it is consistent with Christian faith. In the process she introduces us to mindfulness-related practices that have been used within the Church for hundreds of years which help us slow down, connect to what is happening inside ourselves and make space to listen for God's guiding in everyday life.

"Katherine Thompson's call for Christ-centred mindfulness leads us to the place of contemplation where we can find ourselves and God"
- Tim Costello

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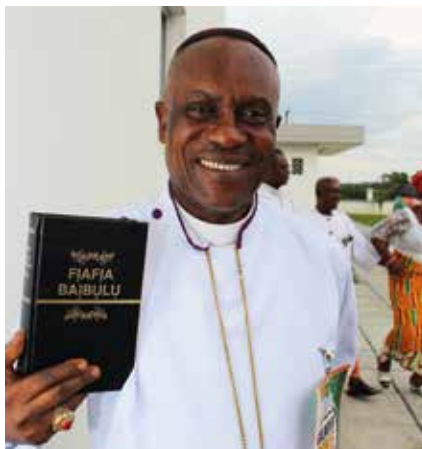
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Bible Societies around the world



His word speaks!

George of the Syrian Bible Society in Aleppo thanks you for your generous gifts to continue Children's Scripture Distribution despite the war. Rita rejoiced when her children came home from church with Bibles. "We might have lost our homes and hometowns, but we haven't lost our faith and the Bible Society team continue to surprise us with the most beautiful Scriptures that continue speaking to our hearts."



Joy at Nigerian Bibles

Two people groups in Rivers State in southern Nigeria recently received their first Bibles. Kalabari speakers danced and sang as the first Bible in their language was launched. "Today I am the happiest Kalabari person!" said the African Church Archbishop of Rivers Province, D. B. Kaladokubo, above. Meanwhile, the Okrika community rejoiced at the dedication of their long-awaited Okrika Bible.



Cuba conclave

Havana, Cuba, is the venue for the annual Roundtable Exchange of United Bible Societies, in July. A riot of colour, Havana is a great contrast to Sydney, which hosted the event last year. But the priorities will be the same – how to harness technology and collaboration to ensure that one day all people can have the opportunity to meaningfully access Scripture.

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(tax-deductible*) 18SWW2TD

☐ South African Kids Literacy
(tax-deductible*) 18SWW3TD

☐ **Where needed most**
(tax-deductible*) 18SWWGENTD

☐ Iraq and Lebanon – Scripture & Aid
(non-tax-deductible) 18SWWINTD

☐ Australian Chaplains (Others)
(non-tax-deductible) 18SWW2NTD

☐ South Pacific Translation
(non-tax-deductible) 18SWW3NTD

☐ **Where needed most**
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