

BICENTENARY YEAR **WINTER 2017**

# SOWER



Jon Love

**Help at-risk women  
escape exploitation  
in Cameroon**



**BIBLE  
SOCIETY**  
Live light

# Surprise result of a brave man's final wish



Thank you

Lawrie Miles on his birthday last year.

Photo supplied

**B**ible Society's bequests manager David Martin had a surprise recently when he heard the specific terms of a supporter's will, written 11 years ago.

Lawrie Miles, who died earlier this year, **left his entire estate to Bible Society for the purpose of buying Gospels of Luke** to be distributed throughout Melbourne, Sydney and Hobart.

"How on earth are we going to fulfil that?" thought David.

But God's hand was at work because thousands of Gospels of Luke had been printed for distribution during Bible Society's Bicentennial year. So as soon as probate is granted, Bible Society will be able to carry out Lawrie's last wishes to the letter.

Lawrie Miles came to faith many years ago at a Baptist church in Perth while he was serving in the RAAF, and he then

shared his conversion experience with his younger brother, Ray.

"I'd been reading the New Testament quite a bit," says Ray, 65, who is now based in Newcastle, New South Wales..

"I'd start at Matthew and the furthest I ever got was into Romans but that was pretty heavy-going for an unbeliever."

But through hearing Lawrie's testimony, Ray suddenly understood what he had been reading.

**"It all fell into place. It became real to me and it was like I was actually at the foot of the cross at Calvary.** And when it all dawned on me - I'm sure it was of God's spirit - all of a sudden you realise that you're one with the Creator God, you're a child of his and you're walking around almost in a daze and looking at trees and thinking that 'God created all this and me as well.'"

Ray, who with his wife Lynne is a long-time supporter of Bible Society, remembers his brother as a passionate evangelist.

"He used to drive taxicabs in Brisbane and if you had the unfortunate pleasure of being his passenger he was a bit maniacal. **He used to drive with one hand on the wheel and have a New Testament in the other** and he would be reading and driving."

Although the brothers lost touch after Lawrie moved to Rockhampton, Ray has a proud memory of his older brother's bravery. When he was aged 17, he risked his life to rescue a younger cousin from drowning in the Church Bank Weir at Ipswich.

Lawrie had recently been in ill health and had suffered two strokes. Bible Society is very grateful for the generous bequest of this brave child of God.

## Dear friends,

**A**ustralians really do have it good. Not all of us, I know, but many of us. Compared to the rest of the world, we have a nation that respects the rule of law, believes in healthcare and basic education for all, and has managed to surf the economic wave incredibly well for the past 30 years. What's more, religious freedom is valued here, even if we have scuffles around specific issues. No one is locking us up for going to church and speaking about Jesus. May it ever be that way.

**One of the reasons things are good here is the Bible itself.** The teachings of Scripture have pervaded our society over two centuries, and we are the beneficiaries. Wherever it goes, the Bible helps to shape not just individuals but societies. It shapes families, community attitudes, workplace conditions, tax systems, legal systems.

So if a nation hasn't had the Scriptures, it is no surprise that it may not have had some of its benefits. Our work in translation, literacy and the new area of trauma healing aims to give



individuals the blessings of God's word. But the benefits don't stop with the person who hears the word. They overflow into social and community structures, changing priorities, elevating virtues and opposing wrongs.

Can you help us with this effort to circulate God's word in new places, to people who haven't yet experienced its benefits?

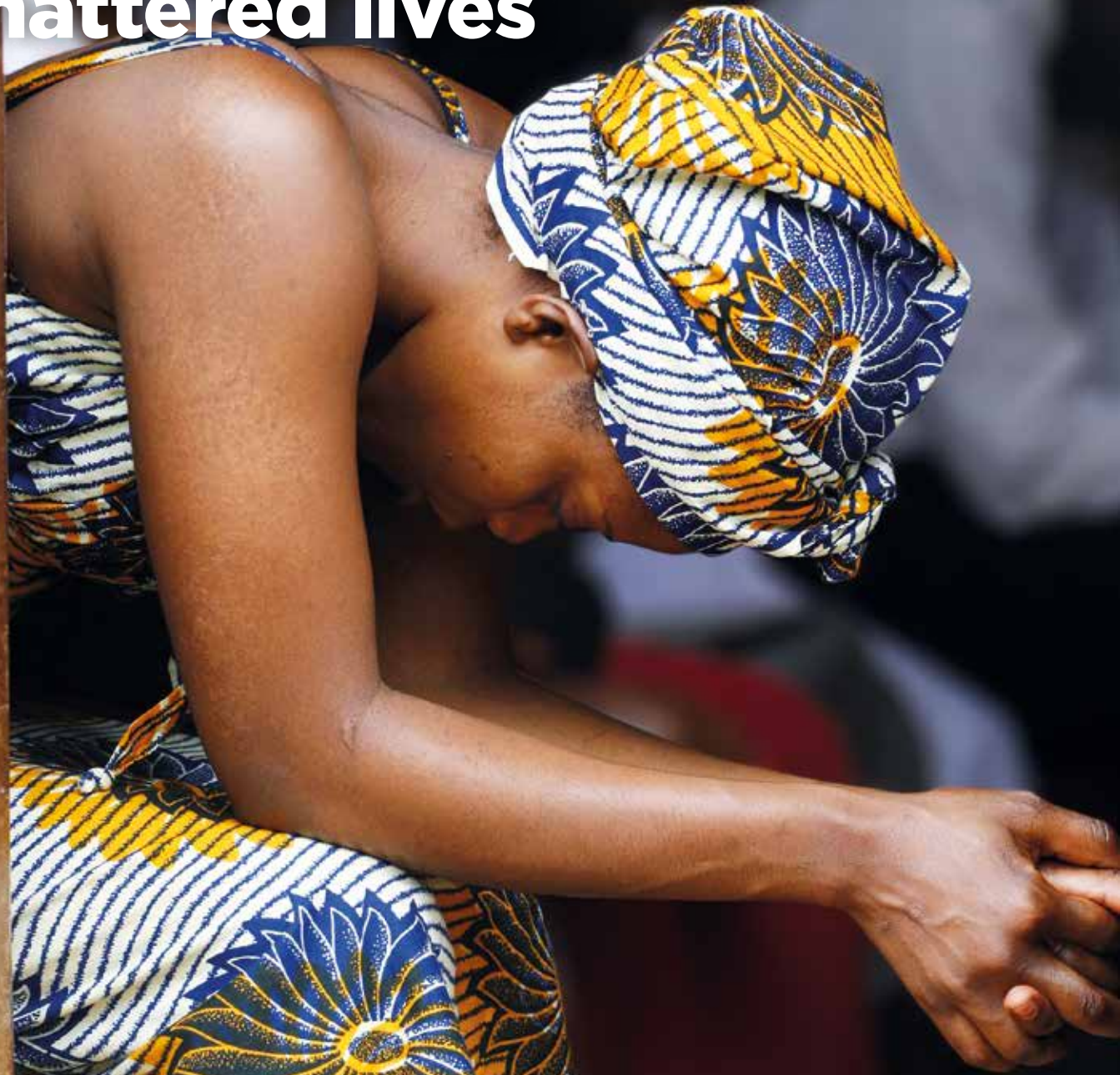
Of course, everything I have claimed about Australian advantages has to be rethought when we consider our indigenous peoples. Some of those advantages have come at a severe cost to them: dispossession, destruction of cultures, and introduction of disease and disaster. We have an even greater responsibility to make amends in the best way possible – access to the love and liberation that God provides in Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Clarke". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr Greg Clarke, CEO  
Bible Society Australia



# Help rebuild shattered lives



Leonie felt hopeless and lost when she became pregnant as a young single in the Central African country of Cameroon. The father wanted her to abort the baby and refused to recognise her pregnancy, leaving her without support.

After she gave birth to the child she discovered the father was a married man.

“I was not the only one who was pregnant for him. We were four of us, his wife included. I discovered that my best friend was also a victim of his abuses. She got pregnant for him two times, and aborted them.”

Luckily for Leonie, an older woman introduced her to the Esther Project, a unique trauma-healing programme run by Bible Society of Cameroon, which helps single mothers and victims of sexual exploitation heal from their trauma and live healthy, independent lives based on biblical principles.

**As well as Bible study and prayer, the programme encompasses psychological counselling** and training in income-producing activities such as bead making, soap making and bag making

Leonie’s story is shockingly common in Cameroon. According to UNICEF, one in five girls aged

between 15 and 19 have been raped or sexually abused. This may be an underestimation because the issue is rarely talked about and the girls are stigmatised or even blamed.

Most of them get pregnant by the age of 15. Usually the girls drop out of school, are ostracised by their families and communities and are vulnerable to physical violence and sexually transmitted diseases. Many go on to have several children before the age of 30, bringing them up

alone. **Ill equipped to protect their daughters from the same fate, many fall into the same destructive cycle.**

Leonie’s story is particularly harrowing. She recounts how her three uncles raped her many times when she was seven or eight.

“The second one used to tie my hands, close my mouth before abusing me sexually. And it happened many times.”

When Leonie arrived at the Esther Project she didn’t know that God could accept her “as dirty as I was.”

“The good news I got from there was that God accepts us the way we are,” she says.

“And I was assured. I felt



**“The good news I got from there was that God accepts us the way we are.”**

**\$43** helps a sexually abused girl with trauma healing, Bible study and income-generating skills so she can build a future with purpose and confidence.

**\$70** will teach two refugees in a literacy class.

**\$129** provides Scripture to help vulnerable girls and young women value themselves and their bodies, and avoid sexual exploitation.



**“I was captivated by the quality of teachings and workshops in the project,” says Aimee.**

relieved and free from bondage, captivity and trauma.

**“The Bible really transformed me. The Bible is my life.** It’s everything I need for better living – I can’t do any more without it.”

The Esther Project has also helped Leonie to be financially independent.

“I am not yet married, but I am coping financially because I am a business girl. I am a hairdresser and I sell cakes.”

Leonie says her mouth is “too small” to express the gratitude she feels towards international donors who have supported the Esther Project. But tragically, this project

has been underfunded for years. **Last year 1300 girls missed out when the money dried up.**

This year, the project is being extended into refugee camps to help women who have fled the deadly terror group, Boko Haram. **Bible Society Cameroon also wants to start literacy classes in the Minawao and Wack refugee camps.** This year, the aim is to teach more than 1000 people to read but funds are urgently needed to provide Bible-based trauma healing and literacy.

“I was captivated by the quality of teachings and workshops in the project,” says Aimee, who has also

been helped by the programme.

“Since then, my life that was so sad has become more joyful. I have started appreciating life. Moreover, I have started reading and meditating on the Bible every day. My communion with God has been reinforced. My life has become light and peaceful.”

Celeste also found peace and redemption through the Esther Project. She says: “The gospel message that was preached there really touched me and helped me get my spirit back.”

Says Elise: “Project Esther is the best thing that has ever happened in my life. I was in total despair when I came and opened the Bible for the first time in my life. The seminars helped me to radically turn to God who is my father. Today my life has a new meaning.”

*Names have been changed to protect the women’s identities.*

## WILL YOU HELP?

To donate to help women like Leonie, please call **1300 Bibles (1300 242 537)** or visit **[biblesociety.org.au/sowcameroon](http://biblesociety.org.au/sowcameroon)**



# The cure for wet-weather Christianity



pixabay/11111

**W**inter. That word might be enough to force you back under the doona to escape the coldest, drabest season. Seeking warmth and cheer during winter is common, but what if you're also battling "wet-weather Christianity"?

Just like a wet winter, the Christian blues can trap you under a grey cloud. Your inner climate is frosty or dampened. Your very core doused by spiritual doldrums. Joy, contentment, energy are rained out.

Persevering through such inclement conditions can feel

impossible, even when you already know God's word offers immediate help. Being reminded that the Bible is a spiritual doona for any overcast season of life can merely register like cold comfort during wet-weather Christianity.

But our response doesn't negate Jesus's all-seasons offer, recorded in Matthew 11:28 – "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." Jesus follows on by explaining how "my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30), apparently comparing his ways and requirements with

**"Jesus assures that those who take up his offer of rest will gain an easier, lighter load."**

the crushing weight of religious observance at the time.

Wet-weather Christianity often can be linked to what we tell ourselves we should be doing or feeling about being a Christian. But Jesus assures us that those who take up his offer of rest will gain an easier, lighter load. Allow your heart to be warmed by such support, whatever the season.

*Ben McEachen, Deputy Editor, Eternity News.*



# Planting mustard seeds in China





**D**uring the Cultural Revolution in China, the Bible and all Christian books were forbidden. If authorities found a Bible in a home, the Bible was confiscated and destroyed and its owners punished.

That was why Qin Xiaoping's mother hid her Bible in a storeroom for ten years. But that Bible, preserved from destruction, became the mustard seed that has flourished into a growing church of 270 members.

**If one Bible can do so much, imagine what 2.5 million Bibles may accomplish in the hands of Christians and seekers?** That's this year's global goal for the Bibles for China's Millions programme.

Qin was just 14 when her mother and a friend gathered in their remote village to read that Bible together in stealth in 1977 – just after the Cultural Revolution.

Qin's parents were farmers and had never learned to read. So her mother asked Qin to read for her and her Christian friend. Soon, the trio started meeting every evening to read the Bible. In one year they had read through the entire Bible.

"Initially, I could not read the old characters because in school we learned only the new, simplified characters," Qin, now 51, recalls. "But gradually I learned to

read the old characters too.

"As the government began to relax the rules, more people came to listen to the Bible reading. Word went out to the neighbours, and soon there were five who gathered, then ten and 15."

When the group grew to 30, they bought an old house to use as a church. Today, there are 270 members in this church and three other new small churches.

Since the reopening of churches in China in the 1980s, the number of Christians has blossomed. From 2.7 million in 1949 there are 46 million today.

**Chinese Christians recognise the Bible as the key basis for growth in faith and wisdom for daily life.** But most of China's Christians live in rural areas and many can't afford to buy their own Bible, which is why Bible Society's Bibles for China's Millions project has been distributing free Scriptures and subsidising the cost of Bible paper since the mid-'80s. But as the numbers of Christians swell, the demand

for Bibles continues to grow each year as well. With funding support from various Bible Societies, at least 2,500,000 more Chinese will be able to own a copy of the affordable Bible this year. In the face of increasing threats from false teachings and heresies, the need is pressing for the Christians' faith to be firmly founded in the word.

**Will you help millions of poor, rural Christians in China own their own Bibles and have their faith strengthened by God's word?**

**Qin Xiaoping**



Dag Slememo

**GIVE NOW**

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

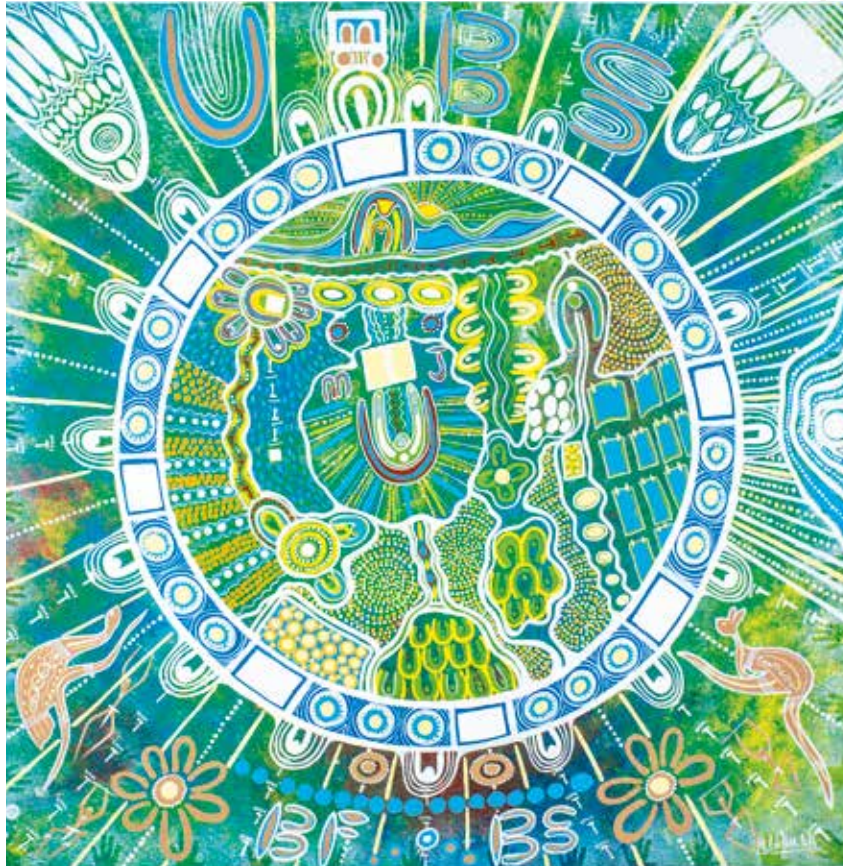
# Bible cause comes home

**T**he challenges of the Bible cause in today's world will be nussed out by 235 delegates from 106 countries at the United Bible Societies Roundtable Exchange 2017 in Sydney from July 3 to 7. The largest event in the UBS calendar is being hosted by Australia this year to mark BSA's Bicentenary.

Delegates will be discussing how to embrace the implications of the Philadelphia Promise, a strategy formulated at last year's General Assembly in the US city of Philadelphia that keeps Bible translation at the core of the mission.

More than 165 million people still have no Scripture in their mother tongue, and a billion lack a full Bible in their heart language.

This year's conference will focus on the following topics: Audiences and Collaboration, Translation and Literacy, Church Under Pressure,



**Artist Max Conlon created this painting for the UBS Roundtable 2017.**

Church Relations and Digital.

“The Roundtable is a stand-out event in the Bible Societies’ world. It is a spiritual collaboration across over 100 nations, to serve the world with the word of God,” notes BSA’s CEO Greg Clarke.

**Will you help Bible Societies**

**“The Roundtable is a stand-out event in the Bible Societies’ world. It is a spiritual collaboration across over 100 nations, to serve the world with the word of God.”**

**Greg Clarke**

**across the world to bring the word of God to people in a relevant way, especially to the new generations?**

**Please call 1300 BIBLES (1300 242 537), visit [biblesociety.org.au/roundtable](http://biblesociety.org.au/roundtable) or fill in the donation form on the back page.**



Dan Paterson



Jordan Thyer



Patricia Weerakoon



John Dickson



Natasha Moore



Richard Shumack

# Inspire high school kids



Rory Shiner



Amy Stopher



Simon Smart

**T**here will be an exciting new format to Bible Society's Masterclass series of one-day seminars for Years 10 and 11 this year. Each event will include a "hot topics" Q&A segment, during which the day's speakers will form a panel to answer students' questions. Students will be able to text their questions before and on the day and have them answered on stage to the full gathering.

Numbers of students attending have increased with each year that Masterclass has been held, and this year should be no

exception, with more attendees expected than last year.

Those who have attended in the past have been almost uniformly thrilled with the content of the teaching, with most saying it has strengthened their commitment and ability to live a Christian life.

**This year we will have many new speakers to inspire the next generation to grow in their knowledge and love of God.**

As well as popular speakers such as John Dickson, founding director of the Centre for Public Christianity (CPX), the line-up has

been extended to include many new faces: CPX research fellow Natasha Moore; Brisbane-based evangelist with Ravi Zacharias International Ministries Dan Paterson, and Jordan Thyer, an Australian fellow with the Oxford Centre of Christian Apologetics. Providence Church in Perth will provide two of our new speakers – senior pastor Rory Shiner and associate Amy Stopher.

For a full schedule of Masterclass events, including public lectures for adults, visit [biblesociety.org.au/masterclass](http://biblesociety.org.au/masterclass)

# More precious than gold



**Tot Nhernh, 94, is delighted that the full Bunong Bible is on the way.**

**T**he Bunong ethnic minorities in Vietnam are very excited about a project to translate the Old Testament into Central Bunong language after receiving their New Testament last year.

Work to translate the Scriptures into Bunong began in Vietnam in the 1960s before the dominance of communism but the work was disrupted in the mid-70s by the war and the manuscripts lost. So

they copied portions of Scripture by hand as a way of holding on to their faith through a dark period of persecution that lasted until the 1990s.

Bunong church leaders from Vietnam are now working to get the full Bunong Bible translated and completed in Romanised script.

As well as the Bunong, who hope to have their Old Testament

by 2020, there are three other ethnic minorities in Indochina who are eagerly awaiting Bibles in their own languages and dialects.

There are large numbers of believers and churches among the Stieng tribe of southeast Vietnam and the hills of Cambodia. Despite this, only one Scripture portion has been translated. Pastors, who need to translate

**“When the Stieng tribe holds a Bible in their mother tongue in their hands, that Bible will be more precious than a piece of gold.”**

from the Vietnamese Bible to preach in their churches, are looking forward to a Stieng New Testament by 2020.

One pastor said, “When the Stieng tribe holds a Bible in their mother tongue in their hands, that Bible will be more precious than a piece of gold.”

Recently, there has been growth in the number of Christians among the Hmong tribes, mainly in Laos and North Vietnam. They have a Bible in their Blue and White dialects which was translated by well-educated Hmong Christians in the United States. However, with their limited education, Christians living in rural areas find the style of the Bible hard to understand. They are looking forward to a new simplified translation that is due to be finished next year.

Also next year, the Eastern Cham minority ethnic group in Vietnam, who are mostly Hindu, will receive the New Testament in the Cham language. This project will enable the sharing of the good news to this largely unreached ethnic group.



**A Hmong Christian woman holds a Bible.**

## **GIVE NOW**

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

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2016



## INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS



### South Sudan: literacy for non-literate Shilluks



**400 teachers**

were trained to run literacy classes.



**3 yrs**



**5 yrs**

The South Sudan appeal received more support than any other 2016 appeal, and can therefore be extended to run from 3 to 5 years, or have its reach broadened to other South Sudanese communities.



### Syria: Bibles for children



**25,000**

**25,000 children**, including refugees, received special children's Bibles and colouring books.

**33**  
PROJECTS  
INTERNATIONALLY



### South Africa

Bible-based literacy material distributed in **4 languages** – Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa and Sesotho.



**4 languages**



**161,285**



**80,000**

Booklets given to disadvantaged children to begin basic literacy skills.

### South Pacific: 10-year translation project



**300+**



The Kiribati New Version and the Tuvalu Revised Bible were completed.

More than **300 people** witnessed the launch of the first Scripture booklet translated into the Koronubu-Ba language.



**5 lessons**

**5 lessons** were translated into Fijian Itaukei from the book 'Healing the Wounds of Trauma – How the Church Can Help'.



# LOCAL WORK



## Missions

### Remote and Indigenous Ministry Support



\$248,800 was invested in ministry support.



The book of Daniel was distributed in Pitjantjatjara and the Gospel of Mark published in the Maung language.

### Australian Public Schools Ministry

20,000 Bibles were distributed to over 400 public schools.



### Events



7 Youth Training Masterclasses held with 2100 attendees from 120+ schools, as well as 12 public events.

### Scripture Grants



75,000

Scripture resources distributed to hospitals, correctional services, juvenile justice centres, Australian Defence Forces and Scripture teachers.

## Media

### Eternity: news from a Christian perspective

A new digital news service was designed and launched.



↑15%



↑183%

15% increase in monthly visitors to the website

183% growth in social media followers

### Centre for Public Christianity (CPX)



30+

Over 30 articles published.



2

books published.



100+

talks delivered.



... my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:11 NIV



# FINANCES



Total donations and bequests:

**\$12.07mil.** ↑ **36%** from 2015



**76¢** of each dollar raised goes toward mission

## Mission expenditure

26.2%  
International

20.5%  
Campaigns, advocacy & CPX

8.6%  
Church & community

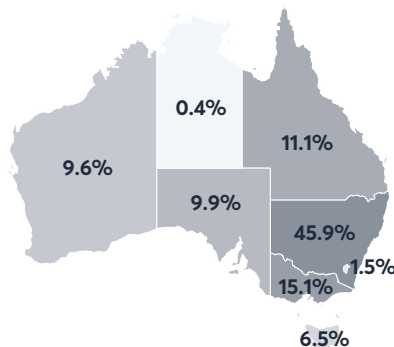
4.1%  
Remote & Indigen.

3.7%  
Scripture grants

27.4%  
Publishing, digital

9.5%  
Youth & schools

## Donations by state



## Comparison to 2015

### Donations are up ...

Donations ▲ 11.6%

Bequests ▲ 127.8%

Return on investments ▲ 7.2%

### Investing in the future ...

Employment costs ▲ 5.0%

Admin. & governance ▲ 3.7%

Fundraising costs ▲ 22.0%

# The heroic Bible colporteurs



**Top left: Bible Society colporteur on the Victorian goldfields;  
centre: Harry Dormer, second from right; his truck in Central  
Australia, right.**



**B**ible Society colporteurs were once found in every corner of Australia, distributing Bibles in the most rugged and inhospitable places. In 1960, the legendary Harry Dormer marked the centenary of the exploration of Central Australia by visiting every inhabited place within 500km of Alice Springs.

“Colporteur” means to carry around the neck and that is literally what the first Bible Society colporteurs did in the remotest parts of the world, carrying their sacks of Bibles in every kind of weather to the most isolated dwellings imaginable. A century ago, the Bible Society paid homage to them:

*“They go where no one else takes the gospel. They offer the Bible to pilgrims flocking to Lourdes and to political exiles on the sorrowful transit across Siberia. They carry the Scriptures to the stern, fair-haired fisher-folk of the gloomy Jutland coast and to dark-eyed vine-dressers on the sunny shores of the Adriatic. They distribute the Scriptures around the teeming rice fields of China and Hindustan. They pass the ruins of ancient civilisations on the banks of the Nile and Euphrates and explore the virgin forests of the Amazon.”*

In Australia in the 1800s,



**Colporteur in Turkey in 1900**

colporteurs visited diggers in the goldfields and axemen’s remote timber camps. James Robinson rowed Bibles down the Hawkesbury River. Before Queensland was a state, one NSW colporteur walked from Sydney to Moreton Bay and back.

Another intrepid colporteur trudged the outback carrying dental instruments along with his Bibles and extracting teeth along the way. Later, some rode bicycles or travelled by horse and cart. Bible Society was quick to see the potential of motorised vehicles and Bible vans became a well-known and often welcome sight.


The last of Australia’s old-fashioned colporteurs, Rev Harry Cottrell-Dormer, was appointed in 1956. He was allotted half of Australia, an area of four million square km, extending west of the Darling River in NSW, the western half of Queensland, most of South Australia, the Northern Territory, and the northern two-thirds of Western Australia.

The Bible Society bought him a three-ton 4WD army truck. “My parish,” said Harry, “is the Aborigines, the stockmen, the miners, the prospectors, the oil-rig crews, the road gangs, the shearers, the fencers, the fettlers and the dam sinkers – all who inhabit the lonely places.”

Harry extended his ministry to every isolated outpost he could reach. At Tasmania’s Cape Sorrell lighthouse, accessible only by boat, the keeper told Harry that he had been born there, and his father before him, and this was the first time a minister had visited.

Harry reluctantly relinquished his role after 17 years, the last of his kind. He died in 2005 at the age of 93. His motto was Colossians 3:23, “Whatever you do, do it with all your heart.”

*Rev Dr John Harris is Bible Society’s Senior Biblical Consultant. He was formerly Director of Translations and Text.*



**Let them  
hear the  
powerful  
words of  
Jesus**

**H**earing God's word in their own languages has helped fuel a powerful movement of God among Australia's Aboriginal communities, as evidenced in the wonderful art book, ***Our Mob, God's Story***, which combined moving personal testimonies with extraordinary depictions of biblical stories.

Now, as Pitjantjatjara Christians work on the mammoth task of translating the Old Testament into their language, they are embarking on an exciting new project that will help people in their communities who struggle with the written word.

**About 20 Pitjantjatjara Christians will travel from their tribal lands to Adelaide in July to take part in a dramatised recording of the whole Pitjantjatjara New Testament.**

With your support, the joint project of Bible Society Australia and mission organisation Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH) will bring alive the richness of the New Testament stories to the thousands of people who speak Pitjantjatjara.

**LEFT: Solomon is a grandson of one of the Pitjantjatjara Bible translators and may read one of the children's roles in the New Testament recording.**

The project ties in with national celebrations of the resilience and richness of Aboriginal languages in NAIDOC week, from July 2-9, which has a motto of “Our Languages Matter.”

Pitjantjatjara is one of the few original 250 Australian languages that are still used daily and are learned by children as a normal part of growing up. It is spoken by several thousand people who live in their traditional APY homelands in the northwest of South Australia spilling over into Western Australia and the Northern Territory, but also includes a diaspora in Alice Springs, Coober Pedy, Port Augusta, Yalata, Ceduna, and Adelaide.

**While Pitjantjatjara has a written tradition dating back to the 1940s, the primary form of the language remains its oral use,** and Pitjantjatjara verbal art includes highly developed forms of rhetoric, storytelling, songs and sung epics, and styles of kinship-based respect and deference.

Over about eight weeks the Pitjantjatjara readers will share the 160 roles in the New Testament. Some will tackle large parts, such as Jesus, Paul and the gospel authors Matthew, Mark Luke and John. Others will play small parts -

angels, Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, disciples Andrew, Peter, Judas, John, Thomas, and the other characters who have a say in the New Testament, such as Nicodemus, Martha, Mary Magdalene and Jairus.

**Appropriate music and sound effects will be added to the soundtrack after the narrative is completed, creating a recording of the New Testament that many will want to listen to.** It will be made available on FCBH’s special app called Bible.is, USB thumb drives, personal digital players and for download onto mobile phones, tablets and other devices. It will also be used in the development of audiovisual resources.

“The logistics will be quite demanding, especially arranging the travel, but there is much interest among the translators and other Pitjantjatjara Christians to be involved in this project,” says Paul Eckert, Bible Society’s production coordinator for indigenous ministry support, who is leading the project.

“When not recording, the readers will be practising for their next session or providing review for those who are recording. Quality control is built into the process as the resulting recording must match the printed Scripture exactly.”

Will you help Pitjantjatjara speakers in the heart of Australia come face to face with the Living Word, Jesus?

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



## Antique roadshow

Rev Glyn Rees and his wife Leisel of St John's Anglican Church, Wodonga, dressed up as Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie for an Antique Bible Roadshow held in Albury, NSW, in March. It was Governor Macquarie, prompted by his wife, who called the meeting that set up Bible Society 200 years ago. Local people brought along their family Bibles or other old copies in their possession for evaluation by Australia's foremost Bible historian, Rev Dr John Harris. There was also a display of rare and historic Bibles at the event, marking the Bicentenary of BSA.



## Artists celebrate

The launch of the Aboriginal art book, *Our Mob, God's Story*, at Darwin's Nungalinya College opened with a song by a local Larrakia woman, Ali Mills. Playing her ukelele, Ali entertained the 90-plus guests with a song written by her mother about Darwin, called *Arafura Pearl*. Several artists who contributed to the book shared their stories. Helen Richmond, a lecturer at Nungalinya College, commented: "God is a wonderful artist who refrains from painting the final strokes to allow us to participate with him in creating a masterpiece."



## Easter Holy Text

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive to an innovative campaign called Easter Holy Text, which brought the Easter story in a new way to a young audience. More than 4000 people signed up to receive daily text messages from Jesus's followers including Mary, Peter and John, which captured the panic and confusion they felt in the lead-up to Jesus's death and resurrection. "I learnt some new things this weekend that I hadn't really noticed in the story before and for me it was an unforgettable experience," commented Joanna W.



# BSA diary

STATES	DATES	EVENTS	VENUES
<b>NSW</b>	<b>August 8</b>	Masterclass	Saesoon Korean Church, North Rocks
	<b>August 13</b>	City 2 Surf	Contact us for more details
	<b>Sept 24</b>	Sing for Bibles	West Gosford Presbyterian
<b>Victoria</b>	<b>August 22</b>	Masterclass	One Community Church, Blackburn
<b>Queensland</b>	<b>July 25</b>	Masterclass	Newlife Uniting Church, Gold Coast
	<b>October 10</b>	<i>Get The Word Out</i> morning tea	Kingaroy Lutheran
	<b>October 26</b>	Combined Churches Ladies Fellowship	Biggenden
	<b>October 31</b>	Redcliffe Branch fundraising luncheon	Contact us for more details
<b>South Australia</b>	<b>August 15</b>	Masterclass	Edwardstown Baptist Church, St Marys
	<b>August 27</b>	Adelaide Hymnfest	St Peters Cathedral
<b>Western Australia</b>	<b>May 28</b>	<i>Bullet in the Bible</i> Movie Screening Event 6pm	Church of Christ, Kalgoorlie
	<b>June 10</b>	Perth Hymnfest (Featuring the Perth Adventist Orchestra and Choir)	Contact us for more details
	<b>July 31</b>	Masterclass	Albany Baptist Church, Albany
	<b>August 1</b>	Masterclass	Mt Pleasant Baptist Church, Booragoon
<b>Tasmania</b>	<b>June 25</b>	Festival of Word & Song 2.00pm	Ulverstone Baptist Church
	<b>August 19</b>	Northern Word Songwriting Showcase 7.30pm	St John's Anglican Church, Launceston
	<b>August 29</b>	Masterclass	Riverbank Christian Church, Riverside
	<b>September 2</b>	Devonport Hymn singing 4.00pm	Devonport Seventh Day Adventist Church
	<b>September 16</b>	North-Western Word Songwriting Showcase 7.30pm	Devonport Salvation Army

See the full list at [bible.com.au/events](http://bible.com.au/events) or call Bible Society on **1300 Bibles** (1300 242 537)  
 Help us to provide 100,000 Scriptures for Australia this year. Have you held your *Get The Word Out* events yet? Details at [bible.society.org.au/gtwo2017](http://bible.society.org.au/gtwo2017)



## Prayer points

### June-September 2017

#### June 4-10

**Egypt:** Pray for an end to the suffering and assaults on Christians in Egypt. Pray for God's comfort for the loved ones of those killed on Palm Sunday.

**Hong Kong:** Pray that the development of digital products for online and smartphone platforms will help Bible Societies of all cultures to provide resources for local Chinese populations.

#### June 11-17

**Philippines:** Please pray for the completion of the Bible Society headquarters to support Bible work in this country, and for a new Scripture engagement programme for women to be launched this year.

**South Sudan:** Praise God for the good news of the Mabaan Bible, expected this year. The people of Mabaan live on the border with Sudan, where Islam is very influential and the war is very complex.

#### June 18-24

**Australia:** Please pray for preparations for the UBS Roundtable Exchange in Sydney in July. Pray for smooth visa, travel and venue arrangements for delegates and Australian staff in support roles.

**West Indies:** Please pray for the success of a Bible Society project aimed at challenging people to get involved in stemming the tide of violence against women and children by telling what they know.

#### June 25-July 1

**Hungary:** Thank God for the progress of the new Gospel of Mark in Hungarian Sign Language. Praise

the Lord for the conclusion of the Audio Bible, which will be distributed to people with visual disabilities and in Romany communities.

**South Pacific:** In the 50th year of Bible work in the Pacific, please pray for all ongoing translation works and for the translation of the trauma healing booklets into various Pacific languages.

#### July 2-8

**Cambodia:** Praise God for the lives and communities changed through the literacy programme. Pray that those who take the literacy classes come to know the Lord and grow in faith.

**Global:** Please pray for Elsbeth Scherrer, the new Head of Global Bible Publishing and Distribution. Pray for a smooth transition as she hands over her work at the French Bible Society.

#### July 9-15

**Portugal:** Praise God for the involvement of many Protestant and Catholic churches in the Action Bible Project. Pray that the children who receive the history of Jesus in cartoon form may understand and come to know Jesus.

**Australia - Supporters:** Praise God for the many Bible Society supporters who help Bible ministry through a bequest. Some are only able to give small donations during their lifetime but continue making a significant impact through their will.

#### July 16-22

**Australia - Bicentenary:** Rejoice in prayer for all the various state-based celebrations of Bible Society Australia's Bicentenary. Thank God for great connections with old friends and new relationships.

**Taiwan:** Praise God for the publication of Jude and 2 Peter study Bibles and pray that they will assist readers to understand God's word accurately.

## July 23-29

**Austria:** Pray that Bibles provided to refugees, people in detention centres and prisoners in their own language bring hope, peace and eternal life to all who read them.

**Australia - Advocacy:** As the church comes under pressure from secularism, pray for effective advocacy for the continuing relevance of our Saviour Jesus and his revelation in the word of God.

## July 30-August 5

**Bangladesh:** Please pray for new projects including a television programme, radio programme and the Lay People Bible Study programme.

**Australia - Remote and Indigenous Ministry:** Pray that prison and hospital chaplains, and staff in local churches, remote schools and women's shelters would be excited to use Indigenous Bibles and Scripture engagement resources.

## August 6-12

**Lebanon:** Pray for Christian ministries in Lebanon as they seek to serve refugees, mainly Syrians, with the Bible message. Please thank the Lord for the Bible distribution and trauma healing programmes targeting Syrian and Iraqi refugees.

**Uganda:** Praise God for the recent launch of the complete Lumasaaba Bible. Pray that the church will grow in maturity as they enjoy the whole Bible in their heart language.

## August 13-19

**Togo:** Please pray for planned Bible translation projects, the spread of literacy in local languages as an aid to Bible engagement and greater church ownership of Bible work.

**Iraq:** After the formal establishment of the Bible Society in Kurdistan, a parcel of land was offered to

build a Bible House in the capital, Erbil. Please pray for resources to complete it. Please pray also for God's protection of staff and the church in Iraq.

## August 20-26

**Africa:** Pray that many young women will be empowered to read Scripture through a literacy programme for 20,000 women and girls who are speakers of 16 minority languages in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania.

**Australia - Content and Publishing:** Please pray for the publishing of Arthur Stace's biography this year. Stace spent 37 years writing the word "Eternity" on the streets of Sydney and Melbourne. Pray that the book will help readers cut through the myths uncover the great truth about eternity.

## August 27-September 2

**Haiti:** Please ask God to bless Bible work in this country and that his word can comfort the hearts of people, especially the victims of Hurricane Matthew, which left a trail of disease and destruction last year.

**United States:** Praise God for Scripture engagement partnerships growing among local churches, furthering a national Bible engagement strategy in major cities including Philadelphia, New York, Charlotte, Dallas, Kansas City and Phoenix.

## September 3-9

**France:** Please pray for the preparation for the anniversary of 200 years of the Bible Society in 2018 and pray that it will be an opportunity to reach a highly secularised nation through the Bible.

**Georgia:** Economic problems, ongoing military occupation and political battles make the lives of people in Georgia very difficult. Thank God for his word, which helps so much.



# Autumn Bible Reading Plan JUNE 11 – SEPT 9



## Our Mob, God's Story

By Bible Society Australia

### Week One

**JUNE 11 – JUNE 17**

- SUN 11** Gen 1:27, 31
- MON 12** Gen 2:8
- TUE 13** Exod 3:2
- WED 14** Josh 1:9
- THUR 15** Eccl 3:1
- FRI 16** Isa 48:12-13
- SAT 17** Luke 1:30-32

### Week Two

**JUNE 18 – JUNE 24**

- SUN 18** Luke 2:13-14
- MON 19** Luke 2:52
- TUE 20** Matt 3:17
- WED 21** Matt 14:28-29
- THUR 22** John 7:38
- FRI 23** John 15:1
- SAT 24** Matt 26:27-28

### Week Three

**JUNE 25 – JULY 1**

- SUN 25** Mark 14:22-23
- MON 26** 1 Cor 1:18
- TUE 27** 1 Cor 15:56-57
- WED 28** Acts 9:3-5
- THUR 29** 1 Thess 4:14
- FRI 31** John 3:16
- SAT 1** Eph 2:8

Join us for  
a 21-day exploration of faith through the eyes of 66  
Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander Christian artists.



## Luke

By Guan Un

### Week Four

**JULY 2 – JULY 8**

- SUN 2** Luke 2:15-20
- MON 3** Luke 4:31-34
- TUE 4** Luke 5:8-11
- WED 5** Luke 8:19-21
- THUR 6** Luke 9:23-25
- FRI 7** Luke 10:38-42
- SAT 8** Luke 12:4-7

### Week Five

**JULY 9 – JULY 15**

- SUN 9** Luke 15:21-24
- MON 10** Luke 16:13-15
- TUE 11** Luke 18:11-14
- WED 12** Luke 19:7-10
- THUR 13** Luke 21:1-4
- FRI 14** Luke 23:39-43
- SAT 15** Luke 24:44-49

In this series of reflections in the Gospel of Luke, we meet the people who had an encounter with Jesus. Nobody who met him remained unchanged, and we will see how he still meets us and changes us today.





## Parables of Jesus

By Scott Sanders



## Out of control

By Ben McEachen



## Women in the Bible

By Anne Lim



## Adoption by the Father

By Guan Un

### Week Six

**JULY 16 – JULY 22**

**SUN 16** Matt 13:10-17  
**MON 17** Mark 4:2-9  
**TUE 18** Matt 7:24-27  
**WED 19** Matt 18:21-35  
**THUR 20** Luke 18:9-14  
**FRI 21** Matt 13:44  
**SAT 22** Luke 2:16-18

### Week Eight

**JULY 30 – AUG 5**

**SUN 30** Job 14:1-2  
**MON 31** 2 Tim 3:1-5  
**TUE 1** Prov 19:21  
**WED 2** Gen 1:1-5  
**THUR 3** Jer 32:26-27  
**FRI 4** Ps 2:1-6  
**SAT 5** Ps 115:2-8

### Week Ten

**AUG 13 – AUG 19**

**SUN 13** Prov 31:24-18  
**MON 14** Luke 8:1-3  
**TUE 15** Luke 10:38-42  
**WED 16** John 11:24-27  
**THUR 17** Luke 1:34-38  
**FRI 18** Luke 1:50-55  
**SAT 19** 1 Cor 11:4-6

### Week Twelve

**AUG 27 – SEPT 2**

**SUN 27** Exod 4:21-23  
**MON 28** Ps 2:6-9  
**TUE 29** John 1:9-14  
**WED 30** John 5:19-21  
**THUR 31** John 6:35-40  
**FRI 1** John 8:28-29  
**SAT 2** John 17:1-5

### Week Seven

**JULY 23 – JULY 29**

**SUN 23** Luke 12:16-21  
**MON 24** Luke 10:25-27  
**TUE 25** Luke 14:7-11  
**WED 26** Luke 14:12-24  
**THUR 27** Matt 25:14-30  
**FRI 28** Matt 25:31-46  
**SAT 29** Mark 4:30-33

### Week Nine

**AUG 6 – AUG 12**

**SUN 6** Ps 86:1-7  
**MON 7** 1 Cor 10:11-13  
**TUE 8** Rom 12:11-14  
**WED 9** 2 Cor 12:8-10  
**THUR 10** Gen 50:19-20  
**FRI 11** John 3:13-16  
**SAT 12** Heb 13:8

### Week Eleven

**AUG 20 – AUG 26**

**SUN 20** John 4:13-15  
**MON 21** Rom 16:1-2  
**TUE 22** Rom 16:3-5  
**WED 23** John 20:15-18  
**THUR 24** Luke 23:55-56  
**FRI 25** 1 Pet 3:3-4  
**SAT 26** Eph 5:25-28

### Week Thirteen

**SEPT 3 – SEPT 9**

**SUN 3** 1 John 5:1-3  
**MON 4** John 16:25-28  
**TUE 5** 1 John 1:1-4  
**WED 6** John 17:24-26  
**THUR 7** Heb 2:10-13  
**FRI 8** Rom 8:14-17  
**SAT 9** Gal 4:4-6

Over the next two weeks we'll reflect on several of Jesus's parables. We'll explore what they mean for us as we practise our faith in a generous, humble and inclusive way.

When life seems to spiral out of control, is there a way to hold on to the hope that God has given us in Jesus? Join us to explore what the Bible has to say about losing control.

In a surprising twist, it turns out that women are some of the major recipients of doctrinal and historical truth in the New Testament. The riches of their witness are too good to overlook!

J.I. Packer said "You sum up the whole of New Testament teaching in a single phrase, if you speak of it as a revelation of the Fatherhood of the Holy Creator." In these studies, we will bring our hearts before the truth that God himself is our Father, that Jesus Christ is our brother, and that we are the Father's children.

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Your word is a  
lamp for my feet  
And a light on  
my path

Psalm 119:105

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## Bible Societies around the world



### Breaking the silence

After many years of dreaming and praying, Armenia's deaf community have celebrated the first Scriptures in their mother tongue, Armenian Sign Language. "The silence is broken!" said the Bible Society in Armenia's Project Director Arshavir Kapoudjian. The DVD of Old Testament stories is the first fruit of a three-part project to produce 365 Bible stories in Armenian Sign Language.



### Millions of firsts

Chinese people who speak East Lisu were among the language groups to receive their first Bibles in 2016. Last year Bible Societies assisted in translations of 61 languages spoken by more than 428 million people. For 30 languages, spoken by 95 million people, it was "a first". Seventeen communities now have their first Bible, six have a New Testament and seven have their first, or additional, portions of Scripture.



### Reprieve for Aleppo

"It's been an incredible Easter for us all! The Christians all over the country have celebrated the Risen Christ in the most amazing way!" writes George Andrea in Aleppo, Syria, who sought your prayers in the last *Sower*. "Your prayers were certainly answered. In the end our City of Aleppo received a reprieve in the fighting. We are still queuing for bread and heating oil, but there is water in our taps and we celebrated Easter with real joy."



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