

the

sower

SUMMER 2022

And the Word became
flesh and dwelt among
us, and we have seen
his glory, glory as of
the only Son from the
Father, full of grace
and truth.

John 1:14
(ESV)

With
Prayer
Guide

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Dear Sower friends

This is my final Sower letter to you. By the time you read it I will have started as Secretary-General of the United Bible Societies. I am overwhelmed by the goodwill and kindness that is sending Louise and I on our way.

It has been a privilege to serve the Bible Society of South Africa these past 15 and a half years, the past eight as CEO. Memories too many to mention, along with the enrichment of friendships and personal growth, will accompany us.

Touch points of our Bible Society mission come flooding to mind, faces of those blessed by the Living Word speaking to them – each in their own language and way. Each one telling an amazing story: God’s story of love for humankind. The story, dear friends, in which we are privileged to play a part. Your prayers and your support are as much a part of this story as is the contribution of those who work for Bible Society. Thank you for your “partnership in the gospel” (Philippians 1:5). Long may it continue, as long as Jesus calls us to be bearers of the Good News.

BSSA has a vibrant leadership team to take the mission forward under the capable and strategic guiding hand of our Interim Executive Officer, Rev Rodney van Wyk. The Board of Directors is diligent in its oversight and has the search for a new CEO well in hand. It is anticipated that the position will be filled in May 2023.

Please hold the Bible Society and the search for the new CEO in your prayers during this time.

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dirk Gevers'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dirk Gevers
Chief Executive Officer



A BIBLE in every language

The translation of the Bible remains the core focus of the Bible Society's work.

As the Bible Society of South Africa it gives us great joy that the majority of South Africans who speak one of the 11 official languages have a complete Bible in their language available to them. However, there are still a number of smaller language groups who do not have the Word of God in their heart language.

The Bible Society is currently in the process of translating four such Bibles into the !Xun, Khwedam, Khelobedu and TjiHlanganu languages. The first two projects on the list started in 2018 while the last two commenced a little over a year ago.

Once completed these Bibles will have a far-reaching influence on their respective communities. However, God's Word has already touched those involved in the translation process.

"The Bible translation among the Khwe speakers in Platfontein is rapidly and visibly impacting the lives of the people. At least three members of the Review Committee have indicated that they want to study in order to become pastors," reports Dr Masenyani Baloyi,



the Bible Society's Translation Lead who facilitates each of the projects.

Martha Mangumbu, one of the !Xun Bible translators, says it is an exceptional honour to be part of this project. "Sometimes when I'm sitting here, busy translating my Bible, it feels like the Lord is speaking to me directly and that I am busy getting to know Him better. I feel at ease because I know that I am not alone."

How can you help?

Every R100 received will contribute towards Bible translation projects this year.

Make a difference; be a sower of hope. IS



CEO says **FAREWELL**



Rev Dirk Gevers, CEO of the Bible Society of South Africa, officially relinquished the reins of the organisation at the end of October.

Rev Gevers stepped into his new role as Secretary-General of the United Bible Societies (UBS)

on 1 November 2022, after serving the Bible Society of South Africa for 15 years — two years as Organising Secretary, five years as Regional Head of the then KwaZulu-Natal (south) region and eight years as CEO.

“We’ve had good times, we’ve had difficult times, we’ve had to work together, and we’ve had to wrestle together sometimes. But it’s just wonderful to see how we all, you all, and your colleagues in other parts of the country, have taken Bible Society forward through these very difficult times,” Rev Gevers said during a farewell function at the Bible House in Bellville.

He assured his colleagues that he leaves the BSSA in good hands.

“We have a very capable, very enthusiastic, very energetic, very creative and visionary team in place. I believe BSSA is in a good place, a position to be able to take things forward into the future. In some ways I’m sorry to be leaving it. But I feel peaceful,” he added.

New hand at the helm

Rev Rodney van Wyk was appointed by the Board of Directors to serve as the Interim Executive Officer from 1 November until the appointment of a new CEO.

Having served on the Bible Society’s Board of Directors since 2008, Rev Van Wyk has an intimate knowledge of the Bible mission and Bible Society’s inner workings. In 2012 he was elected Chairman of the Board. He served two consecutive terms for a total of six years and then a further two years.

“As a true transformational leader Dirk has the ability to see through the fog and clarify the destination for the vision that we (the Board) had,” Rev van Wyk said, commending his predecessor for his heart for fellow African Bible Societies, his sympathetic ear and ability to include others in the mission at hand.

“The capacity built into the BSSA made it possible to unveil this vibrant, energetic and talented BSSA and with the help of God, this organisation is destined for great things,” he added. **IS**



The Board aims to recommend a candidate for the position at the Annual General Meeting on 16 March 2023, with a commencement date of 1 May at the latest.

A DYING WISH for Bibles



Society's Western Region very well and contacted him to purchase the Bibles. Dr Heine offered to donate 50 Bibles for the occasion. This allowed Rita and Cindy to buy more Bibles and Bible literacy material which they could distribute in the surrounding community.

"It was the first time we did something like this and it was a beautiful occasion," Rita said. "Each child's name was written in the Bible along with a verse. The school gave us permission to hand them this Nourishment for their life ahead during the assembly. They were each called forward by name and presented with a Bible." **TS**



The final wish of a dying man was realised when a group of school children each received a Bible of their own.

In 2017 Cindy Leontsinis and her husband, Jonty, moved from KwaZulu-Natal to Barrydale in the Western Cape. Here they befriended Rita Theron. Jonty, who received nursing care after suffering a stroke, passed away in March. Before his passing he expressed the wish to donate Bibles to the matric learners of the local high school.

Rita knew Dr Quintus Heine, Regional Team Leader of the Bible





Seriously **ACTIVE FOR BIBLES**

This year people from across the country once again took part in the Bible Society's third virtual Run, Walk, Cycle for Bibles.

The event is held annually in August to coincide with the Bible Society's birthday.

This year participants had the choice to do their particular activity for Bibles from 1 to 21 August.

A number of churches made a day and event of it and took on the challenge in a group.

One such group was the Grade 6 and 7 Guppies for God from Herschel Girls School in Cape Town.

"We only entered as two people since we cannot fit in a 5 km at school; instead we ran a relay around the sports field. We appealed to the girls in our school to sponsor the teams by donating small change.

All the money was donated to the Bible Society," Grade 6 teacher, Linda Cowie explained.

Marty Holderness, a second-time cancer survivor chose to cycle 42 km for Bibles in spite of her breathing difficulties.


In Tokai in the Western Cape, members of the AFM churches in





the South Peninsula took part in a Bible run/walk organised by Pastor David Muller.

However, the Bible Society's staff did not rest on their laurels. Staff from Cape Town, Gqeberha, Durban and Kempton Park chose to take a walk around the Bible Houses to do their bit for Bibles. One group even chose to hike up Lion's Head.

In total the event saw supporters running 404 km, walking 1055 km and cycling 851 km in total. 



Much fun on **BIBLE SUNDAY**

Every year the congregations of the Full Gospel Church (FGC) across the country celebrate Bible Sunday on the last Sunday in August.

The FGC congregation of Sinoville in Gauteng went all out for this year's Bible Sunday hosting a family day that also included a walk for Bibles. Some 270 participants entered the walk and could choose from distances ranging from one to 10 kilometres. There were also a number of other activities to keep both young and old occupied, including motorcycle trips, which proved very popular. **IS**



BSSA BUILDS, strengthens local relationships



Dr Elliot Sithole, Relationship Ambassador for the Bible Society's Eastern Region (KwaZulu-Natal), recently held a seminar to inform local church and community leaders about the work of the Bible Society.

The seminar, where the topic of leadership was discussed, was hosted at the Bible House in Durban and attended by 72 people. The

group was also made aware of the Bible Society's vision and mission, the availability of Bibles at the Bible shop and how one can support, donate and raise funds on behalf of the Bible Society.

In the future similar events will be held at different urban and rural areas in an effort to build and strengthen relationships with local churches and communities. **IS**

Pray with the Bible Societies



1-7 January

Sudan: Pray for the successful completion of the Bible in Otoro. The Otoro people are endemic to the Nuba mountain region but have been scattered across the country due to the war. This translation will help to reach many with the gospel, including the vulnerable child soldiers.

Ethiopia: Pray for the Bible Society of Ethiopia and its partners as they work together to translate the complete Bible into Tembaro. Also pray for our project aimed at the deepening of biblical values by promoting Bible engagement among the local youth who make up half of the country's population.

Eritrea: Pray for the successful translation of the Old Testament

in Blin. Pray that our projects to reach more young people with the Scriptures will help them to grow spiritually. Pray for our efforts to reach the younger generation of the deaf community.

8-14 January

South Sudan: Pray for financial support to increase the capacity of our Bible Society staff. Continue to pray for the translation project to produce the first Bible in Jur Modo. Sudan has a low literacy rate. Pray that people can learn to read so that they can experience the Scriptures for themselves.

Central African Republic: Pray for our project to improve literacy among women. Pray for our trauma healing

programmes. Pray for the effective application of biblical principles in the lives of our young people. Pray for the Bible work in **Equatorial Guinea** and **São Tomé and Príncipe**.

Cameroon: Pray for our project to distribute one million New Testaments to those in need. Pray that our project to equip young girls with the Scriptures will help teenage mothers and victims of sexual exploitation gain inner healing and restoration. Continue to pray for our translation of the Bible into the Mungaka and Gude languages.

15-21 January

Sahel Project: Pray that efforts of the various organisations working together to make the Bible available to

the people of this region will be fruitful. Pray for the safety of the inhabitants amid mounting tensions between religious groups. Also, pray for the Bible work in **Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania.**

Gabon: Pray that our project to reach young children with the Word will not only help to comfort and heal them but also instil Christian values that are so drastically needed here. Pray for the approaching completion and launch of the Old Testament into Yinzebi as well as our translation of new Bibles in the Fang and Omyéné languages.

Chad: The Kera community in Chad does not have a complete Bible. Pray for the translation of the Old Testament into this language. Pray for our project aimed at providing healing to those who have been traumatized by decades of civil war.

22-28 January

Togo: Thank God for the completion of the New Testament in Ikposso. Pray that this New Testament will give people the opportunity to know the true God and build a lasting relationship with Him. Pray that this will contribute to the growth of churches and help to raise the level of literacy.

Nigeria: Pray that our efforts to make the Bible accessible to those with disabilities through our Braille and Sign Language Bible projects will be fruitful. Thank God for the successful production of the book of Romans in the Binna (Yungur) language.

Niger: Christian communities have in the past been the target of violence in this country. Pray that our trauma healing project will go a long way to provide comfort and restoration to those who have been affected. Pray for our project to improve literacy among our people using Scripture.

Benin: Pray for funding and favour on our project to open and equip five Braille libraries in the main centres across the country. Pray that the New Testament and Bible stories that will be made available here in Braille and audio Bibles will help the visually impaired to connect with God.

29 January - 4 February

Ghana: Pray for the ongoing translation of the Bible in the Bono language. Pray that even as this translation is being tested among the community it will begin to steer people towards the one true God. Thank God for the progress made on the Okere New Testament translation project so far.

Burkina Faso: Pray that our trauma healing project will have a positive and lasting impact on those seeking healing and restoration. The New Testament has been available in the Bissa language since 2000 and there is a growing need for a translation of the Old Testament as well as the Deuterocanonical books.

5-11 February

Sierra Leone: The rise in living costs has recently seen the outbreak of protest action here. Pray that we can make Scripture available to provide

hope to our desperate people in difficult times. Pray that the Word of God will reach our youth and help stem the growing culture of drug abuse.

Liberia: Thank God for the rapid growth of churches across our country. Pray for our project to train pastors and provide congregations with Bibles in the local language for the effective propagation of the gospel. Pray for the completion of the Old Testament translation into Mann as well as the revision of the New Testament.

Gambia: There are currently only portions of the Bible available in the Gambian Wolof language. Pray for the translation of the complete Bible in this language that can be used as a tool for evangelism and as a basis for new reader portions, Bible comics, and oral translation. Pray that this Bible will also help to improve the literacy rate of our people.

12-18 February

Senegal: Our project to translate the Bible into the Pulaar language has had several challenges but we thank God that our overview process is once again back on track and running smoothly. Pray for our project to help young girls read and write to allow them to read the Bible for themselves.

Mali: Thank God for his guidance during the revision of the Protestant Bible in Bamanan and the accompanying addition of study notes. Pray for the health of the translation team and the review board. Pray for the socio-security situation in



our country.

Guinea: Pray for the completion and finalisation of the Kpelle and Toma Bible translations. Pray for our project to bring about literacy and socio-economic development by witnessing the love of God.

19-25 February

Namibia: Pray for our project to translate a current English children's Bible into seven Namibian languages. Pray for the new translations of the Bible into modern Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga. Pray for efforts to improve literacy among the Dhimba-speaking women in Namibia.

South Africa: We are currently working towards translating

the Bible into four minority languages – !Xun, Khwedam, Khelobedu and TjiHlanganu. Pray for the continued support of our donors and the translation teams. Pray for wisdom and guidance for our Board as they appoint a new CEO.

Lesotho: Pray for our efforts to bring the Word of God to our people. Pray specifically for our project to translate, record and distribute 40 oral Bible stories in the SiPhuthi language to meet the need of this language group as it remains the best way to teach them about the gospel.

Eswatini (Swaziland): Thank God for the completion of the New Testament of the Siswati Study Bible. Pray that the

work on the Old Testament will progress smoothly. Pray for our project aimed at helping children whose lives have been impacted by the widespread occurrence of HIV/Aids in our country.

26 February - 4 March

Zimbabwe: Pray for us as we continue with the work of translating the Bible into the heart languages of the people of our country. Pray for the necessary funding to complete the translation of the first complete Bible in Chikunda. Pray for our plans to make Braille Bibles accessible to people with visual disabilities.

Mozambique: There are over 40 languages spoken in our country. Pray that we

can continue to serve the Bible needs of each of these language groups. Pray for all our efforts to translate the Bible into Emakhuwa, Emarevoni, Cibalke, Ciwute and Echuwabo as well as the revision of the Citswha Bible.

Botswana: The deaf people in our country are highly marginalised. Pray that we will be able to share the Good News with them by providing a Bible in Botswana Sign Language. Pray that we will receive the necessary support and funding for this and other projects.

5-11 March

Seychelles: Drug and substance abuse is a growing problem in our society. Pray that our trauma healing project will help to bring comfort, healing and restoration especially to the women and children who are affected by these social ills.

Mauritius: Pray for favour and blessing upon our Bible work here. Pray that Mauritians will welcome the Word of God into their lives and that its message will bring about change in a society that has seen an increase in violent behaviour. Pray for the Bible work on **Réunion** and **Rodrigues**.

Madagascar: Pray for the successful completion of the translation of the Malagasy Study Bible. Pray for our project to improve literacy among adults which will in turn show them the value of education and urge them to enroll their children in school. Pray that our Bible work will also have an impact on the inhabitants of

Comoros and Mayotte.

12-18 March

Zambia: Poverty and a lack of education are two of the biggest challenges facing our country. Pray that our literacy programme for women and girls will help to alleviate this situation. Pray that the translation of the Bible into the Ila, Nyanja and Nsenga languages will proceed as planned and bring hope to a nation.

Malawi: Establishing a love for the Bible among the next generation is paramount. Pray that our project to develop Bible Youth Advocates will allow the Bible Society to build a relationship with the youth of our country and help them to engage with the Bible in a meaningful and transformative way.

Angola: Praise God for the way the recently completed Umbangala New Testament has been received. Pray that it will help local churches reach the lost. Pray for our efforts to bring the Word of God to people with visual disabilities by providing the Bible in braille and audio format.

19-25 March

Uganda: Praise God that Uganda's blind Christians could welcome the Acholi Braille Bible earlier this year. Pray for our ongoing Bible translation in the Kupsapiiny and Ludadiri languages. Pray that our youth project will help children to engage with the Bible and develop a love for the Word of God.

Rwanda: Pray that our work with various ministries and churches will continue to help reintroduce children living on the street into their families and

communities. Pray that God's Word will reach and transform the broken hearts of these children and all others who need healing and comfort.

Kenya: Pray that the youth will be reached with the Bible. Pray that our project to equip young women with literacy skills will be far reaching and empowering. Pray for our work translating the Kenyan Sign Language Bible for the deaf.

Burundi: Pray that we will be able to reach secondary school students, prisoners and hospital patients with the truth of God's Word. Pray that our trauma healing and reconciliation programme will help to heal the hurts of the past and help people to move forward in life.


26 March-1 April

Tanzania: Pray for the translation of the Old Testament in Kinyamwezi and the revision of the New Testament. Pray too for the translation of the Chasu Bible. Pray that the Igikuria Bible translation which has been plagued by delays will be launched in the near future.

Congo (Democratic Republic): Pray for our project aimed at providing an updated Swahili-Congo Bible to young preachers. Pray that our scripture-based radio programme will continue to be a source of hope and healing for the victims of conflict trauma.

Congo (Brazzaville): Pray for the safety and health of the teams involved in translating the Bible in the Beembe, Téké and Yaka languages. Pray for our trauma healing programme. **IS**

BUCKETS of joy

The KCF Church in Kensington, Johannesburg, runs a hamper project every month. Last December the church distributed 400 buckets of food to people in need. Each bucket also contained a *Bread of Life* booklet. These booklets – supplied by the Bible Society – contain the Gospel of John and are used for evangelism. “These 400 families had the Good News delivered to their homes through the buckets. We also used them for our Easter outreach,” said a member of the church, Lee-Anne Reddy. 




Bible walk grabs THE IMAGINATION



The principal of the Fouriesburg Intermediate School was so inspired when she heard about the possibility of raising funds for Bibles that she immediately jumped into action to have her school play its part.

Annalene Hattingh attended a service at the Bethlehem Methodist Church on a Sunday when Rev Pierre du Plooy from the Bible Society spoke and encouraged the congregation to

hold walks for Bibles.

After some quick organising by Lana Esterhuizen, the school held a walk for Bibles on 2 September, with some 300 children taking part and walking through the streets of Fouriesburg. Their efforts raised R7 227 for Bibles and each participant received a medal as well as a New Testament Good News Bible with Psalms and Proverbs. 

CONGREGATION WALKS for Bibles, no matter what

The congregation of the Kerkenberg Dutch Reformed Church in Harrismith has a huge heart for Bible distribution. The enthusiasm with which both young and old take part in their annual Bible walk is testimony to this. The congregation of Rev Org van der Watt held its 22nd consecutive Bible walk that stretched over 5 km.

Even during the recent Covid-19 pandemic the congregation adjusted the dates of the walk so that their uninterrupted record will remain intact. What makes this even more remarkable is the age of some of the senior members who took part in the walk. Seen here are (from left) Lydia Oosthuizen (79), Dolla Delport (71),



Lenell Oosthuizen (82), Marie Maree (84), Trudie Blignaut (72) and Rev van der Watt who all joined in the fun and completed the 5 km. IS

Through the COMPLETE BIBLE

The Vanderkloof Dutch Reformed Church in the Northern Cape celebrated Bible Sunday on 28 August by reading through the whole Bible.

Most of the 63 readers that took part in the exercise, read from the Afrikaans 2020 translation that was made available for this event. Each reader was allocated with a portion to read.

The group read the complete Bible in 100 minutes and every reader received a medal as a token of appreciation for their effort.

The event was organised by Jannie and Louine van der Walt and included a delicious meal afterwards.

The church is a loyal supporter of the Bible Society and contributes annually to the distribution of Bibles. IS



The Bible has **THE ANSWERS**

The Grace Tabernacle Ministries church in Eerste River recently held a very successful Bible Olympiad.

The Bible Society of South Africa partnered with the church by donating 10 King James Version (KJV) Bibles that were used during the event, which is an annual occurrence on the church's calendar. The church is home to a Bible Academy, which offers a three-year course for students.

Other promotional material was also provided to one of the church council members and organisers of the event, Lynette Snayers-Botha.

"The event was a great success and I even distributed some of the

material in Atlantis where I presented a health workshop the following day," Lynette said. 




BIKERS for Bibles



On Sunday, 21 August the bikers from Bloemfontein and neighbouring towns came together for the first Bible Run since the Covid-19 pandemic started.

The Bloemfontein Bikers Church once again hosted the event, which was held for the seventh time. The procession of bikes travelled from the Bible House to the Bikers Church

on a designated route, where they attended the church service. During the service gospel artist Leon Ferreira performed and gave his testimony. Attendees each received a participation pin and could also purchase Bibles. The event was well supported and drew much attention with an amount of R19 868 being raised. 

Bibles reach their **DESTINATION**



Earlier this year, the Regional Head of the Bible Society's South-Eastern Region, Mveleli Saliwa and two of his colleagues, Ds Hein Barnard and Brian Ngxokolo, visited Mtyobo Public Primary School in Port Alfred in the Eastern Cape. They delivered Bibles to the Grade 7 learners.

The Bible House in Gqeberha received this particular request during the Covid-19 pandemic and could therefore not act on it immediately. However, when the lockdown regulations were lifted it was time to share the Word of God with these expectant young people. Their smiling faces as they took hold of their own Bibles showed that this gift was definitely worth the wait. **IS**

LEARNERS RECEIVE their own Bibles

It is always heartwarming to hear of a young person discovering the Bible for the first time.

Gail Shabangu, a teacher at the Phumzile Primary School in Vlaklaagte, Mpumalanga, recently requested Bibles for her learners. Part of the Bible Society's mission of a Bible for everyone is equipping primary school learners with the Word of God through its Bibles for Grade 7 learners project. The Bible Society therefore supplied the school with New Testaments that also contain Psalms and Proverbs.

"One learner said she will underline the verses she loves. Another said

she will read her Bible every night before going to sleep and put it on her bedside," a grateful teacher Gail said. **IS**



DONATION OF NEW TESTAMENTS

can help many



The Bible Society's Eastern Region recently presented New Testaments to some of its partners in an effort to make local churches aware of the resources available.

"Our Regional Committee members each received a copy of the New Testament plus an additional 10 New Testaments for their church outreach programme," explained Pastor Brian Gopaul, Relationship Ambassador for the Eastern Region.

A pastors' forum in Phoenix also received copies of these New Testaments and was encouraged to use them in their outreach projects in impoverished communities.

These New Testaments have been made available to the Bible Society for distribution thanks to a large donation by the Bible Society of Brazil. **IS**

Partners visit BIBLE HOUSE

Christian Smith and Keith Neigenfind of the Pocket Testament League (PTL) recently visited the Bible House in Cape Town. This organization is one of the Bible Society's strategic partners and supplies us with the *Bread of Life* booklets that contain the Gospel of John. Christian (Director of International Partnerships and Operations) and Keith (Donor Ambassador) met with the Bible Society's Dr Ruth Jonas (Scripture Programme Specialist) to discuss the ongoing distribution of this resource as part of the Bible Society's mission. They were accompanied by Chrystal



Nissen-Davids, Project Coordinator of Global Voice of Prayer, one of Bible Society's partners in the distribution of these booklets. **IS**

The Word of God **TRUMPS ALL**

A timely donation of Bibles has allowed a pastor to beautifully illustrate how one should always rely on the Word of God.

Earlier this year, Pastor Christo Maree from the Bible Society visited the Full Evangelical Church in Louis Trichardt. During his talk with the congregation he presented a number of New Testaments to the presiding pastor, Philip de Jager.

Some two weeks later, Pastor De Jager was preparing for a men's gathering. His theme was "What to do when what you read in black and white is only red?" and addressed the economic hardships felt all over, as well as the general despondency with the current state of affairs in the country. He even received a request from a local business man, asking the men's group to intercede for the local business people during their meeting the following day.

"I purposely took some of these Bibles, with the words of Jesus printed in red, with me to the gathering. During the meeting I spoke to the men about this theme. I impressed on them the necessity of allowing the Word of God to feed us in times of difficulty. It is the words of Jesus that will give us hope. That is what we do when what we read in black and white only shows red – we take God at His Word! God said it; we believe it! **IS**



Give now

Have you ever considered making a contribution with the use of SnapScan?

Visit the Bible Society's website www.biblesociety.co.za and click on the **Give now** button. This will take you to a page with a variety of easy ways to make your contribution.

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bible society
of south africa

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