

## From the Chairman

In my first Chairman's statement I am delighted to report that Bible Society is in great heart, thriving, achieving much of what we aspire to, and looking forward to achieving even more in the future. Donation income has continued its upward trend, enabling a great deal of innovative work to develop alongside our traditional activities. This is due to a dedicated staff team, led by our Chief Executive, James Catford, a high degree of professionalism running through the organisation from top to bottom, and the commitment and enthusiasm of the Trustees. It is a real delight to work with so many who are committed to getting God's Word out on the street, into the marketplace, and back into our culture and my thanks go to all of them.

In this report I am focussing on our overseas links and involvement, in part because much has been happening around the world, but mainly because the major part of our charitable spend goes overseas, mostly through the good offices of United Bible Societies (UBS), the umbrella body that co-ordinates the work of the Bible Society movement.

In September 2010 we held the 8<sup>th</sup> UBS World Assembly in Seoul, South Korea. This occurs every 6 years and brings together leading members of Bible Societies from around the world. Over 400 delegates from 140 countries met for a week to review what we had achieved and plan for the future. As a result 'The Seoul Statement' was produced, affirming our roots and core beliefs but also looking forward to see where the Holy Spirit is leading this extraordinary global collection of Christians from across the denominational spectrum.

The Statement affirms our unity in diversity across the barriers of gender, age, race, culture and Christian tradition and stresses the need to work together across the fellowship and with like-minded agencies to make the most of opportunities and resources. It also states that we need to keep our governance under review to keep it fit for purpose in a rapidly changing world.

We reaffirmed that 'in the context of growing needs and limited resources, we will develop and maintain a strategic balance of translation, production, distribution, engagement and advocacy activities.' I have had the privilege of seeing some of these at first hand:

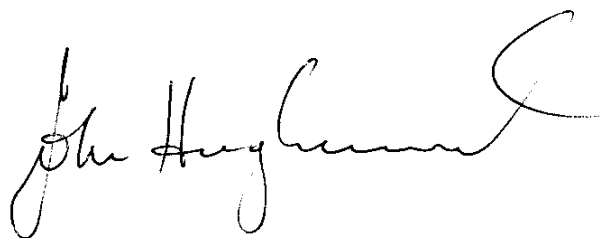
- Translation: Recently the Cameroonian Bible Society celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the publication of the first complete Bible in 'Guiziga', one of the local languages. Some 10,000 people turned out to celebrate this launch; clearly having the Word of God in their heart language met a real desire of those Christians to engage with the Scriptures.
- Production and distribution: In Seoul we visited the Korean Bible Society's printing works, a large factory producing Bibles for export as well as local use. The Amity Printing Company in Nanjing, China is even bigger, now turning out some 10 million Bibles a year, many for use in that great country, but also for export.
- Engagement and advocacy: The work we do at home engaging with politics, the arts, education and the media is of growing interest to our brothers and sisters around the world. Recent gatherings in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia for the 'African Biblical Leadership Initiative' ('ABLI') have involved Christian leaders from church, business and politics (from all over Africa) to discuss how their faith can have a positive effect on their societies as a whole. The Indian Bible Society is celebrating its bi-centenary and, as part of that, a meeting was arranged between two British Christian parliamentarians and a number of the political leaders in Delhi. One of the main topics for debate was the plight of the people of the lowest caste, who are very much the 'under class', often without the rights, let alone the privileges that 'basic human rights' would demand. ABLI dealt with the same issue in the African context, and also the burning question of good national governance. (My counterpart, the chairman of the Cameroonian Bible Society is also the chair of their national anti-corruption league!)

I close my introduction to this report by quoting from the ABLI declaration of 2010 (with my

additions in parentheses): 'We believe the Bible is the Word of God, and its message of spiritual transformation has been (and will continue to be) central to positive development (for people and nations) in education, in poverty alleviation, in reconciliation, in the development of democracy and good governance. The Bible and the God it reveals has brought transformation to entire nations (as well as individuals)'.

Those at Bible Society are working hard to fulfil its vision for the Bible to be 'available, accessible and credible'. Their work is made possible by the prayers and gifts of our many supporters to whom, on behalf of the Society, I offer my deepest thanks, and ask for your continuing support for our mission, both in this country and across the world.

'God is working his purpose out' but he sometimes relies on his people to help! Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Hughesdon'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'J' and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Hughesdon  
**Chairman**