

Our Year



2019 – 2020



This Annual Report is being published in a dramatically changed context as the world has been gripped by the coronavirus pandemic. But that shouldn't in any way dilute our gratitude for all that's been achieved during this last year and all we're able to learn from it. Our conviction is that the God who has helped us in Bible mission so far is the same God who is able to strengthen us and make us fruitful in Bible mission in the future. Our gratitude for what God has done is the basis of our faith in what God will do.

Our work last year was shaped by five strategic objectives. We wanted to be a trusted voice, winning confidence because we do good work and sound research. We wanted to be a trusted meeting place, both for church leaders engaged in Bible mission and as a focal point for the Bible in society. We wanted to equip and mentor a new generation, teaching and training Bible communicators. We wanted to inspire the culture with the Bible, communicating in ways that speak to today's world. And we wanted to catalyse Bible-inspired change: the world isn't what God intends it to be, and the Bible is a transformational resource.

You'll find evidence for all this in what follows. Bible Society is continually learning and growing. We hold ourselves to the highest standards of accountability, which means our supporters know that when they give to this work we'll do what we say we're going to do – and we're deeply, deeply grateful for the thousands of people who share our vision and make our work possible.

This report tells you what we've done towards our strategic objectives in 2019–2020 – though these headline facts and figures can't do justice to the real stories behind them. Our supporters are enabling God's work in this country and around the world, transforming individuals, churches and whole societies by the power of his word.

I want to commend this report to you not just as a record of what, with God's help and your support, we've done in 2019–2020, but as an expression of hope in God's future. We're living through very testing times, but God remains faithful. This year, Bible Society's mission will be as important as ever. The Bible will continue to change the world. And no matter what the challenges we and our partners face in the future, we are looking to God to strengthen our hands and make us wise, creative and effective in our response.

In the words of Lamentations: 'But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness' (3.21–23, ESV).

Engaging churches, building partnerships

We believe Bible Society is part of what Christ is doing with his Church – but only part. We want Bible Society to be a **trusted meeting place** for others who share our vision for the place of the Bible in the world.

One way we do this is through our Church Engagement Team. In the last year, they've spoken at events from the Channel Isles to Newcastle, Wadebridge to Margate, encouraging fresh ways of bringing the Bible alive in our culture and inspiring churches with what's happening globally.

They're joined by volunteers who help at festivals and events, represent us as speakers, fundraise and pray for us – and around 67,000 supporters receive our regular Word In Action newsletter. Mobilising people who share our vision helps us take the Bible to the world.

In 2019 our Church Engagement Team:

Spoke at 194 churches

Attended 115 events

Held meetings with 160 church leaders

Helped tens of thousands of people know more about the Bible and Bible Society's resources

Among our volunteers are:



Our 424 **Action Groups**, locally based and committed to encouraging prayer, raising awareness and fundraising



The Event Team, whose 188 members serve at festivals and other events alongside staff members



The Support Team – nine individuals who serve alongside staff in the Swindon office



Our 451-strong **Church Team**, representing Bible Society in their home churches



The Speaker Team, whose 68 members visit churches and speak on our behalf



The Mary Jones Team – 28 people local to Bala, who help staff at Mary

As we work with faithful and talented volunteers, we're building momentum in our work to see increased confidence in the Bible in the Church, a better quality of conversation about the Bible in society and the transformative embodiment of the Bible in the world.

'Reading the Bible every day I realise that it has an answer to every problem – it is the best handbook for life ever – and it is why my wife and I are passionate about supporting Bible Society to get the gospel into every country.'
– **Simon, Harrogate**



2018 winner Luke Bradford (left) was presented with the award for his White Gold pitch by actor and director Ray Panthaki (Photo credit: Scot Openshaw)

Pitching for change

Bible Society wants to change the conversation around the Bible, so it becomes normal to take it seriously as a source of wisdom. So one of our strategic objectives is to **inspire the culture** – and The Pitch is one of the results.

The Pitch encourages budding filmmakers to use the Bible to inspire their work. Entrants get feedback from industry experts, while finalists are invited to a residential course and spend a weekend pitching their idea to the judges. The winner gets production support to make their film and there's also a trip to Hollywood, where the filmmaker gets the chance to impress leading producers. Your support is helping us bring Bible stories to life in new ways.

In 2019:

The Pitch celebrated its 10th anniversary. During the last decade it's produced 14 films and inspired many more. It expanded to South Africa in 2017, and has a strong relationship with the Bible Society of Portugal.

Past winner PULSAR, directed by Aurora Fearnley and based on the story of Jonah, won the Best Faith Film award at the Carmarthen Bay Film Festival and has been viewed more than 1 million times on the YouTube Dust channel

The Second, based on the birth stories in Matthew and Luke and winner of the The Pitch South Africa in 2017, played at the Hamilton Film Festival in Ontario alongside another winner, Ramsey, based on the story of Abraham and Isaac. The Second was accepted for the prestigious 2020 Pan African Film Festival

White Gold, pitched by 2019 winner Luke Bradford and based on the experiences of people living with albinism in Africa, was made into a

short film. Inspired by the story of Job, it's already winning plaudits and being booked for film festivals

The Pitch 2019 had 123 submissions, the second highest number of submissions ever

Web traffic to pages on how to enter The Pitch was up by nearly 25 per cent on the previous year, from 13,847 to 17,286

The Pitch's website attracted interest from 165 countries



The Pitch Director Luke Walton said:

'The Pitch is part of Bible Society's investment in an area of our culture that profoundly shapes how people think about moral and ethical issues and respond to life events. We want the Bible to inspire that culture, and we've been hugely encouraged to see how creatively filmmakers are responding to the stories it tells.'

#SheToo: Bible stories for women



#SheToo producer Rosie Dawson (left) with Bible Society's Hazel Southam at the 2019 Premier Digital Awards ceremony (Photo credit: Premier)

Once someone starts to read the Bible, they soon come up against troubling stories of violence against women. Today, and rightly, we're highly sensitive to these. So how can we make sense of them in today's world, both for Christians who might struggle to understand what they mean and for those on the margins of faith for whom they're a genuine stumbling-block? We've responded with a series of podcasts in which leading scholars discuss them in ways that help us see beneath the surface of these 'texts of terror' and **inspire the culture** to think differently about the Bible. We want to resource you to live with wisdom and integrity in God's world.

#SheToo was presented by religion journalist and broadcaster Rosie Dawson

The final episode features Revd Dr Helen Paynter, Director of the Centre for the Study of the Bible and Violence, talking about how we can preach on such complex stories today

The podcasts were listened to more than 26,000 times in 2019

The stories considered include Hagar (Genesis 16), Jephthah's daughter (Judges 11), the Levite's Concubine (Judges 19) and the rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13)

#SheToo won the Premier Digital Podcast of the Year award 2019

Twitter posts about the podcasts were seen nearly 58,000 times

On average, over 11,000 people saw one of our #SheToo Facebook posts

The Bible is full of stories, but it can be hard to translate some of them for our own time. We want to resource Bible communicators to be able to show how it speaks powerfully and relevantly today. These podcasts help us imagine a different way of understanding the stories and give a voice to those who've been voiceless.

Bible Society's Head of Strategic Communications Rachel Rounds said:

'Contributors to the #SheToo podcasts showed how the Bible speaks into the real-life situations of women. Reactions have been overwhelmingly positive. Many of these texts have been used to silence women over the centuries or have simply been ignored by those who find them uncomfortable. But they are in the Bible for a reason. I am proud that Bible Society has opened up a conversation that has been shut down for too long.'



Students at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (Photo credit: Clare Kendall/Bible Society)

A growing Church needs deep roots

The Church in China is growing at an extraordinary rate – by one estimate there are around 100 million Christians there. But in a country that's yet to be convinced of the value of Christianity to its people, training enough leaders and scholars to serve believers is incredibly hard. And while printing Bibles – by the Amity Printing Company in Nanjing – is legal, getting them into the hands of needy Christians is another thing. That's why Bible Society is investing in China, to **equip and mentor** believers with Bibles, study materials and other resources. We're called to partner with the Church in China, to help it put down deep biblical roots – and your gifts are what makes that possible.

1. We get Bibles to those who need them

Most Christians in mainland China – around 70 per cent – live in rural regions, and many are very poor. We fund Bible paper to keep the price down so believers can afford them. For the poorest people, we provide Bibles free.

*In 2019 we supported the production of 2,000,000 affordable Bibles
We distributed 50,000 Bibles free to those who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford them
We've also distributed more than 30,000 large-print Bibles, free and paid-for*

2. We help with discipleship training

Responding to the lack of a systematic approach for discipleship training in China, we've helped develop a discipleship training programme and resources.

In 2019, we distributed 4,536 sets of teaching materials to growing Christians.

3. We support poor preachers and students

There's a huge need in China not just for Bibles but for Bible teaching. In some provinces like Yunnan, Gansu and Guizhou, believers live in mountainous areas where it's hard to travel.

In 2019 we funded 40 motorcycles for use by Bible teachers

Yang Changsheng, from Shuicheng county in Guizhou, said:

'My journeys have become easier, and I've shortened a lot of travel time, so that I can spend more time with the believers there. It is also easy to carry a box of Bibles on the back of a motorcycle.'

When students graduate as pastors or preachers, they can face financial hardship. We aim to free as many as we can from financial stresses in their first year of ministry after graduation. We want to invest in and nurture the next generation of leaders and teachers.

In 2019 we supported 53 needy preachers

We aim to provide literature and resources for students, preachers and teachers. Around 800 new students enrol in Bible schools and seminaries every year, and thousands more study locally. Bible students often come from poor backgrounds and can't afford to buy study material.

In 2019 we provided 14,697 books and Bibles to 2,663 preachers and Bible school students

4. We equip Bible teachers and seminary students

The Church in China is crying out for trained leaders who'll go on to train other leaders and strengthen the people of God. From basic training for village preachers to high-level academic study, we support Bible learning.

In 2019 we:

- Supported two-day seminars in Jiangsu (51 students) and Shanghai (170 students)
- Supported doctoral students in Scotland and Singapore
- Sponsored four Bible lecturers at Shandong Seminary
- Offered scholarships to 11 MTh students

5. We provide seminaries with Bible resources

Academic textbooks and study materials are often very expensive and China's seminaries and Bible colleges struggle to afford them. We help set up and equip Bible Resource Rooms (BRR) in seminaries, with Bibles, commentaries, dictionaries and books relating to biblical studies and Bible translation, in both Chinese and English and both printed and electronic. We also provide basic Bible resources for Bible training centres.

In 2019 we funded material benefiting 1,290 students, including:

- A new Bible Resource Room at Jilin Catholic Seminary with 875 books and Logos software
- An additional 224 books to the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary's BRR
- More than 200 study books for each of two Bible training schools in Shandong Province
- A digital commentary set for Huadong Seminary's BRR

Resources for the Church in China help equip leaders to lead biblically. They need good teaching in order to be able to teach well.



A lady taking notes at a Maasai literacy class (Photo credit: Bible Society)

A flourishing Church changes lives

In Africa, we partner with Bible Societies who operate in some of the most challenging situations in the world – not just materially but spiritually. Our aim is to **equip and mentor** believers who share our passion for making the Bible known. We come alongside them with the experience we've gained in our long history – and we listen to and learn from them too.

Pew Research predicts that in 2050, nearly 38 per cent of the world's Christians are expected to be living in Africa – and the challenges for discipleship and spiritual growth are huge. With your help we're partnering with local Christians to share in the transformation of a continent.

Bible distribution

The Bible Societies we work with want to get God's word into the hands of as many people as possible.

In Mozambique, devastated by Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, the Bible Society depot in Beira was destroyed with its stock of Bibles and other literature. We funded the rebuilding of the warehouse and the distribution of 36,000 Bibles in Portuguese, Citswa, Ndu, Shona, Chichewa and Sena. Our partners said: 'When the Bible Society arrived with the Bibles, it was seen as a sign of hope for the communities.'

Translation

We resource translations so people are able to read the Bible in their heart language.

In Eritrea we've completed the translation of the New Testament into Blin, spoken by around 100,000 people. Until now they've never had the Bible in their own language. Translators are now working on the Old Testament.

Literacy

Equipping people to read the Bible for themselves opens up new spiritual horizons for them. It also dramatically improves their prospects in many other areas of life.

In South Sudan, wracked by civil war, over 13 per cent of the population – with women particularly affected – are illiterate. We funded a cluster of three literacy centres, with a co-ordinator, 12 teachers and three facilitators, and distributed 1,500 Bibles.

Mary Apuru Noah (47, with six children) says:

'I opted to join literacy solely to read the Bible in Jur Modo, my language, to understand it and apply what it says in my life and encourage my children to do the same. I am encouraging my fellow women to join me in learning so as to be effective in the community.'

Trauma Healing

The Bible is being used to heal the wounds of conflict, abuse and neglect through trauma healing programmes based on Bible stories.

In Mozambique we've helped the Bible Society there to translate the Trauma Healing course for the local context and mentor pastors and church leaders to deliver it. In the capital, Maputo, where the rate of domestic violence is very high, 46 pastors attended training sessions.

Community building

Our partner Bible Societies often work in places where communities don't function well due to poverty or social breakdown. Bible-based ministry can change behaviour for good.

In Sierra Leone, we've equipped Soaring Eagles youth clubs to help tackle an epidemic of violence, prostitution, gang warfare and abuse. Two thousand young people have been reached and over 1,000 have accepted Christ as their saviour.

Capacity building

Not everything we do makes exciting headline news, but it's vital nonetheless. We equip other Bible Societies to help themselves, with training and infrastructure.

In Mali we provided a 4x4 vehicle for Bible distribution in remote places and improved the internet connection for the Bible Society headquarters.

ABLI

The African Biblical Leadership Initiative conference in October brought together more than 500 African leaders in politics, the Church and civil society. Meeting in Rwanda's capital city of Kigali 25 years after the Rwandan Genocide, contributors spoke of the power of Scripture in healing the traumas of violence, abuse and neglect, and representatives laid a wreath at the National Genocide Memorial.

The chairman of the board of the Bible Society of Rwanda, Archbishop Antoine Kambanda, told the conference: 'We have discovered the power of forgiveness.'

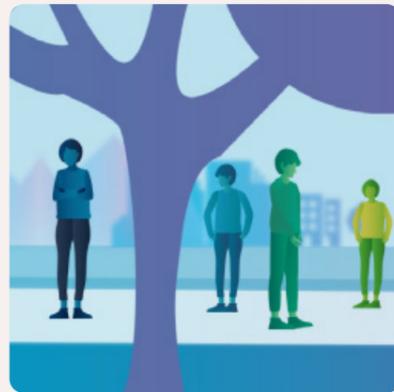
Our year at a glance

Bible Society relies on committed supporters like you, who pray and give because they share our vision for the transformation of individuals and societies through the Bible. We work in England and Wales and overseas – particularly in China, Africa and the Middle East – and in partnership with 147 other Societies in 200 countries and territories.

In 2019 we printed and distributed thousands of Bibles. We resourced believers in some of the most challenging contexts in the world, helping the Church grow deeper and stronger. We thought deeply and creatively about how the Bible can impact our culture in the UK. We brought the Bible to thousands of children in schools, and we worked in prisons with some of the most marginalised people in society. Here's some of what we achieved.



We reduced our UK carbon emissions by a fifth, cut emissions from energy use drastically and offset all our remaining emissions. At every level, we're aiming to match what we do with what we say.



We produced a groundbreaking analytical tool that lets Bible communicators understand how people in their areas feel about the Bible and Christian faith. For those who want to connect with people where they really are, Lumino is an essential tool.



We supported thousands of believers in China through printing Bibles, funding study materials in seminaries and helping students afford to study. We're helping the Church there to put down deep spiritual roots.



In Africa, we distributed Bibles, resourced literacy programmes, translated the Scriptures, resourced trauma healing programmes and helped build stronger communities. We're taking part in the transformation of a continent.



In the Middle East, we trained leaders, utilised TV and radio, engaged with children and young people, worked with refugees and distributed Scriptures. We resourced believers to be not just faithful but fruitful.



In the UK, we reached a record 900,000 primary school children with the Bible through our Open the Book storytelling programme.

Our year at a glance



We brought Bible stories into the heart of today's culture through The Pitch film fund, as filmmakers drew on Scripture to create exciting new takes on ancient stories.



At a time when we've become highly sensitised to violence against women, we tackled head-on some of the most troubling stories in the Bible. Our #SheToo podcast series saw leading scholars explain what lies behind the 'texts of terror' in Scripture.



'When I was in prison, you visited me,' said Jesus. Some of those who most need the gospel message of hope have found it because we've provided the Bible for them. We've worked through prison chaplains to help prisoners engage with the Scriptures.

Our strategic objectives – we want to:



Be a trusted voice



Be a trusted meeting place



Equip and mentor a new generation



Inspire the culture with the Bible



Catalyse Bible-inspired change

In an age where Christianity in Western culture has been pushed from the centre to the margins, we want to see Christians confident in the Scriptures

In a culture where the Bible is seen as a book just for believers, we want to change the national conversation about the Scriptures

In a world that isn't what God wants it to be, we want to demonstrate the transformational nature of the Bible as a force for good



Palestinian children from Bethlehem praying at a summer camp (Photo credit: Bible Society)

A Church under pressure

One of Bible Society's objectives is to **equip and mentor** a new generation of believers to be faithful witnesses to the gospel of Christ.

The Church in the Middle East and North Africa is bearing heavy burdens. Partly this is because political instability and insecurity bear particularly heavily on Christians, and partly it's because they're deliberately targeted for their faith.

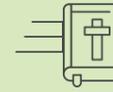
While in the West we might feel the natural response to this situation would be to keep our heads down and say nothing, in the Middle East many Christians see this time as an opportunity for witness and service.

Churches are in the forefront of helping with the refugee crisis. They offer healing programmes to help restore those who've experienced trauma. They work to strengthen the Christian community, but also to minister to all those in need.

Through our deep partnerships with Bible Societies in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Morocco, the Gulf and our Bible Lands team, you make it possible for us to offer the life-changing gift of the word of God.

The Middle East: A Church under pressure

In 2019, working through our partners we helped to:



Distribute 231,000 Scripture portions across the region



Reach out to 18,000 people in Israel through evangelistic church events



Train church leaders in Algeria and in Morocco, where there've been 12,000 downloads of the audio Old Testament



Support 5,000 refugees through our Support Centre in Iraq



Engage with 12,000 children in Palestine through summer camps and schools work



Provide Bibles and Scripture materials in Turkey through book fairs and exhibitions



Train 160 youth ministers in the Jordanian Catholic Church



Reach out to 35,000 people in Algeria through TV and radio programmes, and work with migrants and in prisons



Facilitate visits to 92 church leaders in Syria and 47 house churches in Morocco to equip and encourage them

By investing in partners working in the Middle East, we're helping the Church to sustain a witnessing presence there. As parts of the region are facing the massive internal displacement – which affects Christians as well – we're using our time, talent and treasure to equip and mentor believers to remain not just faithful but fruitful as they live out the gospel in the most challenging conditions they've seen for centuries.

A team member describes an encounter in Jordan with a refugee from Syria we're calling 'Omar'

Sitting in Omar's bare apartment on a hot, dry day, it was a stark reminder of the incredibly simple lifestyle he was living in his new country. He had been forced to give up his wealth and all his possessions in order to escape Syria. Yet in some ways, he told me he now feels more content than ever before.

'After I [came to] know Jesus, I also had hard times, but I felt God with me. This was the first time I've felt God with me and that he cares for me,' he said.

He explained how he started to practise the teachings of the Bible and now his wife saw a different person in him. This led her to come to know Jesus too. Omar said, 'I was practising the Bible and she saw this. Many people said that I'm a different person. I used to face the bad things with bad things, but after knowing Jesus I am turning the other cheek.'



Open the Book is Bible Society's ministry to primary school children in England and Wales. Through a network of volunteers resourced by dedicated professionals, we make the Bible come alive through exciting dramatic presentations in school assemblies. We don't preach, we just let the Bible speak for itself. But as we do, we're sowing seeds of faith and – in line with our strategic objectives – beginning to **equip and mentor** a new generation. We rely on thousands of supporters like you to make that happen.

In 2019, in round numbers we:

- Increased our national Storyteller team by 734, making a total of 17,200
- Reached 900,000 children
- Were invited into 268 new schools, making a growth of 211 from the previous year
- Trained 642 Storytellers
- Received enquiries from 40 schools a month
- Put on 184 training events
- Target** to be in 50 per cent of primary schools by 2028



Children at St Patrick's school in County Durham act out the story of the Walls of Jericho (Photo credit: Layton Thompson)

North East

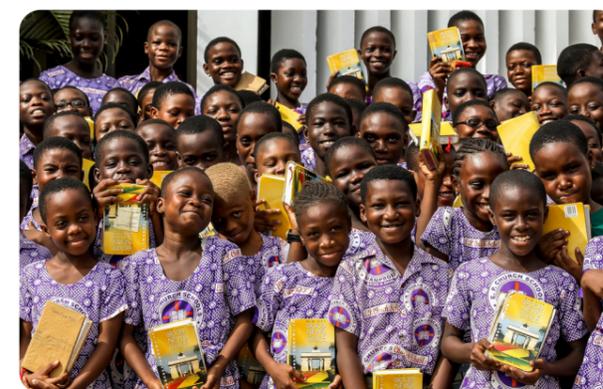
The North East of England saw a huge upsurge of interest in Catholic schools following a pilot scheme in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. At a Catholic RE teachers' conference, of the 110 schools represented, 52 said they were interested in an Open the Book team visiting them.

A child at St Bernadette's school in Newcastle said: 'It's like a whole new world in front of your eyes, a never-ending picture book like a pop-up book.'

Anniversary

2019 was a year of rejoicing marking 20 years since Open the Book was founded. Over a thousand people took part in events around the country, with the largest hosted by the Bishop of Gloucester, Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, at Gloucester Cathedral. The celebrations culminated with a national event at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, and concluded with a return to Bedford, where it all began. Around 30 local teams organised their own celebrations too.

After the event at Wells Cathedral, Cheryl Govier said: 'Having led OtB teams in the past, I've seen first-hand the impact on children and staff in schools. To share in this celebration, recognising the many amazing people who give freely of their time every week to live and tell the story of Jesus through OtB, was incredibly special!'



Ghana

Open the Book has been working in Ghana since 2015 in an international pilot project. At the end of 2019 there were 84 Storytellers in 19 schools. The headteacher of one school, John Ambonay, said: 'Open the Book has done so much for my school'. Since the project started four years ago, he said, behaviour in school has visibly improved, children have stopped insulting each other and more pupils are completing their education.

One child, 11-year-old Daniel, said: 'I love Bible stories because they can change your life, the way you behave and how you talk to people.'

Alison Clark, Head of Open the Book:

The schools

The doors are wide open. Historically, members of churches contacted us and said, 'Please will you come and train us, and help us to approach a local school?' But now the impetus is coming from schools – we had about 40 schools a month last year contact Open the Book to say, 'Can we have a team?'

That's really exciting, because the word is out there now that Open the Book is professional – children love it and the regulators hold it in high esteem.

The future

When Open the Book started we were in a situation where professional people were being offered early retirement. They were often leaving their work career at 55 and they could afford to give something back to the community. That position's changing, so people will have to work longer. So we need to start working with millennials. We need to think about parents, because they're waiting longer to go back to work – we could make better use of them.

We're working with university Christian Unions to ask if this is something students would do. We're looking at training for curacy candidates so that when they get into a parish they could start a team out of their local church community.

The children

The children love Open the Book. Once you've been in two or three times they know what it means – they'll greet you as you walk into the school and say, 'Is it an Open the Book assembly? How brilliant!' They know they're going to be asked to take part, so little hands are going up.

At first when you go into a school you find there are just one or two members of staff. But they enjoy them so much that the longer you're there the more the teaching staff will come in.

Some schools ask if we can leave copies of The Lion Storyteller Bible so the children can retell the story during the week. And then when you've left you bump into them in your local community and they'll say, 'I saw you as part of the Open the Book team' or 'I remember what you were telling me last week about forgiveness.'

The Bible Course

One of Bible Society's most popular offerings is *The Bible Course*, an eight-session video introduction to the Big Story of the Bible created by Andrew Ollerton and presented by him and Heather Preston. The course is a resource for churches and enquirers, fast-paced and accessible but at the same time thorough and well-researched – and it's a key part of meeting our strategic objective to **equip and mentor** a new generation.

Earlier in 2019 *The Bible Course* went on tour, with Andrew and comedian Paul Kerensa presenting The Greatest Story Ever Toured in venues around the country. Your prayers and your support enabled us to bless God's people with the Scriptures and the tour led to many more people taking The Bible Course back to their churches.

In 2019–2020:

The Greatest Story Ever Toured attracted more than 2,000 people in 12 locations around England and Wales

Venues included Gateshead, Liverpool, Cardiff and Bodmin, with three performances in London

The Bible Course manual sold over 12,000 copies in 2019, including large print and Welsh editions

Over 654 *Bible Course* DVDs were sold, with a further 1,321 website downloads

A special edition was piloted in prisons (see page 19)

'It allows you to engage with the structure of the Bible, to get a better overview of things, but at the same time treating it quite lightly. The humour helps you remember stuff' – audience member.



We've brought our creativity and imagination to bear on God's word. And in showing how the stories in the Bible fit together to make one big Story, we're equipping and mentoring believers to be more secure in their faith.

Creative care for God's creation



One of our strategic objectives is to become a **trusted voice**. For you to trust us, you need to see we're authentic. This means how we undertake our mission matters as much as the result. One area impacted by this is creation care.

Bible Society's activities have an impact on the earth through where and how often we travel, how we use energy, and the resources we consume. But the Bible says that 'The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord' (Psalm 24.1).

We're committed to reducing our carbon emissions and living joyfully in God's world.

Our 2018–2019 carbon dioxide emissions are being audited by Climate Stewards. They'll be offset through supporting international projects proposed by United Bible Societies and tree planting here in England and Wales through an exploratory partnership with the Woodland Trust.

We've also started changing the landscape around Bible Society's Swindon headquarters. A redundant green space has been transformed into an orchard thanks to staff who donned their wellies on a muddy November day, working with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. There are benches for people to sit, and it will bless the whole community. It'll also be a haven for bees and other pollinators, and birds.



You can trust us to take responsibility for our part of creation.



New light for Bible communicators

What do people today really think about faith? It's a fundamental question for organisations like Bible Society that exist to spread the word of God. If we're to be a **trusted voice**, you need to know that what we do is based on genuine, accurate insight.

So Bible Society undertook a groundbreaking study of attitudes to faith and the Bible in England and Wales. Conducted by YouGov, it involved responses from nearly 20,000 adults who were asked about their churchgoing habits, what they thought about God and the Bible, and about their values and priorities in life. Out of that came the Lumino website, launched in November.



Respondents are broken down into eight 'personas' or spiritual types on the basis of a rigorous analysis of the data



Ranging from Bible Loving to Bible Dismissive, these personas describe people's beliefs, values and attitudes to faith and the Bible, alongside data like their age, gender, life stage and income



Users are able to enter their postcode and get a breakdown of the personas in their local area, so they have a picture of the spiritual types to whom they're communicating



The site also has data like church-going frequency and denominational affiliation



There's a 'live' section that monitors what people are searching for on Google around the word 'Bible', what they're tweeting and what's being written on Question and Answer forums



The site's regularly updated with new written and video content aimed at unpacking the data and helping Bible communicators use it to refine their message

Lumino's strapline is, 'Shining a light on the state of faith in England and Wales today'. As we're increasingly becoming a trusted voice, Bible Society's research will drive your evangelistic and cultural engagement for years.

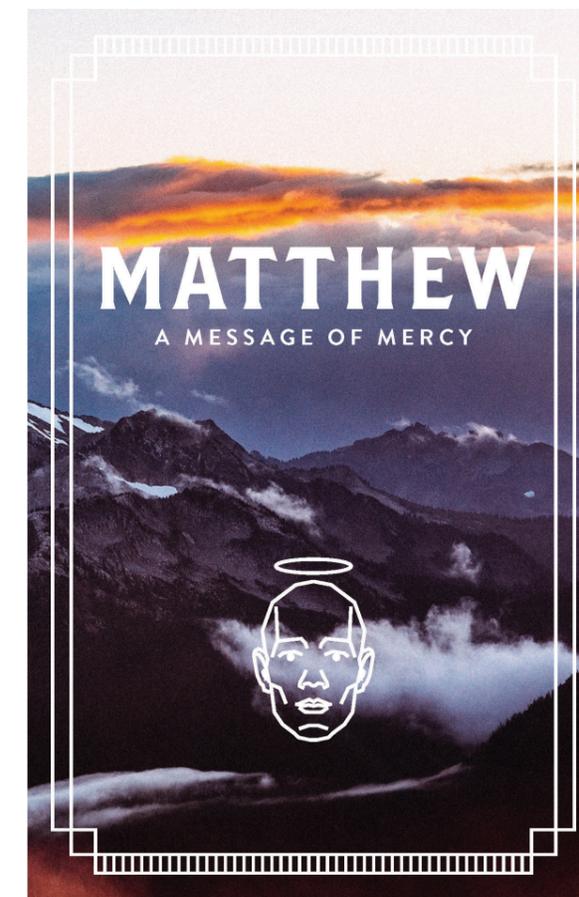


'When I was in prison'

We believe individuals and communities can be radically transformed by encountering God through the Bible. So one of our strategic objectives is to **catalyse Bible-inspired change**. We want to help bring the Bible to bear on some of the deep problems facing the world today – and through your generosity, we can.

One way we do this is through engaging with ministry to prisoners. We're inspired in this by one of our early heroines, prison reformer Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845). She campaigned to improve conditions for inmates, but she also introduced Bible reading groups, believing the Bible could speak to their needs.

Bible Society still resources work in prisons today, providing Bibles and study materials free of charge through prison chaplains as well as offering workshops with prisoners themselves. We're giving prisoners the chance to have life-changing encounters with the Bible for themselves.



In 2019:

We created a Gospel with particular value for the experiences of prisoners, *Matthew – A Message of Mercy* – which includes reflections and prayers written by prison chaplains on the theme of mercy and justice. Nearly 2,000 copies were ordered for prisons alone in just three weeks

A special funding appeal for work in prisons was our most successful ever in terms of its response rate, at 13.2 per cent

We provided 2,542 Bibles and Bible Society resources to 51 prisons

139 Bibles were provided in 10 non-English languages

The Bible Course was piloted in three prisons. One chaplain said: 'The positive attitude the session engendered is one of the best reactions I have ever seen in prison work'

Because of the successful pilot, *The Bible Course* – adapted and released as a special Prisons Edition – was adopted across the whole Prison Service for use as a Lent course in 2020

'As prisoners and sex offenders, we feel rejected by everyone. But we're accepted by Jesus'

'I learned more in 48 pages of the Bible than I did in 48 years of life.'

THE BIBLE:
CHANGING
THE WORLD
FOR GOOD

