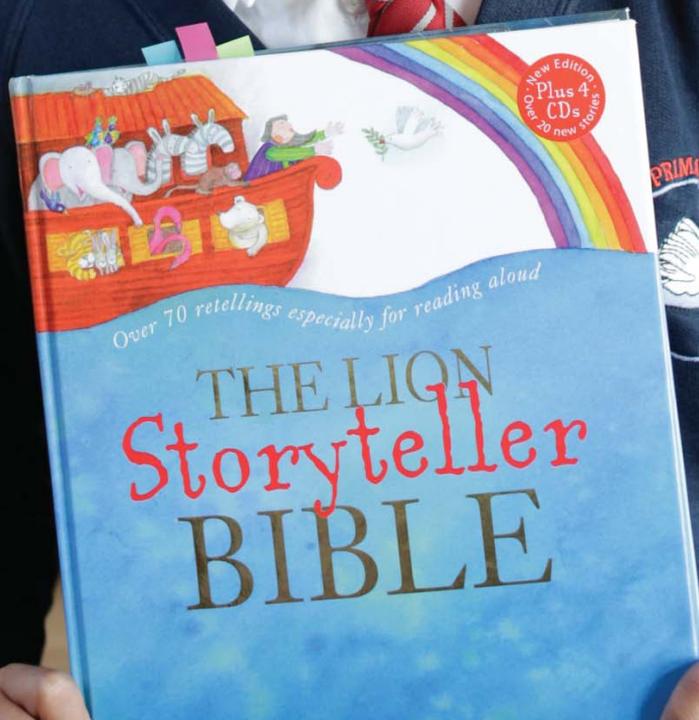


**4** Reaching a generation

**6** Healing the wounds of trauma

**8** God is a healer



At Bible Society, we are driven by a conviction that when people engage with the Bible, lives can change, for good. That's certainly my personal experience.



Photography by Bible Society

Globally, where demand for the Bible continues to grow exponentially, translation, publishing, distribution and literacy are particular priorities. At home, where the Bible is available but only one in 10 people are actively engaging with it, the challenge is to counter notions that the Bible is outdated, too difficult and irrelevant, and bring it to life. So, how do we do that?

In this edition of *Word in Action*, we focus on some of the work we are undertaking with 13,500 volunteers in over 2,400 primary schools. Our Open the Book programme brings the Bible to life in primary schools in an accessible and enjoyable way, which helps schools meet their statutory collective worship obligation. You can also read about the way in which a new video game is introducing biblical ideas to a new generation of Bible unengaged young people (p.10). In these days of political upheaval, you can read about the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast (p.3).

We need to do more to help people engage with the Bible more effectively, and, during the year ahead, we will update you on some exciting new resources that we are developing.

Thank you, as always, for working with us to offer the Bible to the world.

Paul Woolley

PS. This will be my last editorial as Interim Chief Executive. Our new Chief Executive, Paul Williams, joins us in September and will be writing this piece in future editions of *Word in Action*. Please pray for Paul as he takes up his role.



Bible a Month is helping people like Tang Xinnian in China



Photography by Andrea Rhodes

## Bible a Month tops £2m

As our regular giving programme, *Bible a Month*, approaches its 40th birthday, the annual amount donated by supporters like you has topped £2m for the first time. It's a phenomenal achievement – and is equivalent to providing more than 430,000 Bibles around the world, every year.

Just over 22,200 people give an average of £8 a month to make up this total. Around two-thirds of the money goes directly to Bible work around the world, and a third is used for projects in England and Wales.

John Ranford, Coordinator of *Bible a Month*, said, 'We're thankful and humbled by the generosity of so many people. Every single Bible has the potential to change someone's life.' Bible a Month started in 1977 to mark the Queen's Silver Jubilee, and some people have been members since

the beginning. Every year, we select the most critical projects run by our teams around the world for *Bible a Month* funding. Often, these are sensitive projects which we can't raise money for publicly.

Over the last four decades, *Bible a Month* supporters have provided audio and braille Bibles, supported vital translation work, funded Bible-based literacy classes and advocated for God's word among governments.

Donors can choose to give any amount, but the average cost of a Bible is £5. This includes investment in translation, production and distribution. All supporters receive a prayer letter six times a year.

John added, 'I'd encourage other supporters to switch to regular giving. It's the most cost-effective way to provide the Bible to the people who need it most.'

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PBPM001621  
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Front cover photography by  
Layton Thompson



# Prayer Breakfast warned over 'alienation' of Middle East Christians



Top left: Westminster Hall  
Top right: His Grace Bishop Angaelos

## The 'alienation of Christians' in the Middle East cannot be allowed to continue.

**T**hat was the message at the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast at Westminster Hall of the General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK, His Grace Bishop Angaelos.

The event is organised by Christians in Parliament and administered and sponsored by Bible Society. This year it was attended by Bible Society representatives from around the world.

'There has been a silence about this over decades,' said Bishop Angaelos, 'and this cannot be allowed to continue on our watch.'

Overall, the proportion of people in the Middle East who are Christians has dropped from 14% in 1910 to just 4% today. Church leaders and pundits have begun to ask whether Christianity will vanish from the Middle East, its cradle, after 2,000 years.

Christians in the Middle East are 'spread very thin' Bishop Angaelos said. 'This has not happened overnight. It has been the outcome of years, decades of the persecution of, marginalisation of and systematic targeting of Christians and faith communities.'

**'We must stand with them and we must continue to put our words into actions – from getting humanitarian aid to those most in need, to supporting efforts to bring reconciliation to the region in the future.'**

He called on Christians, Muslims and people of no faith to work together for the protection of the rights of Christians in the Middle East. 'Unprecedented times call for unprecedented collaboration,' he said.

The former Prime Minister, David Cameron, echoed the Bishop's words. In a statement to the assembled company, he said, 'We think of all those who have to practise their faith in fear. Across the Middle East, we know that Christians have been hounded out of their homes, forced to flee from village to village, many of them forced to renounce their faith or be brutally murdered.'

The National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast is held annually in Westminster Hall. This year it brought together some 730 people including more than 150 parliamentarians and peers, 50 ambassadors and church leaders including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the **Most Revd Justin Welby** and the Bishop of London, Rt Revd Richard Chartres.





All photography by Claire Kendall

# Reaching a generation

The extraordinary growth of our project to bring the Bible to life in primary schools

In a bright school hall, eight children are pondering the story of Noah's Ark. 'It would have been smelly,' muses six-year-old Ben. 'And scary, with the alligators and lions.' Seven-year-old Phoebe, meanwhile, is contemplating the characters' emotions: 'They would have been homesick, and impatient to get off. There were lots of animals and not much room,' she says.

This is Open the Book, our Bible storytelling programme for children in primary schools. Ben, Phoebe and six classmates dress up and, along with volunteers from their local churches, re-enact and retell this famous story during a whole-school assembly.

For some children, it may be the first time they've heard it.

Scenes like this are taking place in primary schools all over England and Wales, thanks to the phenomenal growth of Open the Book. It's three years since the project merged with Bible Society, and today we're reaching 13% of primary schools in England and Wales – that's more than 600,000 pupils in total. Open the Book is in more than 2,400 schools, and is supported by around 13,500 dedicated volunteer storytellers.

So what's behind Open the Book's extraordinary expansion? One reason is its simplicity. Matt Fletcher, Executive Headteacher of Ben and Phoebe's school, St Mary's C of E Primary in Cheltenham, said, 'Children love a story, and these are great stories. They love the storytelling, they love it as a



performance and they love seeing their friends involved. Open the Book has been a great success and I wouldn't want to be without it.'

Its other strength is the fact that relationships with schools are rooted in the local churches. Almost nine in 10 churches told us in a recent survey<sup>1</sup> that Open the Book improved their links with schools. More than a quarter of churches launched Messy Church services (family-friendly services for those who may have little church background) as a direct result of being involved in Open the Book.

Then there's the impact. Nine in 10 schools say Open the Book 'raises spirituality' among children and 96% believe it has a positive impact on the life of the school<sup>2</sup>.

In the last couple of years, we've taken on five new staff to help train

volunteers. Wales has seen some of the sharpest growth, with 178 teams now going into 277 schools. London launched its first Open the Book team in June, and there are more to come. The first international Open the Book team has even been formed in Ghana, and will be going into schools in the country's capital city, Accra and Cape Coast in the Central region.

But still we can't keep up with demand. Julie Jefferies, Development Manager of Open the Book, said, 'Every day a school approaches us wanting an Open the Book team to go in, but we simply don't have enough churches engaging with it. It's a challenging situation. It's within all of us to share God's word and it's really important that we do it for the next generation.' She added, 'My prayer is that more people will feel inspired to become part of an Open the Book team, and more children will hear Bible stories. I just want to be able to send teams into the schools that ask.'

Julie and the team are now creating a set of resources ready for 2017, based on Christian values such as courage, honesty, kindness and respect to fit with primary schools' spiritual, moral, cultural and social agenda. And training events are taking place up and down the country to prepare volunteer teams.

Meanwhile, back in Cheltenham, Ben and Phoebe are stepping out of character as Noah's son and his wife, and are heading back to class. Ben says he was 'really excited' to take part and Phoebe adds, 'It's special... we feel like they would have felt.' Next week, the Tower of Babel!



**Claire Smith**

Freelance writer  
for Bible Society

<sup>1</sup> PhD dissertation by Meleri Cray, 3,000 questionnaires sent to OtB teams registered in Britain and the Channel Islands, 652 responses received.

<sup>2</sup> 2015 survey, 165 schools responded.

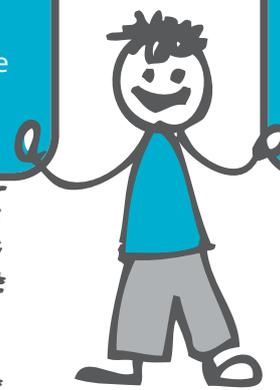
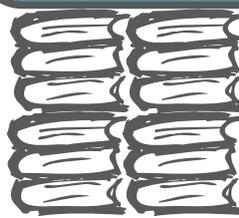
- **More than 600,000 primary school children** in England and Wales hear a Bible story at school through Open the Book
- **13,500 volunteer storytellers** are bringing the Bible to life in schools
- **More than a quarter of churches** running Open the Book have launched Messy Church to cater for families
- **96% of schools** say Open the Book has a positive impact

## Could you become a volunteer storyteller?

Find out more at [openthebook.net](http://openthebook.net) or give us a call on 01793 418355. We'll provide training, help and access to the scripted resources. You need an hour a week during term time to commit to the project, and enthusiasm to share the Bible.

**Marian Wilkinson**, a parent from Derby, said, 'After the school holidays, the thing my little boy was hoping for the most was a story from Open the Book! He is five and doesn't often tell me what happens at school, so you must have made quite an impression.'

Volunteer **Steph Wallace**, based in Newcastle, said, 'After doing the creation story, the headteacher told us it was spot on. With 100 children speaking more than 25 languages in school, the visual nature of Open the Book suited the pupils well.'



# Healing the wounds of

Photography by Clare Kendall

## 'Time for tears,'

says Father Daniel Alkhory. He stands, weeping, trying to gather himself. He's addressing an assembly of around 150 people from 10 different countries. They've travelled to the capital of Lebanon, Beirut, for the launch of a Bible Society programme to bring trauma healing to refugees, organised by the Bible Society of Lebanon. This, in a country itself recovering from recent war, which today has seen an influx of some 1.5 – 2 million refugees from neighbouring Syria, and also Iraq.

Fr Alkhory is trying to explain why trauma healing is necessary. In doing so, he tells his own story. And this is when he cries. In 2005, his family was living in Baghdad. 'We received a series of threats from a terrorist organization that we must leave in 24 hours or we would face death,' he says. 'The reason listed there was because we were Christian believers.'

'That night we started panicking and gathering a few things preparing to leave. At 7am, our father, who is also a priest, woke us up and, with two hours left, he forced us all into the car to leave. So we travelled to Kurdistan. It was my birthday. Most children in the world, in the West, celebrate their birthdays, but my birthday was very sad and distressing.' And he weeps. Now, Fr Alkhory works with fellow refugees in Erbil, Kurdistan. He's travelled to Lebanon to be trained in a trauma healing programme devised by the American Bible Society after the

Rwandan genocide. It is suited for groups of people and covers subjects like 'why is there suffering?', rape as a weapon of war and children's trauma. It uses biblical texts as reference points for suffering and hope. It is now used in 70 countries around the world, including among refugees in neighbouring Jordan (see pages 8 – 9), and is in 174 different languages.

Fr Alkhory mops his eyes, looks at the assembled company and makes his plea. 'Today, as Christians from Iraq, please help us to strengthen those who left, who you work with, to give them some resiliency and flexibility so that they can recover from their traumatic experiences, grief and struggles.' The hall erupts with clapping and cheering. There isn't a dry eye in the house.

To see just why trauma healing is necessary, we travel for an hour or so to the Bekaa Valley. There we meet Fathia and Mousa and their five children, from Syria (pictured). They live in a tent which Mousa – a builder – has constructed from wood that he's scavenged and old advertising hoardings. The one at the front of his tent shows the ideal furniture for your home: sofas and chairs in shades of purple and cream, luxurious tables and light fittings. The irony is grim.

Twelve-year-old Mariam runs to show me the family home. We sit under the light from one bulb while Fathia tells the family's story. They fled Syria three-and-a-half years ago when their home





was caught in bombing from both the government and militia. 'They started bombing during the night,' she says. 'There were a lot of bombs and we took the bus with just what we stood up in and a little bag. We were so afraid. Leaving home was like a fire burning in my heart. But we had to go.'

The Muslim family has been attending Bible study classes in the camp. Fathia says she went initially because she 'needed the love of these people.' 'From time to time I have nightmares,' she says. 'One day I dreamed of a big hole and I felt that I was falling into it with my children. I dreamed about it a lot. I saw a lot of violence in Syria. For me, the hole is the violence I saw.'

Mousa shows me his copy of the New Testament and his Quran. 'Not all Arab people are terrorists,' he says. 'My father and grandfather grew up thinking that the church and the mosque were both houses of God.'

ISIS and extremists are not our culture.

'The Bible is a holy book,' he says. 'We love the Bible study group. The best thing that I have learned is that God loves us. I knew of the mercy of God, but not about the love of God.'

Mariam is chatty and lively. The other children watch quietly from a distance. But little four-year-old Wissam is a worry. He goes for months without talking. I play with him and he brightens up, laughing, running and playing. Then when I leave, he becomes silent again. The trauma healing programme, run by the Bible Society of Lebanon, is for families like Fathia and Mousa's and for the future of traumatized children like Wissam.

**Visit**  
[biblesociety.org.uk/wia-refugeebiblecourse](http://biblesociety.org.uk/wia-refugeebiblecourse) for The Refugees and the Bible course by our Theologian in Residence, Paula Gooder, which includes small group study sessions.



**Hazel Southam**  
Chief reporter

To find out how you can help and pray for people like Fathia, Mousa and Wissam, visit [biblesociety.org.uk/prayertree](http://biblesociety.org.uk/prayertree)



All photography by Clare Kendall

# 'God is a healer'



**Hazel Southam**  
Chief reporter

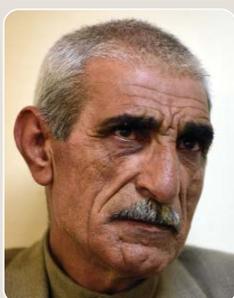
It's a warm, sunny day in the Jordanian town of Madaba. Parents are dropping their children off at school. The early morning bread sellers are out pushing their carts down the dusty roads.

And in the Church of St George, the first clutches of tourists are being introduced to one of the great sites on the pilgrimage trail: the Madaba Map. This is a mosaic map of the Middle East that dates back to the 6th century. It's the oldest known

map of the region. A lot has changed and a lot has stayed the same since it was pieced together. Time and weather have destroyed some parts of the craftsmen's art leaving blank bits where there were once cities, mountains and rivers. Today, politics and violence have destroyed some of the places on this ancient map. Some 1.6 million people from neighbouring Syria and Iraq have fled to Jordan in the last few years, increasing the country's population by an estimated 20%.

They bring nothing with them but memories and trauma. It's into that brokenness that the Bible Society of Jordan has stepped. For the last three years it has offered trauma healing to tens of thousands of adults and children alike. It is also providing much-needed aid and support to between 33-35,000 people a year.

Trauma healing is not a fix-all. But for many, both Christians and Muslims alike, these Bible-based group conversations can be the chance to talk about their experiences; for someone to listen to them; and to try to find hope and God in the midst of it all.



One of them is former cattle merchant, **Amin Ahmad Mashhoor**.

He, his wife, daughters and grandchild

welcome us into their home. It's a sparsely-furnished, very basic place, but tea is served as we sit on the mattresses and talk about life. Amin, who is from Homs in Syria, talks about his love for the cattle he worked with, how he misses them and the daily life of working outdoors. The family fled Homs four years ago because of the effect it was having on his children and grandchildren.

'The children saw bombs and people killed and injured on the ground,' says Amin. 'We took refuge in a neighbouring Christian village but they couldn't take us all because 17,000 of us had fled. I have

two grandchildren who came with me. One had a heart condition and the other, his hair had stopped growing because of shock.'

For three-and-a-half years the family, who come from a Muslim background, have been attending the local church. Set up by Pastor Amjad, who is also the Bible Society of Jordan's trauma healing counsellor for the area, the congregation is now 200-strong. Like Amin, 80% of those who attend are Muslims.

They met Pastor Amjad – who is dying of cancer – when both he and Amin's grandson were in hospital. Pastor Amjad arranged for the child to have heart surgery, for which the local church paid. And he sent them on the trauma healing courses. Amin says it's helped the whole family. 'The war impacted me psychologically. But now we are at ease because our grandchildren have someone taking care of them. Through the years that we've been going to church, many people were affected by what they saw. They were all healed of their trauma.

'I learned,' he adds, 'that God is a healer. When I didn't count on my age and experience, but on God, then I was healed.'

After we've sipped our mint tea, **Pastor Amjad** sits down with the family and reads the Bible with them. He reads from 1 Corinthians 13.13, 'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.'



'Everything falls into place with love,' he says. Pastor Amjad was diagnosed with cancer more than a decade ago. Doctors told him to go home and die. It was too late to treat him, they said. Instead, he prayed that God would give him 15 years to work for him. He's come to the end of that time.

'Why,' I ask him, 'are you spending your dying days providing trauma healing for refugees?'

'This is the heart of Christ,' he says. 'God put them on my heart. God brought the Syrians to me so I can serve them. They come with very negative thoughts, with hate in their hearts. They want revenge. But with the Holy Spirit's work we have made a difference. We focus mainly on the children as they are damaged from the war. If we work hard with them, they will grow up to be a new generation.'

**To find out how you can help and support people like Amin, visit [biblesociety.org.uk/wia-jordanrefugees](http://biblesociety.org.uk/wia-jordanrefugees)**

# THE AETHERLIGHT

C·H·R·O·N·I·C·L·E·S OF THE R·E·S·I·S·T·A·N·C·E

**A new, interactive online game that enables children to play in an imaginary, steampunk world has been used by thousands of families since it launched earlier this year.** The Aetherlight is the brainchild of New Zealand-based games studio, Scarlet City Studios.

It tells the story of the world of Aethasia. Society has fallen apart and it is up to a group of resistance fighters, led by a Jesus-like figure, The Scarlet Man, to take the country back from a hostile enemy. 'It's steeped in metaphor like Narnia for today's generation,' says Bible Society's Matthew van Duyvenbode, Director of National Programme and Research.

Eve Smith (10) from Sunderland, is a big fan of the game. She says, 'It's really fun. My favourite character is The Scarlet Man. I don't know that much about him, but I like him because nobody really knows who he is and he's very mysterious. The best bit of the game,' she adds, 'is just exploring. You get to meet new characters and have mini-quests that are really fun to play.' Children like Eve need parental permission to play the game, which costs \$10 USD per episode.

Tim Cleary, from Scarlet City, says that the aim of the game is to 'reignite young people's passion for the Bible. Connection to the Bible, especially amongst young people, can be really difficult,' he says. 'Many

young people believe the Bible is boring. However, this simply isn't the case. The Bible is a thrilling narrative. But there is clearly a disconnect.

'The Aetherlight is designed to connect young people to the Scriptures in a way that reignites their passion for the story, by telling it in a new and fresh way, allegorizing it into a steampunk world, whilst carefully balancing theology and theatrics. We hope that The Aetherlight will spark a new level of biblical engagement and passion in young people.

'However,' he says, 'it's not simply about engaging Christians in their Scriptures. The game is designed to be accessible to everyone. Whilst the game is deeply biblical, we've designed the experience to be incredibly engaging and inviting to those who come without a faith background.'

Two episodes of The Aetherlight are already available in the UK. A third is expected to be on sale in the run-up to Christmas, with three more potentially becoming available next year. Matthew van Duyvenbode says, 'This game helps you feel like you're participating in the Bible story. It's a fresh way of bringing the Bible to life.'



To play the game visit  
[theaetherlight.com](http://theaetherlight.com)

# Join the team

## Could you become a volunteer?



Photography by Layton Thompson

### We're on the hunt for people to help bring the Bible to life in churches and communities all over the country.

Already, a dedicated band of volunteers are inspiring their churches to support and pray for our mission. They raise thousands of pounds every year, which helps provide the Bible to those who need it most.

But we want to grow the team by 50 new people, to take the Bible mission to the heart of at least 50 extra churches in the coming year.

### Being a Bible Society volunteer within your church involves:

- Holding one or two fundraising events a year (we provide plenty of help to do this)
- Encouraging people to pray for our mission and work to bring the Bible to life
- Encouraging people to consider becoming regular donors to Bible Society
- Promoting our resources to help Christians engage with the Bible more deeply
- Receiving our regular volunteer newsletter, which has plenty of support and ideas for your church activities

'We are deeply grateful for our church volunteer team. You can give as little or as much time to the role as you like, and you will truly make a difference. People's lives will be changed, for good, through your support to provide the Bible.'

Susan Wingrave (pictured left)  
Volunteer Development Officer



Photography by Laurence Cremetti

**Liberté Harries** is one of our church volunteers. She said, 'Why volunteer for Bible Society? After all, the Bible is only an old book... isn't it? I am a retired prison chaplain, and if you could see the effect the Bible has on people, it would certainly amaze you. The Bible is the most exciting, life-affirming, wonderful, breathtaking, fantastic, amazing book! After all, it is the word of God, and shows us God himself. So yes, please, please volunteer for Bible Society!'



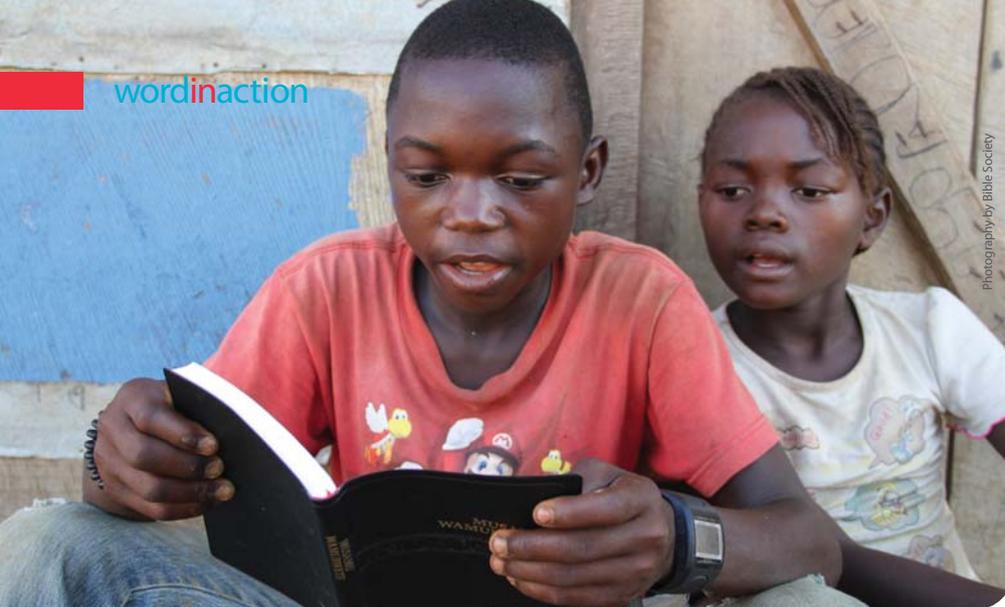
Photography by Layton Thompson



Photography by Bible Society

### To apply to join the church volunteer team:

- Email [volunteers@biblesociety.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@biblesociety.org.uk)
- Call us on 01793 418222
- Write to us at Volunteering, Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7DG
- Find out more information at [biblesociety.org.uk/volunteer](http://biblesociety.org.uk/volunteer)



Photography by Bible Society

Quote from Bible Sunday sermon notes written by Rt Revd John Pritchard:

**'The Bible is a friend and companion. With friends, we love them, debate with them, enjoy them, learn from them, sometimes be annoyed by them, but know that through the relationship we'll learn more about ourselves, and about them.'**

# Bible Sunday 2016

## Bring the Bible to life in your community

Bible Sunday 2016 is about helping you bring the Bible to life wherever you are. We're providing a stash of free resources so you can celebrate the Bible with your church – and bring its message to life in your community.

### What's on offer this year?

- A sermon outline to help leaders prepare
- Fun all-age suggestions to get your congregation thinking about the Bible (for example, can they identify Bible stories from pictures and arrange them in the right order?)
- Inspirational stories about Bible Society's work around the world
- Posters and invitations to a Bible Sunday service
- A short film and postcards promoting #AdventChallenge, which we're encouraging your church to sign up to as a result of your Bible Sunday service

Beth Read, who's put together the resources for Bible Sunday this year, said, 'I hope you and your church family will make time to celebrate this amazing book, the Bible, God's book for us. And I also hope you'll be inspired to live out the Bible's message in your community by taking on #AdventChallenge during December.'

#AdventChallenge is 24 days of small acts of kindness performed in the run-up to Christmas. We'll email you the challenges to choose from each day, and you can use social media to let people know how you're getting on. We'll tell you more about this during Bible Sunday!



Photography by Andreea Rhodes



Photography by Bible Society



Photography by Layton Thompson

**Download your free Bible Sunday resources from [biblesunday.org.uk](http://biblesunday.org.uk)  
Sign up to #AdventChallenge at [adventchallenge.org.uk](http://adventchallenge.org.uk)**

# Christmas with Bible Society



We're feeling the Christmas spirit this year, and have produced a bumper crop of resources to help you bring the nativity story to life. Here's what's on offer:

## Children's nativity booklet

Following on from last year's very popular *Christmas Poem*, we've now produced *The Well Good News of Christmas*, a quirky and heart-warming retelling of the nativity.

- Get your free copy using the reply slip with this magazine
- Order more for your church or school at the cost price of 50p each (includes p&p) by calling 01793 418300

You can download an exciting short video of the story to use in your church, school or toddler group. This is available free from [biblesociety.org.uk/wellgood](http://biblesociety.org.uk/wellgood)

## Colouring calendar

Bookshops are full of colouring books at the moment, and so we've produced a Scripture colouring calendar for 2017.

- Get a free calendar by visiting [biblesociety.org.uk/wiacolouringcalendar](http://biblesociety.org.uk/wiacolouringcalendar)
- Order as a gift for your Sunday School or other groups at the cost price of 50p each (includes p&p) by calling 01793 418300

## #AdventChallenge

Our online advent calendar with three daily challenges is back for another year. Sign up to receive emails encouraging you to perform a simple act of generosity or kindness each day. We hope you'll be inspired by the Bible to help others, be compassionate and take time out of the busyness of the season.

- Sign up online at [adventchallenge.org.uk](http://adventchallenge.org.uk)

## Fundraising stamps

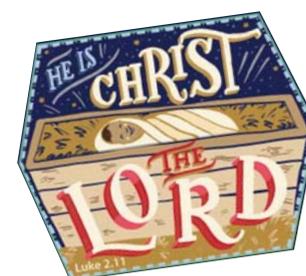
At Christmas we send and receive many Christmas cards. A great way to recycle your stamps and raise money for Bible Society is to send them to Fundraising Stamps. You can request your free pre-paid and pre-addressed envelopes from [fundraisingstamps.com/bible-society](http://fundraisingstamps.com/bible-society) or call 07599 830966.

## Stickers for your Christmas post

Add the real Christmas story to your envelopes this advent with stickers by talented artist Emma Skerratt. Emma says, 'When I discovered hand-lettering I just couldn't stop – Bible verses were really the only thing I felt super passionate about doing.'

My hope is that my work will help more people discover the Bible!

- Order stickers online [biblesociety.org.uk/wiastickers](http://biblesociety.org.uk/wiastickers)



## And there's more!

We're planning some great Christmas resources for your church including a 'pop-up' nativity that you can to run in your church with absolutely no rehearsals. Keep checking our main Christmas page: [biblesociety.org.uk/Christmas](http://biblesociety.org.uk/Christmas)

# YOUR LETTERS & COMMENTS

*Word in Action* gets better and better! From Malawi to Edward in South Sudan to orphans in Swaziland and brave Gaith in Syria, to Grace's beautiful poem and the fabulous montage of moving photos. God is on the move, as his word goes out.

ANNE, WARRINGTON



I was prompted to consider a legacy after hearing about other legacies which Bible Society had received. It seemed like the right thing to do. I have been Chairman of Bible Society, but I chose to leave a legacy long before I took this role. Bible Society does

extraordinary work all over the world. I have been to China and have seen Bibles being printed in Nanjing; I have handed out Bibles in rural churches there. I've seen work in South Africa, Tanzania and Rwanda.

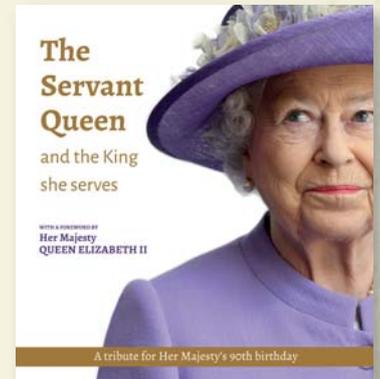
I'm very happy for Bible Society to decide how to spend the money I leave; there's enough good work that needs support.

PHILIP GREEN, READING

[biblesociety.org.uk/legacy](http://biblesociety.org.uk/legacy)

*The Servant Queen and the King she serves* is a lovely testimony of our Queen's profession of her faith in Christ and God's word. Thank you all at Bible Society.

ROSE, RYDE



I am delighted you have published *The Servant Queen*. It is so appropriate and a testimony to the Queen's living faith. I hope it will inspire faith in many people who read it.

MARGARET, FERNDOWN

We're thrilled by the overwhelmingly positive response to *The Servant Queen*! Over one million copies have been distributed and it's being reissued this Christmas. If you'd like to buy a copy for friends or family please call 01903 263354 or go to [cpo.org.uk/thequeen](http://cpo.org.uk/thequeen)

LARISSA, WORD IN ACTION EDITOR

## WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Email us your thoughts and comments at [wia@biblesociety.org.uk](mailto:wia@biblesociety.org.uk) or use the comments form attached.

We reserve the right to edit letters for style and length.

The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of Bible Society.



Photography by Ralph Hodgson

**'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.'**  
John 1.5 (ESV)

In Guatemala, we face many social problems that seem overwhelming... a hopeless darkness. But we have learnt to see these problems as big and wonderful opportunities for Bible mission. We can transform these issues in new realities through the word of God.

I believe there is no deep darkness that the word of God is unable to light up. We work in orphanages and correctional centres for children and I remember one girl, Isabelle, aged 12. She had fair skin, and was beautiful. Her mother had recognised that and

tried to sell her into prostitution. Her step-father used to violate her at night. The grandmother had alerted the authorities and Isabelle was taken to the orphanage for protection. Isabelle came to our weekly Bible study and told me she loved Psalm 4.8: 'You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.'

We're working with the last, the least and the lost. The Bible can rebuild these children's identities and repair their wounded hearts. We've seen children open their hearts to the Bible and to God, and find healing.

**Marco V Martínez**  
Director of Projects and Programmes  
Bible Society of Guatemala

## Biblepeople:

Paula Gooder, Theologian in Residence for Bible Society, shares with us what hope means to her:

Hope is a word we use a lot... I hope it all works out, I hope I'll see you soon, I hope I can come on Friday. As we often use it, 'hope' communicates a slightly vague optimism about the future but nothing certain. So when, in the New Testament, the writers talk about hope it can seem odd to us: hope for us is not a 'sure and steadfast anchor of the soul'

(Hebrews 6.19); it isn't 'living' (1 Peter 1.3) and often disappoints, unlike for Paul in Romans 5.5.

I'm on a bit of a campaign to rehabilitate hope! Jesus' death and resurrection has changed the world forever and so we know with deep certainty that this world is not all there is; that death and despair do not have the last word; that love will win. This is what hope is for me, it is sure, certain and full of joy.



Photography by Bible Society

## Creation: A Celebration

### Celebrating the crossover between art, creation and the Bible

Creation: A Celebration is an awe-inspiring display featuring 42 panels of embroidery, painting and mixed-media – and now you can host this exhibition to bring people together. Using creation as its theme, the panels are a luminescent piece of storytelling. By hosting this exhibition in your public venue, you can make the Bible a talking point, bring together churches and get media exposure – it's the perfect opportunity to do something different that will have an impact. To find out more, go to [biblesociety.org.uk/creation](http://biblesociety.org.uk/creation) or call 01793 418222 and ask for Elaine Young.



Bringing  
*the Bible to* **Life**

# Bible Sunday

## 23 October 2016

or any Sunday of your choice

Will you and your church take up the challenge and celebrate Bible Sunday with our free resources?

- Simple ways to **bring the Bible to life** in your community
- **Free resources** available for your Bible Sunday church service
- To find out more visit **[biblesunday.org.uk](http://biblesunday.org.uk)**