

# News from Bible Society

## James Catford

Group Chief Executive



### Hope springs eternal

Are you part of HOPE 2014? This bold initiative supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury and a wide variety of other Christian leaders is well worth a second look. It is about the most convincing and authentic expression of Christian unity in action that I have seen.

Often attempts to bridge the divide between churches extends no further than a statement of support and a well-meaning pat on the back. HOPE 2014 has integrity because it brings together unity and mission under the same umbrella. This is good news for the church, and the nation.

Bible Society is a keen supporter of the HOPE movement and I enthusiastically recommend the impressively glossy handbook of practical articles and ideas *HOPE: The Heartbeat of Mission* available from [www.hopetogether.org.uk](http://www.hopetogether.org.uk). It is worthy of our support.

The hope that is behind HOPE is a central theme in the Bible, as this issue of *Transmission* ably demonstrates. The word comes 164 times in my Bible and the meaning behind it is constant throughout: *living as if something is real*.

In his latest (and probably his last) book, *The Reason for My Hope: Salvation*, Billy Graham offers a wonderful array of ways of looking at hope:

- 'Hope is the breath of nature that surrounds us everyday.'
- 'Hope is seen in a sprig that shows up from the crevasse of a sundried rock, proving the water of life within.'
- 'Hope is the first ray of sunshine that peeks above the horizon – without fail – every morning with blazing truth, telling us we can make it through.'
- 'Hope is dispatched when the moon rises in the dark night, foreshadowing that a new day will dawn.'
- 'Hope swells within a sea-weary drifter when he spots a distant speck of a ship that grows larger with each passing wave ...'
- 'Hope is the cry of a new-born baby once bound, now free.'

These touching images speak of something profound, always at hand but at the same time also beyond us. Only when we actually live it, do we discover whether our hope is for real.

*Transmission* is provided free by Bible Society as part of our mission to equip the church to live out the Bible's message. We also work creatively and with passion to show that the Bible resonates with issues today – and to make Scriptures available where there are none.

In his recent book *What Kind of Hope?: How Jesus changes everything*, Michael Ots ends each chapter with a section called 'imagine'. Here he invites his readers to picture a world where the kind of things Christians hope for become a reality. Through imagination we can start 'to glimpse what God's new world could be like'.

However, hope is not just for a new world beyond time. It is for here and now as well. The social activist and reformer Jim Wallis talks about the way Christians can hold onto what many would call an impossible hope; only to see reality change as they work and pray to make it happen.

HOPE 2014 is the living proof that hope is not just about what happens when we die.

### Mary Jones and our mission in Wales

If you know anything about the story of Bible Society then you probably know that our formation in 1804 was inspired by a teenager called Mary Jones who walked 26 miles to the town of Bala, now in the beautiful Snowdonia National Park, to receive her own copy of the Bible.

Now Bible Society has announced plans to open a state-of-the-art heritage centre right on the shores of Lake Bala making good use of a wonderful church that was deconsecrated in 2006. Please join us in Bala on 5 October 2014 when friends from around the world will gather to thank God for the past and to look to him for the future of the Bible in Wales, and beyond.

As an example of how the Bible, when used well, has a power to change people, communities and nations, look no further than Revd Thomas Charles. He was the person Mary Jones visited to obtain her Bible. But he was also responsible for the development of Sunday schools across Wales.

Under his ministry, and in the space of his lifetime, Wales went from having one of the lowest literacy rates in Europe to having one of the highest. Thomas Charles is a towering example of what HOPE 2014 is doing today; bringing together words and actions in the cause of mission. The invitation to us is to do the same today.

### Is there more?

Two of our recent, bestselling titles address an ever pressing question of Christian apologetics: who is Jesus? Both *Jesus the Jew* and *Might There Be More?* root him firmly in history, offering a

much-needed antidote to the gentle shepherd in a nightie, the mythical Jesus of the sceptics, and anything between those two ends of the long spectrum of Jesus fakes.

*Jesus the Jew* shows him in his first century, Hebrew context – a six-week course, rooted in up-to-date scholarship yet accessible to church audiences.

*Might There Be More?* is the perfect giveaway booklet for those who struggle to square the poetry of faith with the sober prose of scientism: a pithy introduction to questions like 'Is God bad for your brain?' is followed by the unashamedly supernatural Gospel of Mark in the beautiful Contemporary English Version.

Go to [www.biblesociety.org.uk/products](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products) to find out more.

*And Carol*

**B**  
BIBLE  
SOCIETY

Take a peek at our  
**Christmas  
Gifts and Ideas**

Don't miss our online Christmas magazine, featuring **12 Deals of Christmas, outreach resources and fun ideas** for the festive period. Visit [biblesociety.org.uk/products/christmas](http://biblesociety.org.uk/products/christmas)