



# Quarterly Record

The Magazine of the Trinitarian Bible Society • Issue Number 645

October–December 2023



THE WORD OF GOD AMONG ALL NATIONS



# Trinitarian Bible Society

Founded in 1831 for the circulation of  
Protestant or uncorrupted versions of the Word of God

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*Issue Number: 645*

**October to  
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# Children's Scripture Learning Programme



**T**he Children's Scripture Learning Programme is one of the means that the Trinitarian Bible Society uses to promote the study of God's Word among children. This programme was commenced in 1972 to encourage English-speaking children to memorise the Holy Scriptures from the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible.

Under the rules of the programme we provide lists of verses to be memorised by children in two age groups: ten years and under, and eleven to fifteen. To the younger children who memorise their verses we award suitably inscribed leather text Bibles with gilt page edges. For the older children suitably inscribed gilt-edged leather reference Bibles are awarded. Children who have received the junior prize may, upon reaching eleven years, receive the reference Bible if they learn the verses for the higher age group.

The Society would encourage all parents, office bearers, and other supporters of the Society who seek the spiritual well-being of the children under their care to request further details of the Children's Scripture Learning Programme from the Grants Department ([grants@tbsbibles.org](mailto:grants@tbsbibles.org)) at our London Headquarters, or from any of the Society's branches (for which the contact details are on the inside back cover of this *Quarterly Record*). Please note that, due to financial constraints, eligibility is limited to children in countries in which the Society has a branch.

**Please visit [tbsbibles.org/cslp](https://tbsbibles.org/cslp) for more information.**



ADVANCE NOTICE



**Saturday 9 March 2024**

G O D W I L L I N G

at the Society's Headquarters

**William Tyndale House**

29 Deer Park Road, London SW19 3NN

**T**he Society is again opening the doors of our London Headquarters for a time of information about the Society and fellowship with like-minded believers, as we present the Society's work of Bible translation, publication, and distribution. The day is also suitable for children.

Please visit our website for more information and to book your place:

**[tbsbibles.org/openday2024](https://tbsbibles.org/openday2024)**



# The General Secretary's Introduction

Jonathan D. Arnold

It is once again my privilege to introduce this issue of the Society's *Quarterly Record* magazine. As ever, it is packed with information about our work both now and historically. I hope that through reading it you may be encouraged to pray for our small labours for the glory of God.

In Scripture we are given various exhortations to look to the Lord as we are engaged in His service.

'A man's heart deviseth his way:  
but the LORD directeth his steps'  
(Proverbs 16.9).

'So then neither is he that planteth  
any thing, neither he that watereth;  
but God that giveth the increase'  
(1 Corinthians 3.7).

As such, all our endeavours in translating and distribution, while engaging our full and diligent effort, must also be marked by our dependence on the Lord for blessing. As such we pray the Lord will send labourers (cf. Matthew 9.37–38), that the Lord would bless the work of our hands (Deuteronomy 28.12), and that we would acknowledge that God's Word will not return unto Him void (cf. Isaiah 55.11). Mr Broome reminds us in his article in this

QR of the critical connection between God's Word and true revival. Likewise each blessing the Society knows—in provision for our work, in the completion of projects, in encouraging interest in the Scriptures—are things we must give thanks to God for, and labour in these things for God's glory and not self-glory.

In July it was my privilege to attend two thanksgiving meetings in Latin America to mark the Society's publication of the Spanish Bible. This Bible was built upon the original 1602 Reina Valera Bible, seeking to bring it back to a Received Text basis after earlier revisions had introduced Critical Text readings and less accurate translations. This milestone represents many years of hard work by our revisers. The thanksgiving services were well attended to the extent that we were hard pressed to find suitable venues to hold everyone.

The interest in the TBS Spanish Bible is most encouraging, and I hope these photos will be the first of many you see regarding its distribution. The Editorial Director in his article reminds us of the provision of storehouses from God in Latin America, for which we are most thankful. Lord willing, Mr William Greendyk will



bring us a full report and article on the distribution of the Spanish Bible in a future *Quarterly Record*.

During the launch of the TBS Spanish Bible, I was informed that the practice with some non-TBS Bible translations was to get the signature of the translator. It struck me at this meeting as the TBS lead reviser issued a firm instruction (rightly so) that they would not sign the Bible in any way, as it is the Word of God. I don't know the circumstances regarding the practice and the motives may be sincere, but surely the only signature that we are interested in is God's—the spiritual signature that this is a faithful translation from God's inspired and preserved Word. 'The mouth of the LORD hath spoken it' (Isaiah 1.20). The whole of Scripture is inspired by God (cf. 2 Timothy 3.16), so that it is fit for use in eternal matters, matters of the utmost importance, matters of our standing with God.

The Authorised (King James) Version translators remind us that faithful translations of God's Word should be acknowledged as the Word, writing in *The Translators to the Reader* of the fidelity of translation:

Now to the latter we answer, that we do not deny, nay, we affirm and avow, that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set forth by

men of our profession, (for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet) containeth the Word of God, nay, is the Word of God. As the King's speech, which he uttereth in Parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin, is still the King's speech, though it be not interpreted by every translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expressly for sense, everywhere.<sup>1</sup>

That being so, we hope and pray that the Bible the Society has now published in Spanish might be used in the spread of the Gospel for the glory of God and bring light and life to many souls. Let us heed the wise words of William Tyndale:

So now the Scripture is a light, and sheweth us the true way, both what to do and what to hope for; and a defence from all error, and a comfort in adversity that we despair not and feareth us in prosperity that we sin not.<sup>2</sup>

We are grateful for all those who labour with us in the spread of the Word of God. We are particularly grateful for the support of Gereformeerde Bijbelstichting (GBS), our sister society in the Netherlands on a number of projects, including the Spanish Bible. It is good to be able to feature something concerning the history

and work of GBS in this edition of our magazine. TBS has been close to them since their early days. We hope that this article on GBS will encourage prayer for their labours too.

A further area of significant development is the TBS's work in India, where the Lord has opened several doors for the translation and distribution of Scriptures. Mr Hopkins and Mr Vogan's visit demonstrates the extent of our work there, and, whilst there are growing concerns for Christians in that part of the world, the Society presses on as the handmaid to the church in supplying faithful editions of God's Word.

You will notice we are due to hold an Open Day in March 2024, if the Lord will. This is something we have held from time to time, and we trust that it gives people the opportunity to hear more about our

work in places like India from the staff, translators, and distributors who are engaged in it. We hope that those of you who are within travelling distance are able to join us.

Thank you for all your support this past year, in which the Chinese New Testament, French New Testament, and Spanish Bible have all been printed by the Society, as significant milestones in those translation projects. We trust it is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes, while we look to the Lord for His sustaining grace for the year to come.

### Endnotes:

1. *Translators to the Reader*, Westminster Reference Bible, pg. xiii.
2. William Tyndale, *Works of William Tyndale Volume 1* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 2010), pg 399.

# DOES IT MATTER?

## The Power and the Glory Matthew 6.13

### AV/KJV

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

### ESV

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [the rest is missing]

## *It does matter ...*

because every word of God matters (Proverbs 30.5). But also because there is overwhelming documentary evidence since the earliest times for the retention of these words. They have been read and used by millions all over the world for nearly two thousand years.

*There are most substantial grounds for retaining these disputed words in our Bibles with full confidence that they came from the lips of our Lord Himself, were faithfully recorded by Matthew, and preserved through the ages. To find out more read the article The Power and the Glory: [tbsbibles.org/matthew6verse13](https://tbsbibles.org/matthew6verse13)*





# ‘Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise *and* praise thee?’ Psalm 88.10

by Mr G. D. Buss

*A Vice-Chairman of the Society*

**‘A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.’** Heading of Psalm 88.

**O**f Heman the Ezrahite little is known, except that most godly scholars believe that he was contemporary with Solomon. However, two things may be said of Heman without hesitation: that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write as he did, and that he himself was a deeply spiritual man.

The language of the psalmist in Psalm 88.10 may seem extravagant to some readers, but perhaps these people have not been in the spot where Heman sat. Otherwise they would doubtless understand the deep place into which he had come.

We must not infer from Heman’s language in verse ten that he believed in the annihilation of the soul, but rather that he knew that matters which are not settled between God and the sinner before death, will not be resolved hereafter. ‘In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be’ (Ecclesiastes 11.3; this can also be seen in Revelation 22.11). In that sense the answer to Heman’s questions about the dead is ‘No’.

However, looking deeper into the language of Heman’s soul an awakened sinner can give a different answer.

**Firstly**, when the Lord is pleased to begin a work of grace in a sinner’s heart, He does show wonders to the dead! How wondrous are those words in Ephesians 2.1, ‘And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and in sins’.



*Looking towards Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley*

How the awakened soul looks back in wonderment to the quickening grace which first alerted him to the solemn state in which he was living. And what encouragement this may be to those who have loved ones yet in spiritual death and darkness. It may be pleaded for them by those who are burdened for their eternal state, while as yet these spiritually dead have no heart for it themselves and 'are as far from God as sheep may go'. The prodigal's father said, 'This my son was dead, and is alive again' (Luke 15.24).

**Secondly**, when the soul is awakened it begins to learn more and more of the absolute spiritual death there is in the old nature. 'Could ever God dwell here?' is a perennial question. While the Lord never regenerates the old nature, He works resurrection power in the new man of grace, which acutely feels the deadness and barrenness of the old. How often a living soul, groaning under the deadness and lifeless condition of the old nature, cries out with this question, and how the words of the psalmist suit them. 'Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name' (Psalm 80.18) and 'Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me' (Psalm 119.175).

**Thirdly**, when a soul is brought under the condemning sentence of the broken law the sinner cries under a sense of God's justice in condemning them, 'is there no way of escape?' How welcome are the good tidings so aptly expressed in the poet's language.

In guilt's dark dungeon where we lay,  
Mercy cried 'spare' and Justice 'slay'.  
Jesus answered, 'Set them free,  
Pardon them and punish Me'.<sup>1</sup>

**Fourthly**, when the child of God is at wits' end corner, or like Jonah in the belly of the whale, how suitable to their feelings is

such a question. How impossible did the resurrection of Lazarus seem to Martha as she stood at his grave! But what wonders did Christ show to the dead as He called Lazarus forth with Divine power.

**Fifthly**, how in living faith the child of God waits around the tomb of the Saviour to see the wonders shown to and by the Son of God as He rose victorious over death and the grave. The disciples had inwardly if not outwardly given the answer 'no' to the question of the psalmist, but God gave the answer 'yes!'

**Sixthly**, what wonders may be believably anticipated for those souls who die in the Lord. They are 'with Christ which is far better'. With sweet surprise they find themselves at home at last, and the wonder of it fills their soul to a never-ending eternity.

**Finally**, what a wonder God will show to the body and soul of His people who have passed on before His return: 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord' (1 Thessalonians 4.16–17). But how solemn will be the awesome, terrifying wonder of those who lived and died without living faith in Christ.

Yes, God does show wonders to the dead. May we be found among those favoured souls to whom the wonder of His resurrection is a saving reality.

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## Endnote:

1. J. Hart, 'Repent, awakened souls, repent', *Gadsby's Hymns* no. 837.



# Editorial Director's Report

by Matthew A. Vogan

## Our Responsibility for Scripture-less People Groups

English speakers in Western nations may find it hard to comprehend a lack of available Bibles today, because anyone walking into a Christian bookshop is met with a bewildering array of versions in a range of editions. If they come back to the shop a while later no doubt yet another version and more editions will have been added to the shelves. It has been estimated that since Tyndale first published the English New Testament in 1526 over nine hundred English full or partial translations and paraphrases of the Bible have been printed.

The excess that this represents stands in stark contrast to not only the affordability but also the very availability of the Bible in many countries of the world: many in the world today can only be described as Scripture-less.

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### What are Scripture-less people groups?

Of course, in Western nations there are some people who do not own a Bible and may never even have seen one despite such abundance, as they have grown up in ignorance of the Scriptures even though it is readily available. However, in

other countries it may not be possible to afford the Scriptures or there may be other difficulties in distribution. Some people cannot read and write, or perhaps even see, which means that they cannot access the Scriptures for themselves unless an audio or braille version is provided for them. There are also deaf people who do not have the Scriptures in their first language, which may be one of the many sign languages that exist across the world.

It is generally agreed that around twenty per cent of people in the world do not have a full translation of the Bible in their first language. This is 6,658 languages and represents about ninety per cent of the world's languages. Some people will have a portion of the Scriptures in their mother-tongue so they are Bible-less in one sense but not Scripture-less. Initial work in progress in 1,320 languages is expected to provide some Scriptures for them.

Sadly, we have to caveat these figures with the fact that most New Testament translation projects by the majority of Bible translation organisations are from the Critical Greek Text not the Received Text. The effect of this is that key words and verses of the inspired Word are not included in such translations, and

other passages are marked as dubious. In addition to this, the predominant approach to translation uses dynamic equivalence, a method that involves imposing interpretation on the text that may not be accurate, and results in losing key words and phrases as the form of Scripture is being rewritten. In many cases the base text being used is the Good News Bible, itself already a very weak, and often misleading, rendering of the original Biblical languages. We cannot therefore say with confidence that many of those receiving new translations are being given access to all of God's Word.

All those we have discussed above are Bible-less people in the sense of lacking the inspired Word in its completeness for various reasons, and their needs are truly worthy of our attention. However, this article focusses on Scripture-less people groups. They are Scripture-less because they speak Scripture-less languages which have never had any portion of Scripture translated. It has been estimated that 1,268 languages spoken by around 100 million have no Scripture in any form and have no translation project in sight. The data on the number of such languages in the world is difficult to gather since some languages are not yet fully recorded, but this gives us some information to start with.

The numbers are truly daunting as indeed was Christ's command to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28.20). Yet that truly comprehensive undertaking was primarily given to just eleven apostles and those associated with them. On a global scale today surely our concern for those without any Scriptures must be great. How can they be disciplined without the Word?

It is easy to assume in our generation that most people will have several languages, and some form of Scripture will be in one of these. However, even where this is

the case, only a limited percentage may be properly understood. Indeed, a well-educated translator with several languages at a high-level told us recently that there were parts of Scripture he did not understand fully until he rendered them into his heart language. Furthermore, many of those in remote communities are monolingual and live in a predominantly oral culture, and will never be able to access Scripture unless someone translates it into their language.

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### **What are the effects of being Scripture-less?**

The Westminster Confession of Faith notes that 'all the people of God ... have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them' (the Westminster Confession of Faith 1.8). In some sense therefore, when there are converts in a particular language we have a duty to seek that their God-given right to Scripture would be realised through translation: they need to be able to read and search the Scriptures for their own spiritual growth and help. The Westminster Confession of Faith goes on to say, 'The Scriptures are, therefore, to be translated into the language of every nation to which they come. Thus, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner; (Colossians 3.16) and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope. (Romans 15.4).'

Yet if a believer does not have the Scriptures in their language, they forfeit all of these benefits. At best they are reliant on what they can hear by means of translation and preaching at a church service. They live in two worlds, and it is difficult for their everyday world to be shaped by the Scriptures when they are

not available in their own language. The Word has not penetrated the culture in which they live, meaning that the church cannot grow spiritually as it should.

The historian Mark Noll has observed that 'over the course of the last century, Christian penetration of local cultures has accelerated as never before. The great vehicle of that acceleration has been translation, primarily translations of the Bible into local languages'.<sup>1</sup>

### **TBS and Scripture-less people groups**

People may not always associate TBS with translations for Scripture-less people groups because in recent years a number of revision projects have been necessary in major languages. The Society has, however, had a lengthy history of engagement with first Bible translation projects for people groups and languages. Perhaps the first of these yielded its first fruits in 1935 when we published a translation of the Gospel according to John into Balti, the first time that any portion of Scripture had been printed in this Tibetic language. It was translated for work among Shia Muslims in Outer Tibet (most speakers today are in Pakistan or India). The whole New Testament came to completion by 1967 but even yet this language does not have a full Bible.

Later, translation work was undertaken for Pokot (Kenya), Chad Arabic (Chad), Dan-Gio (Liberia), Guéré (Ivory Coast), the Sar (Chad), Lisu (Burma), and Malinaltepec Tlapaneco (Mexico). In Manipur (Northeast India), Scriptures were translated for the first time into Thadou, Paite, Simte, and Vaiphei, opening up a long history of engagement with the tribal languages of that region. No doubt there are others that we could mention.

Today we still have projects and enquiries about translations in languages which have never received the Bible. It is difficult to be specific at present about these (more than twelve at least) either because they are at early stages or because they are in a context where there is intense opposition to Christianity and the Scriptures. Most of them are, however, at the pilot stage of producing a Gospel according to John. It is a great help to have this Gospel for evangelism, teaching, and even consecutive exposition. However, while these people groups will no longer be Scripture-less, they will still be Bible-less: with the Gospel according to John they only have around 2.5% of the whole revealed will of God. Progression further depends not only on the quality of the translation work but often especially on available funding to support first Bible translators, who often live in places where poverty abounds.

In certain situations, it is not feasible for someone to undertake the work full time or even in their spare time since their employment and financial needs require all their time. By providing a relatively modest means of financial support, however, it is possible to assist them to provide the Scriptures for their own people group. Please pray with us that the Lord would provide the necessary means for these many languages so that they may receive the Word in their mother tongue.

### **Encouragement to labour for Scripture-less people groups**

In Revelation 7.9 we read, 'After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands'. The question is asked, 'What



are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?' (Revelation 7.13).

One might easily think that the answer would be that they come from people groups across the face of the earth. Yet this is not the response given in the passage (see verse 14): the primary identity of this great multitude which no man could number is that they are Christ's blood-bought people; they are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus (see 1 Corinthians 6.11). This multitude has not been washed from their sins by their own innocence nor their own sufferings or works, but 'by the blood of the Lamb'. They have no access to God nor the rights and privileges of His children except through that finished work.

Why then does Revelation 7 mention all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues? No doubt it is an echo of the psalms that tell us of the fruits of Christ's redeeming work (Psalms 2.8; 18.49; 22.27; 65.5; 66.4; 67.7; 86.9; 100.1; 117.1). Does it not also underline to us that we are to have a specific concern for and an affinity to all tribes and languages? We are not just of one blood with them as fellow members of the human race. If we are Christ's they are also our people in a special way. Some of them certainly will be fellow redeemed sinners who will give redeemed praise to God. Surely this encourages and motivates us in the work of translation and mission.

'All peoples, nations, and tongues' is a phrase commonly used in the book of Revelation (5.9; 7.9; 10.11; 11.9; 13.7; 14.6; 17.15). Sometimes it varies in terms of the order in which they are listed, and in some places it does not always mention people and kindreds, yet tongues or languages are always mentioned. They are given a special emphasis when the fullness of the earth and its peoples are described. This great multitude have come to a distinct understanding and believing embrace of

Christ's atoning work—they praise the Lamb. They acknowledge His supreme sovereignty and authority and ascribe salvation to Him alone.

How could they call on the Lamb if they did not have something of the special revelation of the Saviour and His atoning work? How could they call on Him in whom they had not believed? How could they believe in Him of whom they had not heard? How could they hear unless a preacher declared it in a language they could understand? 'So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' (Romans 10.17). This requires some measure of translation. We might ask further. How shall they grow by faith unless they have the Word as a means of grace?

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## Scripture-less people groups and our responsibility

Surely therefore, Scripture gives us the motivation and lays on us the responsibility to seek to do what we can, as opportunity arises, so that the Scripture-less may indeed receive the Word. This remains a vital part of fulfilling the original purpose of the Society:

To promote the Glory of God and the salvation of men, by circulating, both at home and abroad, in dependence on the Divine blessing, the Holy Scriptures, which are given by inspiration of God, and are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

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## Endnote:

1. Noll M, 'Faith and Conflict: The Global Rise of Christianity', *Pew Research Centre*, 2 March 2005 [www.pewresearch.org/religion/2005/03/02/fait-and-conflict-the-global-rise-of-christianity/](http://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2005/03/02/fait-and-conflict-the-global-rise-of-christianity/) last, accessed 18.08.23.



# GEREFORMEERDE BIJBELSTICHTING (GBS):

our sister society in the  
Netherlands

Leerdam

by **Natalie A. Hanks**, *Lead Editor*

In 1961 a man named H. Kooistra visited the biggest bookshop in the city of Zwolle, Netherlands, to buy his daughter a pocket Bible for her eighteenth birthday. He wanted to buy the Statenvertaling, the famous Reformation-era Dutch Bible and equivalent of the English Authorised (King James) Version. However, when he looked in this shop, he was advised that they no longer sold this version, but only sold the Nieuwe Vertaling (the 'New Translation' published in 1951 by the Netherlands Bible Society). The shop staff even tried to put him off, saying that young people wanted to keep up with the times. Eventually, after ringing around various places, the shop finally managed

to track down a copy for Mr Kooistra from Royal Jongbloed, the Dutch Bible printers.<sup>1</sup>

A century and a half before in Wales Mary Jones's longing for a Bible had led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society (and eventually to the Trinitarian Bible Society). Likewise Mr Kooistra's search for a copy of the Statenvertaling led to the birth of a new Dutch society: Gereformeerde Bijbelstichting (GBS), the Reformed Bible Society, an organisation which has worked closely with the TBS for many years.

## Bible societies in the Netherlands

The first Bible societies in the Netherlands developed from the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), which was formed in 1804. The BFBS aimed to encourage the wider circulation of Scriptures

*Leerdam and the River Linge*

following Mary Jones's twenty-six mile walk to Thomas Charles in Bala to find a Welsh Bible. Following the formation of the BFBS, Bible societies were set up in many European countries to publish and distribute the Scriptures in their languages.

It was in 1814 that a Bible society was first set up in the Netherlands—this was only made possible after the end of the Napoleonic wars and the withdrawal of the French occupation army from the Netherlands after several years of domination. Further local Bible societies were set up in various provinces across the country and were eventually united by the Netherlands Bible Society (NBG). In 1847 the NBG decided to publish their own Bibles—primarily the 1637 Statenvertaling. Two colporteurs were appointed in 1890 to distribute the Scriptures around the Netherlands to areas in the countryside where it was difficult to obtain Bibles. This was first done by push-cart and later by horse drawn vehicles.

The NBG sponsored many Bible translation projects in the Dutch East Indies. This was a Dutch colony consisting of what is now Indonesia and was formed by nationalising trading posts of the Dutch East India Company. The NBG initially reprinted and published the 1733 Leydekker Bible in Malay, and by 1823 was working on their own Bible translation projects into languages such as Javanese. However, sadly the standards of the NBG, like those of the BFBS, wavered due to their ecumenical policies, and while within a few years in the United Kingdom the Trinitarian Bible Society was formed, there was no equivalent in the Netherlands.

Over time scholars decided that the Statenvertaling needed updating; and

after some more drastic attempts to modernise it were not successful, in 1911 it was decided to start a new translation of the Bible into Dutch from the Critical Greek Text.<sup>2</sup> The NBG became involved in this project in 1927, and in 1951 the Nieuwe Vertaling (New Translation) was published—this was the edition that the shop assistant tried so hard to sell to Mr Kooistra in 1961.



*Mr H. Kooistra and the farm at Broeksterwoude*

## **A new society in the twentieth century**

Mr Kooistra was disturbed by the lack of availability of good Dutch Bibles, combined with the proliferation of the Critical Text-based Nieuwe Vertaling which was widely accepted in churches, families, and schools across the Netherlands. In 1963 Mr Kooistra addressed a meeting on these issues at a farmhouse in Broeksterwoude, a small village located in Friesland, the most northerly part of the Netherlands. Following the meeting a committee of five Frisians (locals from the area), including Mr Kooistra, formed to campaign against the effects of the New Translation and push for the reprinting of the Statenvertaling. This committee was named 'The national committee for the

upholding of the Statenvertaling and the condemnation of the Nieuwe Vertaling’.

### A national movement

Gradually, through letters and advertisements, the work of this new committee began to be known outside Friesland. This led to a meeting in November 1965 with contacts from different churches and denominations across the Netherlands at a parsonage in Zwijndrecht where it was decided that something more national was needed. On 15 December 1965 the first official meeting took place at the restaurant and meeting centre De Oude Tram in Amersfoort. A board of fourteen members was formed, with Mr Kooistra as the first treasurer. Pastors from various denominations pledged their cooperation, and on 14 January 1966 the ‘Society for the maintenance of the Statenvertaling’ was formally established, with the first edition of their magazine, *StandVastig* (meaning ‘steadfast’ and also containing some letters from the word Statenvertaling), published in August 1966.

### Early days of the new society

On 20 August 1966 the first *Toogdag* (annual meeting) took place in the church building of the Reformed Congregation (Gereformeerde Gemeente) in South

*The first edition of StandVastig*



Rotterdam, with more than two thousand people from all over the country attending. These yearly conferences would become annual meeting points for the board, staff, local committee volunteers, donors, and other interested parties. The GBS also organised regional and local meetings from the start. These meetings focussed on the value of God's Word as translated in the Statenvertaling, and the dangers of modern Bible translations, along with updates on the work of GBS.

The first chairman of GBS was Dr C. Steenblok, though sadly he had to withdraw after six months for health reasons. The Rev. J. van Haaren was elected as the next chairman in June 1966, and he became the driving force behind the development of GBS, leading it with a steady hand for seventeen years. After he passed away in 1983 the Rev. F. Mallan became chairman, resigning in 1990 due to his busy workload. He was succeeded by the Rev. P. Blok, and then the Rev. A. C. Rijken, who remains chairman until this day. Generally, the board

*The Rev. P. Blok*





*Mrs Kooistra receiving the first copy of the GBS edition of the Statenvertaling*

and executive board meet four times a year, and the composition of the board, like that of TBS, was interdenominational from the beginning.

### Preserving and publishing the Statenvertaling

From the very start GBS was primarily concerned with the preservation and publication of the Statenvertaling Bible. The Statenvertaling Bible was a product of the Synod of Dort (1618–1619), which requested a Dutch Bible carefully translated from the Biblical languages. This Reformation-era Bible was finally published in 1637, when it received an

excellent reception among Dutch speaking people. Like the Authorised (King James) Version, many inferior modern, Critical Text-based versions have tried to replace it.

Over time many language, printing, and typesetting errors had crept into the Statenvertaling. Therefore, in 1967 GBS decided to address the problem and produce an accurate edition that they could publish as their own. They found out that a nineteenth-century Jongbloed edition (called Dessendiaan) was the most accurate of that time, and this edition was checked and improved in conformity with the 1657 Van Ravesteyn standard edition.

The GBS edition of the Statenvertaling was published in 1973, and the first copy presented on 18 August 1973 by the then chairman Rev. J. van Haaren to the widow of Mr H. Kooistra, the man who had set this train in motion more than ten years previously.

In 1976 the pocket sized 'School Bible' was printed. In 1978 it was reported that the GBS could now supply Bibles and Psalm books in no less than nineteen different types and versions, and by the middle of 1980 more than 35,000 Bibles had been sold. In 1982 a basic version especially intended for evangelism was published. By 1987 the number sold was 100,000.

### Statenvertaling with marginal notes

In 1978 the board discussed publishing an edition of the Statenvertaling with the famous marginal notes (*Kanttekeningen*), announcing their plan in the 1980 *Toogdag*. The first meeting of the special 'Text Committee' commissioned by the board took place in October 1989, meeting more than 150 times during which over 59,000 marginal notes were meticulously edited. After years of work, in 2004 the first GBS *Kanttekeningenbijbel* rolled off the

*The Statenvertaling*





presses; the one volume edition was made possible by modern labour and printing techniques of thin paper printers. The Bible was presented during an official gathering on 27 November 2004, where copies were handed to representatives of various reformed churches in the Netherlands. Copies were also given to members of the



*Presenting the Bible to the Queen's private secretary*

Dutch Senate and House of Representatives and the cabinet (ministers and state secretaries). Queen Beatrix as well as Prince Willem-Alexander and his wife were sent copies. Queen Beatrix's secretary wrote to GBS, 'Her Majesty Queen Beatrix asked me to convey her special thanks to you for the beautiful edition of the reprint of the Statenvertaling.'

Various other formats of this Bible have since been published—in 2006 an edition was especially produced for students, and later a pulpit Bible, along with a family size Bible which is often given by churches to newly married couples. GBS also produces other publications about the Statenvertaling, problems with other Bible versions, and resources for children, along with Psalm books.

## **A network across the Netherlands**

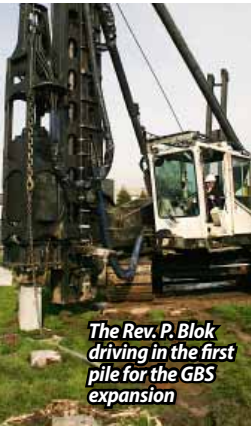
As the work of GBS grew, in 1966 they began establishing local committees and appointing correspondents across the country in order to make the work of GBS more widely known and to raise funds for the organisation. Nine geographical districts were established, each headed

by a district board with a commissioner to lead it. The commissioner's task is to develop the work of the committees and correspondents in their area, and stimulate interest in the work of GBS. Every two years a general meeting of board members, committees, and staff is held, where matters concerning the day-to-day running of the society are discussed in the morning meeting, and an introduction is given in the afternoon about the authority of Scripture and Bible translation. The number of committee members (volunteers) is currently about 500; these

are spread over 72 local or regional committees, and 52 correspondents. Since 2014, a committee has also been active for the GBS in South Africa.

## **The GBS office in Leerdam**

The growing distribution during the 1980s meant that GBS needed a purpose-built space for the storage and distribution of Scriptures. It was decided to build a new building in an industrial estate in Leerdam, a town in the western Netherlands province of Utrecht. This new building contained space for a warehouse, shipping and sales areas, and office space, along with a meeting room for the board which meant they no longer had to meet in De Oude Tram in Amersfoort. The office was opened on 17 September 1987, exactly three hundred and fifty years after the first



*The Rev. P. Blok driving in the first pile for the GBS expansion*



*Displays in the GBS exhibition room*

Statenvertaling Bible was presented to the States General.

In 2006 the board decided to renovate and expand the existing building, and the Rev. P. Blok drove the first pile for the expansion on 22 September 2010. This expansion contained a new warehouse section, library, and presentation room. There are also two exhibition rooms, containing three permanent exhibitions on the history of the Statenvertaling, GBS, and Bible distribution. Schools and churches regularly visit GBS and go on tours around the building and view the exhibitions.

### **Distribution of Scriptures in other languages**

Over time, the GBS wanted to expand their aims to the spreading of reliable

Bibles in languages other than just Dutch. In September 1966 the board considered and discussed whether they should work with the Netherlands Bible Society in regard to the distribution of reliable Bibles in other languages for other countries. However, as mentioned previously the NBS pursued an ecumenical policy and allowed modern theological insights in its work, so GBS decided that it was wisest not to work with them.

This led to GBS approaching TBS to work with them, and a relationship issued that has lasted over fifty years and is still very strong today. Both organisations were founded on similar principles, and stand for the Divine inspiration and authority of Scripture, and both desire to produce and circulate accurate versions of the Bible throughout the world.



*GBS warehouse in use for the 2023 Open Day*





*The GBS library*



*Seating and displays in the GBS exhibition room*

On 13 October 1969 it was decided to formally expand the name and purpose of the society to reflect the wider distribution of Scriptures across the world, and it became known as 'The Reformed Bible Society for maintaining the Statenvertaling and for the distribution of Protestant and uncorrupted Bible publications'.

### **Working with the Trinitarian Bible Society**

Today, TBS and GBS have a very close relationship, sharing the same goals and principles. The generous support from GBS has helped TBS pursue projects that might not otherwise have been possible. In turn, TBS has been able to supply GBS with hundreds of thousands of Bibles for distribution.

There are several projects where GBS has worked particularly closely with the TBS. For example, the GBS supports the Chinese Bible translation project. It was with great joy that the Chinese New Testament was published early this year, and work is now ongoing on the Old Testament translation.

The GBS has also supported the revision of the Spanish Bible, and the printing of 30,000 copies to be distributed across Spanish speaking Latin America. In 2020 the GBS also generously donated funds for the printing and distribution of 100,000 Spanish New Testaments with Psalms and Proverbs.

In addition, the GBS has been working with the TBS on the revision of the Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament,



*TBS stand at the 2023 GBS Open Day*



*The Rev. Rijken, Mr Lodder, and the Rev. van Heteren of GBS with the TBS General Secretary and Editorial Director*





alongside the Board for Israel and the da Costa Foundation, so that it is more faithful to the Greek Received Text and in a more understandable form of modern Hebrew.

Another instance of cooperation between the GBS and the TBS was in the printing of the Shona Bible when 10,000 copies were printed and distributed for Zimbabwe.

Representatives of GBS often attend the TBS Annual General Meeting, and the TBS General Secretary usually attends the GBS

Toogdag. The GBS also holds an annual Open Day at their Leerdam office, with TBS representatives manning a display about the work of the

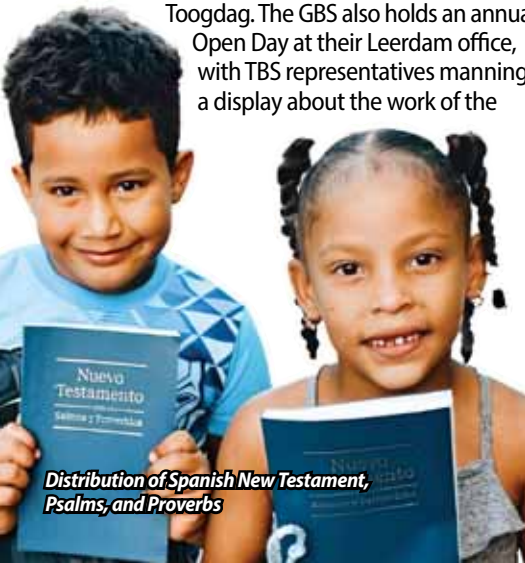
Society. Earlier this year I was able to attend this and see the exhibition rooms in person.

## **Conclusion**

TBS is very grateful for the harmonious and productive relationship it has enjoyed with GBS over many years. The GBS plays a vital role in the preservation and publication of the Statenvertaling across the Netherlands. It is also instrumental in the translation and distribution of Scriptures in many other languages across the world, acting as a sister society to the TBS, for which we would thank the Lord.

## **Endnotes:**

1. Royal Jongbloed is one of the world's leading thin paper Bible printers, and for many years has printed a large number of Bibles for TBS.
2. Not all the nineteenth century updates of the Statenvertaling were as drastic as the revisions done by the NBG. There were also minor revisions (such as the 1834 edition of H. Cats and W. A. van Hengel) that were limited to an update of orthography, grammar, and sometimes word choice. The GBS edition published today itself relies on some of these nineteenth century updates of the Statenvertaling text, but always checked against the original edition of 1657.



***Distribution of Spanish New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs***

# Thou Shalt Not Kill or You Shall Not Murder?

by Larry Brigiden

Senior Editorial Consultant (Linguistics)

The Authorised (King James) Version translation of Exodus 20.13 is 'Thou shalt not kill', but more modern versions, such as the English Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, New International Version, and even the New King James Version, translate the verse as 'You shall not murder', evidently preferring 'murder' as the translation of the Hebrew word in the verse to 'kill'. So which is correct? Should the verse read 'kill' or 'murder'? The purpose of this brief article is to demonstrate that 'kill' is in fact correct and that the use of 'murder' by the more modern versions indicates a departure from some quite important principles of translation.<sup>1</sup>

The Hebrew word in Exodus 20.13 is רָצַח (*ratsach*), a word that can mean 'to commit murder', but which also has the broader, more general meaning of 'to kill', 'to slay'. The context determines which meaning should be used for the word in each place where it occurs. That is why the translation of רָצַח (*ratsach*) in the AV, as well as in other translations, varies according to the context: sometimes 'kill' or 'slay'<sup>2</sup> and at other times 'murder'.<sup>3</sup> The question then is whether 'kill' is the better translation of רָצַח (*ratsach*) in Exodus 20.13 or 'murder'. The AV translators evidently thought the former, while more modern translations evidently think the latter.

Some who criticise the AV translation of 'kill' argue that the Hebrew verb רָצַח (*ratsach*) means 'murder' and therefore that is how the word should be translated here.<sup>4</sup> But they are quite mistaken, as a survey of the use of רָצַח (*ratsach*) in the Old Testament makes clear.

For example, in Numbers 35.27 we have:

... and the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill [*ratsach*] the slayer [*ratsach*<sup>5</sup>]; he shall not be guilty of blood

Now, the Hebrew word for 'kill' is the same as the one used for the 'slayer' (in the latter case it is a participle). Yet, quite obviously, the former action cannot be 'murder' for the text explicitly says that 'he shall not be guilty of blood'.

Consider also Numbers 35.30:

Whoso killeth [*ratsach*] any person, the murderer shall be put to death [*ratsach*] by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.

Here the same verb *ratsach* describes the act of one who kills 'any person' and the act by which the killer is himself put to death. But obviously the latter action cannot be 'murder', though the same verb is used.



Then there are the cities of refuge listed in Joshua 21. They are called עִיר מְקַלֵּט הָרָצָח = city of refuge of the *ratsach* (Joshua 21.13, 21, 27, 32, 38). Are each of these to be translated as a city of refuge of the ‘murderer’ because *ratsach* must have that meaning? Obviously not, since it was not the purpose of the cities of refuge to harbour a murderer but simply to give refuge to a manslayer from the avenger of blood till the case should be tried (Numbers 35.12). And most modern versions correctly translate this as ‘city of refuge for the manslayer’.<sup>6</sup>

Others argue that ‘kill’ seems to introduce a contradiction into Scripture since certain killings are permitted and even sanctioned by Scripture.<sup>7</sup> But they seem not to notice that by translating ‘murder’, the impression may be given that some types of unlawful killing, such as manslaughter, suicide, etc., could be understood as not forbidden by the commandment. Misunderstandings are possible with any translational choice, but the solution is never to adjust the translation in order to avoid any ill consequence that may be supposed to attend it. Rather, the aim should always be to translate the original Hebrew or Greek word as it stands in the text, though having due regard, of course, to the context and the analogy of Scripture. It must always be left to the preacher or expositor to explain the meaning of the original word and clear up any supposed inconsistency with the rest of Scripture. It is not the work of the translator to attempt such a task, but as far as possible to faithfully translate the word as it stands in the text.

So which is the correct translation at Exodus 20.13, ‘kill’ or ‘murder’? As already noted, the Hebrew word רָצַח (*ratsach*) can have the narrower meaning of ‘murder’ or it could have the broader meaning of ‘kill’, ‘slay’. The correct meaning of the word in Exodus 20.13 will depend on the

context. Is there anything in the context of Exodus 20.13 that would favour either meaning? As the commandment is very briefly expressed, the broader and more general meaning of ‘kill’ would seem to be favoured. At least, there is nothing in the context that compels us to adopt the narrower meaning of ‘murder’. Any such narrowing of the meaning must therefore be arbitrary and motivated by considerations outside of the text itself, such as the need to avoid a supposed contradiction with the rest of Scripture as mentioned above.

The broader meaning of the Hebrew word רָצַח (*ratsach*) at Exodus 20.13 is also confirmed by the inspired and authoritative exposition of the sixth commandment in the New Testament. In Matthew 5.21–22 our Lord contrasts the faulty understanding of the sixth commandment common at that time with its true meaning, indicating by His exposition of the commandment its very broad scope, reaching even to the first motions of enmity toward another:

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

The Greek word for ‘kill’ in Matthew 5.21, φονεύω (*phoneúō*), closely matches the Hebrew word רָצַח (*ratsach*) in Exodus 20.13, being also capable of both the narrower meaning of ‘murder’ and the broader meaning of ‘kill’. But it may be observed that if ‘murder’ were substituted for ‘kill’ in the initial statement of the commandment in verse 21, as in most

modern versions,<sup>8</sup> then the contrast with the broader scope of the commandment in verse 22 is not so fitly stated.

The intended contrast is evidently between the outward physical act of taking life and any inward malice and enmity of heart. Our Lord checks the sin at its source, even when it falls far short of the outward physical act. That being the intended contrast, how is it fitting that the first member of the two things contrasted should be the very specific act of 'murder'? Is the contrast not more fitly expressed between any outward act of killing and the inward motions of malice and enmity of the heart? Such inward motions of malice and enmity do not necessarily always aim at 'murder', but may extend only to grievous bodily harm, though that may yet, even if unintentionally, actually issue in the death of the victim. Thus, 'kill', being the broader term, covers all cases and is the more suitable term as the first member of the two things contrasted. But to restrict the first member of the contrast to the narrower act of 'murder' is unnecessary and appears as an artificial over restriction.

In conclusion, the translation 'Thou shalt not kill' is the correct translation of the Hebrew at Exodus 20.13. This was the translation of the verse found in all early English Bibles<sup>9</sup> and up until about the mid twentieth century when most versions substituted 'murder' for 'kill' on quite inadequate grounds, grounds which in fact reflect a departure from important principles of translation. The work of the translator is, as far as possible, to faithfully translate the word as it stands in the text, having due regard to the context and the analogy of Scripture, and not attempt to adjust the translation so as to avoid any supposed contradictions with the rest of Scripture. The clearing of such supposed contradictions must be left to others, to the preachers and expositors of the Holy Scriptures.

## Endnotes:

1. This article does not discuss the other clear difference between the translation of the more modern versions and the AV, which is the use of 'you' instead of 'thou'. The English 'thou' is certainly more accurate, being a singular pronoun matching the underlying Hebrew singular pronoun, whereas the English 'you' may be singular or plural. But the key difference in the translations is the substitution of 'murder' for 'kill', and hence the discussion here is confined to that difference.

2. Exodus 20.13; Numbers 35.6, 11, 12, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30; Deuteronomy 4.42, 5.17, 19.3, 4, 6, 22.26; Joshua 20.3, 5, 6, 21.13, 21, 27, 32, 38; Judges 20.4; 1 Kings 21.19; Psalm 62.3; Proverbs 22.13; Hosea 4.2.

3. Numbers 35.16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 31; 2 Kings 6.32; Psalm 94.6; Isaiah 1.21; Jeremiah 7.9; Hosea 6.9.

4. "Thou shalt not kill" vs. "Thou shalt not murder", Andrew Holt, Ph.D.: *History, Religion, and Academia*, apholt.com/2015/03/17/thou-shalt-not-kill-vs-thou-shalt-not-murder. It is worth noting that, according to the modern Hebrew dictionary, Reuben Alcalay, *The Complete Hebrew English Dictionary*, (NY, USA: P. Shalom Publications, 2000), רצח (*ratsach*) is not confined to the meaning of 'murder', but may also mean 'kill'.

5. It is actually the participle form of the verb with the article, הַרצִיחַ, which is used here.

6. One interesting exception is the version called 'God's Word' which has 'a city of refuge for murderers'.

7. Self defence (Exodus 22.2, Esther 8.11), lawful war (Judges 7.13-25, 1 Samuel 15.3, 1 Chronicles 19.6-19) and capital punishments judicially inflicted for certain breaches of the Moral Law, e.g. bestiality (Exodus 22.19), adultery (Leviticus 20.10), sodomy (Leviticus 20.13), sorcery (Leviticus 20.27), idolatry (Deuteronomy 13.10),

8. English Standard Version, New International Version, New American Standard Bible, New English Translation, etc.

9. Geneva, Bishops', Coverdale, Tyndale. Even the Roman Catholic Douay-Rheims Bible uses 'kill'.



■ New Delhi

Kathmandu

■ Lucknow

Imphal

Churachandpur

■ Kolkata

Karnataka

Mangaluru

■ Bengaluru

# TBS VISIT TO INDIA

by **Philip J. D. Hopkins**  
*Senior Editorial Consultant (Projects)*

India is mentioned twice in the Bible. Both occurrences are in the book of Esther (1.1, 8.9), where the countries over which Ahasuerus reigned are described as being 'from India even unto Ethiopia' (Esther 1.1). The Society has been involved for some sixty years in translating the Scriptures into various Indian languages.

India is home to 398 languages according to Ethnologue, of which 22 are given official status by the Indian government.

Over the past six decades, TBS has been particularly involved in helping tribes from the northeastern Indian state of Manipur to prepare faithful editions of God's Word in their mother tongues. Longer-term readers will be familiar with some of these Indian tribal languages, particularly Thadou and Simte in which we published whole Bibles in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

The last visit by TBS staff to India was in July 2016 when Paul Rowland (then General

*Nandi Hills, near Bangalore, Karnataka*

Secretary) and I (then Editorial Director) visited Manipur to meet with various tribal Bible translation and revision teams. A follow-up visit had been anticipated sooner than this year, but in God's providence the Covid-19 pandemic delayed our plans to return. In the Lord's timing, Matthew Vogan (current Editorial Director) and I were able to visit India in late February and early March of this year, undertaking editorial meetings in Manipur and in the southern state of Karnataka. We were warmly received throughout our time in India, and experienced considerable kindness even from complete strangers: surely an answer to the many prayers that went up on our behalf.

## An eventful outward journey to Imphal

Manipur is one of the most remote Indian states, and so three flights were scheduled for my journey (I initially travelled alone): London to Istanbul, Istanbul to Delhi, Delhi to Imphal (the state capital of Manipur). In one of many remarkable instances of God's care throughout this trip, I inadvertently forgot to pick up my wallet at the domestic airport in Delhi following their rigorous and chaotic security checks. (I gradually learned how to handle these, but this was the first!) However, before I left the area a member of the security staff pointed out the wallet to me and I gratefully picked it up.

The flight from Delhi to Imphal was then diverted to Lucknow, as a passenger on board was taken seriously ill and had to be taken off to receive treatment: the first time this had happened to me in twenty-two years of fairly frequent flying. During our unexpected stopover in Lucknow I was kindly provided lunch by the family of the woman seated next to me, who happened to be getting married the next day. I was subsequently grateful to arrive in Imphal

Airport, albeit several hours late, where I was warmly greeted by members of the Simte tribe who took me to the hotel which was to be our base for the next six days.

## Bible project meetings: Kom, Chothe, Vaiphei

My first meeting the next morning (Wednesday 22 February) was with our Kom Bible translator. It was good to meet with him again, almost seven years after our first in-person meeting. The New Testament text has been finalised and, at the time of writing, has just been typeset and is undergoing editorial checks before being passed to the translator for proofreading. Translation of the Old Testament is well underway, and he is currently working in Deuteronomy.

The second meeting was with the Chothe Bible translation team, who are still labouring hard to complete the New Testament. This was the first time that I was able to meet the translator, and it was a joy to discuss the project in person with the team. During the late lunch which followed with the Chothe team, Matthew Vogan arrived, having set out to India one day later than me and was able to attend the second part of the meeting.

Matthew was able to join in fully with the third meeting of the day, which was with five members of the Vaiphei Bible revision committee. This Bible had recently been typeset when we met, but many errors were found in the text, due to software issues. We seek



*Philip with the Kom translator*



*Philip and Matthew with the Chothe team*

your prayers at every stage of the Bible translation process because there are so many points at which problems can enter and delay the work. At the time of writing the Vaiphei Bible text has been checked thoroughly and final corrections made which will allow it to be re-typeset. It is hoped that the print ready file can soon be sent to Bearing Precious Seed, Milford, Ohio, for them to print.

## Bible project meetings: Simte and Tedim Zomi

The following day, Thursday 23 February, we were joined by Dale Money, Director of firstBible International, who arrived that day in Imphal and was able to join Matthew and me in our meetings.

The first meeting was with the lead Simte Bible reviser and some other Simte brothers, during which we discussed some matters relating to the Simte Bible published in 2021 and which arrived in Manipur one year before our visit.



*Philip and Matthew with the Simte Revision Committee*

The second meeting was with a man who had prepared a draft translation of the whole Bible in Tedim Zomi from the English Authorised (King James) Version. Time was spent understanding the background to his work and how the language in India differed from the closely related Tedim-Zokam language spoken over the border in Myanmar (Burma). As always in such initial meetings, the principles and practices of the Society were explained in some detail. We were happy to find that he agreed with our principles and practices. Since that meeting we have undertaken considerable work with him and, at the July meeting of the General Committee, his translation of the Gospel according to John was approved and permission given by the Committee to continue working with him as he reviews and refines his translation.

## Thadou Bible Thanksgiving Service

On Friday 24 February it was our joy to travel to the home of the Rev. Vumthang Sithlou, head of the Thadou Bible translation committee, where we received a warm welcome. Both Indian chai (sweetened milky hot tea) and the healthier option of hot green tea without milk were on offer. Following these morning refreshments, we headed over to a neighbouring village, where we were shown a well-organised complex comprising numerous buildings, including one housing several handlooms, another which was the Indian headquarters of an audio Bible organisation, and a further one which housed a Bible academy. Some of the other buildings were classrooms.

There were already good numbers assembled at the church when we arrived for the start of the Thadou Bible Thanksgiving Service. By the time the service began the church was full, with





*Crowds begin to gather in the church*

about four hundred people present. Encouragingly, the majority of the congregation were young people, some of them forming different choirs which sang beautifully and harmoniously together. Both Dale Money and Matthew Vogan spoke at the service (through an excellent interpreter), after which it was my privilege to preach from the Word of God, taking the text, 'the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever' (1 Peter 1.23).

Following the joyful and uplifting service we were provided with a generous lunch, after which we had a short meeting to discuss



*Meeting with Thadou brothers and sisters*

matters relating to the Thadou Bible. The thankfulness shown by the Thadou tribe for having the Bible in their tongue and their commitment to the Word of God was greatly heartening, and we wish to relay their

thanks to all friends, supporters, and members of TBS.

After the Thanksgiving Service, Matthew and I were able to have a very helpful meeting with Dale Money to review in detail the many partner projects which TBS have with firstBible International.

## Bible project meetings: Hmar, Simte, Gangte

The first meeting on Saturday 25 February was with our Hmar Bible translator, meeting him in person for the first time. The Gospel according to John was approved by the General Committee in 2022. Since then, progress on the Hmar New Testament translation has been good, with the four Gospels, Romans, and Acts completed in at least first draft.

The second and longest meeting on Saturday was with members of the board of the New Testament Baptist Churches Association (NTBCA), the main body representing the Simte churches. TBS has had a long relationship with the NTBCA, dating back to 1967 when the NTBCA first approached TBS asking for help to prepare a translation of the Simte Bible. At our meeting with the NTBCA members, it was



*Philip and Matthew with the Gangte Bible translators*



*Speaking at Thadou Thanksgiving Service*



*Simte Thanksgiving Service*

agreed that their Simte Bible committee would work with TBS to prepare a third edition. The new endeavour would focus on further improving the recently published second edition, which was itself a marked improvement on the original first edition. TBS gratefully acknowledges the labours of all who have worked with them on the Simte Bible during the past fifty-six years.

The final meeting of the day was with three members of the Gangte Bible translation committee. It had been hoped

to meet with these brothers in 2019, but it had not proved possible. A lively and interesting meeting resulted in the TBS General Committee subsequently giving their approval for the Editorial Department to work on a pilot project in Gangte commencing with the Gospel according to John. Very sadly, in late June a son of the main Gangte Bible translator was knocked unconscious in a motorbike accident and has remained in a coma since that time. This tragic accident has understandably hindered this brother from commencing his translation work.

### *Vaiphei memorial*



## Simte Bible Thanksgiving Service

On Sunday 26 February we travelled to Churachandpur for a church service which gave thanks to God for the publication of the second edition of the Simte Bible. A year on from the arrival of these Bibles in Churachandpur, many of them had been distributed far and wide among Simte speakers. Some copies were also taken up by folks from other tribes who understand Simte but who are without a complete faithful Bible in their language.

The thanksgiving service was held at a church in Churachandpur. The church building was packed with a congregation of all ages, and we were advised that about 1,400 people were present. The service



### ***Simte Thanksgiving Service***

again included a number of choirs, which each sang with harmony and earnestness. Several addresses were given in Simte during the service, the main points being translated into English for us. Dale Money and Matthew Vogan both spoke at the service, after which I preached from the Word of God, drawing out several points from Isaiah 40. We were thankful for the interpreters who laboured alongside us.

The entire service lasted three hours and forty minutes without a break, but we were very thankful to have been present. Following the church service, we were warmly welcomed at the nearby church of the lead Simte Bible reviser and then treated to a lovely meal in his home.

It was humbling to witness the great thankfulness of the Simte people in having the Scriptures available to them again. On

their behalf, we relay their thanks to all our partners, members, and supporters who prayerfully and practically supported the Simte Bible project.

On our way back to Imphal we took a detour to pay a brief visit to meet the lead Vaiphei Bible reviser at his church denomination's headquarters. Whilst there, we saw the memorial tablet to the two first Vaiphei converts of British missionary Watkin Roberts. These two Vaiphei youths came to faith in 1910. Today, in 2023, there are proportionally far more Christians among the hill tribes of Manipur than there are in the United Kingdom, which highlights the great changes that have taken place in these two parts of the globe during the past one hundred and thirteen years, especially the sobering decline of Biblical Christianity in the UK.

### ***Looking over Mangalore***







*With Kannada Bible revision committees*

## Visit to the State of Karnataka

On Monday 27 February, Matthew Vogan and I bade farewell to Dale Money and spent most of the day travelling across India from the far northeast to the far southwest of the country. Three internal flights took us respectively from Imphal to Calcutta, from Calcutta to Bangalore, and lastly from Bangalore to Mangalore. (These long-established names for the last three cities are still commonly used by Indians as well as by foreigners, but the official names are Kolkata, Bengaluru and Mangaluru.)

## Kannada Bible project

We were welcomed late in the evening at Mangalore airport by the head of the TBS Kannada Bible Revision project and his wife. Mangalore is a city on the Arabian Sea coast of India and has a very warm, humid tropical climate, which notably contrasted with the drier subtropical climate of Imphal, although both cities were in their respective dry seasons when we visited.

The next day, Tuesday 28 February, whilst in Mangalore we met with members of the two Kannada Bible committees: the two groups work together, but one is based in Mangalore and the other in Bidor (a city in the northeast of Karnataka). The revised text of the Gospel according to John is close to being finalised, and it is planned to publish this once it has gone through the usual checking and approval stages.

During our time in Mangalore we were able to take a beach walk by the Arabian Sea. It was also a privilege to visit some local Christians in their home. We were again provided with warm and generous hospitality throughout our brief stay there.

## Tamil Bible project

On Wednesday 1 March Matthew and I flew back to Bangalore Airport, which, with its modern, well-designed, air-conditioned passenger buildings, certainly eclipses some of the north American and European airports I have been in! There we met our



Tamil Bible translator, who had taken a flight from Chennai (Madras) that morning. We were all picked up by a local pastor and taken to his home in Bangalore, where we were able to discuss the Tamil Bible project.

It is pleasing to report that the second draft of the Tamil Gospel according to John is now being reviewed by several native Tamil speakers. Feedback is thus being sought and collated and, where appropriate, will be incorporated in a final draft text of John, which we hope to publish once approved.

The local pastor who hosted us in Bangalore is active in evangelising hard-to-reach groups nearby. He is also running a small Christian school for local impoverished children from various backgrounds, an undertaking that would be very difficult to achieve in many western countries due to the abundance of laws and regulations in this area. Whilst in Bangalore we were able to meet another group of local Christians who run a printing press in the east of Karnataka. We were again humbled at the warm welcome afforded us in Bangalore.

## Brief visit to Nepal

Early on Thursday 2 March, Matthew and I flew out of Bangalore to Delhi for an onward flight to Kathmandu, where we had a series of meetings. The route from Delhi to Kathmandu took us over the Himalayas and gave us a few tantalising glimpses of snow-covered mountain peaks poking through the high-level cloud. We returned to the UK via Delhi, arriving back on Saturday 4 March.

## Wider aspects of the visit

In India the economy and infrastructure has clearly improved since my last visit in July 2016. By contrast, Kathmandu remained in dire poverty, the malaise no doubt partly attributable to the devastating earthquake in April 2015, which took place just three months after I last visited the city.

In the parts of India we visited and in Nepal there was growing interest in Christianity. This was allied with considerable zeal among local Christians to spread the Gospel and make Christ known in their own community and in other communities in their neighbourhood, as well as further afield in other parts of India and Nepal. Such fervour for Christ and such zeal for the Gospel, of course, attracts the special hatred of the devil.



## Later shocking news

After such an encouraging visit to the Indian subcontinent, especially in Manipur, it was

nevertheless a shock to receive an email on Thursday 4 May from one of our main Simte contacts, reporting that serious civil unrest had broken out in Manipur, with churches being burned down, tribal villages being razed to the ground, and fierce clashes breaking out between the mostly Hindu Meitei people and the largely Christian hill tribes. Since that date hundreds of churches have been burned down, many villages destroyed, and tens of thousands displaced from their homes. Armed clashes between Hindu and Christian groups continue and there appears to be no let-up in the conflict.

There had been no obvious indications that violent unrest was around the corner when Matthew and I were in Manipur. However, the trigger was a court ruling in late April 2023 which for the first time gave the Meitei

people protected tribal status, meaning that they could now legally purchase land and forest from the hill tribes. Up to that point, ever since the time of British rule in India, the more numerous Meitei people were unable to purchase tribal lands. When the court ruling was given and the hill tribes lost their unique protection, they protested as they feared their lands and forest would be swallowed up. Sadly, in early May the protests turned violent, aided and abetted by some militant Hindu Meitei groups, and from that point on the suffering, bloodshed, and violence have continued. As is so often the case it is the true Christians who are suffering by far the greater losses and hardship, particularly those among some of the hill tribes.

In the midst of this sadness, we are thankful to report that, at the time of writing, all of our Bible translators and revisers are currently safe. Some have left for neighbouring Indian states for their own safety. Others have remained in Manipur. In God's goodness many of them are continuing with their Bible translation and revision work. However, they all

need our earnest prayers for peace to be restored, and for a fair and just resolution to the legal ownership dispute that triggered the present conflict. Whilst many churches have been burned down, some continue to hold services and the genuine Christians in Manipur continue looking to the Lord for help.

### Conclusion

We are grateful for the prayerful interest many have in our Bible translation and revision projects. The opportunity to meet our Bible translators and revisers on this trip to India and Nepal was a great blessing and an opportunity that was not taken for granted. Across the world, many of our fellow labourers are working in countries where instability, disease, and conflict are much more present threats than to those of us labouring in Western countries. Let us prayerfully and practically stand with them, 'For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister' (Hebrews 6.10).





# THE STOREHOUSES PROVIDED BY THE LORD

by Matthew A. Vogan, *Editorial Director*

Along with the publication of the Spanish Bible, on 26 July 2023 a new distribution centre was opened in Medellín, Colombia to facilitate the distribution of the Holy Scriptures in Colombia and surrounding countries. At the official opening of the centre, the following devotional message was given highlighting the Lord's good kindness in the continued efforts of circulating His Word among all nations.

**'The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee' (Deuteronomy 28.8).**

## The Storehouses

In Spanish the word for storehouses is *graneros*. This is very like a word we have in English: granary. It is how I think of the warehouse in London: there are many racks

ascending to a great height, with shelves full of pallets containing boxes, and in every one of those boxes is a portion of the Word of God or at the very least something that upholds it.

I think of the warehouse as a granary full of seeds ready to be sown. The motto of the Society reminds us of this—'the Word of God among all nations'. This is drawn from two verses where the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking, 'The seed is the word of God' He



says in the parable of the sower in Luke 8. In Mark 13.10 we then read, 'the gospel must first be published among all nations'. Thus we have the Word of God—the seed—among all nations, and so it is that as this seed leaves the granary in London it goes among all nations.

But our verse speaks of more than one storehouse, and likewise the Society also has many 'granaries' around the world, with more in the future, God willing. They may be of different sizes, but they have the same purpose—the precious, God glorifying task of sending out that seed. The core purpose of the Society is to circulate the Scriptures. Our task is not finished when a translation or revision is drafted. Neither is it complete when we submit that work to the printer. When we receive the printed copies in the storehouse it is still not the end of our work: it is only the beginning.

We may apply the promises of this verse that speak of the Lord's outward blessings for the children of Israel. It is God's Word, and these are also ultimately the Lord's storehouses also. Their purpose is to distribute the Scriptures to the glory of God alone. Joseph wisely stored up corn in Egypt in storehouses; thus apparently Egyptian storehouses were filled from the top. Is not that a picture of the Lord's work in relation to providing us with the seed of the Word? There is much labour and activity on our part, but it is all subject to the overarching activity of Divine providence. Sometimes He

intervenes in a remarkable way to bring about translations and to make a way for His Word, working by His providence to bring all these things about.



*Addressing those gathered at the launch of the distribution centre*

'Joseph opened all the storehouses' (Genesis 41.56). There was famine but he had prepared the necessary provision for that time and now he supplied the need. Our Old Testament Joseph is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ opening all the storehouses of His grace for perishing sinners—it is a full provision. But part of this is His opening the storehouses of His Word so that sinners may hear and their souls live.



The Lord is gracious to give us these resources to steward wisely, although they are ultimately His. Thus, we read here that they are called ‘thy storehouses’. For those of you who have laboured in revising the Reina-Valera, these are your storehouses in a sense. You have laboured to see places like this filled with the Scriptures, and then constantly emptied and filled as the Word goes out. These are also the storehouses of those who have helped with practical arrangements, and those who have given generously in Gospel partnership—many whose names we never will know.

We pray that this revision will be adopted by many churches and Christians in Spanish-speaking nations. Our desire is that this storehouse will serve them, and that there will be many more storehouses springing up in many countries, not just here, but also in Bolivia and São Paulo, Brazil, and across Latin America and indeed Spain itself also, if the Lord will.

## The Responsibility

More than four hundred million people in more than twenty countries speak Spanish. It is the fourth most spoken language in the world. Much work is needed to ensure that people know about this revision and the reasons it is to be preferred. We read here in this verse, ‘in all that thou settest thine hand unto’. That indicates there is much work to do; there is a great deal of responsibility laid upon us. There are many things great and small we must set our hands to.

And as we are reminded in Ecclesiastes 9.10, ‘Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest’. We must diligently seek the Lord’s glory in all lawful ways, and make use of all opportunities in redeeming the time.

‘In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both *shall be* alike good’ (Ecclesiastes 11.6).



Sometimes—and this is certainly true of translation projects—things do not turn out as we plan and hope. We pursue possibilities and they are not fruitful. We speak to different people, but nothing seems to come of it. But the Lord has His time, He knows what will prosper and is able to make it prosper.

We need to fill the storehouses not just with Spanish Scriptures but with equally accurate and faithful translations of the Scriptures in the other languages spoken in Latin America. Spanish is spoken by sixty per cent of Latin Americans as the first language and Portuguese thirty per cent. But that remaining ten per cent constitutes a large proportion. There is French and Dutch for French Guyana and Suriname, but what about Quechua, Guaraní, Aymara, Nahuatl, and many others? Should we not be praying to the Lord of the harvest that He would thrust forth other labourers into this harvest and set their hands to this work of translation in other languages?

There are many people in many countries, speaking many languages—souls perishing for hunger. Christ is saying to us ‘Give ye them to eat’, but we are inclined to look at our

scarce resources like the disciples; they looked at only five loaves and two fishes and they asked, 'but what are they among so many?' 'Give ye them to eat', Christ said. He told them of their responsibility—perhaps you have heard the following: responsibility means our response to His ability. This is what launched the modern missions movement: 'Attempt great things for God and expect great things from God'. Christ is able to multiply and abundantly bless the seed sown so that it may be said, 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth' (Proverbs 11.24).

## The Blessing

We must not separate our responsibility from the Lord's blessing. The verse says 'The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee ... in all that thou settest thine hand unto' (Deuteronomy 28.8). The notes of the Geneva Bible on this verse read as follows, 'God will bless us, if we do our duty and are not idle'. The Lord is able to command the blessing in the sphere of labour and activity.

The Hebrew word translated 'storehouses' is only found here and in Proverbs 3.9–10, 'Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses

shall burst out with new wine'. We must be diligent and wise stewards: 'the hand of the diligent maketh rich' (Proverbs 10.4). There may be various disappointments and challenges, and we may sow in tears, but we have the sure expectation of reaping in joy (Psalm 126.5–6).

'He shall command': this is greatly encouraging and means that the Lord has all things at His sovereign disposal. When things seem most difficult and impossible to us, He can intervene. We labour in hope and sow in hope—it is His own Word and He will always bless it. This is how it was in the time of the apostles, 'So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed' (Acts 19.20).

In conclusion, let us remind ourselves of the promise of Isaiah 55.10–11.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.





PRODUCT NEWS

# New Chinese New Testament



The Society is pleased to announce the completion of the Chinese New Testament. Of all the languages in the world, Chinese has the second greatest number of speakers. China has a very large population of around 1.4 billion people, and the language is widely used in other countries in the surrounding area. The sheer size of the Chinese-speaking contingent in the world underlines the great need for a faithful translation of the Scriptures into the Chinese language, which until now has not existed.

## Features include:

- Black vinyl-covered paperback
- Text Bible (no references)
- Page Size: 203 x 133mm (8" x 5.2")
- Thickness: 9mm (0.4")
- 10 point print
- Weight: 300g

**Product Code:** CHINT/SBK

**UK** £7.25 | **AUS** \$14.79 | **CAN** \$9.00 |

**NZ** \$14.50 | **USA** \$8.00



# Bulgarian Scriptures

By Hannah Woodhams, *Executive PA*

**B**ulgaria is situated in southeast Europe. It borders Romania on the north, Greece and Turkey on the south, Serbia and North Macedonia on the west, and the Black Sea on the east. The population of Bulgaria is a little over 7 million people, approximately 85% of whom are Bulgarians, 9% Turks, and 5% Roma. The main language is Bulgarian, which is written in the Cyrillic script.

## Christianity in Bulgaria

Bulgaria was recognised as a Christian country in the year 864 during the reign of King Boris I of the First Bulgarian Kingdom. However, the form of Christianity which was accepted was Eastern Orthodox, which is the official state religion to this day.

From the year 864 until 1868—when the first Evangelical Congregational Church was established in the town of Bansko—there is no known history of Protestant Biblical Christianity.

Between 1944 and 1990—the years of Communist rule in Bulgaria—practising religion, whether Eastern Orthodox or Evangelical Biblical Christianity, was strictly forbidden and many Christians were persecuted and imprisoned.

***Sofia, capital of Bulgaria***



## The Bulgarian Scriptures

The brothers Cyril and Methodius, who developed the Cyrillic script, also translated the Scriptures into vernacular Slavic for the first time. Most of the New Testament was translated before the death of Cyril in 869; following his death his brother Methodius completed the translation of the entire Bible with the help of two scribes.

During the 500 years of Ottoman rule over Bulgaria, the form of Slavic spoken by Bulgarians was greatly diluted by being mixed with the Turkish language. This created a need for the Bible to be translated into an understandable, idiomatic form of the Bulgarian language.





That work was initiated after 1813 by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and particularly by a man named Robert Pinkerton.

Pinkerton was succeeded by Benjamin Barker, who saw the fruits of both his and Pinkerton's labour with the publication in Smyrna in 1840 of a Bulgarian New Testament that had been translated by Neofit Rilski.

Neither Pinkerton nor Barker lived to see the completion of the entire Bible. The entire Bulgarian Bible was eventually published in 1871 in Constantinople, and is known until this day as the Constantinople (Slaveikov) edition of the Bible. Since then, the Constantinople Bible has undergone numerous revisions but sadly not one modern Bulgarian Protestant Bible contains the text first published in 1871.

## TBS Bulgarian project

Early in the twenty-first century TBS was contacted regarding the need for a sound edition of the Bible in Bulgarian, and the Society took up the challenge. The aim of the Society's revision is to bring the text into closer conformity to the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received text, which were used by the translators of the original 1871 Constantinople edition of the Bible, and at the same time to update the language where necessary, thus making it suitable for today's Bulgarian speakers.

The first fruits of the revision of the Bulgarian Bible is the Gospel according to John which was published by the Society in 2019. In God's sovereign purposes (which at times are mysterious to us) our Bulgarian reviser passed away in 2021 at the age of 46. At the present time we have a native proofreader who is supportive of the Society's textual and translational position, but as yet we do not have someone suitably qualified to take on the revision work. We encourage you to join us in prayer for the Lord's overruling in this situation.

## Bulgarian Gospel according to John

Paperback Gospel according to John in Bulgarian, suitable for evangelistic purposes.

### Details

**Page Size:** 176 x 125mm (6.9" x 4.9")

**Thickness:** 3mm (0.1")

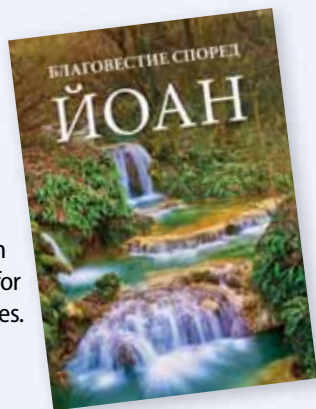
**Print Size:** 9.8 point

**Product Code:** **BULJN**

**ISBN:** 9781862284838

**UK** £0.75 **AUS** \$1.55 **CAN** \$1.20 **NZ** \$1.50  
**USA** \$1.00

The Gospel according to John is also available on our online Bible: [tbsonlinebible.com/#bg](http://tbsonlinebible.com/#bg)



## Bulgarian Words of Life Calendar

This colourful calendar for 2024 features a Scripture text in Bulgarian and an attractive photograph for each month predominantly from countries in which we have offices.

### Details

**Page Size:** 297 x 210mm (11.7" x 8.3")

**Product Code:**

**BULWLC24**

**UK** £0.78  
**AUS** \$1.25  
**CAN** \$1.00  
**NZ** \$1.30  
**USA** \$0.90





# The Treasury

By **David J. Broome**, *Resources Director*

It is an established fact in the history of the church of God that the revivals which stand the test of time are those most deeply rooted in the Word of God, both as it is read and faithfully preached. We are not surprised by this, of course, for we have our Lord's own assurance that, 'So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it' (Isaiah 55.11). A good example of this is the blessing that rested on the labours of Thomas Charles of Bala (and others) in North Wales in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Charles was a man who truly understood the value of the Word of God and its power to change lives, under the application of the Holy Spirit. If he is remembered at all in the twenty-first century, it is principally as the minister to whom Mary Jones went to buy her Bible at a time when the supply of Welsh Bibles was so limited. This incident so moved Charles's heart concerning the need for Welsh Bibles that he became highly instrumental in the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) in 1804, from which the Trinitarian Bible Society eventually emerged in 1831. This reminds

us afresh of the parable of the mustard seed (Luke 13.19), to which we believe the beginnings, growth, and—we trust—fruits of the Bible society movement can be happily likened, although, sadly, not all have stayed faithful to the high view of Scripture so ably articulated at the time of the Protestant Reformation and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by men such as Thomas Charles.

However, the formation of the BFBS was just one aspect of the fruit that flowed from Charles's evident embracing of the deep mystery of Psalm 138.2, 'for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy



***Statue of the Rev. Thomas Charles at Bala***

name'. Charles was truly a student of the Word who drank freely from 'the deep that coucheth beneath' (Deuteronomy 33.13) in the Scriptures. As a preacher, his sermons and addresses displayed a sound grasp of Scripture, but he also published his four volume *Geiriadur Ysgrhythrol* (Scriptural Dictionary) between 1805 and 1811, which was undoubtedly the fruit of his Biblical studies. This went through many editions and was highly influential.

But perhaps the most interesting aspect is Charles's vision and zeal for circulating schools and Sunday schools, the aim being to educate the population, both young and old, so that they could read the Scriptures. The Lord greatly honoured this work, and it evidently contributed to a revival of heart religion in North Wales in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that was firmly rooted in the Word of God, which is surely why it stood the test of time. However, sadly, the state of Biblical Christianity in Wales today is very low, and the sad witness to better days are the numbers of large empty chapels all over the country—not that the Lord is without His faithful remnant still in that beautiful part of our nation.

So, what is the lesson for us in the twenty-first century from this? Clearly the majority of people here in the UK do not need teaching to read as they did in Charles's day, but it would seem a reasonable assessment that the majority of the British population in 2023 are Biblically illiterate. Recent experience in taking school assemblies for primary school leavers has revealed that the lack of Bible knowledge, even of those who have been in Church of England schools for seven years, is deeply concerning.

Given this sad fact and the fruitfulness that we are promised in Isaiah 55.11—although we may never see it ourselves—surely we must redouble our efforts, under God, to distribute His Word in our local communities (particularly

among schools)? May we focus on this as individuals, as families, in our churches and assemblies, and through the auspices of TBS locally, nationally, and internationally. We often think of mission work as something that is done overseas, but surely many of us have a large mission field right here on our very doorsteps? We would encourage you to actively support and help your local TBS auxiliary where there is one, and where there is not, to prayerfully consider coming together with other like-minded brethren to form one.

Turning to more practical matters, we shared our financial results for 2022 in QR644 (the annual report edition of the *Quarterly Record*) and reflected on the Lord's gracious provision (Philippians 4.19). The Society has been mercifully maintained in this great endeavour, and our finances are sustained thus far through 2023, with both Sales and Donations ahead of budget. The sale of Bibles in connection with King Charles III's coronation has contributed significantly to this encouraging situation.

However, the Society still faces some significant financial challenges, not least rapid inflation in the cost of printing Scriptures (the highest rate that we have seen is a 76% increase over four years, although 40–50% over two years is common), despite our best efforts to control costs. Sadly, these cost increases will have to be reflected in the future pricing of our Scriptures if the Society is to remain financially sustainable. We seek your prayers that much wisdom might be given in managing these pressures, and that the Lord would continue to provide for all our financial needs.

A year ago, we asked for prayer concerning the Society's need for several new staff, as some part-time staff fully retired, others moved to part-time as a stepping-stone to retirement, and some struggled with debilitating health

issues. We are very thankful that the Lord has seen fit to raise up a 'following generation' to work at the Society and constrained them to venture forward at the appointed time. We have made five new permanent appointments in TBS London since April 2023, as well as two other staff receiving internal promotions, and one moving to the UK from TBS (USA). By the time that you read this, we trust that the last of these appointments will have started work, and that we will also be well on the way to finding the Lord's choice for the final post that we need to fill, that of Finance and Supporter Manager (advertised with QR644). We are very thankful to all our staff for all their loyal service to the Society, whether longer or shorter. We are also grateful to the retiring staff members, many of whom gave sterling service to the Society over many years. Please pray for the

new staff members, most of whom have been recruited to fill the roles previously occupied by those who have retired.

We remain deeply thankful to all the Society's members and supporters who uphold us in prayer and give practically to the work (Hebrews 6.10).

'Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you' (2 Thessalonians 3.1).

#### Endnote:

1. We are indebted to J. Aaron and the Banner of Truth for his recently published book *Thomas Charles of Bala* (Edinburgh, UK: Banner of Truth Trust, 2022), a must-read for any student of the Bible society movement and/or the course of Christianity in Wales, and from which some of the information in this article has been drawn.

## Supporter News Emails



Do you want up-to-date regular news and updates from the Trinitarian Bible Society?

**Did you know you can subscribe to weekly news emails? These give updates on topics such as:**

- Translation projects
- Latest news from the Society
- Distribution news
- Vacancies
- Articles and devotionals
- New products
- *Quarterly Record* updates
- Auxiliary news and meetings

**To sign up, visit our website:**  
**[tbsbibles.org/newsletter](https://tbsbibles.org/newsletter)**





# Membership Renewal

Membership subscriptions for 2024  
are now due.

**W**e are grateful to all those who have identified with us this year by being members of the Society, and we now take this opportunity to invite you to renew membership for 2024.

**The tariff, as agreed at the 2021 Annual General Meeting, is as follows:**

- Ordinary membership: £20.00
- Discounted membership for students, pensioners, or the unemployed: £12.50
- Discounted membership for those in developing countries: £5.00<sup>1</sup>
- Membership for pre-existing Life Members: No charge (new Life Membership is no longer available)

Membership, which runs from January to December and is renewable annually, can be taken out online at [tbsbibles.org/membership](https://tbsbibles.org/membership). Alternatively, the enclosed form can be completed and returned directly to any of the TBS addresses given in the back of the *Quarterly Record*.

To all who have faithfully supported us through membership, and to those who will take this opportunity to join, we and those around the world who have received faithful copies of the Scriptures are deeply thankful.

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<sup>1</sup> TBS regards a developing country as a low- or middle-income country (LMIC) as set out and recognised by international agencies. These are countries where wages are particularly low and the economy is less developed. The determination of a country as 'developing' in the context of membership is at the discretion of the Society and we may review your membership if a suitable category has not been selected.



# Distribution News from a Prison

For many years the Society has been pleased to send Scriptures and Scripture items to prisons. A prison chaplain in the United Kingdom recently sent this very thorough report about Scriptures he had received and effects of these on inmates in the prison. The letter has been edited slightly for publication, but we have reproduced it essentially as we received it.

## Bibles

The first thing we would like to say is a massive thank you to you for all your support that you have given us through the giving of the Bibles. These are making a massive difference to the prisoners and us as staff here at the prison. Earlier this month I had the privilege of giving a man a Bible and he was very moved by this. He later told me that this was the first time that he had been given anything and it meant so much to him.

The men are asking for Bibles, and they are taking them back to their cells and then spending time reading them. As soon as we get Bibles they are all given out within a few days, and we have even started to have to limit the giving out of the Bibles so that we can make sure that they are going to the people who are in the most need.

The men are really starting to grow

and understand what they are reading—for me as a minister it is great as they are asking lots of questions and I'm getting lots of challenges about what I am preaching on Sunday, which is a good thing.

We are praying that this continues and that men continue to grow in their relationship with God through reading His Word.

## Tracts and puzzle books

The tracts continue to be a great help and resource for us, they are used by many of the men to help pass time when they are locked up behind their doors.

For me as a chaplain, one of the big advantages we have seen with the puzzle books and Bible Journeys series has been the way that they are used by our team and the safer custody team as distraction packs. These are given to men that are finding things hard and need help. This can range from a man on suicide watch, to someone who has had bad news, or just someone new to the prison.

The books help men take their minds off things that are happening and help them to get through the day, week, month, or the event that has just happened.





The men also keep asking if we have any more of these as they have enjoyed doing them.

I have also seen men who have nothing decorate their cell with pages of these, just so they have something to look at. These are also great

for people who don't know how to read and write as these are helping them to learn.

Please pray that God continues to bless this work and the way these are being used. The smaller pocket tracts are a real blessing as they are easy to carry around with us, and when we come across people who are struggling and just need a bit of help or an encouraging word these are a great tool for this.

We thank God and yourself for the great help and resource that these are for us, and pray that they will continue to encourage the men who receive them.

## Calendars

One of the biggest items that we get requested for is the calendars. These are requested by men who come to chapel and Bible study, but mainly from men who have nothing to do with chapel, Bible study or services.

The other day I found out why when I went into the cell of someone who does not come to chapel. The whole cell wall was covered with this and last years' calendars. When I asked him why he gave me the following reasons:

- It brightened his cell up,
- The words gave him encouragement,
- He felt that there was hope through the words and pictures,

■ They helped him to not self harm and think about life beyond the prison,

■ They cancelled out the voices that tormented him, and while they were up the voices could not win.

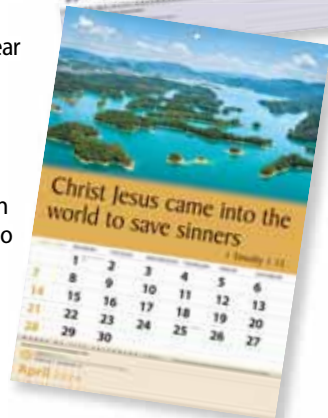
This was so encouraging to hear and see.

## General update

This year has been a very busy year so far, and we have had many things happen in the prison and in the chapel. One thing that has been a real help and blessing to us is the support and resources that we have had from the Trinitarian Bible Society. This has meant that we have been able to help those who have asked for help.

We continue to look at ways in which we engage with both the men and staff with us, and also the families of those who we look after.

Thank you so much for your support and help.





# The Word of God Among All Nations



Although certain phrases and expressions used in these letters may not be doctrinally accurate or in correct English, we reproduce the letters essentially as received, knowing that the Lord is using His Word to the glory of His Name and the furtherance of His Kingdom as the Scriptures are distributed among the nations of the world.



## Europe



### From a prison chaplain in England

Thanks for all your continued support and help. The men that I support here in the prison really do enjoy the items you give us.

Last week I had a lad come to me and tell me that he was getting out soon and that he had given most of his items away to help other men. But when asked by one of the men if they could have his Words of Life

Calendar that he had got from me, he said, 'Sorry but no I want that, I have really enjoyed looking at it each day and it has helped me to keep my head'. Now for those outside prison they may not understand this, but for us that work in prison this is probably one of the best complements you will ever get.

The items you give us make a difference and help me to do my ministry in a way that has never been done before so a really big heartfelt thanks . . . I wish that we could pay you for these items, but I just do not get any budget for this and if I could I would happily give you funds as what you do makes a difference.



## Africa



### From Kenya

I would love to show my gratitude to the TBS for their generosity towards me in my missionary work. As I write this short message, I feel like crying because I see God's grace in my life through the approval of my grant requests and reception of Bibles. I once heard a preacher say that having a Bible that contains references is just like having a personal study Bible because the references aid in Bible study. This year when I received the Compact Westminster Reference Bibles, I've experienced this practical truth through my daily personal Bible study. All I can say is thank you, and may the Lord show the whole team at TBS grace and favour as you continue in your work of Bible translation and distribution.

I've received a total of 33 bags containing the Bibles (200 Arabic and 200 English) that I requested from

the post office. They were so many that we had to transport them via a mini truck.

I had the pleasure of giving out forty copies of the compact Westminster Reference Bible to the pastor of my local church for the sole purpose of giving them to new believers who are in need of Bibles, as well as ten Arabic Bibles just in case God brings into our local

congregation someone from a Muslim background. Pray with me that those who'll receive the Bibles will be faithful in feeding upon God's Word, for man shall not live by bread







***Distribution of Compact Westminster Bibles***

alone but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

I had the pleasure of visiting a Christian rehabilitation centre, and apart from interacting with the recovering addicts, I also gave them some of the Bibles that you blessed me with. I gave them a total of 52 Compact Westminster Reference Bibles as well as ten Arabic Bibles. Please remember the recovering students in your prayers that they may hide God's Word in their hearts so that they may not sin against Him and that they may meditate on His Word day and night.

I also had the opportunity of distributing fifty Arabic Bibles to an organisation which deals with helping persecuted Christians. They said that they had a large Christian community in Sudan where their main language is Arabic. I felt compelled to give them some of the Bibles because I know that it will be of benefit to the believers there. They are grateful.

By God's Grace, I also gave out twenty Arabic Bibles to an organisation which deals with Muslim evangelism. I saw it fit to give them some Bibles because they interact a lot with Christian converts from the Islamic religion, and the best way to help such new converts in their growth to maturity is by ensuring that they have God's Word.

Sixteen copies of the Compact Reference Bibles went to the campus students, specifically to the Christian Union leadership team as a token of appreciation

***Arabic Bibles for evangelism***



***Bibles for students in Kenya***

for the wonderful work that they do in evangelism, discipleship, and service unto God despite being young students. I do know that if they continue to take heed unto God's Word, they will be able to walk in a way that glorifies God, and it is to God's glory that they have received His Word.

I have also distributed sixty Arabic Bibles to the three regional offices of the organisation where I work. These three regions have a lot of Arabic speaking people and because the missionaries in these three regions are involved in Muslim evangelism, these Bibles will be of help to them as they hand them out to new Christian believers.

I have not yet finished distributing all the Bibles. There are some that I've given out to those whom I disciple, as well as to my missionary colleagues. But just know that I am humbled. The Scripture below shows not just my attitude towards TBS but many who have benefitted from your grants:

'We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father' (1 Thessalonians 1.2–3).



*A Sunday School in Niger receiving French New Testaments*



### From Niger

The French New Testaments and the booklets have arrived in Niger, let us give glory to God. 600 New Testaments were sent to Niger, they arrived safely two days before the military coup and closure of all borders!



## The Americas



### From Brazil

My whole family sends you their greetings! It was beautiful to watch the Lord's hand reach so many individuals with the light of His Word throughout the prisons here in Sao Paulo, Brazil! We were able to distribute the New Testaments and Gospels of John in over fifteen different facilities in the Sao Paulo region as well as some in Curitiba. We were overwhelmed with their gratitude. We received numerous accounts of individuals who were actually praying that God would answer them and our visit with the Scriptures came as His direct response to them. One inmate told us that he had specifically asked the Lord to provide him with a Bible, knowing how impossible it would be, when we came the very next day and gave him the New Testament, it was like a miracle to him! It was evidence to him from the Father, not only of His existence, but also that he must seek salvation in Jesus! So many others told us how they greatly appreciated the pocket size Scripture booklet and said that they would both treasure and study it! We have also received messages weeks after visiting from inmates thanking us for the Bible.



### From Mexico

The article 'The Divine Inspiration of Scriptures' has been translated into Spanish, and is being distributed in countries such as Mexico, shown in this photo.



### From Bolivia

Distribution of Golden Thoughts and Words of Life Calendars in a congregation in Bolivia.



# Trinitarian Bible Society

## International Headquarters

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## The aims of the Society

To publish and distribute the Holy Scriptures throughout the world in many languages.

To promote Bible translations which are accurate and trustworthy, conforming to the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the Old Testament, and the Greek Textus Receptus of the New Testament, upon which texts the English Authorised Version is based.

To be instrumental in bringing light and life, through the Gospel of Christ, to those who are lost in sin and in the darkness of false religion and unbelief.

To uphold the doctrines of reformed Christianity, bearing witness to the equal and eternal deity of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, One God in three Persons.

To uphold the Bible as the inspired, inerrant Word of God.

**For the Glory of God and the Increase of His Kingdom through the circulation of Protestant or uncorrupted versions of the Word of God.**



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