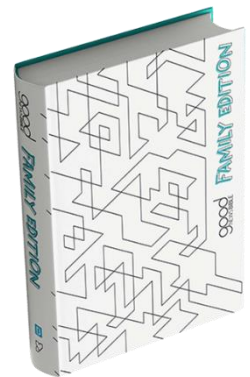


December 2021

‘So we will have to run the whole event online’ was a common cry throughout the pandemic. For Bible Society, the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast is an important opportunity to see the Scriptures explored with politicians, community leaders and church members. Usually, around 700 people would fill Westminster Hall for that annual event in June. In 2020, the whole event was broadcast from there to an entirely online audience.

This year, the event was again livestreamed to an eager audience (around 10,000 views to date) but with the innovation of over 40 local in-person, on-site events around the country. Hosted by local church leaders with invited politicians, these events demonstrated the pivot to the new hybrid era that so many churches have embraced. And the Bible Society webinar that followed, which featured NT Wright discussing ‘Re-imagining Mission’, has been similarly successful in applying the themes of Scripture to the changing landscape of this COVID era.

Our ministry is working hard to respond to the needs of the local Church both here and in the wider Bible Society family around the world. Our resources have been rapidly transformed to meet the demands of the season. *The Bible Course* is now fully available online, and we’ve developed a free accompaniment, The Bible Series, which provides video clips, sermon notes and, well, everything you’d need to run a seven-part Sunday series as a Bible overview. And, as families have spent more time together, so we have just published the Good News Bible – Family Edition, a resource to cater for every age. Packed with notes, discussion questions and creative ideas, it is designed for maximum fun and learning opportunities together.



Despite the challenges of this pandemic season, we thank God for the many opportunities we have had to work with churches and international partners to encourage Bible production, distribution and projects that are changing lives. The generosity of both individuals and local churches has been so encouraging. Many of our international colleagues have faced extreme hardship through the economic effects of lockdowns. Indeed, 88 national Bible Societies were in severe difficulty during 2020; yet, following a wonderfully generous response to our appeal (raising over £650,000), they were all able to be supported and have their immediate futures secured.

Our current campaign is to support the training of pastors in China. The Church there continues to grow in the face of great pressure, yet their leaders have little or no access to formal training. This caused a crisis of discipleship during several lockdowns as many members accessed their teaching through internet sites, some of which were speculative and misleading. Feng Chao, pastor at a rural church in Shandong in East China, describes the challenge: 'As churches were closed, people were consuming all sorts of content online. Some believers who are not able to distinguish falsehood from what is true have been lured away to join the cults'.



Pastor Feng Chao

If you feel moved to find out more and donate to this campaign please click here:

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/latest/news/entering-the-ministry-in-china-the-threat-of-cults/>

I would like to thank you all for your continued partnership with Bible Society and for your generous gifts that are enabling Bible Mission both here and overseas. We are focused on providing timely and creative resources for churches in the challenging post-lockdown season. You may have had the unfamiliar experience of seeing the RHS Chelsea Flower Show on your screens in September. If you did, you may have been surprised to see the Gold Award-winning Psalm 23 Garden. This Bible Society project, working with garden designer Sarah Eberle, uses the inspiring words of David to create a calming, reflective space for everyone to enjoy. The wonderful news is that the project doesn't stop there! There are resources to help local churches design their own garden and to



welcome the local community in for a fabulous banquet, 'a feast set before me.' More details are available here <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/psalm-23/>

In closing, may I wish you a peaceful and joyful season of Christmas celebrations this year. The King has come among us and our lives will never be the same again. Alleluia!

Gareth Davies, Church Engagement Manager, Bible Society

