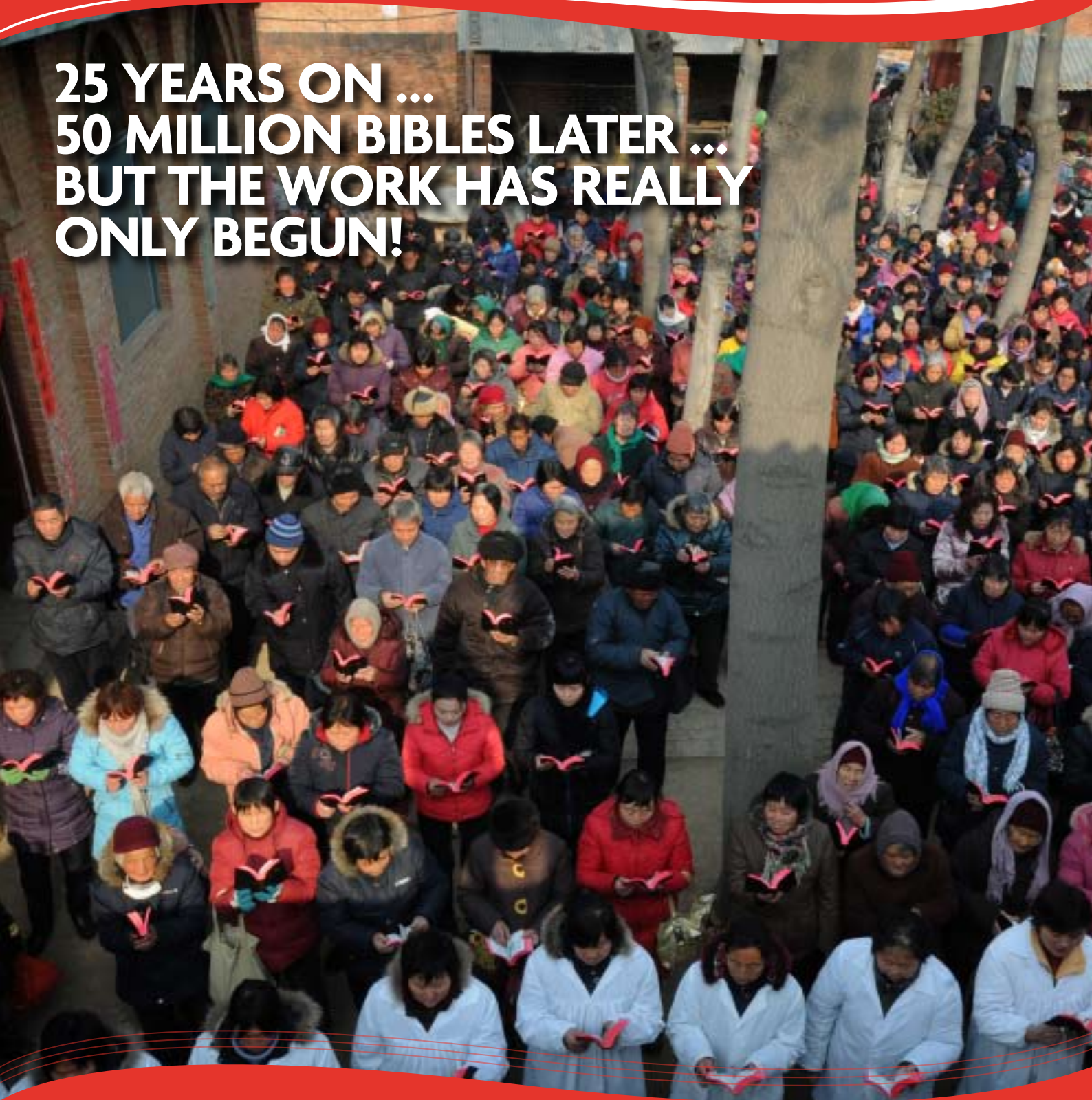


THE WORD AT WORK

**25 YEARS ON ...
50 MILLION BIBLES LATER ...
BUT THE WORK HAS REALLY
ONLY BEGUN!**



500 people at a rural church in the Henan province receive their Bibles after they were delivered from the Amity Press. Some of the more elderly had waited all their lives for their first Bible, distributed free thanks to supporters of Bible Society. While 250 worshippers squeezed into the church, another 250 more joined in worship just outside the church (as this picture shows) in sub-zero temperatures.

25 YEARS ON ... 50 MILLION BIBLES LATER ... BUT THE WORK HAS REALLY ONLY BEGUN!

On April 10 this year in Shanghai, China, a very significant event was held.

It was an event that happened by God's grace and because of you. You, and many others like you - Christian people who, through their practical and prayerful support, have ensured the widespread printing and distribution of Bibles throughout China for nearly 25 years.

It was a celebratory event and present were government officials, Amity Printing company executives, leaders of the Christian church in China and representatives of Bible Society.

They gathered to give thanks to God for the partnership between these four organisations that began in 1985. Today, 25 years later, all the parties agreed that the partnership is not only as strong as it ever has been but it is also needed more than ever before.

The partnership began at an informal meeting between Bible Society representatives and some Chinese church leaders. One of those church leaders, Bishop Ting, bemoaned the fact that the rapidly growing church in China couldn't get enough Bibles to meet the demand. Then one of the Bible

Society delegates made a suggestion: "Well, why don't we set up a printing press here in China to print them?"

Within weeks Bishop Ting, on behalf of the Chinese churches, negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding among his government, the Amity Printing Press and Bible Society that holds good to this day.

The result so far that you've made possible is the provision of more than 50 million Bibles in Chinese for the people of China.

Bible Society is privileged to have you as a partner in what's been called 'a modern day miracle of God'.

And the miracle continues.

With a new church opening every five days the work of providing Bibles in China has really only begun.

200 people in China are coming to



Thanks to you, this young Chinese church-goer in Manpo, in the Yunnan Province, has a Bible he can call his own. Your gift will ensure there are many others like him who will receive their first-ever Bible, in the coming year.

faith in Christ every day so there's a continuing and urgent need for more Bibles so these new Christians can grow and nurture their new-found faith.

Helping to provide these Bibles is a vital part of our mission.

Will you please continue to partner with us in doing this? We cannot do it without you.

\$2 BUYS PAPER FOR A FULL BIBLE

Compared to the cost of paper in New Zealand, this figure looks very economical. And it is.

But the paper is good quality Bible paper that has been developed in China to ISO standards. And because it is produced in China, there are now no added importation or duty costs.

For every \$2 you give towards providing Chinese Christians with a Bible, it means that all but the very poorest will be able to afford a new, strongly-bound, hardcover, long-lasting Bible in Chinese for just \$2.50. So your gift subsidises the cost of Bibles by almost half.

Let us pray for the burgeoning church in China and let us support them in the best way we can – by helping to provide Christians in that country with a Bible.



A roll of Bible paper being taken from storage to the press production line. This roll, when it comes out as Bibles at the end of the production line, will be transformed into 500 Bibles.

NEW ZEALAND CHAIR REPRESENTS DONORS AT CELEBRATIONS



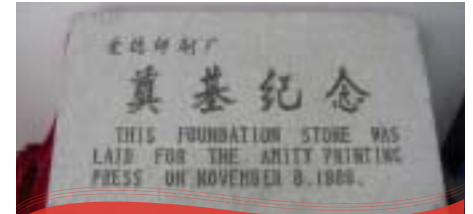
"I am more convinced than ever that we must do everything possible to support the church in China through the provision of Bibles from the Amity Press."

These words from Bible Society New Zealand chairman, David Harrison, who was one of the Bible Society personnel representing donors from five specially invited countries – the UK, USA, Finland, Australia and New Zealand – at the 25th anniversary celebrations.

"There is no doubt that not only the church in China but even the government there, knows of the enormous support given to Bible production by the New Zealand Christian community and they are most grateful," said David.

"One of the government leaders spoke glowingly of New Zealand's contribution in firstly getting the press up and running and then helping to sustain production for nearly 25 years.

"Integral to that has been the presence, until last year, of New Zealander Peter Dean* at the press. He was a tremendous asset to them and was instrumental in developing the Bible paper on which they now print Bibles – and as this paper



The foundation stone that was laid at the beginning of work on the first Amity Press in 1986. The entire operation was moved to a new press in 2008.

“

It's a God given opportunity, the like of which doesn't offer itself very often.

”

is now produced internally, it has saved millions of dollars on import duty and taxes that used to be passed on to the buyers of Bibles – and he also helped the Press attain international ISO status.

"It was a humbling experience to represent Bible Society supporters in New Zealand who have donated to the production of Bibles at Amity Press over the years. I am so grateful to Bible Society supporters here in New Zealand who have been, and I pray will continue to be major supporters of this important part of our mission.

"It's a God-given opportunity for us," said David, "the like of which doesn't offer itself very often."

**Since returning to New Zealand Peter Dean has taken up a position as the Regional Representative for Bible Society in the Bay of Plenty, Eastland area.*

CHINA CHURCH LEADER TO BIBLE SOCIETY: 'THANK YOU!'



"With Bible paper subsidised by generous supporters of Bible Society, many Chinese Christians are now able to have Bibles of their own," said Elder Fu Xianwei, a leading Chinese churchman, during the 25th anniversary celebrations.

"Chinese Christians whether rich or poor, can now afford to buy a copy of the



The new Amity Press which now has the capacity to print 12 million Bibles a year.

Bible because of you. On their behalf I say 'thank you' to New Zealand donors to Bible Society.

"I also want to thank Bible Society donors for helping to purchase 44 Bible distribution vans to enable us to get Bibles to the churches in the furthest parts of our country.

"The partnership the Chinese churches have had with Bible Society for 25 years has laid a solid foundation for the growth and development of the church in China and the spread of the gospel in China," said Mr Fu.

MINORITY LANGUAGE BIBLES PUBLISHED IN CHINA

In recent years the Amity Press has published Bibles in eight minority languages within China, including the Miao language Bibles and Lisu New Testament which were published last year.

Bible Society, through their donors, has been involved in not only the translation of these Bibles but also the subsidising of the printing of them.

As well, included in the more than 50 million Bibles that the Amity Press has published in the last 25 years, are Bibles in 50 different versions or specifications. And this figure does not include Braille Bibles or the latest specification, digital Bibles.

“With support from donors to Bible Society, the church in China is now able to serve much more effectively the needs of Chinese Christians from various age groups, occupations and social conditions,” said Mr Fu, a leader in the Chinese churches.



A group of Miao Christians who belong to a church in the Guizhou province of China, proudly show their new Bibles which were recently printed in their own language.

CHANGED BY LOVE

At the age of 15 Yu Cheng Kun was one of Chairman Mao's Red Guards that persecuted people considered to be a corrupting influence.

Then he strayed into a secret meeting of Christians, worshipping.

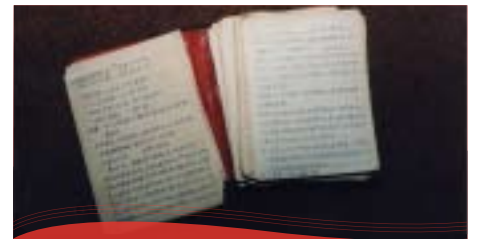
“The love I met in the people there changed me,” he recalls. “I decided to put my life into God's hands.”

Expelled from the Party and high school, he spent his nights hand-copying the

Bible, since copies were impossible to obtain.

Then the political climate changed and when the Nanjing Theological College reopened in 1979, he was one of its first students.

Since those days, in his work as a Pastor, he has seen more than a million copies of the Bible put into the hands of Chinese people. In nearly every instance it was the first Bible these people had owned.



A hand-written Bible camouflaged as “editorials from people's daily Red Flag Liberation Army” during the cultural revolution in China.

GOVERNMENT BACKS BIBLE MISSION



“I have been very pleased to be a witness to the development of Bible mission in China, of the enhancement of Christianity in China, and

the improvement of friendly relations between churches in China and organisations like Bible Society,” said

Ms Guo Wei, the Director General of SARA's* Department of Foreign Affairs during the 25th anniversary celebrations.

“Bible Society is not only a sincere friend of the churches in China, but also a friend of SARA.

“We appreciate that Bible Society chose to cooperate with the churches in China in an open and legal way. And I am personally grateful for the support of Bible Society and the longtime friendship

I have with many Bible Society people,” said Ms Guo Wei, who has visited New Zealand twice as part of SARA delegations to this country.

**SARA is the State Administration for Religious Affairs, the Chinese government agency that oversees all religious activity in China.*

Question:

How many Christians are there in China?

Answer:

Nobody knows the definitive answer to that. There is no question about religious affiliation in the Chinese census and the figures among registered church officials, the unregistered churches, and the government varies from between 30 million and 120 million with the government estimate being the lower one. The actual figure is any number between the two.

Question:

Are Bibles printed at Amity Press freely available in China?

Answer:

Yes, they are available from most churches. A buyer requires no identification nor are any names or other details taken.

Question:

Is the smuggling of Bibles still an issue in China?

Answer:

Yes. Bibles are still smuggled into China. Bibles printed at the Amity press have a permit number imprinted and that is how the authorities differentiate between a legal and an illegal Bible. And those caught with illegal Bibles have to face the consequences of possessing illegally imported or produced goods – as they would in any country, including New Zealand.

Question:

Obviously there is an increasing demand for Bibles in China – where does the Bible rate on China's best-seller list?

Answer:

Unofficially the Bible is the number one best-seller in China! This statement came from a government minister – 'unofficial' because the Bible is not for sale in public bookstores and therefore does not count in the best-seller list (much the same as in New Zealand, where almost every year the Bible outsells any other book but that fact is not recognised in the annual New Zealand best-seller list). The 'official' best-selling book in China is "*The Collected Speeches of Deng Xiaoping*", but sales of this book are declining while sales of the Bible are increasing.

CHINA, CHRISTIANITY AND THE BIBLE

Some Q & A's



Hundreds of cartons of Bibles at Amity Press awaiting distribution to the furthest parts of China.

Question:

Why is there a Bible printing press in China?

Answer:

Because the government does not allow the importation of Bibles – and many other books – into China. Bibles have to be printed in China and the printing of them has to be approved annually by the government. To date, the government has not turned down any annual request and has, in fact, allowed substantial increases in the number of Bibles printed.

Question:

How much does a Bible cost in China?

Answer:

The standard Bible - this is the full Bible with Old and New Testaments produced by the Amity Press - sells for \$2.50. But even that amount is too much for some of the rural poor Chinese and so, each year, thousands of Bibles are given to churches through the generosity of Bible

Society donors. The \$2.50 cost makes the Bible readily available "at a cost they can afford" to most Chinese Christians. The cost is able to be kept low because of the subsidy that pays for the Bible paper. This subsidy is met by Bible Society donors in New Zealand and other countries.

Question:

Does the government edit the Bible that Amity Press produces?

Answer:

No. Occasionally rumours surface that a book or a particular passage of the Bible is left out of the Bibles printed at the Amity Press because of a government edict. This is and always has been a false rumour. The Bibles printed at the Amity Press contain the full Bible as we know it.

“CHRISTIANITY WAS SEEN AS COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY”



“I grew up in China during the Cultural Revolution in a non-Christian family, at a time when Christians were being persecuted by the

communists. But in spite of those things I always felt drawn towards Christianity.”

Rev Dr Gao Ying is the Vice Principal of the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, the national seminary of the church in China. This is her story.

“In 1981, when the churches in China officially re-opened I attended my first church service at the age of 25. I began attending every week. I got baptized and soon afterwards I decided to apply for a place at the Nanjing Theological Seminary.

“When my parents, who saw Christianity as counter revolutionary and pro-Western, learned of my decision – that I had not only become a Christian but that I was planning to take up theological

studies – their opposition was intense. I was forced to leave home. My mother threatened to disown me and she refused to see me throughout the years I was at the Seminary.

“My father died just as I was starting my studies in Nanjing; the strain between

my mother and I continued for years until finally, after I had moved to the United States to further my studies, God brought about an unexpected reconciliation between she and I. Shortly afterwards she was diagnosed with cancer and six weeks later she died.”

Dr Gao Ying has a special affinity for New Zealand after visiting in 1995.

“It has been a privilege to work with Bible Society since the 1980s. Its servants bear a great burden for the church in China. I know that in the early days they faced many challenges, but they kept an open and flexible attitude and because of this the cooperation has lasted.

“I am very grateful to the many Bible Society donors in New Zealand. Because of you, Bibles are available at either a low cost or they can be given away for free to very poor Christians. But even after 25 years of printing locally the supply of Bibles is still insufficient. I think that no matter how many Bibles were printed, it would never be enough to meet China’s growing demand.”

“

...because of your gifts, Bibles are available for free or at a low cost in China.

”

RURAL PREACHER’S PRAYERS FOR PRESS ANSWERED



“Whenever I open my Bible to the page with the sentence, ‘The Bible paper is contributed by Bible Society,’ I give thanks to God,” says Liu Ming, a rural preacher and third year student at the Jiangsu Province Bible School.

Liu Ming first became aware of the great need for Bibles when he became a Christian in 1980 and began attending a house church with his parents. There were few Bibles available and as he was

the youngest and the most literate person there, it fell on him to read Scripture passages out aloud to the other members of the church. This is how his ministry as a lay preacher began.

“The picture of the yearning eyes of those around me is still etched in my heart,” he says.

“I used to pray, Lord, how wonderful it would be if everyone could have a Bible.”

It wasn’t long after that in 1985 that the Amity Printing Press was established which, thanks to the generosity of Bible Society supporters, has seen 50 million Bibles distributed to Chinese Christians in the last 25 years.

“So now, by God’s wonderful provision of the Amity Press, my prayers are being answered. What a miracle!” exclaims Liu Ming.

AN 8 PAGE ISSUE?

Yes, this is a bigger issue of *The Word at Work* than normal.

That’s because the story about China and the Bible is such a great God-glorifying story and also because we think the continuing need to support this miraculous work is worth an extra two pages.

We know from the way you have generously supported Bible Society mission in China in the past that you’re passionate about this part of Bible mission too.

That’s why, just for this issue, there’s a page or two more.

And if, once you’ve read it, you know of someone else who is interested in Bible mission, why not pass it on to them?

200 YEARS OF BIBLE TRANSLATION IN CHINA



A copy of the first Chinese Bible translated by Robert Morrison and published, in several volumes, by Bible Society in 1823.

Bible translation in China stretches back to 1807 and the first translator, Robert Morrison.

After him many missionaries working individually translated the Bible into a number of dialects. This led to many diverse, even dubious translations of the Bible throughout China and, in some areas, the ministry of the Gospel was adversely affected.

In 1919, nearly 20 years after a meeting in Shanghai of many missionary organisations and Bible Society, the Mandarin Union version was published, known as the 'Union' version. By that time, Mandarin had become the official language of China.

This was the first version of the Bible to be widely accepted and through the following seven decades many people came to faith in Christ and the Bible was both instrumental in many conversions and in the nurturing of their faith.

In 1989 Bible Society added further features, including upgrading of the format and layout, to give the Bible even wider acceptance. This was called the New Punctuation Union Version.

Then, in 1994, the Bible Society in Singapore using the New Punctuation Version, published the Simplified Script version. It is this version that is now predominantly printed at Amity Press for distribution in China.



A drawing depicting Robert Morrison and his assistants working on translating the Bible into Chinese in the early 19th century.

2009 RECORD YEAR FOR CHINA BIBLES



Last year a record 4 million copies of the Bible in Chinese were printed and distributed in China, from the Amity Press.

BIBLE SOCIETY NEW ZEALAND

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The Hon. Sir Anand Satyanand

President

The Most Reverend David Moxon

Vice Presidents

Mr Bruce Murray

Mr Ian Grant

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Dr George Barton*

Mrs Helen Chandelle

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Mr Robert Hagan-Pratt

Mr Peter McKenzie

Mr Roger Moses

Mr Sewlyn Tong

Chief Executive

Mr Francis Burdett

**Dr Barton is also President of the United Bible Societies, the worldwide fellowship of 145 national Bible Societies.*

SUPPORT CHINA BIBLE MISSION THIS BIBLE SUNDAY - 18 JULY

This is the day when we in New Zealand will celebrate the Scriptures. It's a time we give thanks to God that we have such ready and available access to Bibles in the style and format we can understand and easily read.

Millions of people around the world do not have that same freedom of choice or availability of Bibles. China is one country where this is the case.

That's why this year as your Bible Sunday gift of thanksgiving we are asking you to help us make a difference for the Christians in China by helping to provide them with an affordable Bible. Every \$2

“

Every \$2 you give will provide the paper for a full Bible.

\$1,000 provides for one full roll of Bible paper – enough for 500 Bibles!

”

you give will provide the paper for a full Bible and that almost halves the final cost of a Bible in China to Christians and others in that country. A gift of \$1,000 provides for one full roll of Bible paper – enough for 500 Bibles!

Please consider this carefully and if you are able to help meet this special and urgent need please do so now! There are many Chinese Christians, especially those new to the faith, who you can help by making your gift today.

Thank you and God bless you!

TEARS OF JOY AND GRATITUDE ...



The tears flowed as Christians in Shang Dang village, Jiangsu Province, received Bibles for the first time recently. Your gifts are helping to bring Bibles to Christians like these throughout China.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BIBLE DISTRIBUTION IN CHINA.

Watch the video online at:
www.biblesociety.org.nz

Click on 'urgent Bible needs' and follow the China link.

Please give prayerful consideration to offering a gift for Bible paper in China.

Please send your gift to: Bible Society,
Private Bag 27901, Marion Square, Wellington 6141

THE LAST WORD

As you share your faith with others, I pray that they may come to know all the blessings Christ has given us.

- Philemon 1.6

Freephone: 0800 4 BIBLE (42 42 53)

E-mail: bibles@biblesociety.org.nz

Web: www.biblesociety.org.nz

**NEW ZEALAND
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