

# THE WORD AT WORK

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Members of the Eastern Cham community  
proudly display their  
Cham New Testaments.

PHOTO CREDIT: @QUAN PHAN

## VIETNAM'S CHAM RECEIVE NEW TESTAMENT

On March 4, 2024, the Eastern Cham Christian community celebrated a historic milestone with the official launch of the Cham New Testament. The event, organised by the Bible Society of Vietnam, marked a significant step forward for the approximately 135,000 Cham speakers, providing them with access to Scripture in their heart language for the first time.

Throughout the course of the project, which spanned from 2015 to 2021, the Cham translation team faced many challenges, including funding constraints and the inherent complexities of translation work. Yet, their perseverance paid off, culminating in the completion of the Cham New Testament in December 2021.

The Cham people are one of Vietnam's 54 officially recognised ethnic groups. Descendants of the ancient Champa kingdom—which once spanned parts of Vietnam, Cambodia, and southern Laos—the Eastern Cham primarily reside along the southern

coastline and in the Mekong Delta provinces of Binh Thuan, Ninh Thuan, and Dong Nai. From a religious point of view, the Cham people include adherents of Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, ancestor worship and animism making up a diverse religious landscape. Approximately five percent of Cham identify as Christian, making their access to Scripture particularly significant.

Compounding the religious diversity, linguistic barriers have also isolated many Cham from engaging with the Bible. Vietnamese, the national language, is often difficult for them to fully understand. The introduction of the Cham New Testament aims to bridge this gap by equipping Christians to deepen their faith.

"We are excited to see the New Testament in the Eastern Cham language serving as a powerful tool of evangelism to the Eastern Cham community," said the Translation Officer for the Bible Society of Vietnam. "We look forward to the growth of the church as Cham Christians are empowered to read and study the Bible in their own mother tongue," she said.

Dear Friends of Bible Mission,

Welcome to the Summer Issue of The Word at Work. As we embrace 2025, we wish you a year filled with abundant peace and joy.

A new year is an excellent opportunity to reflect on the past and look forward to what lies ahead. At Bible Society New Zealand, we are sincerely grateful for your unwavering support. Your partnership is not merely a contribution but a vital component of our mission. It enables our mission of helping make the Bible accessible to everyone and encourages interaction with it, significantly impacting the lives of many.

This year's theme, "Faith and Life, United through Scripture," embodies our dedication to helping people connect with the transformative power of God's Word. We begin 2025 with an emphasis on children's projects in the Middle East, where millions of young lives are affected by conflict. The urgency of the situation is evident, as many face hunger, separation from loved ones, and the profound physical and emotional scars of war. Yet, even amidst these trials, the Bible offers hope.

Bible Societies in the region work tirelessly to bring Scripture to children, providing comfort and the reassurance of God's love through Jesus Christ. This month, we spotlight the efforts of the Arab Israeli Bible Society, the Palestinian Bible Society, and the Bible Society of Syria.

These initiatives are part of 45 international projects you can support this year. Each project addresses unique challenges and opportunities, from Bible translation and distribution to literacy and beyond. Your generosity transforms lives and ensures that God's Word continues to reach those in need.

Thank you for journeying alongside us. Your support is invaluable, and we are profoundly grateful for all you do to advance His mission.

May God richly bless you.



Neels Janse van Rensburg

CEO



A smiling Eastern Cham man with the New Testament he has received.

PHOTO CREDIT: ©QUAN PHAN

# TRANSFORMING LIVES IN KUWAIT AND BARAIN AND BARAIN

In 2024, your generous support enabled the Bible Society in the Gulf to bring the Word of God to migrant workers in Kuwait and Bahrain. Here is a glimpse of what your contributions have achieved.

## CHALLENGES FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Migrant workers make up around 75 per cent of the workforce in Kuwait and Bahrain. Many come from countries like India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Philippines, and Pakistan, seeking better opportunities for themselves and their families. Unfortunately, upon arrival, many

face exploitation. Employers often confiscate their passports, forcing them into near slave-like conditions.

Amid these hardships, many migrant workers are finding comfort in Christ. They gather in migrant churches, often led by pastors who have also come from non-Christian backgrounds. To support these communities, the Bible Society in the Gulf is conducting seminars on Christ's teachings, training church leaders, and distributing Bibles in various languages.

## EMPOWERING CHURCH LEADERS

In 2024, Bible Society facilitated three workshops in Kuwait and Bahrain, training 200 church leaders and distributing 600 Bibles, in Arabic and other languages. One workshop, entitled "God's Skilful Workers," was specifically designed for Telugu-speaking church leaders. Forty leaders attended, gaining deeper biblical knowledge and practical skills to better serve their congregations.



A migrant worker with a Mega voice audio Scripture player he received from Bible Society.

PHOTO CREDIT:  
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Migrant workers in a labour camp with Scriptures they received from the Bible Society in the Gulf.

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In 2021, the Bible Society of Brazil launched a project to distribute 325,000 New Testaments through churches to celebrate Bible Day. The New Testaments were printed in SBB's printing facility. In the end, the target was far exceeded, with around one million copies distributed for free.

PHOTO CREDIT:  
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## MINISTRY IN KUWAIT

Partnering with New Covenant International Ministry (NCIM), Bible Society reached out to migrant workers in Kuwait, particularly those living in labour camps near Wafra on the Saudi border. These workers, employed on farms, often live in isolation and hardship. During one visit, Bible Society conducted a seminar on the story of blind Bartimaeus. Pastor John shared, "The migrant workers in this labour camp are simple people who are always happy when we visit.

They love hearing the Word of God and treasure receiving a Bible in their mother tongue. The story of Bartimaeus was especially inspiring, showing Jesus' love and care for marginalised people like them." This outreach not only shared the Gospel but uplifted and encouraged workers far from their families and communities.

## OUTREACH IN BAHRAIN

In Bahrain, the Bible Society is supporting a newly established congregation at a long-term private hospital, where many Christian staff work as cleaners. Recognising that many are illiterate, Bible Society provided audio Bibles in multiple languages to help them access God's Word.

Additionally, the Bible Society distributed Bibles to churches serving diverse congregations, including those speaking English, Sinhala, Tagalog, Tamil, and Urdu. A domestic helper from Sri Lanka expressed her gratitude, saying, "I received a Bible, and His Word strengthens me. I am truly blessed."

## SBB CELEBRATES 200 MILLION BIBLES

In August 1993, a group of thirty people gathered on a landfill in a neighbourhood outside São Paulo, Brazil. They prayed and read Scripture, united by a shared vision: to create a centre dedicated to producing and distributing God's Word. On that day, the cornerstone was laid for what would become the Bible Production Centre—a monumental project to bring Scriptures to Brazil and to the world. Fast forward to 2025, and that dream has become a reality. The Bible Production Centre now produces high-quality, low-cost Bibles that reach millions both in Brazil and abroad. On 7th November 2024, the Bible Society of

Brazil (SBB) celebrated a historic milestone: the printing of 200 million Bibles and New Testaments. Over the past three decades, 70 per cent of the 200 million Bibles and New Testaments were distributed within Brazil, while 30 per cent were sent overseas.

The achievement was marked with a special thanksgiving service attended by representatives of the United Bible Societies (UBS), local churches, Christian organisations, and communities. To commemorate the occasion, a special-edition Bible was created, featuring the biblical texts in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

## MISSION IMPACT

The Bible Society of Brazil has taken as its theme: “Bible: The Reference – Reconciliation in Family and Society.” This reflects the organisation’s dedication to sharing God’s Word and highlighting its transformative role in fostering peace and understanding. For instance, in 2022, amid the war in Ukraine, the Bible Society sent 100,000 New Testaments in Ukrainian to offer comfort and hope to those affected by the conflict.

The Bible Society of Brazil strives to ensure that Scripture serves as a catalyst for spiritual, cultural, and social transformation. Each year, it supports 350,000 people in vulnerable situations by providing Scripture. These include children, prisoners, hospital patients, individuals with disabilities, and those struggling with addiction.

# BONO-TWI NEW TESTAMENT LAUNCHED

Ghana, a Christian-majority country where 71 per cent of the population identify as Christian, marked a significant milestone in July 2024. The Bono-speaking people celebrated the launch of the Bono-Twi New Testament at an event in Sunyani, the Bono regional capital. Themed “We hear them speak in our language,” the occasion was attended by Members of Parliament, Christian leaders, and Bible Society representatives. The Bono-Twi dialect, recognised as one of the mother dialects of the Akan language,



Staff members working on the production line in SBB's Bible printing facility in Sao Paulo.

PHOTO CREDIT: ©DREW HOOD

holds a special place in Ghana’s rich linguistic tapestry. The Bono translation project began in 2017 and was led by a dedicated team of three translators. They were assisted by a committee of 15 reviewers who played a crucial role in ensuring the translation’s accuracy.

A significant achievement was the development of a standardised orthography for the Bono language, which was formally approved by the Bureau of Ghana languages in 2018. The orthography was first applied in the publication of the Bono Gospel of Mark, launched in July 2018.

The Very Rev Dr John Kwesi, Bible Society of Ghana's General Secretary, emphasised Bible Society's vision to make the Bible accessible in formats and languages that resonate with Ghanaians. Madam Owusu-Banahene, Bono Regional Minister, underscored the cultural and spiritual significance of translating the Bible into the Bono language. She noted that such efforts not only preserve the Bono people's cultural heritage but deepen their spiritual connection with God.

The first 5,000 copies of the Bono-Twi New Testament were eagerly received by the Bono community-including those in the diaspora-many of whom had long awaited Scripture in their heart language. The New Testament has been designed to enhance reader engagement with many user-friendly features such as introductions to each book, cross-references, and illustrations.

The Bible Society of Ghana is now focusing on translating the Old Testament into Bono-Twi, with the aim of releasing the full Bono-Twi Bible by 2030.



Scan the QR code to get started and leave a lasting legacy!

## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Would you prayerfully consider making a gift to provide Scripture for children in the Middle East?

## IN MEMORIAM

Bible Society has learned of the passing of the following friends. Gifts towards the work of Bible Society's mission have been made in their memory. Their work of love goes on.

- Soleman & Alice Andi-Lolo
- Bernadette Downs
- Lyn Harrison
- Mrs SE Runciman of Te Awamutu
- Joyce Palfreyman

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## THE LAST WORD

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. 2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV)*

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