



the sower

Number 252 • 2026
WITH PRAYER GUIDE

THE SOWER is the official journal of the Bible Society of South Africa. Articles herein may be freely used with acknowledgement.

AUGUST 2026
NUMBER 252
ISSN 1018-1504

Published by: Bible
Society of South Africa

CONTACT DETAILS

The Editor

The Sower

p 5500 Tyger Valley 7536

t 021 910 8777

e biblia@biblesociety.co.za



Dear Friends

This will be my final letter to you as Chief Executive Officer of the Bible Society of South Africa. As I prepare for retirement, I am deeply grateful for the remarkable journey we have shared. It has been a privilege to serve alongside faithful believers through seasons of great adversity and renewed hope.

During some of the most difficult years in our organisation's history, your generosity, prayers and encouragement never faltered. Your partnership has played a significant role in the turnaround of the Bible Society of South Africa (BSSA), enabling us to strengthen our ministry and to continue placing God's Word in the hands of South Africans. Thank you for your continued trust and partnership in strengthening the BSSA as a sustainable and impactful mission of the Church.

As I hand over this position to our new Chief Executive Officer, I do so with confidence and peace that the Lord will continue to guide the leadership with wisdom and sufficient resources. I know the BSSA has a devoted and Christ-centred leadership team, supported by passionate staff who are committed to serving the Church and advancing God's Kingdom.

To our long-standing supporters and partners, and those who have recently joined the Bible Society family, thank you for your trust and faithful support. Scripture reminds us, "For we are co-workers in God's service" (1 Corinthians 3:9, NIV).

May the Lord richly bless you and your families as you continue to invest in his Kingdom. It has been a great honour to serve alongside you in God's mission.

I leave with a thankful heart full of hope, knowing that, by God's grace, the shared work we have done will continue to bear fruit for generations to come.

Yours in Christ,

Rodney van Wyk

Chief Executive Officer



SECOND CHANCE through Scripture

Serving a prison sentence deprives a person of freedom and separates them from much of everyday life, but it cannot extinguish the human need for hope, in fact, it increases the importance of it. For many inmates, receiving a Bible marks the beginning of a journey towards healing, restoration and a renewed sense of purpose. In the pages of Scripture, they not only encounter God's love and forgiveness, but also the possibility of a transformed life.

The Bible Society's *Bibles for prisoners* project makes God's Word available to men and women in correctional facilities all throughout South Africa who would otherwise have little or no access to a personal Bible.

For many prisoners, this is the first Bible they have ever owned. It is a constant source of comfort in difficult circumstances, offering wisdom for a different path and the assurance that

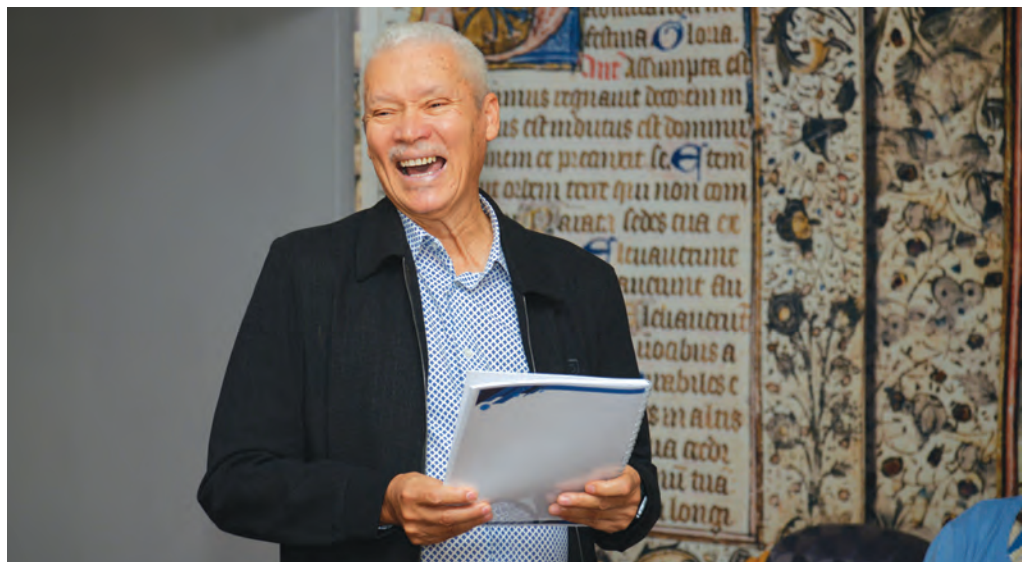
God's forgiveness and grace remain available to all who seek him, regardless of their past.

The impact of a single Bible reaches far beyond physical prison walls. As lives are transformed through God's Word, families can begin to heal, relationships can be restored and communities can be strengthened. Where there was once brokenness, God's Word plants the seeds of hope, purpose and tangible change.

Your donation to this project will help place God's Word in the hands of someone seeking hope and a second chance at life.

By supporting the *Bibles for prisoners* project, you are playing a part in helping to share the message of forgiveness, redemption and new life with those who need it most.

Visit www.biblesociety.co.za to donate. 



PASSING THE TORCH

After nearly 35 years of faithful service, Rev Rodney van Wyk will retire from the Bible Society of South Africa (BSSA) at the end of August 2026, closing the door on an illustrious chapter of leadership, commitment and faith.

On Friday, 29 May, staff gathered at the BSSA Head Office with Rodney and his family to celebrate a career that has made an enduring mark on the organisation. It was a heartfelt occasion overflowing with gratitude, emotion and appreciation for a man whose devotion to God's Word has guided the Bible Society through some of its most challenging seasons.

Rodney's relationship with the Bible Society has been one of faithful service. He served in various capacities, including 11 years as a member of the Board of Directors. During this time, he

was elected Chairman in 2013, a role he held until 2018. In 2022, Rodney once again stepped up to the task, accepting the role of Interim Chief Executive Officer, which led to his appointment as Chief Executive Officer, guiding the Bible Society through a period of renewal and stability.

Those who have worked alongside Rodney know that his leadership has never been defined by titles or status, but characterised by calm strength, humility and unwavering dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ. During times of uncertainty and difficult decisions, he remained steadfast in his conviction that God would continue to lead the Bible Society according to his plan and purpose.

Under Rodney's leadership, the organisation experienced a remarkable turnaround. Yet, those closest to him



would agree that the greatest legacy he leaves behind is not measured by organisational achievements alone, but by the example of faithful Christian leadership that he demonstrated daily. His sincere love for people, commitment to biblical principles and trust in God have encouraged everyone around him.

Although retirement marks the end of Rodney's formal leadership, it also begins a new season of well-earned rest, quality family time and continued service to the Lord in different ways.

We invite our donors, partners and friends to join us in thanking God for Rodney's faithful service. We pray that the Lord will richly bless him and his family as they welcome this next chapter, confident that the seeds of his faithful service will continue to bear fruit for many generations to come. **ITS**





EVERY LANGUAGE deserves God's Word

Behind every Bible translation is a community waiting to hear God's voice in words that feel like home.

In 2025, thanks to Bible Societies around the world and the faithful support of donors, that became a reality for millions more people.

The latest United Bible Societies Translation Statistics Report highlights that Bible translations were published in 100 languages in 2025, making Scripture more accessible to approximately 566 million people.

For 66 language communities, this marked the first time they received portions of Scripture, the New Testament or a complete Bible in their own language. These first translations reached around 32 million people, opening the door to worship, discipleship and personal Bible reading in

languages that previously had little or no access to God's Word.

Translation work also continues in languages that already have Scripture.

Languages change, vocabulary evolves and readers' needs change over time. That is why 34 languages received new or revised translations during the year, benefitting more than 534 million people.

One of those languages is close to home.

Last year, a revision of the Afrikaans 1933/1953 translation was released digitally to coincide with the language's 100th anniversary. This revision focused exclusively on updating the language and spelling while preserving the original translation approach and the text's theological integrity.

The Bible Society of South Africa

is also continuing its translation work in indigenous languages such as Khelovedu and TjiHlanganu, where communities are eagerly waiting to receive Scripture in their heart language.

Several other milestones were reached across Africa during the year.

The first complete Bible was published in Eastern Oromo, serving more than 10 million people in Ethiopia. First complete Bibles were also published in Dagaare in Ghana and in Lambya in Malawi. Moreover, new braille Scriptures were produced in Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe, making God's Word accessible to the visually impaired.

Yet there is still much more work to do.

Today, around 7,6 billion people have access to at least some Scripture in their own language. But 123 million people still have no Scripture at all. While 55,7 % of the world's languages have some portion of the Bible, the Bible still needs to be translated into 3 272 languages. As a result, 1,5 billion people still do not have access to the complete Bible in their own language.



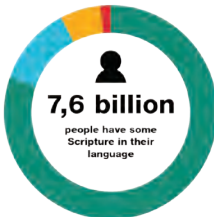
Each translation project brings us closer to our vision of providing everyone with a Bible in their own language.

Your faithful support enables the Bible Society to participate in this global mission of making God's Word available where it is needed most.

Every language completed, revision published and Bible placed in someone's hands remind us that God speaks to people in the language of their hearts.

Thank you for continuing to help more people read, understand and encounter the life-changing message of Scripture in a language they call their own. 

How many people have Scripture in their language?



Total language users 7,7 billion

-  **6,2 billion people**
have Bibles
-  **927 million people**
have New Testaments
-  **454 million people**
have Portions
-  **123 million people**
have no Scriptures

1,5 billion people do not have the full Bible in their language

How many languages have Scripture?



Total languages 7 393

-  **795 languages**
have Bibles
-  **1 815 languages**
have New Testaments
-  **1 511 languages**
have Portions
-  **3 272 languages**
have no Scriptures

55,7% of the world's languages
have some Scripture

Athletes run the race well **FOR BIBLES**

South Africa has a large and vibrant running community, with thousands of runners taking part in more than 138 marathon-related events annually.

This creates numerous fundraising opportunities for athletes who would like to use their hobby to support Bible distribution. The Bible Society's *Activities for Bibles* (A4B) platform is the perfect tool to help these runners reach out to their sponsors and supporters easily and effectively.

Aubrey Kruger and Leon van Moerkerken ran the Comrades Marathon, while also running for Bibles. They are currently the top two fundraisers on the A4B platform, having raised a combined total of more than R36 000.

"The platform works well. It is easy to register, upload your goal and edit it later for new events. The built-in functionality makes it a breeze to share the link via e-mail, WhatsApp or social media. In addition to the support I receive from across South Africa, I now receive sponsorships from Singapore, Australia, the USA, Europe and Ukraine," said Leon, who completed his 35th Comrades Marathon this year and has been running for Bibles since 1993.

"It is important that everyone knows about God and can read and learn more about him. That is why I run for Bibles." **IS**



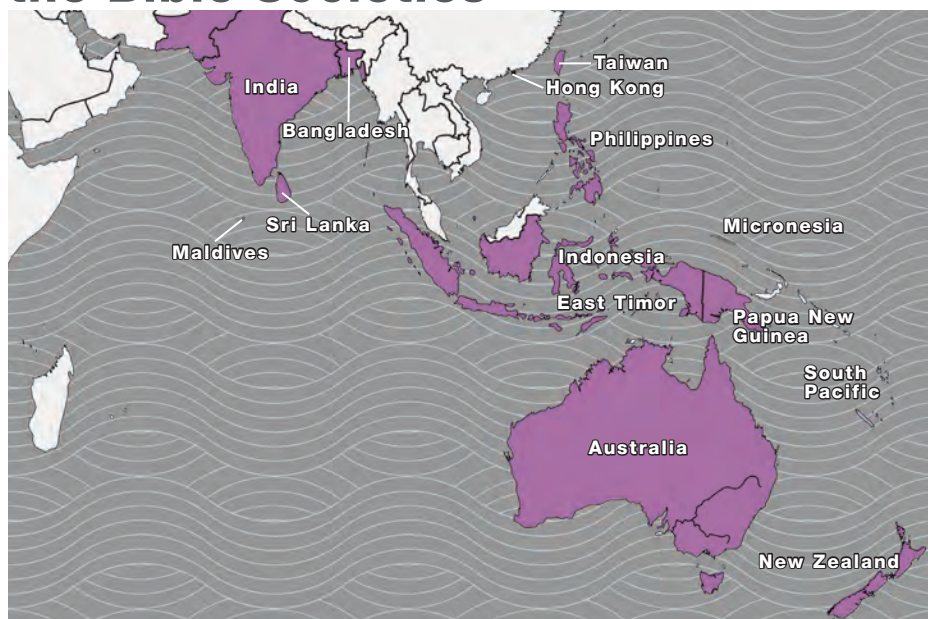
Aubrey Kruger



Leon van Moerkerken

Pray with the Bible Societies

Prayer Guide
no 4 • 2026



28 September–4 October

New Zealand

Pray for the Asia Pacific Catholic Affinity Group as it strengthens relationships between Bible Societies and the Catholic Church across the region. Pray that these partnerships will help more Catholics engage with God's Word.

Papua New Guinea

With more than 840 language groups, many communities here are still waiting for God's Word in their own language. Pray for those serving in Bible translation and that more people will encounter Scripture in their language.

South Pacific

Pray for Bible work in the South Pacific. In Vanuatu alone, translation work continues across several languages so more communities can encounter Scripture in their own language. Pray that God's Word will bring lasting hope and faith.

East Timor

Around 98% of East Timor identifies as Christian. It has more than 16 indigenous languages, and many believers still need Scripture in the language they understand. Pray for Bible translation and engagement and that God's Word

will take root deeply in the community.

5–11 October

Indonesia

Pray for our *Smart Bible* project that helps churches engage people with Scripture through digital tools. Ask God to bless the adoption of the platform by at least 100 churches and 50 Christian communities and that people will read, hear and share God's Word.

Australia

Pray for the *Oceania Translation Officer Scholarly Editions* project, equipping translators and consultants with Greek and

Hebrew resources. This investment aims to strengthen 34 Bible translation projects, including sign language work, helping ensure that future translations are accurate.

Hong Kong

Only 16% of people in Hong Kong identify as Christian. Pray for the Bible Society as it makes Scripture more accessible through translation, publishing and digital resources and that more people have the opportunity to explore God's Word.

Taiwan

Pray for the first-ever Bible translation in Taiwan Sign Language, serving nearly 140 000 people. Ask God to grant the translation team wisdom and unity, and that Deaf communities will engage deeply with Scripture.

12–18 October

Philippines

Many Filipino churches still need Scripture resources and funding. Pray for the Bible Society as it works to address this hunger for God's Word through Bible translation, distribution and engagement.

Micronesia Partnership

Micronesia's geography makes access to Scripture both complex and costly. Pray that Bibles will remain available and affordable across the region and that translation, digitisation and Bible engagement efforts will help more people encounter God's Word.

Bangladesh

Pray for the War-Jaintia First New Testament translation project, bringing Scripture to this community in their mother tongue for the first time. Ask God to guide the translators with wisdom and to strengthen the support of local churches and communities.

19–25 October

India

Pray that vulnerable families will gain improved access to education, social support and opportunities. Ask God to help Christians demonstrate the love of Christ. Pray that Scripture will reach the many who have yet to encounter God's Word.

Maldives

Hold the Maldives in prayer, where access to Scripture remains among the most restricted in the world and only parts of the Bible are available in Dhivehi. Pray for the safe completion of Bible translation and for discreet ways to bring God's Word to those seeking truth.

Sri Lanka

Pray for the *Braille and Audio Bibles for Sri Lanka* project. Ask God to guide those recording and distributing these resources and to provide the funding needed to complete the project.

26 October–1 November

Honduras

Pray for our new General Secretary, Marlon Cardona, as he begins this new season of leadership.

Ask God to grant him wisdom and vision. Give thanks for Pastor Jorge Gómez's more than 30 years of faithful service and legacy.

El Salvador

Pray for our *Living in the Middle of Fear* project, helping children overcome the trauma of violence through God's Word. Ask God to strengthen teachers and schools using this programme.

Suriname

Suriname's rich linguistic diversity creates an ongoing need for Scripture in different languages. Pray for the successful translation and distribution of God's Word.

2–8 November

Guatemala

Pray for greater literacy among our indigenous communities. Some language groups only have a 30% literacy rate, limiting access to both education and Scripture. Pray that our Bible-based literacy programmes will help to address this situation.

Dominican Republic

Our country and its people are still recovering from the impact of Hurricane Melissa, which left more than one million people without water. Pray for the Bible Society as it brings God's Word and hope to churches and communities.

East Caribbean

Pray for the Bible Society of the East Caribbean as

it serves 14 island nations, many vulnerable to hurricanes and other natural disasters. Ask God to strengthen churches, expand Scripture engagement and equip communities with the hope and comfort of his Word.

9–15 November

Netherlands Antilles & Aruba

Pray for the Bible Society of the Dutch Caribbean as it serves islands where Dutch, Papiamentu and English are widely spoken. Ask God to bless Bible translation, publishing and outreach, and that people of every generation will engage with Scripture.

Puerto Rico

Pray for our churches who serve communities impacted by poverty, migration and hurricane recovery. Ask God to strengthen our efforts in Scripture distribution to give the nation hope through God's Word.

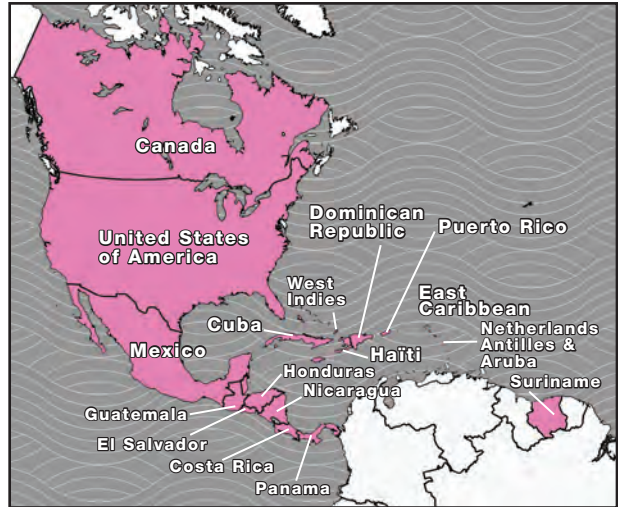
Cuba

Pray for our project where we partner with churches to bring Scripture, humanitarian aid and pastoral care to communities affected by Hurricane Melissa. Ask God to strengthen those rebuilding their lives and sustain Bible Society staff.

16–22 November

Haiti

Pray for Haiti where ongoing violence, displacement and insecurity continue to limit access to Scripture. Ask God to



strengthen the Bible Society as it provides Bibles and biblical resources.

West Indies

Pray for the Bible Society as it serves churches, schools and communities with affordable Scripture resources. Give thanks for the Jamaican New Testament and ask God to deepen its use in worship.

Panama

Pray for Panama's churches. May the Bible Society's work supply Scripture where it is most needed, cultivating for deeper understanding and renewed trust in God's Word.

Nicaragua

Pray for our project to bring Scripture to more than 35 000 Miskitu people in their own language. Ask God to provide the resources needed and to strengthen volunteer pastors leading Bible study groups.

23–29 November

Costa Rica

Pray for the translation of the New Testament in Ngäbere. Ask God to guide the translators and reviewers with wisdom.

Canada

Pray for Canada where more than 70 indigenous languages are spoken, creating an ongoing need for Bible translation. Ask God to bless Bible work so that more communities can experience his Word.

30 November–6 December

Mexico

Pray for Mexico where 32% of the population are native language speakers and millions continue to face violence, abuse and poverty. Ask God to make the Bible accessible in every language, inspiring hope, restoration and lasting change.

United States of America

Pray for the USA where



one in five adults remain sceptical of the Bible. Ask God to deepen Scripture engagement across the nation, heal those carrying trauma and strengthen efforts to make the Word accessible.

7–13 December Kazakhstan

Pray for the Bible Society as it works to secure the legal status of its ministry headquarters following the discovery of long-standing property documentation issues. Ask God to grant favour with authorities, wisdom throughout the process and a smooth resolution that allows ministry to continue.

Kyrgyzstan

Economic hardship continues to drive many people to seek work abroad, leaving families separated and communities vulnerable. Ask God to strengthen local churches and expand access to Scripture, so people of every generation may find lasting hope, wisdom and encouragement in the Bible.

14–20 December Armenia

Pray for Today's Eastern Armenian Bible, the first meaning-based translation of the full Bible into Eastern Armenian. Ask God to guide the translation team with wisdom and unity, and may this new translation help people of every generation understand, embrace and live out God's Word.

Azerbaijan

Pray for *LightPath*, an innovative Scripture engagement project that will connect 3 000 young people with God's Word through interactive city quests. Ask God to open hearts, guide local churches and volunteers and lead many participants into lasting faith and fellowship.

21–27 December Pakistan

Pray for the Bible Society as it equips women with literacy skills and introduces them to God's Word in their heart languages. Ask God to encourage them and expand this ministry to bring about change.

Afghanistan

Pray for Afghanistan where fewer than 0,1% of the population is Christian and access to Scripture remains among the world's most restricted. Ask God to protect believers, sustain Bible translation and open quiet pathways for the Bible to reach those seeking hope.

28–31 December Georgia

Pray for Georgia where economic uncertainty continues to affect many families. Ask God to strengthen Bible engagement across the country, encourage churches to help people grow in their understanding of Scripture and inspire a new generation to treasure God's Word.

Russian Federation

Pray for the Russian Federation where the ongoing effects of conflict and economic pressure have left many searching for hope and stability. Ask God to strengthen Bible distribution ministries, so more people may encounter the comfort and truth of the Gospel. **IS**

One heart touched, **MANY LIVES CHANGED**

A single act of generosity is helping God's Word reach children across the Sandveld region of the Western Cape.

When Bible Society staff visited the Dutch Reformed congregation in Redelinghuys in 2024, an anonymous donor was deeply moved by the need for Bibles among Grade 7 learners in the region. What began with three schools has now grown to seven, with a total of 108 learners having received their own Bibles in 2026.

These small rural schools primarily cater to children from farming communities, where many families cannot afford to buy a Bible for each child. At the various schools in the Sandveld region, only a handful of learners were able to say they owned a Bible.

The joy of receiving God's Word was



a delight to witness. One learner said, "If you want to know more about God, you just have to read the Bible." Their words show the impact of this gift. Through faithful partnership, the gift of Jesus Christ will continue to shape the lives of these children as they grow in faith and life.

To God be all the glory. **IS**



SCRIPTURE BEYOND SILENCE

brings God's Word to deaf learners



The joy on the faces of learners as they received their own Bibles was a powerful demonstration of what generous supporters have made possible through the *Scripture beyond Silence* project.

Over the last few months, the Bible Society of South Africa (BSSA) distributed 420 Bibles for the Deaf to four schools, enabling hundreds of learners to engage with God's Word in a format designed specifically for their needs.

The first presentation of Bibles took place earlier this year at the De la Bat School for the Deaf in Worcester. In June, this was followed with visits to two schools around Cape Town.

The BSSA's Rev Willem





Swanepoel, Michelle Fisher and Leon Steenkamp visited the Mary Kihn School, where 62 learners each received their own Bibles. The principal, Jill Willmot, was pleasantly surprised to learn that the children were receiving a complete Bible. In the past, they had received only New Testaments. The learners were equally excited to receive their own copy of *The Bible for the Deaf*, whose accessible language, illustrations and definitions make the text easier to read and understand.

A week later, the team visited the Dominican School for the Deaf, where a further 205 Bibles were distributed. The older children, in particular, had many questions about God and what the Bible says about issues such as relationships, certain behaviours and faith.

Further east, at the KwaThintwa

School for the Deaf in KwaZulu-Natal, the BSSA's Pastor Brian Gopaul facilitated the presentation of 153 Bibles to learners. The school had requested the Bibles to support its Religious Education programme, explaining that, as a Catholic school, Scripture forms an essential part of its curriculum. The Bibles for the Deaf will become a valuable classroom resource, benefiting learners in Grades 5 to 9.

These distributions were made possible through the generosity of donors who supported the *Scripture beyond Silence* fundraising campaign. Every contribution helps remove the barriers that prevent deaf people from experiencing the Word of God. **IS**



Annual Wellington **BIBLE WALK**



For more than 22 years, the annual ATKV Wellington Bible Walk has brought people together to raise funds for Bible distribution.

Held on 7 March, this year's event reached a new milestone, with more than 300 people participating for the first time. Set against the beautiful backdrop of Wellington, the Bible Walk continues to grow in popularity while making a lasting difference.

The event raised R10 540 for the Bible Society, with an additional R3 000 donated by long-time supporter, Dalene Whatts, who has faithfully made this contribution for several years. Participants proudly wore the Bible Society's blue armbands as they walked, demonstrating their commitment to and support towards this shared mission.

The Bible Society of South Africa is deeply grateful to ATKV Wellington, project coordinator, Hentas Kotze, Dalene Whatts and every participant whose faithful support is helping to make the life-changing Word of God available to more people. **IS**



BRaille BIBLE

brings God's Word closer to blind couple

A blind couple from the West Coast can finally read the Word of God for themselves, thanks to the recent donation of a braille Bible by the Bible Society of South Africa (BSSA).

Arthur William Christiansen, affectionately known as 'Prillie', and his wife, Lena, are well known in St Helena Bay on the West Coast. They earn a modest living by collecting and recycling paper, and locals often see Arthur walking the streets with his cart. Lena has been blind since birth and Arthur lost his sight as a child, likely due to meningitis. Both attended a school for the blind in Bellville South, Cape Town. For the Christiansen couple, their faith plays an important role in their lives.

For years, they longed for something they had never owned: a braille Bible. Without one, they could only experience God's Word through Scripture readings during church services.

Hence, it was a moment of great joy for Arthur and Lena when the BSSA donated a complete braille Bible to them this year. It was presented to them during a service at the St Helena Bay Dutch Reformed Church by the BSSA's Rev Christo Klopper, and Lena joyfully declared that, for the first time in her life, she owned a Bible that she could read.

The congregation was deeply moved as Lena confidently and fluently



read the day's Scripture from the braille Bible, demonstrating the life-changing impact of making God's Word accessible to all.

Given that the volumes of a complete braille Bible fill seven large boxes, the St Helena Bay library generously offered to store them. This allows Arthur and Lena to collect whichever volume they need from the library whenever they want to read the Bible.

Arthur and Lena's story once again reminds us of the importance of the Bible Society's mission to make the Bible available to every person in a format they can understand and access. We pray that this Bible will be a great blessing to them and that reading God's Word will deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ. **TS**



New Bibles bring joy to GRADE 7 LEARNERS

In May, the Bible Society of South Africa distributed 170 Bibles to learners at Birchleigh Primary School in Kempton Park through its *Bibles for Grade 7 learners* project, which forms part of its broader Bible distribution mission.

Grade 7 teacher, Marelize van Tonder, expressed her delight at receiving this special donation.

"I am deeply grateful that each learner received a Bible of their own. It is a gift that affirms their worth and gives them access to God's Word. Reading in their mother tongue builds confidence and comprehension. I hope the Bible will shape their character and guide them to make wise choices," she said.

She added that the children will use

the Bibles during reflections, for reading comprehension and for discussions about values, empathy and respect.

"I want to thank the Bible Society for investing in our learners' spiritual and educational growth."

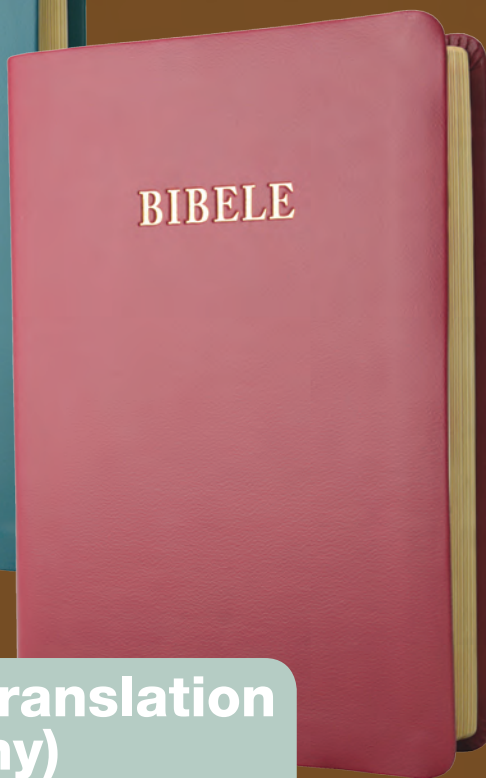
Although 13-year-old Tumi Seroka already owns a Bible, she was delighted to receive a new one because hers is very old. She expressed that the Bible means a great deal to her and is a necessity for daily living. "It teaches you more about the world and Jesus Christ. When you need help with something in life, you need Jesus."

Tumi hopes her new Bible will help her become kinder towards others and herself. **IS**

New in stock



ISBN: 9780798226172



ISBN: 9780798226189

**Xitsonga 1929 translation
(new orthography)**
with teal and pink vinyl covers.



www.biblesociety.co.za
bible society of south africa

www.bibleshop.co.za



www.biblesociety.co.za
bible society of south africa

**Yes, may you
come to know his
love — although it can
never be fully known —
and so be completely filled
with the very nature
of God.**

**Ephesians 3:19
(GNT)**

Your Bible House

Central Region

p 12149 Brandhof 9324
t 051 444 5980

Eastern Region

p 30801 Mayville 4058
t 031 207 4933

Northern Region

p 2002 Kempton Park 1620
t 011 970 4010

South Eastern Region

p 7579 Newton Park 6055
t 041 364 1138

Western Region

p 4848 Tyger Valley 7536
t 021 910 8777