



YOUR MONTHLY MEMBER'S REPORT **DECEMBER 2023**

NEW ZEALAND

In 1846, the Auckland Auxiliary branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed. For the past 177 years, Bible Society New Zealand has sought to bring the Bible to New Zealanders in a language they can understand and in a format that is most suitable for them.

Right from the start, the mission was dependent on the work of volunteers who went from door to door in small towns raising funds and selling Christmas cards. They held fundraisers such as bake sales and Bible quizzes. They believed whole heartedly in the mission that everyone should be able to access a Bible in their heart language and engage with it.

Today, this work continues as we partner with volunteers, churches, and Christian organisations, such as chaplaincies, to bring the Word of

God to New Zealanders. This year, we are aiming to distribute 18,500 Bibles, New Testaments, and Scriptures.

Some of these are special-edition Bibles. This year, we have created a Bible especially for the hard-working frontline responders and volunteers of Hato Hone St John. This will be available next year. As well, we are doing a reprint of the Bible for the New Zealand Police, which was first launched in 2020, and has proven to be very popular among members of the Police.

Once again this year we have printed a children's Christmas booklet entitled, "Amazing Days." Already, 70,000 copies have been distributed throughout the country. Your gift to Bible a Month Regular Giving this month will help to support Bible mission in New Zealand.



Pray that the distribution of every Scripture will see a life impacted and changed for good and for God.

Pray that Christians will find new, fresh ways to reach out to New Zealanders with the Gospel message.

Give thanks for the forty-one per cent of New Zealanders who identify as Christian and pray that they will share the light of Christ with others.

Give thanks for New Zealand's growing diversity as a nation and pray that Christian leaders will be raised up from many ethnic groups.



Scan to get a look at our latest Prayer Booklet!

FURTHER BIBLE MISSION PROJECTS



BURKINA FASO

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in West Africa, located south of the Sahara Desert. Previously known as the Upper Volta, it was part of French West Africa from 1896 to 1960, when the country achieved independence. In 1921, the Gospel message reached Burkina Faso. Today, 31 per cent of people identify as Christian. It is one of the world's poorest countries with 90 per cent of the population dependent on subsistence agriculture.

In 2022, it experienced two military coups. There have been increasing attacks by Jihadist groups and two million people are currently displaced. The Bible Society of Burkina Faso is translating the Old Testament into Birifor, a language spoken by 225,000 people. It is also running trauma healing programmes for children.

Photo Credit © Maurice Harvey



PORTUGAL

Christianity first reached Lusitania, which is now Portugal, during the Roman Empire in the first half of the first millennium. Then in the 12th century, the first king of Portugal, Alfonso I, declared Portugal to be a unified Christian church and state after his reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula.

In 1974, the country experienced a revolution which ended 48 years of dictatorship. In 1976, the constitution guaranteed religious freedom. Today, around 84 per cent of Portuguese people identify as Christian. The majority are Roman Catholic, but many do not actively practice their faith. This year, the Bible Society of Portugal ran an ecological exhibition at World Youth Day, which was attended by Pope Francis, and it distributed 200,000 portions to attendees.

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SLOVENIA

In the 8th century, Christianity was accepted by the Slavic tribes which occupied what is now Slovenia. In April 1941, Slovenia was occupied by the Axis Powers and divided between them. In 1945, the country was liberated by Josip Broz Tito, who ruled until his death in 1980. The communist Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia incorporated Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia.

Today, Slovenia is still recovering from deep wounds inflicted upon it both during World War II and from its communist past. Many Slovenians are suffering from domestic violence, abuse, suicidal thoughts, divorce, loneliness, and alcoholism. The Bible Society of Slovenia is assisting people through its Bible-based trauma healing programme. Partnering with churches it is also running Bible engagement programmes.

Photo Credit © Bible Society of Slovenia



ALBANIA

In 325 A.D., the Council of Nicaea took place in what is now modern-day Iznik, Turkey. It included thirteen bishops from the localities around Albania, the earliest indication that Christianity had spread to that region. In the 15th century, the region was invaded by the Ottoman Empire coming under Muslim rule.

After World War II, Marxist ruler Enver Hoxha came to power, ruling from 1944 to 1985. He banned all religion and under his regime clergy were tortured and forced to do hard labour. In 1991, the Soviet Union fell. Today, 17 per cent of Albanians identify as Christian. The Interconfessional Bible Society of Albania is providing children's Scripture materials to children in summer camps and sports groups. It is translating the New Testament into Gheg Albanian, which is spoken by 4.1 million people.

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