



# BES news Into Europe

Summer 2018

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## Introduction

Stephen Gillham

BES moved into Europe soon after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the conclusion of the Cold War. It was then apparent that there was freedom and liberty for evangelism in a number of Eastern European countries. We were thrilled to have good translators, through the contacts of Bert Gray and others, who started to translate Bibletime into Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, Romanian and Ukrainian. Interest in BES developed which led to translations into Croatian, French, German, Italian and Spanish. It is a fascinating story and God has certainly blessed those who have faithfully translated and designed Bibletime, which is now being used by children across the world. Most of the European languages are now on the BES website and Bibletime can be downloaded in these languages anywhere in the world.

## Conference

We are planning the next International Conference to be held from 22nd - 29th April 2019 and we are about to send out invitations to delegates around the world. We are anticipating between 80 and 100 will gather in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland during that week. We would particularly value prayer as we have little idea of how BREXIT will affect travel and visas.

## GDPR

Please note we now have a BES GDPR Policy in place. BES hold information like name, postal address and email address about their supporters. This allows those interested to receive BES News either by post or by email. BES will not pass information to any other Party but will only use it to acknowledge gifts and keep everybody informed on the work of BES and associated ministries.

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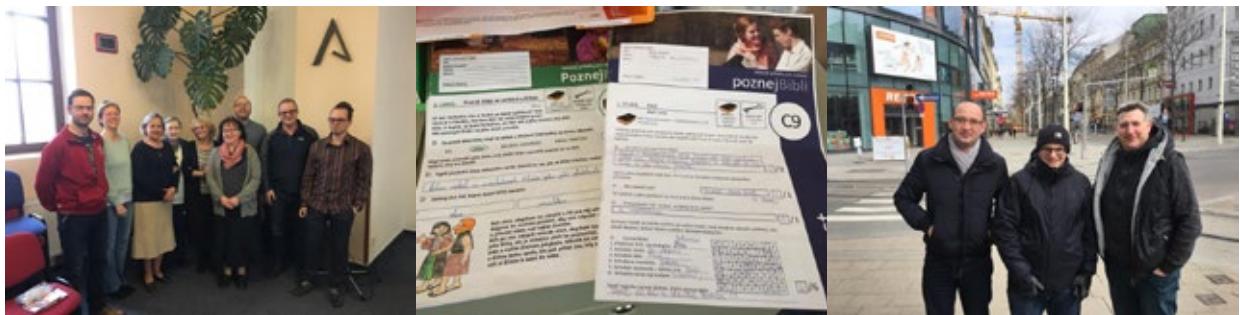
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## Save the Date!

Friday April 26th 2019

BES International Night in Enniskillen on Friday April 26th. We ask for any who are able to join us on that occasion to book the date.

Further details will be sent nearer the time.



# Into Europe

**Sam Balmer and Stevie Walls**

Sam and Stevie visited 6 European countries in 7 days in late March this year. During that time, they visited many brothers and sisters who translate, design, print, promote and use Bibletime and other BES material. Sadly, Christianity is on decline within Europe and many churches, of all denominations, are facing shrinking congregations, demolition, abandonment and adaption for secular use. Therefore, it was such an encouraging trip to see the positive developments taking place, the demand for quality children's bible material in multi languages, and the excellent work going on to promote the material as widely as possible.

Sam and Stevie flew into Germany where they met Hartmut, from ZAM, and had very

encouraging discussion about the promotion of French booklets in French speaking Africa and the use of German Bibletime in Hartmut's own church. They then travelled by train to the Czech Republic and met Ondrej and the PBS team where they discussed translation, design, printing and the promotion of Bibletime. Onwards to Austria and into Vienna where they met and talked with Damir and Mitja at length about the work of the Gideons and Bibletime in many Eastern European countries including Croatia, Albania, Slovenia, Serbia, Macedonia and Bosnia. They also spent some time with Andreas Reh in Vienna. He works for ZAM Emmaus and they discussed Bibletime in many countries, including Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Armenia. They then drove to

Budapest, Hungary and met with Tamas and his family. Tamas is the international designer for BES, and it was great to catch up and have many conversations about the extensive designing he is doing for BES; 19 languages in total. The next day saw them visit Romania where they met both Csabi and his family in Oradea and Mihaela and her parents in Cluj. Both meetings were very productive and there were fruitful discussions about the promotion of Bibletime, summer camps, prizes, volunteers, markers, editing and design. Unfortunately, Sam and Stevie did not fly on to Moldova as Sam was ill and the decision was made to return home to Northern Ireland. However, Sam has plans to return to Germany in June and Moldova in September, God Willing.



## Russia

**The coordinator of children's ministry Klaptsova Svetlana**

The Bibletime programme, known in Russia as Bible Hour, began in Russia 12 years ago. Today, from a small office in the suburbs of St. Petersburg, BES Russia prints and sends 1000 courses every month to 20 regions within this large country. Bibletime is then distributed to small groups within neighbourhoods, Bible Clubs in churches and Christian holiday camps, as well as being used in Sunday Schools. This year, 40 teenagers successfully completed their studies on the children's programme, and many of them gave their lives to Christ and were baptised.

Svetlana shares a very touching testimony about a fifteen-year-old girl, Karina, who has been fighting cancer for several years. She says "Karina's mother wrote to us and told us how Karina, after some gruelling treatment and procedures, began completing the Bibletime courses and reading her Bible. She said that as Karina's faith increased, and her understanding developed about how her life was in the hands of God, she also grew in physical and spiritual strength and has since been baptised." Svetlana told us, "This is the most joyful news for us!"

Svetlana also reported on how many adults who have completed the course in their childhood and came to faith because of them, are now contacting BES Russia and requesting Bibletime for their own children. She says "We hope that those seeds of faith that have been adopted by them will give good seedlings. We are waiting for new instructors and assistants dedicated to the ministry of children."



## Moldova

**Hariuc Gabriel**

Hariuc writes of how a prisoner, who was doing a Newlife course, wishes to be baptised. He requests prayer about how he will arrange this. He also says, "In June I will have an exhibition stand, presenting Bibletime, in the central park of Cahul. Last year between 150-200 children came to the park, and 30 registered to receive Bibletime on that day, so please pray that the Lord will work again! Please pray for additional support for me in the office this summer. Thank you for your prayers and support in the Lord's work."

## Albania

**Lorenc Tona and Mona**

Lorenc tells of how the translation work for the Albanian language is having a boost as Gerta, his wife, has recently joined the team to translate the Teaching Guidelines. He says, "We are excited at the prospect of the A series being finished and ready to print, and we're about to start translating the B Series. At the same time, we are trying to create a network of church contacts, to prepare the way for the A Series. Please pray for another translator to join the Bibletime team." It is believed that there are over 500 churches which would use Bibletime once the complete A series is ready and printed.

Revival Movement printed and shipped a small quantity of A4 level 1 Bibletime booklets in the Albanian language in January. The children who received the material were Roma children, living in a poor area of Tirana, Albania and have little or no education. Mona, a local Christian lady, and her daughter, Alba, have started a small outreach into the Roma community with a South African WEC missionary, Stewart.

Mona says "Firstly, we would like to thank you for thinking and praying for us and the church. Secondly, thank you for the Bibletime booklets you sent us. We have been working on the first story. The children enjoyed it, learning about the creation of the world. It was easy for them to understand, they could relate to it in every-day life, and they had so much fun colouring the pictures. One of our children asked why we took a Sunday off and didn't work. After reading the first story in the Bibletime booklet, she had a better understanding of the reasons and learnt how God rested and so we rest. It was truly amazing to see the children enjoying the class."

**Arxhan 7 years, says: "It is the first time I am doing something like this. I like colouring and learning about how God has created the people and the animals – I had no idea."**



## Croatia

**Damir and Mitja Skalic**

Damir has been promoting Bibletime around churches in Croatia, but with care, as there is conflict between the different denominations. There are proposals to pilot Bibletime in some Catholic schools, and they are currently being promoted along with the Bibletime lesson plans in an effort to attract the teachers. Pray for the continual editing of the B and C series, and for the use of Bibletime in churches, schools and Sunday Schools. Praise God that 1000 children in Croatia are using the SunScool app.

## Turkey / Bulgaria

**Ibrahim**

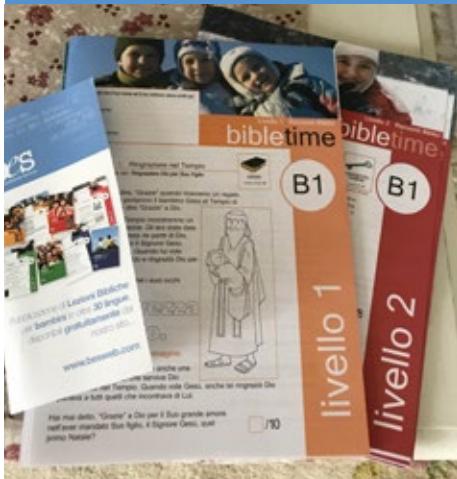
Ibrahim and the small team have recently moved into a new office. Pray that God would protect and bless them in this new neighbourhood. Translations are going well, and they would appreciate prayer for the translator to continue until the project is completed. The team is thinking of doing a promotion event to the Turkish churches to introduce the Turkish Bibletime booklets, so please pray for this to take place and for open hearts to receive and use the material. Recently Revival Movement have sent thousands of Turkish Bibletime booklets out to Mitko in Bulgaria to assist his ministry among Turkish speaking children.

## Italy

**Tracey Johnston**

Tracey and her husband are Global Mission Workers from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and have lived in Italy for several years. She contacted BES last year about obtaining quality Biblical children's material in Italian. They printed the A series themselves in Italy, but earlier this year Revival Movement printed and shipped 20,000 A4 Bibletime B series booklets to her in Italy. As she had already been networking with many local churches, she was able to fully distribute the material to 50 churches, reaching 1600 children from Turin to Sicily. She writes "This material has been so well received, and with much enthusiasm and encouragement. We would really appreciate your prayers as Bibletime is introduced and used in many Italian churches for the first time."

The translation of the C series Teachers Guides, by Rod Jones and his small team, is still on-going and progressing very well. It should be finished and ready for print by the end of this year.



## Romania

**Mihaela Vlas**

The work in Romania started in 2003 with the translation of Bibletime, followed by the translation of Newlife by Mihaela, and since then Bibletime has been used for individual study through postal correspondence, in Sunday Schools, at Bible Clubs and with prisoners. The total number of active students receiving Romanian Bibletime is now 4,876. Over 300 of the students are adult prisoners, who have started to get the Bibletime courses whilst in detention. Here are a few of their comments, in their own words:

George says, "I found a question in this weeks Bibletime study about giving my life to Jesus, and after some thought, I decided to answer yes, and give my life to the Lord, here in prison ... and since then I keep searching the Scriptures and believe I can never know enough from the Bible. Since I trusted the Lord, He is guiding my life ... I changed my way of thinking, I now have the hope of a better and quieter life to follow in this dark dreadful place."

Last year, 227 new children across Romania started the Bibletime series, and at the same time, 230 children graduated (finishing the entire Bibletime series). This year, 513 additional children have applied to receive Bibletime in Romania. Praise the Lord! The building and establishment of the Onesimus Christian Centre in Cluj in June 2017, and the holding of regular camps and prize giving events has increased the popularity of Bibletime and its impact on children.

Here is one girl's story. "I travelled a long distance to get to the summer Bible campsite. I had been doing the Bibletime course for a long time, but I stopped when I changed schools. My parents and sister forced me to go to the teenage camp this year, because my friends at my new school were not Christians and I felt ashamed of my Christian background and belief in God. I had turned my back on Him. But the camp was like a "cold shower" for me, as I felt every Bibletime story and every message was for me. We studied the C1 Bibletime booklet containing the stories of Daniel, and how he and his friends stood up for God, even risking their lives. I have now restarted the new Bibletime series, and have sent Mihaela a few messages telling her I am doing well and really enjoying completing the puzzles, crosswords and readings. I am not ashamed of God anymore".

Mihaela who leads the PBS Romania says, "Most of the courses we send out are used for individual study and some of them are used for groups in Sunday Schools. We are sending Romanian Bibletime booklets to a mother who started doing the work books with her 3 little children. Her children told the neighbours about Bibletime and now she has 20 – 25 children in her home every week completing the booklets. We praise the Lord for the work He is doing in our country through the Bibletime resources, for Revival Movement and all the people He is using to provide for the Romanian Postal Bible School every month."

## France

Dorothy Seed

The French translation project has been moving forward slowly but surely for nine years now! At present the team is made up of Sophie, Michèle, Christine and Dorothy in France, and Ronnie in Scotland. They are almost at the stage where all the Bibletime lessons, booklets, and Teachers' Guidelines have now been made ready for use. As a result of the hard work of the French team, literally thousands of Bibletime French booklets are being used right across French-speaking Africa.

Dorothy writes "We thank Him, because Bibletime is bringing a blessing to us, the translators and correctors, before they ever reach the children and young people of the French-speaking world. What a mighty God we serve! It is also a privilege for us to pray for the children and youth who will use Bibletime in the future. This thought gives us renewed impetus as we continue to translate and correct, over and over again ... In many respects our work is routine, so it is good for us to set our sights well beyond our computer screen and see the big picture of God's future harvest."

## Germany

Hartmut Schulte

Bibletime was introduced to Germany by a past pupil in Northern Ireland called John Walls. Whilst on work placement he asked if anyone in his local church would consider translating the Bibletime material. Andrea took up the task. This was an answer to her prayer as she had been asking the Lord for two years if there was some form of service she could do for Him. Her husband Andreas commenced the Graphic design and with Tamas Bozsoki's assistance, all levels of the A and B series Bibletime are now being used in various pilot projects in German-speaking countries.

Some of the Bibletime lessons are being piloted in Hartmut's local church in Wissen to support the Sunday School. About 40 children, aged 5-14 years study a lesson each week. The parents and Sunday School teachers are highly motivated, and everyone seems to really enjoy using Bibletime. There is a team of 5 translators working on the C series and on the Teaching Guidelines (A series). This is very exciting, because once they are complete and checked, the Bibletime lessons and Teacher's Guides can be published and printed alongside each-other and promoted widely throughout Germany. He requests prayer for both the health and wellbeing of those involved in the translation process, and an interest in the churches to use the Bibletime course for their Sunday School.

## Czech Republic

Karel and Lubov

Bibletime has been used for several years here following the translation and design process being carried out by Karel and his brother Lubov. Due to the country's communist background and with increased secularism, it is a very difficult and challenging country in which to promote Bibletime. However, praise the Lord for a small group of 50 dedicated students and PBS co-ordinators who use Bibletime.

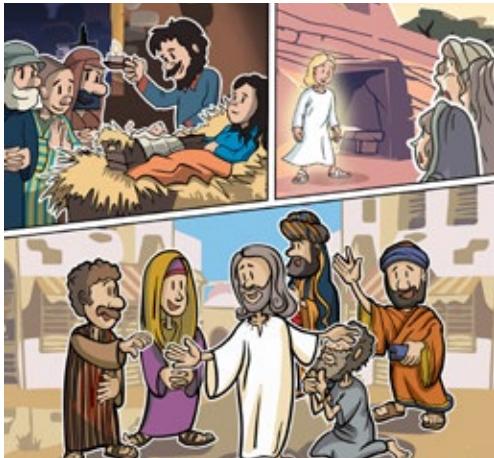
## Translations and Design

Tamás and Szilvia Bozsoki

Bibletime was first introduced to Hungary in 2000 where Tamas and Szilvia live and where he volunteered to translate some of the material. As time progressed it became evident that designing the Bibletime material was very expensive, and soon after the first BES Conference in 2008, it was decided to search for someone who could learn how to use the software and design Bibletime within the BES network. That somebody became Tamas.

From 2008 Tamas started to design Bibletime as a volunteer, but it wasn't until 2010 when BES was looking for help in designing translated French Bibletime material that he understood this as a call from God for him to work full time as an international designer for BES. In 2011 he took up this post and in the first year translated Bibletime into 4 languages; in 2012 it increased to 8 languages. This was a challenge to him as it was the first occasion he had to use script letters to translate Bibletime into Amharic. Over the years, he has dealt with over 19 languages, and in 2016 he started writing from right to left translating Farsi and then Arabic!

Tamas says, "It fills my heart with joy to hear about how Bibletime is being used across Europe and the rest of the world. There appears to be always someone to plant the seed and someone to water it, but "but God is making it grow." (1 Cor. 3:6)



## Spain

Gil Vargas

The translation of the BES materials into Spanish is a huge team effort. They finished the translation of Bibletime syllabus over five years ago and are currently revising all the material. Laura, a stay-at-home mum, checks all the content for grammatical and structural errors after a comparison with the English is done. Please pray for her, and for a fellow missionary, Manuel, who is translating all the Teaching Guidelines. The actual distribution of the courses in Spain has been limited and Bibletime is primarily being used as Sunday School materials. Pray too for the SunScool App in Spanish, that there would be qualified Spanish speakers who could help in this work.

Please pray for the four correctors in Spain: Susan in the North, Elena in the South, and Gil and Carolyn, in the centre of the country. What a blessing AND responsibility it is to encourage young people to study the Word of God!

As for future goals, Gil says, "Please pray that in September 2018 we will be ready to begin the new 6-month layout project so that by September 2019 Bibletime can be used in Central and South America". Pray especially for Gil in this time-consuming project. Pray also for key South American couples that God wants to attend the International Conference in April 2019.

## SunScool

Nikolay Abkairov

Most of the SunScool team is in Europe - mainly in St. Petersburg, some in Moscow and some are in Germany. The team is focusing on reaching out to children who have never heard of Bibletime and the Bible, but who have a sincere interest to learn more about God. The App currently has 14 stories and associated games and puzzles in Russian, Ukrainian, Croatian, English, and Spanish, while translation of some stories to other languages is still in progress (Portuguese, German, Norwegian, French, Romanian, Chinese). The SunScool team are currently working on new introductory material, which will teach children at a very basic level about "who God is, how we can pray, what is the Bible and what is sin and salvation". They are also working on designing new stories and activities regarding the Parables of Jesus. Nikolay writes "In the past year, we saw 85,000 children finish at least one lesson in the App, and currently, over 7000 children engage with the App every month. Around 15% of them complete all the stories and on average it takes them 5-7 hours to do that. Most of these children are from European countries and Latin America. We praise the Lord for what He has done so far, for His mercy and strength, for all the helpers who do translations and voiceovers."

Nikolay requests prayer for the children who use the App - that the Lord would work in their hearts to eventually bring them to Himself; for the team - for wisdom in what to do and how to do it, and for them to stand strong in the Lord and His Word; for the release of new content in Chinese and Romanian. The Romanian Bibletime team is doing a great job with translations and voiceovers, however, launching an App in China is a serious challenge, and finally for inventive ways on how to use Bibletime and the SunScool App in conjunction with one-another.

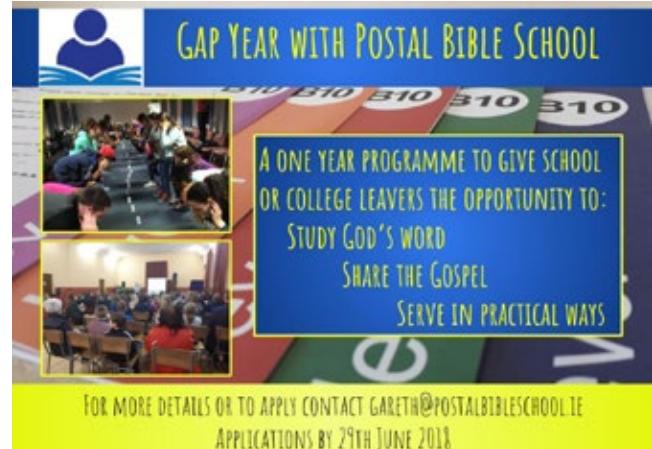
## Romania - Hungarian

Csabi Kabai

Csabi and his family look after and distribute the Hungarian Bibletime material. He says "during 2004 we started to translate Bibletime from English into Hungarian, and in 2006 we sent out 150 Bibletime lessons to Hungarian speaking children. Praise the Lord that the work has grown and thanks to Revival Movement, who print and ship out the Hungarian Bibletime books, we now reach over 300 Hungarian children in 18 different regions." Here are some testimonies from children, in their own words, who have received and completed Bibletime.

Anita, 8 years, enthusiastically states "For me, Bibletime is an adventure, but not just like any other, and when the Bibletime booklet arrives and I open it, I get my pen right in my hand, and I'm flying to another world. In this world the Bible characters reveal to us month by month newer and newer stories about God. We can draw different things from each story and learn so much about God. I am very glad that these Bibletime worksheets have arrived in the Hungarian language!"

Tötös, 7 years, says "For me the Bibletime booklet is through which I can get closer to God. I really love filling it up and every month, if I'm heading to the post office, I ask if Bibletime has arrived! I like the games and the puzzles and to search the stories from the Bible, and we commonly read the Bible in our small family circle at home. Thank you so much for the correspondence and sending them to us from far away!"



# UK & Ireland

## Ireland

Gareth and Margaret McMeekin

Gareth reflectively writes "As I stop to write a short summary of our current work I am forced to think of great need around us, great weakness within us and a great God who is for us.

The journey of succeeding Noel and Liza as the leaders of the work here in Ireland, reaching over 5,000 children, has of course been a journey into the familiar in many regards, but it has been far from a journey of ease. We have taken this step at a time in our lives when we are most stretched, and we find our weaknesses come to our attention so easily. Family, assembly, ministry, business, the discipline of fellowship with the Lord and a renovation project to cap it off all make their demands on our time. We recently heard Jesus' challenge for Philip to feed the 5000 interpreted as "this He said to stretch him" (John 6:6) and we certainly understand how that might have felt.

Since we stepped up to the role of leadership in the work we have hoped to bring some other young people alongside us to teach and disciple as they help with the routine aspects of the work. To date nothing has developed on this front and we often feel like we are drawing on the same few faithful people. Having said all that, we have to report that every need to date has been met – Praise God! Through the prizegiving season and all its travels, someone always turned up to be able to help. Although looking forward we often despair at our inability to complete all that has begun, we must acknowledge that the past teaches us His sufficiency. In particular we must give thanks for His provision for our new office building. A year after we began to consider moving to the town with our offices on a very limited budget, a building much more suitable than we could have hoped for has been provided for and it looks like there is now also adequate funds on their way to complete the renovation. Truly this is only a little thing for the Lord to accomplish, His faithfulness is exceptional.

We look forward to more months of busyness with continuing renovations as well as summer camp and other routine work. We trust that tomorrow as today He will meet our every need."

## PBS Tyrone & Fermanagh, Northern Ireland

Sam and Louise Balmer

Sam and Louise say "To say we are encouraged is an understatement. In twelve months our student numbers have risen by 2,500. This growth is in primary schools who are now using Bibletime in their RE departments. We now have a total of over 8,400 students in total. We praise God for this and long that many children will come to the Lord as a result of these opportunities. Please pray that these doors will remain open and that many more schools will sign up to use Bibletime. We have recently been visiting the schools giving the children prizes for completing the Bibletime lessons and speaking in school assemblies. What an opportunity to speak about the Lord with over 6500 children plus staff. Please pray that someone appropriate would come along and make appointments with local schools and speak to them about the resource we can offer; we believe this could increase the reach of Bibletime." Sam quotes "I will praise the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

## South Wales Postal Bible School, Wales

Stephen and Gwyneth Treseder

Stephen and Gwyneth report that over the last few years, the numbers of students in South Wales PBS have dropped quite considerably and they are finding it more difficult to enrol students in the UK due to increased secularism. At present they send to 150 students. Gwyneth says, "Recently, when we were feeling rather despondent, we received a lovely letter from an adult student thanking us for the Bibletime lessons and saying what a help they were to her in her Christian life. We have also recently had a request to enrol 40 students who meet in an Indian church in Cardiff. We do pray that they will find Bibletime suitable and helpful. We are ever grateful to those who support us in this work, either by marking lessons, supporting us financially, or by prayer. We would value prayer for the Lord's guidance as to the future of the work."

## London Postal Bible School, England

Charles Adocco

London BES office has recently relocated to Chigwell Row and we are grateful to God for the churches who continuously and consistently use the Bibletime materials to engage children and young people and to help them know the Lord. Please pray for the teachers and do not forget to pray for more labourers in the London area.

## Dorset Postal Bible School, England

Stephen Gillham

Dorset Postal Bible School was started 40 years ago initially for children in the Dorset area. Stephen says "we now send lessons to all parts of the country and we post around 220 lessons each month most of whom are returned on a fairly regular basis. We are grateful for a team of 21 markers and also Grace Goulding who administers the work. We would love to see more new recruits most of whom come via the Website contact."



# Final Thought

Andy Street

**... I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it ...**

It should come as no surprise that Europe, the world's wealthiest continent, is the poorest in spiritual terms. Spirituality and materialism are poor bed-fellows and seldom accompany each other. Whilst all other continents have, over the last two centuries, seen growth in the gospel, Europe has seen decline and is now home to the

smallest percentage of evangelical believers per capita in the world today.

However, the promise of the Lord Jesus has not been rescinded; He continues to build His church throughout the world and Europe is no exception to His church building process. Please pray with us that through

the use and study of Bibletime lessons, Europe's youth will gain an understanding of the Word of God; will come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and go on to achieve full maturity in Christ.

**Matthew 16: 18**

## Contact BES

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## Support BES

### How to support BES

You can make a one-off donation or choose to support us regularly by cheque, standing order, or any other means. You could also consider leaving a legacy to BES, so we can continue bringing the Good News of Jesus to the next generation. For more information, contact [vicky@besweb.com](mailto:vicky@besweb.com)

### BES Ireland supports BES UK

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The next issue of BES news, due Winter 2018, will focus on the Americas and Australia.

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