



BES news

The Americas & Australia

Summer 2023

Resourcing you to reach the next generation - www.besweb.com



This edition of the Summer BES News focuses on the continents of North America, South America and Australia with its encouraging reports mapping the development of Bibletime throughout these 3 landmasses. Although English is the main language used for the Bibletime material in Australia, North America, Canada, Jamaica and the West Indies, the translation teams have worked hard to produce the Bibletime material in Portuguese and Spanish. 'HoraBíblica' (Portuguese Bibletime) is used primarily in Brazil and 'Mibiblia' (Spanish Bibletime) is used in Argentina, Venezuela and many of the neighbouring South American countries.

We thank and praise God for the tremendous work by Revival Movement (Every Home Crusade) who have printed and shipped the BES resources to Brazil, St Lucia and Venezuela over recent years. We pray that in the future they will also be able to ship 'Mibiblia' booklets to Argentina, Bolivia and Chile as difficult and challenging customs procedures are overcome.

Contents

- Welcome
- Australia & Canada
- Canada (Emmaus)
- Houston (USA)
- Jamaica, St Lucia & Antigua
- Argentina & Brazil
- Venezuela
- Other News
- Final Thought

Australia

Emilie Owers

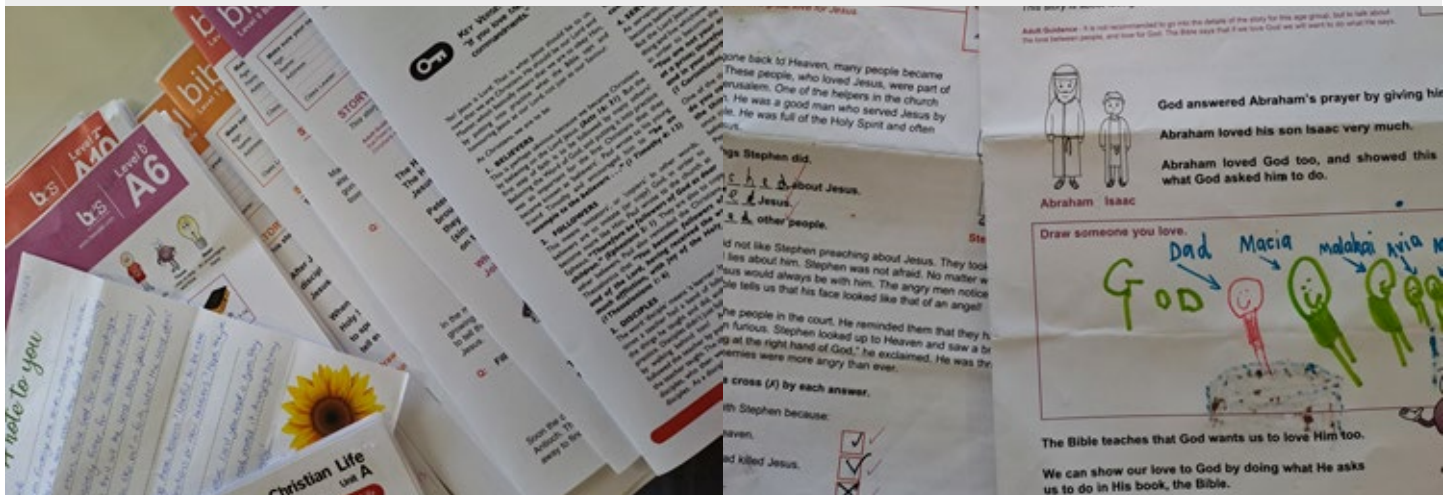
Emilie writes, "March 13, 2023, saw PSSM celebrate 90 years of ministry. I doubt that those who started the Postal Sunday School Movement back in 1933 would have foreseen the way the ministry has developed over the years and the many people who have been impacted by its work. In the late 1970s, two ministries in differing states merged and relocated to Perth. It became known as PSSM Mailbox Club Incorporated in Western Australia. Around 5 or 6 years ago it moved to Queensland. We are presently in the last phases of that change with our application now waiting upon Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) consent to establish a Company Limited by Guarantee. With this approval we will have a new name which we expect to be 'PSSM Bible Discovery'. We want our new name to reflect our history and to state we are about encouraging and discovering the message of the Bible. With the sustaining power and favour of God, we have faithfully maintained our vision from the 1930s – to introduce people to God through free Bible lessons. PSSM currently has over 200 active participants receiving and completing Bibletime lessons regularly. Lessons are mailed out right across Australia from Western Australia to Tasmania and everywhere in between." Here are a few encouraging testimonies from students:

"I just got back home from school and was so happy to see that my first PSSM letter had arrived! I started straight away and enjoyed it so much ... Thank you again, I am really excited for my next lesson." **Megan – Junior student.**

"PSSM was introduced to us by Aunty Terri and has been a great way to learn about Jesus. Now all three of my children participate. I love the personal messages each of my children receive and the love it shows them. Getting letters in the post is a rarity these days so my children also get to experience the joy of receiving something personal for them. And then be able to learn about the love of Jesus. It's been amazing! Thank you for all you do! It makes a difference." **Mikayla R.**

POINTS FOR PRAYER:

- **Pray for Emilie as she negotiates with the authorities to finalise the legal changes to PSSM.**
- **Pray for the relaunch of PSSM in its new form and a renewed interest from children and teenagers in the use of Bibletime to help them with their Bible studies.**



Canada

Pete and Elaine Smith

Pete writes, "Once again, we acknowledge the Lord's faithfulness, that has allowed us the privilege to reach over 15,528 young people with the PBS materials since July 1999, when the work in Canada began. Over the past 10 months we have received over 1,000 new applications, most of them through the internet, yet, sadly, we see a continuing trend, that we lose each month as many as we gain! Disappointingly, especially with the adult NewLife students, they only seem to do a month or two before stopping. However, we probably have as many students as we can properly handle month by month. It would be wonderful to see the Lord start more new centres across this vast continent so that the workload could be shared.

On an encouraging note, we recently discovered that 455 of our students are based in 83 Hutterite Colonies. For many years the numbers averaged between 120-150, so we are thankful for this great opportunity to reach those from this religious group. Some of the

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

students have such delightful names like Wolf Creek, Whistling Wind or Silver Lake Colony! Visiting the farms has become a rarity due to our time being so limited and since Pete began the new radio outreach in December 2020.

In March, we were able to have a Gospel Booth again at the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair after a 3-year break. Though the main focus for us this year was on the new radio outreach, we were still able to distribute over 1,200 colourful text cards to the children, with a Gospel tract, that encouraged them to look at our PBS website and sign up for Bibletime. One new recruit is the 8-year-old daughter of a man who did the courses himself. Her grandma wrote telling us that her son and his wife, "... were quite excited to think that PBS is still available! Such good memories!" This has been seen several times in recent months, so another generation are being introduced now.

The biggest challenge we have faced over the past 12 months has been the formulating and implementing of a Safeguarding Policy. Sadly, 16 of our teachers stepped down, some due to illness and age and others because they didn't agree with it. This put an immense burden on the Centre and on us in particular. The situation led to some deep heart searching as to what the Lord wanted us to focus upon in our work and how He wanted us to proceed in the future. After much prayer, discussion and reflection we are due to present a revised version to the board members in June which we feel more at peace over and believe is the way forward for our Centre. We look forward to being able to get back to what really matters, the reaching of young people with the Gospel, through presenting the Scriptures of truth and building relationships with them and their families."

POINTS FOR PRAYER:

- Pray that students will continue with their studies in both Bibletime and NewLife for more than a month.
- Pray that the door will remain open to send material to the Hutterite communities and we can visit when time allows.
- Pray for the children who have signed up to receive Bibletime from visiting our booth at the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair.
- Pray that as the Safeguarding Policy is presented at the annual Board Meeting, it will be approved and implemented and the confusion and tension which was felt will not divide us or hinder the work.



Canada Emmaus

Sue Ellery

In April 2015, Peter and Dorothy Kerr, Director of Emmaus Correspondence Centre Canada, asked Sue to be part of the Emmaus Team. At first, none of them were certain what direction the work would take but over time it became clear that Postal Bible School (PBS) would partner with Emmaus and begin a second PBS in Canada. Sue met with Pete and Elaine Smith for training in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba in May 2016 and one month later Sue mailed out to just 13 students. The student base has grown slowly and during the height of Covid-19 in Spring 2021, Emmaus PBS had their largest student base. They quickly added a couple of teachers to meet the demand for qualified markers to maintain contact with the students.

Sue writes, "We do not have a huge student base in this little school, but in God's economy that does not matter. This week, I received a note from a teenage girl saying that she was ending her time with us because she is now taking the Emmaus adult courses. Her words were,

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

“to say that I like PBS is an understatement – I love it!” Encouraging notes like that make us all realise that even if we are only serving one child, it is still worth it. Recently, there has been a trend of adults with disabilities signing up to Bibletime to study God’s Word. They love the lessons and are some of the quickest to return their studies to us. In our student base, we currently have a 59-year-old male, an 80-year-old female, and 37-year-old female all enjoying the solid teaching offered by PBS. We have had an illiterate adult prison inmate and the prison chaplain use the lessons to teach reading and writing skills while learning the truth of Scripture. Grading their papers can be challenging but the markers have patiently corrected the mistakes and have learnt so much good healthy theology themselves!”

Sue continues to say, “On a personal level, in April 2023, I moved into a home in a small quiet city in south-central Ontario about one and a half hours north of Toronto. This home has a dedicated home office space able to house all the PBS curriculum, prizes and stationery necessary to keep in contact with students and teachers. I have 7 teachers who mark and return lessons and we are ready and willing to serve any child who registers on our website, by snail mail or phone.”

POINTS FOR PRAYER:

- Pray that students will continue with their studies within the family unit, moving through the Bibletime levels as a child and into using the adult Emmaus literature.
- Pray for promotional opportunities to encourage more volunteers to get involved in the administrative duties of grading and posting Bibletime lessons.
- Pray Bibletime would bring God-centred spiritual blessings to the lives of the students and their families who regularly use the resource.



Houston PBS, USA

Philip and Mary Kuruvilla-Peter

The Postal Bible School in Houston was formed in 2014 and 4 ½ years later Philip Kuruvilla, his wife, Mary, and their family took responsibility for printing, posting and coordinating the Bibletime booklets each month. There are currently just over 280 registered students with 7 to 9 teachers regularly marking them. It has been encouraging to see the growth in numbers from just over 150 students in 2018 when they took over the ministry. Prayer is appreciated for Houston PBS especially for energy, passion, and wisdom as they balance their PBS work alongside full-time secular jobs.

Philip writes, “It is so encouraging to receive feedback from the students as they complete their Bibletime lessons and enclose thankyou notes in the returned envelopes. Many of the markers enjoy grading the material as it encourages them knowing that they are helping the children to grow in their love and knowledge of Jesus.”

Here are some examples of the notes enclosed with lessons:

Jonathan (age 16), “I enjoy learning about the Bible through Postal Bible School lessons! It makes learning easier through activities like a crossword puzzle or filling in the blanks. I have advanced through multiple levels. I like how the lessons get harder and the in-depth teaching can be applied to daily life.”

Hannah (age 12), “I enjoy PBS because I like the coloring and the puzzles. I get excited when I get the lesson and I normally do it on Saturdays because I have lots of time. I can’t wait for the next lesson.”

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

POINTS FOR PRAYER:

- Pray for these students and their parents as they study God's Word with Bibletime that it would bring spiritual meaning to their lives and that they would continue with the course.
- Pray for the teachers and others helping in this ministry as they take time out of their schedules to serve the children and teenagers.
- Pray for the Manvel Bible Chapel family as they are a great encouragement and support to Philip and his family in the ministry. More volunteers are needed to share the administrative work, so pray the Lord may put the burden in someone's heart.



Jamaica

Kerron Campbell

Kerron attended the 2019 BES International Conference in Northern Ireland, and since his return to Kingston, Jamaica, he has been using a small amount of English material sent to him from the BES office. Kerron has used both the A5 Booklets and A4 Lessons with missionary students, teenagers from the local youth clubs and in his Assembly Sunday School with primary school children.

POINTS FOR PRAYER:

- Pray that new partnerships will be formed with those who want to teach children about God's Word.
- Pray that Sunday School and youth club teachers who are seeking practical help will sign up to the BES LMS system to improve their knowledge of how to teach children about the Word of God using Bibletime.



St Lucia & Antigua

Pete and Elaine Smith

Pete and Elaine visited St Lucia in February and Pete is currently on the island for 3 weeks as he writes this update. The main purpose of Pete's visit is to take advantage of the enthusiastic interest shown in the BES resources and to promote fresh interest in the Bibletime booklets by visiting many more schools in the area. They are thankful to Revival Movement for printing over 6,000 booklets last year but, unfortunately, the shipping delayed their arrival until late December. There are currently 22 schools, out of a possible 72 primary schools, using the BES resources in Antigua and St Lucia.

POINTS FOR PRAYER:

- Pray that the promotional visits to new schools will have borne fruit and that there will be many more young people and teachers exposed to God's Word.
- Pray that the delivery time will be much improved and that the booklets will arrive in the Autumn, for the new school term rather than in December.
- Pray for God's blessing upon the students studying the Word of God across the Caribbean.

Argentina

Eduardo Schuster

Eduardo, an Emmaus worker and Director of Misión Patagonia, attended the 2019 BES International Conference and went away determined to bring Bibletime to Spanish-speaking South America. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Eduardo and his team faced many obstacles to importing any material into Argentina and therefore dedicated their time and efforts to promoting the BES resources. This created great enthusiasm, excitement and expectations from churches, missionary organisations and partners in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, who were all eager to use Bibletime. Finally, in October 2022, 10,000 Bibletime booklets and Teacher Guidelines in Spanish were printed locally in Patagonia. A series of bespoke and interactive BES training sessions were held for over 50 people on Zoom with Stevie Walls, the BES International Development Manager, which generated great enthusiasm and active participation among the trainees.

Part of the promotional strategy was to send and store the BES resources in 3 main centres in the country including Buenos Aires, Cipolletti and Cordoba, and then to distribute Bibletime samples from there to churches, schools and into other provinces and neighbouring countries. To date, over 20% of the Bibletime booklets and Teacher Guidelines have been distributed to schools and churches throughout Argentina, namely in Buenos Aires, Cipolletti, Cordoba, Chubut, Neuquén, Pilar, San Martín, Sarandí, Tucumán, Villa Regina, and many others. In Chile they have been sent to the cities of Coyhaique, Talca and Santiago and a handful of boxes have gone to Asunción in Paraguay, which is very encouraging as the school year in Latin America only started in March. More promotional events at conferences are being planned during the summer months and on the social networking sites to increase awareness that the booklets are available. Eduardo is aware that PDFs are being downloaded from the website for family use and others have sent it to their Sunday School teachers to review before orders for hard copies are placed.

POINTS FOR PRAYER:

- **Pray for the continuity of the BES material and for the future printing and shipping of the Bibletime resources by Revival Movement in Northern Ireland.**
- **Pray that the Lord will open doors for the BES team to promote the resource to churches and Christian schools, and they will want to use the material once they see it.**
- **Praise God for the enthusiasm of the Patagonia missionary team in Argentina, that the Lord has the right people in the right places for all of these promotional and training procedures.**



Brazil: Interlink and HoraBíblica

Alexandre and Geovana Torres

Bibletime in Portuguese was first distributed in Brazil from the Revival Movement depot (Interlink Missionary Agency) and HoraBíblica in late 2014. Much of the work in Brazil is overseen by Alexandre Torres and his wife, Geovana, from HoraBíblica. They are based in Manaus, Amazon State, and coordinate the translation work, distribution of the resources and training of BES volunteers. Geovana also travels with Alexandre as he visits the schools in the towns and cities to promote the material and give practical guidance to teachers to help them use the Bibletime booklets more efficiently during their classes. When Alexandre travels to more remote parts of the Amazon State by boat, Geovana stays at home to look after their boys.

Sérgio and Debora serve in Santarém, State of Pará, which borders Amazon State. They are working with Bibletime in 2 large assemblies in Santarém, and having recently been given permission to distribute Bibletime to all schools in the region, they have quickly established a presence in 13 primary schools.

Jeanne Lipse, who lives in Campinas, São Paulo State, works in 5 public schools. Due to restrictions on teaching religion to children in the south of Brazil, Jeanne uses Bibletime in her Valores' classes. In these sessions she teaches morals and values to her students using Biblical principles found in the Bibletime material.

The growth in Bibletime usage has been enormous over the last 7 years. Alexandre estimates that since 2016, Revival Movement have printed and shipped over 400,000 Bibletime booklets in Portuguese which has allowed them to reach over 75,000 children in over 100 schools throughout Brazil. Bibletime is being used to teach children about God in both public and private schools in 7 states, however, the schools in northern states are

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

more open to receiving the material than those in the south. For example, in the Amazon State, over 8,000 children from 9 schools in Manaus complete the Bibletime booklets at school, and there is increasing interest in the material every day. Alexandre plans to visit 30 public schools in 8 different towns of Amazon State, most of which can be reached by car, but some by boat. In the southern part of Brazil, opposition comes from political and other religious groups who do not accept the Christian teaching and way of life. Regions are still under the effects of Communism, idolatry and other worldly influences, like materialism and wealth, which hinder the spread of the Gospel. However, with persistence, incentives and the presentation of attractive material, Bibletime is creeping into uncharted territories.

Through financial gifts, prayers and funding, Sérgio and Alexandre were able to build a boat, called Boas Novas (which means Good News). They have used the boat to distribute Bibletime to over 4,000 children in hard to reach fishing and rural communities along the Amazon River and its tributaries. The boat has been used by them and other workers to visit river villages along the Tapajós River and Arapiuns River and more recently indigenous farming reservations where only the native language of the tribe is spoken. One group of children greeted them with a song they had written about the Bible and Bibletime and how special it was to receive both resources.

"We are here to tell you about an amazing book that is going to help with our education. Please pay much attention! Get this book now and read it with optimism. Read it soon that you may know the Bible is here, and to join it, is Bibletime. It is too much! With this project we will learn so much more. What you need to know is in the Bible. It is real. Away from this path, you go from bad to worse. The Bible and Bibletime teach you how to be much better."

POINTS FOR PRAYER:

- **With a population of almost 210 million people, the task of distributing the Bibletime booklets and reaching many communities is challenging as they now only have one centre, which is in Manaus. They need so many more volunteers to help them meet demand. Please pray!**
- **There has been an unforeseen decrease in demand for Bibletime from prisoners who use the Bibletime during their Bible studies. Pray for a reversal of this trend and changes in attitude towards God.**



Venezuela

Swanny Engels

Hisca and Bertha who are missionaries from Holland have lived in Venezuela for over 50 years. They have established a Vacation Bible School, a church and have written many articles on the Gospel for well-known newspapers and magazines. They currently live in Caracas with their daughter, Swanny, and her husband, Douglas. Swanny and Douglas are both qualified doctors in medicine but felt that God had also led them into missionary work, so they became involved in the training side of ministry while Hisca and Bertha concentrate on Gospel outreach and church service.

In January 2022, 150,000 Spanish Bibletime booklets arrived in Venezuela for the first time. Despite the initial excitement, the promotion, uptake and distribution of the BES resources has been challenging and slow. Although the Engels family had a training strategy in place for those working with children, the turbulent political crisis, severe economic pressures and geographical distances have not allowed them to implement the planned training programmes or distribute many Bibletime booklets outside of their local church circle. They have held meetings with people in Barquisimeto and Táchira State, and with an organisation which has an extensive network of 2,000 public schools, but building trust and establishing a strong connection has been slow.

POINTS FOR PRAYER:

- **Pray for God's protection over Hisca, Bertha, Douglas and Swanny.**
- **Pray for the building of trust and strong connections with those organisations and groups working with children. Pray they will see the benefit of the Bibletime material in helping children learn about God and the Bible and want to use the material.**
- **Pray for wisdom and discernment when deciding how best to promote the material, and then how much to send to new contacts so that it is shared out proportionally to church groups, youth clubs and schools.**

Other News

BES CONFERENCE 2024. BES plan to hold a conference in Northern Ireland between 29th May – 5th June 2024 based on the theme 'Connected to Christ, Cooperation with Co-workers and Compassion for Children.' The procedure for the conference is different from previous occasions in that there is an application process, and it is mandatory for attendees to complete the 14 training modules on the LMS system. Invitations for international delegates to apply for the conference will be sent out soon.

BES TIMELINE IN COLOUR. The BES timeline which allows students to track their progress as they complete the lessons or booklets from each Series has been produced in colour. This will be available in English to print from the BES website. Students can print the timeline and colour the Bibletime icons as they complete each stage and advance through each Series. By Autumn 2023, corresponding icon stickers will be available to primary school children in the UK and Ireland to stick on the timeline, but consideration may be given to make them obtainable for international students pending funding.

BES VISUAL AIDS. Visual aids for each Bibletime lesson have been produced using FreeBibleImages to allow teachers to show pictures to the children when reading the Bibletime story. These images correspond to the Bibletime lesson. The PDF image files for lessons from all Series should be available for downloading from the BES website under the 'Bibletime' tab by Autumn 2023.

BES Deputation opportunity

BES would be happy to speak to your church or organisation via video conferencing or in person to tell them more about the work of BES here in the UK and around the world. If you would like to arrange this with us or require more information, **please contact Sam Balmer at sam@besweb.com**

Silver Servers

Are you a grandparent? Could you help change the fact that many children don't know about Jesus? Silver Servers has been designed to give you everything you need. Through this website, there is on-line access to all of the Bibletime Resources free of charge! Register your interest and sign up to our online newsletter via the website: **www.silver-servers.org**.



A Final Thought

by Sue Ellery (Emmaus Canada)

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 (NIV)

I love that Postal Bible Schools around the world echo the Shema of the Deuteronomist's call to teach diligently to our children, to live out God's commands and to speak and walk in the Lord when "you lie down and when you rise up" (Deut 6:7). It reminds us of the key principles of the faith and that we must listen, concentrate and give the Word of God our most focused attention. Over and over, I am reminded of the great responsibility that has been entrusted to our generation of believers to teach children about God. What a privilege it is to serve our young people in the Americas and be part of the global BES family.

Contact BES

Registered BES Office:

c/o Angela Johnston, 37 Belmore Street,
Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, BT74 6AA

Telephone: 028 6632 2462

Email: info@besweb.com

Editor and Secretary of Trust:

Stephen Gillham -

stephen.gillham@besweb.com

International Director:

Sam Balmer - sam@besweb.com

BES Ambassador:

Bert Gray - bert@besweb.com

UK BES Trustees: Sam Balmer, Stephen Gillham, Pam Harknett, Allison Hill, Stuart Price, DJ Watts and Pamela Rainey.

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 finance@besweb.com

Next BES News in
Winter 2023
will focus on the BES 2024 Conference.

Further copies of this BES news can be downloaded from www.besweb.com

NONE OF THIS MATERIAL CAN BE COPIED OR DUPLICATED WITHOUT THE EXPRESS PERMISSION AND CONSENT OF BES.



BESnews Summer 2023
Resourcing you to reach the next generation

www.besweb.com
Registered Charity: UK CIO 1186004