

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland
Annual report for the year ended
31 December 2007

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Society information

Trustees

Very Reverend Dr D Clarke	(From 26 November 2007)
Mr J Dobson	(Until 20 August 2007)
Reverend R Kerr	(From 26 November 2007)
Mr N Lavery	Honorary Treasurer
Reverend Dr E Mawhinney	
Reverend D Maxwell	
Reverend Professor C McCullough	
Mr L McDonald	
Reverend Dr J Ross	(Until 20 August 2007)
Miss J Scott	Chair (From September 2007)
Miss A Taylor	
Mr D Taylor	Chair (Until September 2007)

Management Team

Mr J Doherty	General Secretary
Mr C Moore	Office Manager
Miss J Moore	Gift/Project Manager

Auditors

ASM Horwath (A) Limited
Chartered Accountants
Horwath House
20 Rosemary Street
Belfast
BT1 1QD

Solicitors

Cleaver Fulton Rankin
50 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7FW

Bankers

Northern Bank Limited
Donegall Square North
Belfast
BT1 5GJ

Registered office

Bible House
27 Howard Street
Belfast
BT1 6NB

Trustees' report

The Trustees present their report and the audited accounts for the year ended 31 December 2007.

Reference and administration details

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland is established under a Scheme of Incorporation made by the Department of Health and Social Services for Northern Ireland on 10 September 1999, under Section 10 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964.

The Society is established for charitable purposes only and its objects, as stated in its constitution, are to promote the widest possible effective distribution and use of the Holy Scriptures. This continues the work that commenced in Belfast in 1807. Since 1987, the Society has been a member of the *United Bible Societies*, a Fellowship that embraces 145 national Bible Societies working in over 200 countries.

The society information on page 1 sets out:

- ◆ the Society's registered office, which is also its principal address;
- ◆ the Trustees in place during the year; and
- ◆ details of the management team charged with the day to day running of the Society.

Trustees' Induction and Training

The Society has a policy of arranging one-to-one meetings both before and, as required, after the appointment of Board members. These meetings serve to provide members with access to all the information that they require to discharge their role. In addition to the formal programme of scheduled meetings, additional events and briefings are held to promote dialogue within the Board itself and also between the Board and Staff team.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland is governed by its constitution, which sets out the objects of the Society. The governing body of the Society are the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees met four times during the year – three times for regular meetings and also for a special Strategy day in September. This considered the concept of Interconfessionality as applied to the Northern Ireland context. Two Board members stepped down during the year, Mr J Dobson and Very Reverend Dr J Ross, who was a long-time servant of the Bible cause. The Very Reverend Dr D Clarke and Reverend R Kerr took their place after learning of the Society's day to day operations.

The full-time staff team of three posts comprising General Secretary, Office Manager and Gift/Project Manager continued unchanged and the Society has an experienced and settled team to drive the work forward in the year ahead.

Trustees' report (continued)

Risk Management

As part of their regular meetings during the year, the Board and Executive Committee regularly review the types of risks faced by the Society and the likelihood of their occurrence. This has necessitated consideration of property, human resource and financial risks. The key risks are reviewed regularly and are effectively managed to mitigate against a range of events which could disrupt the effective operation of the Society.

Internal Financial Control Policy

A range of measures are in place to control access to the Society's funds, to ensure consistent handling of and the security of gift income, and to provide regular reporting to the Society's Office-bearers. These measures are kept under review. In keeping with best practice, the Society retains finance in reserve that is equivalent to one year's expenditure in order to counter any potential downturn in Income.

The Society's Vision and activities

In a year of special celebration **The Vision** of the Bible Society in Northern Ireland continued to be that:

All the people in the world should have access to the Scriptures,

- ◆ *in their heart language,*
- ◆ *in a medium they can understand,*
- ◆ *at a price they can afford,*

And all would be helped to interact with the Word of God.

This reflects the continuing need to ensure that the Bible is not only made as widely available as possible, but also in a format and style that is appropriate for the reader or listener that will enable them to be impacted by its message.

Achievements and performance

Financial Results

The total level of Income in 2007 was substantially higher than in 2006. This was as a result of a number of generous gifts received during the year. The total incoming resources were significantly greater compared to 2006. A surplus of £12,783 is being retained towards the Society's initial commitment of £300,000 to specific Scripture projects during 2008. The level of support for international and home-based projects given by the Society in 2007 amounted to £417,124, representing a record increase of £100,000 compared to the 2006 financial year.

Tight budgetary control contributed to the equivalent low level of expenditure in 2007 as was incurred in 2006. The use of bulk mailing, electronic communication and downloads from the Society's website as an alternative to printed material contributed to the increasing cost effectiveness of the Society.

Trustees' report (continued)

The Society's activities during 2007 followed the direction set out in the new 2007/08 Business Plan, which acknowledged benefits accruing from the celebration of the bi-centenary anniversary of the commencement of Bible ministry in Belfast. While supporting Bible projects in an unprecedented number of countries abroad, efforts continued at home to highlight the place of the Bible in the community.

The Society's activities are reviewed under the following headings:

- ◆ Home Programme and Trading;
- ◆ Fundraising and support for Bible Mission abroad;
- ◆ Other work within Northern Ireland; and
- ◆ Other special activities and developments.

1. Home Programme and Trading

We continue to provide an important service to guide churches and individuals in accessing appropriate Scriptures in a wide range of languages. During 2007 the total number of Scriptures (in all languages) distributed from Bible House totalled:

- ◆ 878 Bibles (1,884 in 2006);
- ◆ 442 New Testaments (6,913 in 2006);
- ◆ 8,294 Gospels (67,713 in 2006); and
- ◆ 300 Selections (138 in 2006).

These figures represent a considerable decrease in 2007 due to the high level of activity in this area in 2006. In the financial year 2007 the Society suffered reduced level of sales due to more bulk orders and a free distribution of gospels in 2006. The following, however, was accomplished:

- ◆ continued demand for Scriptures to distribute to those living in Northern Ireland, or working here temporarily, whose first language is not English. A total of 543 Scriptures were provided in over 30 languages during 2007;
- ◆ a total of 7,000 Gospels were provided to support the Baptist Church's Amazing Journey Storytelling Project in schools within Northern Ireland during 2007. This is part of the Society's ongoing commitment to this important project; and
- ◆ three issues of the Society's magazine for members of the Bible Kids Club were circulated during the year, with additional material being drafted in order to bring the Bible to the attention of teenagers.

Trustees' report (continued)

The Society continues to provide Scriptures to support the Amazing Journey Bible Storytelling project, now in its eighth year. The Amazing Journey seeks to introduce Primary school children to Jesus through the acting out of stories and the Scriptures that the Society provides. Portions of Mark, Luke, John and Acts are being provided, with a complete New Testament available as a follow-up resource for interested families.

Membership of the Society's magazine-based Bible Kids Club continues to grow. We feel that this is an important resource for 8 – 11 year olds to help them to engage with the Bible through stories and puzzles, and to learn about how the story of Jesus is reaching their peers in other countries. We are beginning to consider the implications of providing a complementary publication for young teenagers.

A major effort was required to complete the Handwritten Bible Project that commenced in May 2006. The final words were copied by Archbishop Alan Harper in Armagh in June 2007, after which all of the copied pages, contributed by around 10,500 people, were bound into 19 volumes for public display. The Handwritten Bible was exhibited in public for the first time on 12th October when the Society celebrated its bi-centenary anniversary.

2. Fundraising and support for Bible Mission abroad

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland continues to organise fundraising campaigns to help to pay for Bible translation and distribution work in other countries. The Society is provided with financial support by a wide range of individuals and churches from some eight denominations and various other fellowships.

Fundraising Campaigns

A considerable amount of time is spent ensuring that supporters are kept informed about the Society's work to apply the gifts that they receive to the widest possible distribution of God's Word. Our direct Fundraising followed a familiar pattern using three Direct Mail Prayer / Campaign letters and a fortnightly Prayer Circle email which is sent to several hundred churches and individuals with regular information updates entered onto the website. The website was key to making available the widest ever range of resources for Bible Sunday in churches – the result of a collaboration among the Bible Societies of England, Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland. Deputation work continues week by week to take the story of the Society's work to church audiences, including for the first time, a three night teaching series for three churches in Enniskillen.

As part of the bi-centenary celebrations, a first ever Study Visit was arranged to learn of the opportunities for Bible ministry currently being experienced by the Bible Society in Albania. Over five days a group drawn from four denominations, including the current Leaders of two of the Churches in Ireland, were able to witness the encouraging effort that is being made to create support for work in this country.

During 2007, funds were designated to Bible translation or distribution projects in a number of countries such as, Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Panama and many others. In addition, arrangements were negotiated to supply Bibles in countries where our support had a specific interest. The extent to which this programme is increasingly donor driven was demonstrated when a CMS Mission Team in Uganda and prisoners in Rwanda were singled out for special support from funds provided by our supporters. Due to a small number of substantial gifts received, the Society was able to support projects substantially beyond the anticipated budget level and this included a special grant to the family of a Bible Society colleague who was murdered in Gaza city in October.

Trustees' report (continued)

Extent of support

By the end of 2007 a total of £411,600 had been allocated to international projects in almost 30 countries. A further £5,524 was expended on projects within Northern Ireland. Our international support was spread across every continent and embraced Bible translation in countries such as Ethiopia (Amharic Bible) and Russia (Buryat Old Testament), as well as Scripture distribution in print, audio and even, in the case of Sudan, in the visual medium. The full list of countries to which funds were specifically designated (apart from Northern Ireland) is:

Albania	Argentina	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Bangladesh	Bolivia
Botswana	Burkina Faso	Cambodia	China	Cote D'Ivoire	Cyprus
Egypt	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Haiti	India	Jordan
Kenya	Lebanon	Liberia	Nepal	Nigeria	Palestine
Panama	Paraguay	Russia	Rwanda	Sudan	Tajikistan
Uganda	Democratic Republic of Congo				

3. Other work within Northern Ireland

The Society contributes to other work to make the concept of Mission visible and attractive to people and churches through exhibitions, attendance at events, through membership of Association of Missionary Societies and the Mission Secretaries Fellowship and through the membership of the Church of Ireland Council of Mission.

4. Other matters

Visitors to Northern Ireland

During the year we had the opportunity to welcome Mark Brown (CEO of Bible Society of New Zealand) and Ms Silke Hendle his marketing manager.

Northern Ireland staff participated in international meetings held in Vienna and Madrid.

In November, James Catford (Bible Society of England/Wales) visited to discuss further strengthening the co-operation between the two Societies.

Our strong co-operation with the National Bible Society of Ireland also continued.

Trustees' report (continued)

Our Volunteers

We continue to be blessed in the voluntary service of a number of volunteers who contribute their time and talents towards the design of our publications, the maintenance of our website, special inscriptions for presentation Bibles and the mailing of materials to supporters. To them all, the Society records grateful thanks.

Looking forward

The Society wishes to spread its message to an increased number of churches and efforts are being made to reach those churches and fellowships which may have lost contact with the Society through changes in personnel and those that remain largely ignorant of its work. Ideally, churches would decide to engage with a country and a Bible project which would offer a distinctive stimulus to the prayer life of the church. Plans are also being made for a Campaign to highlight the place of the Bible within church life and worship within Northern Ireland, to build on the success of the Handwritten Bible Project.

2007 proved to be a remarkable year in the Society's history. The task of reaching people with the Bible for the first time remains as challenging and as exciting as ever. It would be our prayer that this work will continue to enjoy God's direction and blessing, as plans are made and the support of donors is invited to ensure that the message of the Bible is set free to change the world.

Joy Scott
Chair of the Trustees
31 March 2008

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Society as at the end of the financial year and of the surplus or deficit of the Society for that year.

The Trustees confirm that suitable accounting policies have been used and applied consistently, and reasonable and prudent judgements and estimates have been made in the preparation of the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2007. The Trustees also confirm that applicable accounting standards have been followed and that the financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, for safeguarding the assets of the Society and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Trustees

Joy Scott
Chair of the Trustees
31 March 2008

Report of the independent auditors to the members of The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

We have audited the financial statements of The Bible Society in Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2007 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the revaluation of certain fixed assets, and the accounting policies set out therein.

This report is made solely to the Society's members, as a body in accordance with the Charities Acts (Northern Ireland) 1964. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Society's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Society and the Society's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and auditors

The Trustees' responsibilities for preparing the annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards are set out in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view. We also report to you, if in our opinion, the Trustees' report is not consistent with the financial statements, if the Society has not kept proper accounting records or if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We read other information contained in the Annual Report, and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. This other information comprises only the Trustees' report. We consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements. Our responsibilities do not extend to any other information.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Trustees in the preparation of the financial statements and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Society's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of the information in the financial statements.

Report of the independent auditors to the members of The Bible Society in Northern Ireland (continued)

Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Society's affairs as at 31 December 2007 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended.

ASM Horwath (A) Limited
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors

Belfast

31 March 2008