



United Bible
Societies

Building Bridges, Growing Connection

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2022

“We beg you, our friends, to pay proper respect to those who work among you, who guide and instruct you in the Christian life. Treat them with the greatest respect and love because of the work they do. Be at peace among yourselves. We urge you, our friends, to warn the idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”

1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-14 (GNT)



DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST,

I am honoured and grateful for the privilege to serve alongside you as the UBS Secretary General. The journey began on 1 November with one month of formal baton handover alongside Michael Perreau.

For UBSA, 2022 was a year of transition and fresh focus on the way forward after two years of pandemic disruptions. This transition included the inception of new GMT and governance structures.

Amidst the challenges that UBSA and the broader Fellowship encountered, we embraced change as an opportunity to adapt and refine, and witnessed the power of resilience and innovation. Collective commitment to the mission of spreading God's Word remained steadfast. Together, strength in unity, collaboration, and shared purpose were reaffirmed. Partnerships were developed, relationships nurtured, and the reach of UBS expanded.

Looking ahead, we anticipate the fruits of our collective efforts to blossom in exciting ways. We continue to serve and empower communities, embracing the profound message of Scripture and witnessing lives being changed.

To our member Bible Societies, supporters and partners, my heartfelt gratitude extends to you. Your unwavering commitment, sacrificial efforts, and faithful prayers continue to propel the Fellowship forward on this remarkable journey.

As we look to the future, we will carry forward the lessons learned, the connections formed, and the growth achieved. May our future be marked by even greater impact, deeper connections, and a relentless pursuit of our vision to ensure that every person has access to the life-transforming power of God's Word.

In Christ,

Rev. Dirk Gevers

UBS Secretary General

Passing the leadership baton

After 12 years under the guidance of Michael Perreau, the season for transition in the UBSA leadership had arrived.

2022 saw the Fellowship say goodbye to Michael Perreau, as his time as Director General came to an end.

Michael Perreau's legacy was one of stability and Christ-centred leadership through both prosperous and challenging times. He is known as someone who deeply valued the strong connections he developed with Bible Societies and their teams around the world.

Over the month of November 2022, the leadership baton was passed from one leader to another, as part of an intentional transition period.

As one era has drawn to a close, another has begun – the Fellowship welcomed Rev. Dirk Gevers to the role of Secretary General of the United Bible Societies.

Dirk has brought with him considerable experience, including as the former Chief Executive Officer of the Bible Society of South Africa. Dirk has the expertise, wisdom, humility and knowledge to lead our organisation into the future.

"I have had the joy of seeing first-hand the profound impact of God's Word being made available in the heart language of those who wait. I'm also grateful for the opportunity to witness Bible Societies faithfully serving their audiences in their individual contexts. We see time and again that our Fellowship is rooted in faithfulness, generosity and sacrifice, and I wish to thank you personally for living out these characteristics in your own acts of service."

– Michael Perreau

"I look forward to exploring together with you how we might increasingly unlock the potential of our Fellowship – both its lived reality and its unique unfolding story – in order that we might unlock the Bible, everywhere, for everyone."

– Dirk Gevers, upon commencing as Secretary General in November 2022.



New Global Mission Team Structure

A substantial reconfiguration of the Global Mission Team (GMT) structure occurred throughout 2022. This realignment sought to strengthen the core functions of the GMT, while ensuring sustainability for the years ahead. The reconfiguration included changes which would ensure that the Global Mission Team would be best positioned to help Bible Societies and the Fellowship at large achieve their mission.

The Global Mission Team is now comprised of the following departments:

SECRETARY GENERAL'S OFFICE

Led by Rev Dirk Gevers, Secretary General

Church Relations - Led by Rosalee Velloso Ewell

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (ISP) AND GMT EFFECTIVENESS

Led by Adrian White, Chief Operating Officer

GMT Finance & Operations - Led by Nick Allenson (commencing January 2024)

International Finance - Led by Dooshima Ikpaahindi

ISP Management - Led by Mark Cook

People & Organisational Development - Led by Janet Bolton

FELLOWSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Led by Sarah Starrenburg, Executive Director

Digital Experience - Led by Andy Wallace

Mobilisation

Communications - Led by Oana Romocea

Fellowship Operations

BIBLE MINISTRY EFFECTIVENESS

Led by Alexander Schweitzer, Executive Director

Global Bible Translation

Global Bible Publishing - Led by Elsbeth Scherrer

Translation Project Management - Led by Marina Lomova

Translation Resources (Translation Skills Facilitation) - Led by Esteban Voth

Bible Ministry Technology - Led by Steve Berneking

Bible Engagement Team

Bible Engagement Resources

Literacy - Led by Julian Sundersingh

BIBLE SOCIETY EFFECTIVENESS

Led by Chris Egitto, Executive Director

Digital Resilience & Digital Services

Member Relations - Led by Maxime Bakiono

Mission Sustainability (with a special focus on Supply Chain Management) - Led by Ralph Libier

Supporting global Bible Engagement research

Analysing Bible attitudes and measuring Bible engagement around the world in a variety of cultural contexts and environments, the British & Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) launched a multiyear global survey in 2021.

The feedback communicated through the survey - collected throughout 2022 - informed the Big Conversations. The GMT recognised the significant contribution that this project would make to the Big Conversation on Bible Engagement and supported the project as a key catalyst for reflection on Bible Engagement within the Fellowship.

FORUMS

The Big Conversations were further facilitated by a series of Bible Engagement Forums that started in 2022, in parallel with BFBS's global research project.

The first round of the Bible Engagement forums was held in seven countries: UK, Italy, Brazil, South Africa, Togo, Malaysia and Egypt - through which 66 Bible Societies were represented.

GMT have worked closely with the BFBS team to ensure the successful delivery of these forums. Not only have they been consulted from an operational and relational perspective, but each forum has been attended by at least two GMT members with expertise in that cluster's context.

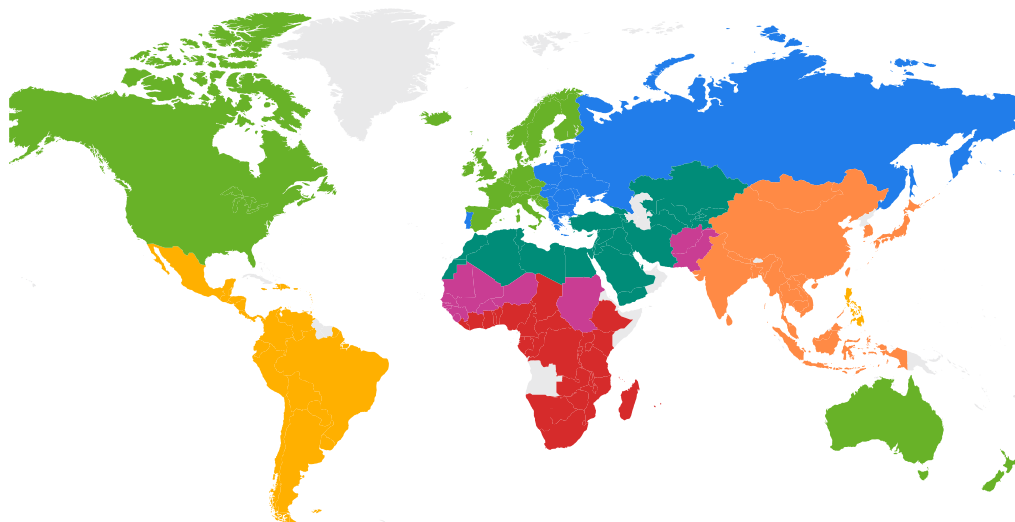
At the end of the year, the whole Fellowship was invited to join in an online Zoom forum, which renewed these conversations and offered a chance to further reflect on the hopes and dreams for Bible Engagement that had been expressed at the earlier forums.

GMT staff, including from the member relations, church relations, and translation teams, have facilitated small-group discussions, helped drive the conversations in a helpful direction and adopted a listening posture when hearing learnings and feedback from Bible Society leaders in each cluster. Some GMT have also generously stepped in to offer their skills in translation and interpretation, not only at in-person forums but also at online follow-up meetings.

GLOBAL TYPOLOGY

As part of the global survey, BFBS worked closely with Gallup and other experts to identify a robust global typology based on existing data which groups countries according to their missiological contexts. In addition to Gallup, this project has involved a Technical Advisory Group which includes Rosalee Velloso Ewell among a panel of experts that have been consulted periodically throughout the process. The Global Typology informed the design of Bible Engagement Forums which took place throughout 2022.

The key dimensions used to arrive at this typology were political system/freedoms; religion; culture, society, language; demographics; economics. The typology identified seven distinct missiological contexts, pictured on the map.



Young Oceania Alliance grows together



The Oceania Alliance – a collaborative partnership between Bible Society Australia (BSA), the Bible Society of Papua New Guinea (BSPNG), and the Bible Society in the South Pacific (BSSP) – exemplifies the spirit of connection and collaboration which became a common theme of 2022.

Formalised in late 2021, initially between the BSSP and BSA, the Oceania Alliance has grown from strength to strength – adding the BSPNG to the Alliance in mid-2022.

THE WORK AHEAD

The Bible Society in the South Pacific serves 16 island nations across the Pacific Ocean. 290 languages are spoken within the 16 nations, and many are without any Scripture translation. Geoffry Miller, BSSP General Secretary, explains the task ahead of them: “We have a big need within Bible translation itself. There is so much to do, but few people to do it.”

The Bible Society of Papua New Guinea also faces a significant challenge in Bible translation. There are 300 languages with no Bible translation, and more than 400 other languages with some translation, but with a desperate need for greater Scripture engagement resources.

DAILY OPERATIONS

The new Oceania Alliance promotes increased cooperation and resource sharing, allowing Bible Society teams to more effectively realise their goals and spend more of their time on missional projects.

Practically, this Alliance has achieved a great deal in its short life, and a lot of this success can be attributed to the collaborative and cooperative approach of the Alliance members.

Chris Melville, BSA Head of Missions, cites capability building as the most important practical function of the Alliance to enable the other two Bible Societies to achieve their mission:

“Among other work, we have helped out with IT and finance infrastructure and even had one of our Koorong [book store] team out to BSSP to assist with their warehouse and distribution. We’re trying to build capacity so they can become self-sufficient.”

Joel Peter, BSPNG General Secretary, spells out the type of support that they’ve received through the Alliance: “The Alliance has provided operational support, technological support, administrative support, and has been very helpful in providing financial resources.”

EARLY OBSTACLES

Before signing the agreement and joining the Alliance, Joel Peter and the BSPNG Board spent six months analysing the Memorandum of Understanding and assessing whether membership of the Alliance would be right for them.

“With our Board, we considered all the potential positives and negatives of joining the Alliance that we could foresee – from a missional perspective and historical perspective.”

Miller and Peter both spoke about the natural apprehension regarding the perception of relinquishing control to Australia. “Within our region, we have a history of colonisation and so culturally we are naturally critical of any plan which can be seen as handing control over to another country or organisation,” Miller explains.

AFFIRMATION

But joining the Alliance has been a tremendous success for Joel and the BSPNG team, even in only a year since joining. “We are so pleased to be a member of the Alliance. Ultimately, our missional goal is to see the availability of the Word of God increase in our country, and the Alliance is enabling us to achieve more towards this goal,” Peter said.

“Our infrastructure – IT and finance – has greatly improved and we have got two new staff – directly as a result of Alliance. Additionally, we have got a new vehicle which helps a lot with distribution. We have over 50,000 copies of the Bible arriving at the end of 2023 and we are excited to have been able to maximise the work of our Bible Society.”

Miller explains that “the opportunity to learn from and collaborate with other Bible Societies in the region has been invaluable in expanding our knowledge and capabilities. With the Alliance, we have seen a transformation in our work culture, standards, and transparency, challenging us to think differently and open up to new possibilities.”

BUILDING ON EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

While now part of the Bible Society Australia team, Andre Minnaar provided support during the early stages of the Alliance’s development, in his former role with the GMT ISP team.

“During the challenging period that the PNG team was going through, a small team comprising [GMT Financial Account Manager] Joshua Poon, Stephen Pattermore [Bible Society of New Zealand Translation Consultant] and myself, with the assistance of several others, were able to ensure some core operations continued in PNG,” Minnaar explains.

Chris Melville explains how Minnaar enabled the Alliance to develop so smoothly in the early phases. “Andre has such strong relationships with so many people in the region – a testament to his 18 years of service through the GMT and commitment to the Bible mission.”



A Bible Society in the South Pacific translation team

GMT SUPPORT

Despite this being a partnership driven by the collective vision of the three Bible Societies, the Global Mission Team has been able to support and encourage the Alliance in several ways.

“Having Andre join us [at BSA] from UBS and provide that continuity has been tremendously positive for the Alliance. We also have Adrian White and Mark Cook always asking us whether we need support and what they can do to assist. In the past, this has included help with funding applications among other things. Now that we have a lot of the core components sorted, GMT serves more as an encouragement to us, and we know they are always there if we need the help,” Melville explains.

The recruitment and training of more translation consultants was one area which the Alliance members could agree that more GMT support was needed. Going forward, the integration of ISP-funded projects into the Alliance mechanisms is also being actively pursued.

EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

‘Every Tribe, Every Nation’ (ETEN) is also a major funding partner of the Alliance. The transparency and accountability of the Alliance is a key feature of the partnership – inviting funding partners, including ETEN, into meetings to see how the partnership functions and to provide feedback to the member organisations.

“The core values of the Alliance are unity in Christ, servanthood, humility and transparency. It is a values-driven partnership with mutual respect, and no one member forcing their ideas on others,” Minnaar clarifies.



FUTURE OF THE ALLIANCE

As for the future of the relatively young Alliance, all of the members are excited about the future and what God has in store for this partnership – as the three Bible Societies work towards a five-year Oceania Region Strategy. Chris Melville anticipates, “one strategy for Oceania – where each Bible Society is able to achieve their goals and vision because they have the right infrastructure and resources.”

The success of the Oceania Alliance has other Bible Societies discussing how they can replicate this partnership within their geographical region. “The model is a good one to build on, and the Bible Societies of other countries should use and adapt it into other regions,” Peter shares in the hope that the positive outcomes they have achieved can be replicated in other regions of the world.

The Oceania Alliance is a profound example of the type of relationship building which took place throughout the Fellowship, aided by the GMT, in 2022.

Inaugural Meeting of the UBS Fellowship Council

The new UBS Fellowship Council gathered for the first time in November 2022 in Swindon, United Kingdom.

Over three days, the group spent time building relationships with each other and understanding each other's contexts; discussing key missional efforts within our Fellowship; and sharing aspirations for the future of our shared life together.

Among dedicated times of discussion around core Bible mission work including Bible translation and Bible engagement, they also conducted election processes by which the late Simon Peter Mukhama (then General Secretary of the Bible Society of Uganda) was elected as the new Vice-Chair of the Fellowship Council and UBSA Board of Trustees, and Christoph Rösel (General Secretary of the German Bible Society) was re-elected to continue serving as Chair of the Membership Committee, and as a member of the UBSA Board of Trustees.

On day one, the Council spent time discussing the role of the Fellowship Council within the new governance structure. The Council members shared their aspirations for how the Fellowship can continue to grow together.

On day two, focus turned to the missional landscape the Fellowship is operating in across the globe, and the Fellowship's work across the Bible lifecycle. Topics also included further understanding and discussion of UBS Fellowship and UBSA (the charity organisation), Membership Committee matters, formal governance elections processes as described above, and the upcoming World Assembly.

Among the many significant conversations and moments throughout the first gathering of the Fellowship Council, attendees took time to mark the transition of leadership from Michael Perreau to Dirk Gevers.

On the final day, there was specific attention given to the areas of Bible engagement and Bible translation – both generally as a core element of our missional work, and specifically in relation to the Bible Translation Roadmap. Finally, the Council discussed how they can continue to engage well with the wider Fellowship and ensure the voices of Bible Societies across diverse contexts can be heard by each other and help shape our shared life together.



The Fellowship in 2022

Supporting the work of the Fellowship is the purpose of the Global Mission Team, and Bible Societies are using this support to transform lives through the Word of God.

DISTRIBUTION IN 2022

In total, 166.4 million Scripture items were provided in 2022.

This shows the continuous interest in the transforming power of the Bible narrative and the extraordinary commitment of Bible Societies to provide the hope of God's Word in a post-traumatic world.

Meanwhile, the number of Bible downloads followed an ascending trend. In 2022, 28% of Bibles provided were internet downloads, compared to only 21% in 2021.

TRANSLATION IN 2022

In 2022, Bible Societies around the world completed Scripture translations in 81 languages used by 723 million people.

100 million people received first Bible translations. Among the 57 first translations published by Bible Societies in 2023, there were 14 first full Bibles.

There is still work to be done. A total of 3,776 languages – more than half the world's languages – used by 201 million people, still have no Scripture at all. 1.5 billion people do not have the full Bible.

Thanks to the efforts of Bible Societies and other Bible translation agencies, the full Bible is available in 733 languages spoken by 5.9 billion people, as of the start of 2023. Over 70% of these were translated by the United Bible Societies Fellowship.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (ISP) IN 2022

Many Bible translation and distribution projects, among others, are only possible because of funding provided by other Bible Societies, delivered through International Support Programme (ISP) grants. The ISP forms a substantial component of the Global Mission Team's functions in supporting the broader Fellowship.

Marking a return to pre-pandemic funding levels, the ISP in 2022 was USD 34,698,808 (up from USD 30,219,310 in 2021, and a marginal increase of USD 34,400,000 in 2019*).

36 Bible Societies contributed to the ISP, and there were 1,402 active ISP projects across 132 Bible Societies. 57% of ISP projects in 2022 were either fully or partly funded.

Bible translation projects are the most funded ISP projects, representing US\$ 7.4 million.

The ISP Team works closely with the Translation Project Team, the International Finance Team and ministry specialists in Bible Ministry and Bible Societies, and together they reviewed 4,570 project reports in 2022.

More information on data provided here is available at <https://solomonresources.ubsccommunity.org/isp-overview/>

**Figures not adjusted for inflation.*

More to come from World Assembly 2023

During 2022, preparations commenced for the World Assembly 2023 – the first World Assembly in approximately seven years.

An event of this size and scope is years in the planning and World Assembly 2023 was no different in this regard. The World Assembly 2023 was held in Egmond aan Zee, The Netherlands, in October.

More on the outcomes of this important event will feature in the 2023 Annual Report.



United Bible Societies Finances in 2022



DEAR FRIENDS,

Having adapted to delivering Bible ministry in a landscape so dramatically transformed by a pandemic, 2022 was promising to be a year where many of us were expecting to start seeing recovery across the global stage. Though there was uncertainty about what exactly the 'new normal' might look like, I am not sure any of us quite expected the turbulence of the year we were handed. With world economies going through a tropical storm, the best image I can think of to describe UBSA throughout 2022 was a fishing boat at sea riding ever-growing waves, not really knowing exactly what was on the other side.

With our faith firmly set in God, we were able to ride the waves of uncertainty and navigate forwards. What this looked like on the ground was a restructuring of the Global Mission Team, enabling us to strengthen the service we offer the members of the Fellowship, along with travel restrictions easing, which allowed us to reconnect in person to strengthen the service we offer across the globe.

Along with continued strength in the International Support Programme, it was encouraging to see high levels of generosity across the Fellowship, even in times as uncertain as they were, as well as fewer requests to call upon the Solidarity Fund showing a reduced sense of financial emergency. As a Global Mission Team, we delight in supporting the mission of the Bible Societies we serve. After all, your mission is our mission.

In faithful service,

Andrew Neale

Interim Head of Finance
United Bible Societies
Global Mission Team

2022 GLOBAL MISSION TEAM INCOME

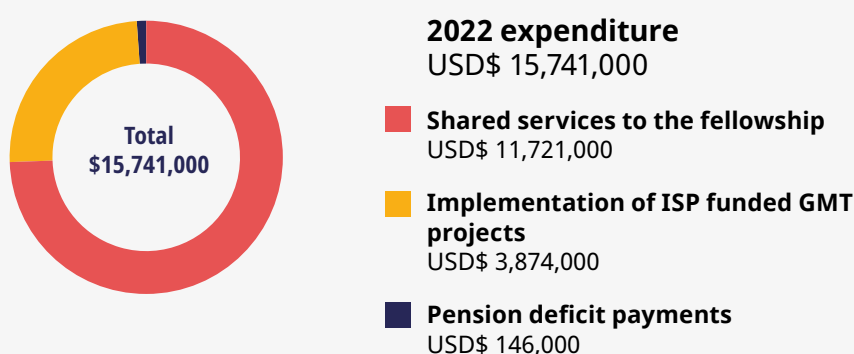
The largest portion of income of the Global Mission Team comes from the Global Stewardship Fund (GSF). 2022 was the first year operating without the discount which was given to help weather the COVID-19 pandemic. This gave rise to an increase in the GSF.

The Global Mission Team also received income—designated here as “Other Income”—from sources such as investments, sales, and royalties of copyrighted materials, reimbursement for seconded staff, and other minor activities. The income from ISP grants is restricted and primarily designated for Scripture translation projects that provide value and service to the Fellowship at scale.



2022 GLOBAL MISSION TEAM EXPENDITURE

When compared to 2021, it is clear to see that global economic factors had a large effect on the expenditure of the UBSA and the Global Mission Team in 2022. With COVID-19 restriction easing, some of our services began to return to in-person delivery which gave a rise to travel costs and at the same time the global uncertainty gave rise to increased foreign exchange challenges. Alongside that, the Global Mission Team went through a restructure in order to realign our service to be able to support the current needs of the UBS Fellowship better.



AVERAGE UBS FELLOWSHIP ECONOMY

Average Annual UBS Economy (2019-2021):
USD \$345,169,000

Local Bible Societies' economies:
USD \$301,366,000

ISP grants: USD \$35,687,000
GSF Contribution: USD \$8,116,000

The UBS Fellowship economy is made up of three components: Local Bible Societies' economies, grants given from Bible Societies to each other through the International Support Programme (ISP), and the Global Stewardship Fund, which funds the provision of shared services through the Global Mission Team. This shows the average amount of each part of the economy from 2019-2021.

The Bible for everyone

unitedbiblesocieties.org

Tel +44(0)1793 236 200
Email comms@biblesocieties.org

Scripture quotes are from the
Good News Translation and
Contemporary English Version.

The Fellowship is incorporated as United Bible Societies, a corporation registered in the state of Delaware, USA, in 1946. The affairs of the Fellowship are administered on its behalf by the United Bible Societies Association (UBSA) from its registered office at UBS UK Hub, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7PJ, England. UBSA is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales no. 2264875. Registered charity no. 800058.