

BIBLE *&* SOCIETY

HOW THE BIBLE TRANSFORMS THE WORLD

05
ISSUE

2025

The UBS Day of
Prayer 2025

| PAGE 18

Abraham and the
God who Speaks

| PAGE 48

A Violin Maker's
Search for God

| PAGE 54

Translation as a Force
Against Injustice

| PAGE 80

TRANSLATING THE BIBLE FOR CHINA'S ETHNIC MINORITIES

PAGE 66



CONTRIBUTORS



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For almost 15 years, Pamela WY Choo served in the United Bible Societies China Partnership (UBSCP) as a writer, Communications Manager and later as the Head of Communications. One of her most memorable assignments under UBSCP was co-authoring a photobook: “The Bible Comes Alive” published by Marshall Cavendish. What kept her zeal “alive” for the ministry was hearing firsthand and writing about the amazing transformation testimonies of the many Christians in China benefiting from projects funded by the generosity of UBS donors.

Favorite Bible Passage:
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end.
LAMENTATIONS 3:22



ROSE GAMBLE

Rose Gamble is a freelance journalist and mother to three very young children, currently based in Zimbabwe. Prior to moving to Harare, she worked for five years as a Senior News Reporter for the Catholic magazine The Tablet, and before that for Country & Town House magazine and on The Sunday Times Business desk. As a freelance journalist, she has written for Travel Africa, The Independent and Evening Standard amongst others.

Favorite Bible Passage:
The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, He will rejoice over you with singing.
ZEPHANIAH 3:17



TIM GLOWIK

Tim Glowik is a photographer based in Germany, specializing in events and portraits. With over 10 years of experience, Tim’s approach focuses on capturing the authentic essence of people and moments, allowing their true character to shine through. He enjoys embarking on road trips with his wife and two small children, exploring beautiful landscapes that often inspire his work. To learn more about Tim and view his portfolio, visit his website: www.timglowik.de

Favorite Bible Passage:
And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.
HEBREWS 10:24



MARCO HERRERA

Marco Herrera served in United Bible Societies from 1974 to 2019, the last 15 years as Director of International Ministries with the American Bible Society. Marco continues to volunteer as a consultant for Christian organizations in several countries. He and his wife Genoveva live in Dallas, Texas, they have three daughters and seven grandchildren.

Favorite Bible Passage:
Work hard at whatever you do, because there will be no action, no thought, no knowledge, no wisdom in the world of the dead—and that is where you are going.
ECCLESIASTES 9:10



ALYSON R. QUINN

Alyson R. Quinn is a US-based freelance writer and editorial consultant who specializes in helping nonprofit organizations bring their stories to the world. Her work has appeared in the Washington Post, WORLD, Darling, and other publications. She holds a master’s degree in nonfiction writing from Johns Hopkins University.

Favorite Bible Passage:
A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.
PROVERBS 25:11



JULIA GARSCHAGEN

Julia Garschagen is a theologian and serves as the director of the Pontes Institut for Science, Culture and Faith across three German-speaking countries in Europe. She speaks at universities and in the business context across Europe and loves to be in dialogue about a faith that is both intellectually credible and existentially satisfying. Julia co-leads the biggest evangelistic youth outreach in the German-speaking world and teaches apologetics at a theological seminary.

Favorite Bible Passage:
You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.
JOHN 15:16

INQUIRY

THE BIBLE IN THE
PUBLIC SQUARE

Bible Society-affiliated think tanks are sparking
dialogue and connecting the Christian story to
today's biggest challenges

By Alyson R. Quinn



The tragedies came one after the other, like waves rolling up on the beach. In April 2024, a man wielding a knife charged through a shopping mall in the Sydney suburb of Bondi, killing six people and injuring twelve more, including an infant whose mother died in the attack. Within days, a 16-year-old boy, also armed with a knife, attacked an Orthodox Assyrian bishop and priest during a church service in another Sydney suburb. Australian officials treated it as an act of terrorism. Australia, a country with few mass casualty events in recent memory, reeled. Meanwhile, Simon Smart, the long-time executive director of Sydney's Centre for Public Christianity (CPX), found himself busier than usual, trying to speak empathy, peace, hope, and truth to his hurting community.

Since 2007, CPX, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bible Society Australia, has sought the good of the public by elevating and contributing to conversations about society's most pressing challenges. In times of national tragedy and soul-seeking, the Centre's mission feels particularly urgent. "Though a country like Australia is very secular and very materially prosperous," shares Smart, "there are deep human needs that are not being met by a thoroughly materialistic answer to life's questions. We feel there is a lot to offer to people who are hurting and without a mooring that would sustain them through [life's challenges]." CPX is one of several prominent Christian think tanks affiliated with local Bible Societies that have been formed in the twenty-first century. Others include the London-based Theos, which conducts research, publishes reports, and hosts discussions on politics, society, and religion in contemporary life; and Singapore's ETHOS Institute for Public Christianity, which was inspired by the success of Theos and CPX. Across the globe, these organizations are helping to put the story of the Bible not only into people's hands, but also into the arena of contemporary discourse. William Wilberforce, a founder of the British and Foreign Bible Society, wrote in "Real Christianity", first published in 1798, "For all that we have the Bible in our houses, we are ignorant of its contents. No wonder that so many Christians know so little about what Christ actually taught..." While printing, translating, and distributing Bibles throughout the world is critical, these copies of God's Word will provide little benefit if they remain on shelves, unopened and unexamined. As part of Bible Society's focus on advocacy, Christian think tanks seek to engage spiritually impoverished societies in a serious re-examination of the life-giving wisdom embedded in faith traditions.

This important work is a complementary extension of Bible Societies' traditional focus. Rev. Ezekiel Tan, founding executive director of the ETHOS Institute, explains, "Christian think tanks ... help people understand

the relevance of the Bible in today's world and provide insight into how Christian beliefs intersect with contemporary issues. This collaboration underscores a holistic approach to spreading the message of the Bible, ensuring its continued relevance and impact."

Joshva Raja John, head of the International Bible Advocacy Centre (IBAC) since September 2021, sees transformative potential in the work of Christian think tanks. Through IBAC, the British and Foreign Bible Society calls for thoughtful engagement with the Christian story in the public square. By keeping the Bible in the public eye, they hope to spur Christians to live out their faith and promote community flourishing.

"We want to see whether Christians can, through their character, influence their colleagues, and through them the public imagination, to reduce poverty, corruption, discrimination, violence, and oppression," says Raja John. "We want to empower people to imagine a different future through a biblical vision for society."

IBAC has helped carry this vision across the globe through its support of the African Biblical Leadership Institute, which marshals local Bible Societies to provide biblically informed leadership development for young professionals. At a training in Addis Ababa, an architect named Afok, who is also an Orthodox priest, joined with fellow Ethiopians from the Pentecostal and Catholic traditions to share their views on leadership. Afterward, Afok shared, "This course will have a positive impact ..., because one of the main objectives ... is how to operate our day-to-day practice in a biblical context, and our everyday practice will become our evangelism, our preaching."

According to Raja John, Afok came together with a Pentecostal colleague after the training to provide internships to young architects from disadvantaged backgrounds, helping them become established in their careers while mentoring them in the relevance of the Bible to their lives. In this way, the ABLI training will have a prolonged impact on Afok's life, his profession, and his society.

Christian think tanks challenge the notion that faith in modern society belongs only in the confined sphere of private belief. By presenting the Bible's continued relevance amid today's challenges, think tanks argue for its renewed place in contemporary life.

Beyond research and advocacy, think tanks' mission extends to making the Bible's good news more accessible to the world. Smart concludes, "In the tradition of the Bible Society, we translate the Christian story to a people who are estranged from it, and for whom it is quite a foreign-sounding thing. [Many people] have less meaningful engagement with Christian people or the Christian message. In a sense, that element of translation seems to be a contemporary expression of something that's been a long-term aim."