

Biblefresh Stories – looking for inspiration – here is what others are doing!

Kingston Circuit

Our text was Ezekiel 38, which is rather grim!, but we took it as the text for our Sunday morning service. I used images from the Book of Kells (a millennium before the Authorised Version!) to "give permission" for them to "doodle" and draw illustrations as they heard it read. We then wrestled with the text and tried to make some sense of it in our contemporary situation. Next week they'll be doing the "official" writing and illustrating on Saturday afternoon.

A few days after the service in Surbiton (Kingston circuit), I had arrived in Chennai, S India, and was invited to do a "Bible Study" for the Women's Fellowship that very evening! Since the Ezekiel text was fresh on my mind, I did a similar exercise with those ladies -- who thoroughly enjoyed hearing about a part of the Bible they weren't familiar with. (They also hadn't realised it was the 400th anniversary of the AV). I again got them involved in a discussion about the various images and what the text might be saying in today's world. They had some similar and some different ideas than the Surbiton group; we concluded with: "It's going to be good in the end, and if it's not good now, it's not the end."

By Bonni-Belle Pickard

Southlands College



We are looking forward to the launch of the Handwritten Bible next week on Shrove Tuesday. Sister Mary (one of the nuns resident on campus in Digby Stuart, Roehampton University's Roman Catholic college) has created a beautiful letter "T" to begin our chapter and we are delighted that the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Paul O'Prey, has agreed to contribute the first verse.

We are setting up our Scriptorium in the market place and will be writing out the Bible in the conservatory area of the Southlands College café. There will also be a stall selling fair-trade goods, the invitation to enjoy a free pancake and a leaflet offering suggestions for alternative ways of marking the season of Lent.

The Bible is to be created using normal handwriting, though with the opportunity of maximising the variety of contributions. Sister Mary will contribute a verse in calligraphy. Nicola Coulthard, our Assistant Chaplain, will add one in Braille. There will then be the opportunity for anyone who wishes to contribute to the Handwritten Bible.



As our section, Revelation chapter 1, has only 20

verses, we plan to continue by writing out Philippians which we have been studying at our Sunday evening services. This will allow over 100 staff and students from the University to participate and will mean that we can keep our own permanent record of the project. Work on the Handwritten Bible will continue for the rest of term with the chance for the college's alumni to add verses during Southlands Saturday when Jenny Impey will be the preacher at our celebratory service.

By David Innes

Enfield Circuit

Members of the Enfield Circuit gathered for an evening service at Southgate Methodist Church to hear Michael Smith from "Word4Weapons" speak on the work of his organisation in taking knives and guns off the streets of our city and giving Bibles to young people. At the same time, representatives of all our churches were busily writing away at the front of the church for our contribution to the handwritten Bible project to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James Version.



Our allotted chapters are Ezekiel 33 and 34, and as we worked on chapter 33, its themes of living by the sword and dying by the sword and the tasking of the prophet as a watchman fitted very well with Michael's words. Our writers included Ruth and Ian and their children David, Elijah and Abigail representing the Jewish heritage of our area and Ruth contributed the opening verse in Hebrew. They were followed by Ray, a circuit local preacher and Nancy and Eric Aboagye and their daughter Akosua who are of Ghanaian heritage.

Our next writer was Daniel, a recent arrival at our church in Ponders End who has worked all over the world and spoke of the importance of the Methodist church during his childhood in Fiji. Dr Hla Thin from Goff's Oak contributed some verses in the Burmese language and as the evening went on the baton (or the was carried by people of all ages, nationalities and backgrounds. Some wrote in copperplate, others in wobbly writing but all were touched by the experience. We discovered that the writing itself took much longer than we had imagined it would and, as the evening wore on, we found more in common with the scribes of Lindisfarne than the printers of the fifteenth century. There was a real sense of taking part in an event of historical importance. Our second allotted chapter, Ezekiel 34 will be written by community leaders. We hope that they will be challenged by Ezekiel's words to the shepherds of Israel!

By Louise Morrissey

Croydon Circuit

The Methodist Church Annual Conference has asked the whole Connexion to work collectively and handwrite the Bible during the course of 2011. This is as part of the celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible and 'Biblefresh'. The Croydon Circuit are therefore contributing three chapters.

Ezekiel 3 has been written by young people in Youth Group sessions at West Croydon, South Norwood, Shirley & Christ Church, Addiscombe. We had much fun with the verses 'Eat what you see. Eat this book... So I ate it. It tasted so good — just like honey.' It is good encouragement to read the Bible and let the Holy Spirit change your expectations! Generous donations by a member at Downsview of 'Word for Today' Bible reading notes are also a practical help in doing this. 'The Message' was used to convey the sense of story in the chapter most effectively. An illustrative page is being prepared by the Monney family using a variety of Ghanaian languages.

Ezekiel 7 has been written by people in day-to-day rooms. It begins in my dining room at a Pancake Party for some of the Circuit's 20 something's and end's in the workplace of Downsview's notice sheet editor. The original King James Version has been used as it is one of those chapters using some of the most morose Old Testament words like 'transgression', 'iniquity' and 'abomination'. Rev Dr Ebute has kindly translated 'Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none' into his mother tongue for an illustrative page. His doctorate was achieved through the translation of the whole Bible to enable a community in Nigeria to find guidance from the Scriptures in the language they know best. One of the aims of the Biblefresh Initiative is to raise funds for more translation into as yet untouched languages. You will be refreshed that this chapter ends 'I am the Lord', a welcome reminder of God's saving grace.

Revelation 3 has been written by people mostly at meetings! Its words about various churches are mirrored by all seven churches of our current Circuit having been included in this Handwritten Bible. Our various approaches and characters are bound together by the Spirit moving amongst us. The New Revised Standard Version is used for this chapter as the recommended translation across the Connexion signalling a common identity. Mrs Shin Wey is preparing an illustrative page using Chinese characters for 'Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.' This should encourage us all that throughout time, the Bible is a living word.

(With thanks to Jean Beecher)

Lindsey Macfarlane, Circuit Youth Development Officer