

“Turn the great emergency into a great opportunity”: The Australian Bible Society and the crisis of war and pandemic, 1914–1919

Michael Gladwin

In 1916 an AIF (Australian Imperial Force) soldier named Bill—described only as a “strapping fellow”—buttonholed an agent of the Bible Society of Victoria who was distributing free New Testaments to Australian soldiers. “I want to tell you something,” exclaimed Bill to the agent:

Some weeks ago you gave me a Testament; I promised to read it; I kept my promise, with the result that I am now a sound man. How do I know it? I’ll tell you. I was a drunkard, and the Book says, “no drunkard shall enter the kingdom of heaven,” so I prayed for forgiveness and for help to give up the drink and all other evils I was addicted to. God

Dr Michael Gladwin is Senior Lecturer in History at St Mark's National Theological Centre in the School of Theology, Charles Sturt University. He is also a research fellow in CSU's Public and Contextual Theology (PaCT) research centre. This article has been peer reviewed.

answered my prayer. I know Christ is my Saviour, and I am a sober man.”

Another man in the tent waited until Bill had finished before speaking up:

Twelve months ago you gave me a Testament; I did not trouble much about it when I was in camp, but on Gallipoli I saw enough to make me think, so I read my book there, and, like Bill here, I learned to pray, and soon got saved.¹

The two New Testaments given to these soldiers were among hundreds of thousands given freely to Australian soldiers, sailors, and nurses by Australian Bible Society associations during the Great War. That herculean distribution effort was a key part of the society’s response to a period of sustained crisis between 1914 and 1919, that witnessed the death and injury of thousands of Australians during the war, followed by the death of 15,000 Australians in the subsequent Spanish Influenza pandemic.

In keeping with the theme of this issue of *St Mark’s Review*—living graciously in times of crisis—this article offers a historical perspective on how a group of Australian Christians responded to their times. The focus here is on the leaders and supporters of the Australian arm of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS)—since renamed the Bible Society of Australia. The Bible Society’s response to crisis provides an illuminating case study for several reasons: in the first place, it is Australia’s oldest and largest nationwide parachurch organisation; additionally, during the period of the Great War it was the nation’s most important ecumenical (pan-protestant) structure, and so it provides a unparalleled snapshot of religious organisation and activity across Protestant denominations. The society also possesses a rich vein of archival sources—including extensive committee and branch minutes, ephemera, and periodical publications—that remain almost completely unmined by historians.²

As this article will demonstrate, Bible Society leaders and supporters responded with a clear focus on their mission and *raison d’être*; with creativity that saw opportunities within crises; with sacrificial commitment and flexibility; and with a stubborn optimism underpinned by trust in a transcendent kingdom governed by the generous and good providence of God—all of which was pursued in the face of profound uncertainty and loss that touched almost every family in Australia.

Australians and the worldwide Bible cause

The British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS or “Bible Society”) was founded in London in 1804 by a group of prominent evangelicals connected with William Wilberforce MP and the so-called “Clapham Sect.” From the outset the organisation was ecumenical in temper. It was unusual in having a charter that ensured leaders would be drawn from across the Protestant spectrum—a genuinely pan-evangelical and pan-Protestant outlook. Their mission was to translate, print, distribute, and promote the Bible, without notes or commentary, first in the United Kingdom and then globally. The movement gained traction within the British Empire and its settler colonies—including the fledgling Australian colonies—and beyond, as part of an immensely influential early-nineteenth-century evangelical vision and effort for worldwide missionary outreach. Economies of scale, location in London, and technological advances (such as the steam-driven printing press) meant that Bibles could be printed very cheaply and exported worldwide. By the end of the nineteenth century, the BFBS had distributed 160,000,000 Bibles (including New Testaments and portions of Scripture) in nearly 400 languages.³ It maintained depots and warehouses in nearly a hundred of the chief cities of the world in 50 countries, and in bookstores of many less important towns.⁴

The first Australian branch of the BFBS was founded in Sydney in early 1817. Over the course of its first century, Bible Society branches mushroomed across every Australian colony in concert with an economy that boomed until the 1890s on the back of wool, wheat, and gold. Over time, most colonies adopted a kind of federal system by which a central metropolitan auxiliary (for example, the NSW Auxiliary based in Sydney) acted as a central body with oversight for multiple auxiliaries in that colony, each of which oversaw its own local branches and depots. Where a town or settlement was too small to start an association, a visiting agent asked a local storekeeper, bookseller, or clergyman both to subscribe to their nearest auxiliary and to create a modest depot for local distribution of Scriptures.⁵ Storekeepers who sent supplies to remote stations in South Australia, for example, bundled Scriptures and collected large sums annually to promote their issue.⁶ In 1856 there had been six central auxiliaries and 26 branches in Australia.⁷ By 1914 there were scores of auxiliaries in major Australian cities and larger towns, from which radiated around over 1,000 branches and depots.⁸ During that time Australian Bible Society organisations had

distributed well over one million copies of the Scriptures among a settler population that by then numbered close to five million.⁹ This period of nineteenth-century expansion had also prompted the Bible Society in Australia to feel its way toward new, homegrown leadership and administrative structures. The London Home Committee's oversight of Australian Bible Society work through foreign agents (sent to Australia) gradually gave way to demands for local Australian agents and the creation of a self-governing, independent Australian movement by 1897. Nevertheless, the Australian Bible Society still worked closely with London and continued to distribute at cost price (and sometimes less than cost price) the Bibles that were printed cheaply in Britain.

The most striking response of Australian Bible Society auxiliaries and branches to the crisis of the war after 1914 was their herculean effort to ensure that every serving Australian soldier, sailor, and airman received a copy of the New Testament. Globally the Bible Society's policy extended to providing New Testaments for all combatants, "without distinction of friend or foe," using to great advantage its vast worldwide networks and resources. Bible Society agents circulated 1,300,000 volumes during 1915–16 in enemy nations of Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey.¹⁰ Sadly around 70 German and Austrian colporteurs (itinerant Bible salesman) were lost to the society when they were called up for war service.¹¹ Remarkably, however, no belligerent governments placed obstacles in the way of distributing Scriptures. BFBS agents and experienced colporteurs continued to man depots in Petrograd, Berlin, Paris, and Constantinople, as well as in centres of conflict such as Antwerp, Warsaw, Belgrade, and Tsingtau. Depots in Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, Warsaw, and Constantinople remained open.¹² Testaments in multiple languages were also given to the hundreds of thousands of men of many races and tongues who were marshalled in "labour battalions."¹³ Between August 1914 and 1919 the BFBS distributed, in its war service alone, more than 9,000,000 volumes in over 80 different languages—only around half of these were in English.¹⁴

Australian Bible societies

Just as many overseas missionaries pressed on undaunted with their work, so Australian Bible Society leaders and agents focused on their *raison d'être* of producing and distributing the Bible at home and globally.¹⁵ As the 1916 annual report noted, the society had "laboured without ceasing to

turn the great emergency into a great opportunity.”¹⁶ The Society selected hard-wearing pocket New Testaments with a robust binding, khaki cover and an inscription noting the Bible Society’s gift. Flexibility is evident in the suspension of the usual policy of selling Bibles (on the grounds that they were more valued and read if the recipient had “skin in the game”) in favour of giving Bibles away—a policy that prevailed in times of “national distress, war, famine or plague.”¹⁷ These were purchased by Australian auxiliaries for less than half of their normal cost. Australian Bible Society committees developed innovative distribution methods to channel tens of thousands of Testaments direct from London to Cairo (saving the freight costs from London to Australia). An Australian agent based in Egypt ensured that testaments were distributed to the Australian troops in training camps and *en route* to Turkey, the Middle East or the Western Front. Testaments with Red Cross bindings were given to wounded soldiers in hospitals—on the front and back in Australia—while Braille Bibles were provided for the many Australian soldiers who had been blinded while on active service.¹⁸ Testaments were also presented to Australian nurses.¹⁹ By December 1915 the Melbourne auxiliary had given away 50,000 Testaments at a cost of nearly £1,500.²⁰

On the Australian home front, dedicated Bible Society agents based in movable huts in the recruit and training camps worked with Army chaplains, YMCA workers, and sympathetic Army officers to get the testaments into the hands of thousands of soldiers in Australian recruit and training camps.²¹ Women’s guilds and ladies committees packed testaments alongside knitted woollen socks in the billy-cans, comfort parcels, and Christmas boxes sent to soldiers.²² With the absence of many young men, women stepped up their work in leading and organising ladies committees and drawing-room meetings, and in making systematic collections in the large towns (during the nineteenth century it had been calculated that one woman was worth “thirteen and a half” men in terms of the amounts collected “for charitable and religious purposes”).²³ German-language Scriptures were also distributed in internment camps for German Australians (ominously named “German Concentration Camps”).²⁴ Overall, Australians defrayed the costs of Bible distribution to Australians; moreover, Australians increased their surplus donations to the worldwide work of the Bible Society over the course of 1914–19.²⁵

Austerity measures and voluntary energy

Bible Society committees were also forced to deal with the financial impact of the crisis. An October 1914 NSW committee circular requested that the “the utmost economy be carried out, in view of the national crisis through which we were passing.”²⁶ Over the course of the war the cost of binding and printing doubled, paper cost six to seven times as much as it did pre-war, and freight and insurance costs spiralled upwards. In Australia, however, there was a stolid determination—despite advice from London to the contrary—to avoid passing these costs on to the poor by maintaining pre-war prices for the cheapest Bibles (such as, for example, the “Penny Testament,” so called because of its heavily subsidised price of one penny that those on low incomes could afford). The Sydney committee made sacrifices in other areas to maintain its giving to foreign Bible work, cheap Bibles for the poor and workers, and to ensure it could supply free Testaments for troops and philanthropic societies. The committee reduced the numbers of free periodicals sent out to subscribers; it temporarily closed down the work of its colporteurs, which included selling the horse-drawn Bible van; and it decided not to reappoint its full-time assistant secretary after his term of employment ended (thereby saving his salary), instead relying on honorary agents (including retired missionaries and clergy) to do the work of visiting branches and churches to catalyse and promote the Bible cause.²⁷ At the grassroots level of the organisation, the Sydney committee also insisted on retaining its customary modest Christmas bonus for the “caretaker, postman, & Boy in Depot.”²⁸

The experience of one such honorary deputation agent, the Revd T. E. Pierce, reveals the deeply personal impact of this time of crisis. In April 1915, Pierce proposed to the committee a scheme for holding “open air patriotic services” in his district, which included the distribution of Penny Testaments and collections to supply Testaments for troops. These were so successful that Pierce was invited to be an honorary deputation agent. In January 1916, the committee observed with sadness that Pierce’s son—a Rhodes scholar who had commenced what “promised to be a brilliant career in scientific research” and “had left it all for the sake of duty”—had been killed in action on the Western Front.²⁹ Other committee members and many supporters likewise lost sons in the fighting. Another Bible Society advocate who had visited the committee in November 1914 to inform them about the best kinds of Bibles for troops was the Revd Everard Digges La

Touche.³⁰ An Irish-born Anglican “missioner” and theology lecturer at Moore College, La Touche joined the AIF as an officer after failing to secure a chaplaincy position. In August 1915 the committee received news that he had been killed by machine-gun fire on the eve of the horrendous battle of Lone Pine. It was his first day in action. His younger brother was killed in France in November.³¹

Deputation agents were re-engaged before the end of the war, but by April 1919 “the Influenza restrictions” (the equivalent term for “lockdown” in 1919) were in place across Sydney (Spanish Influenza broke out in Melbourne in January 1919 and in Sydney not long after). Two Bible Society agents, Mr Hickson and Mr Jackson, were visiting country branches in NSW at the time. The committee decided, however, “in view of the contamination of the Influenza in Sydney, & in order to give confidence to our country friends, that Messrs Hickson & Jackson be instructed not to return to Sydney until the restrictions on travel have been removed.” Branch meetings and a planned meeting of Sunday School superintendents were also cancelled.³² In Melbourne the high-profile annual Bible Society meeting was cancelled. By September, however, tours of branch meetings had been resumed.³³ By December a semblance of normality was returning: one committee member even reported his departure to England by ship.

This voluntary energy was crucial: for the Sydney committee it extended to honorary collectors as well as an honorary solicitor, auditor and even architect (for helping with reconfiguration of Bible House in Pitt Street).³⁴ One of the colporteurs whose job had been axed, Mr Anderson, informed the committee in June 1916 that he “felt the work was so important that he would take a reduced salary, or even work without salary for a few months rather than see the work come to a stand still.” The committee accepted his offer and gave Anderson a retiring allowance of £1 per week for a year, with the option of using the Bible Society horse and van, along with a commission on all Scripture sales.³⁵

Another creative response to the onset of the Spanish Influenza outbreak and “the Influenza restrictions” was the Sydney secretary’s decision to take all of his annual holidays in May, while restrictions were in place—that way he could be ready to visit branches once travel restrictions were lifted.³⁶ Auxiliaries also found numerous creative ways to raise money via special fundraising drives and events, several of which were initiated from beyond the committee by grassroots supporters in the branches. By such means

Australian Bibles were able both to cover their costs (including provision of hundreds of thousands of Testaments for troops and sailors) and maintain a modest increase in their surplus contributions to the worldwide Bible mission.

“The Soldier’s Book”

“Many discoveries and revelations have been made since the war broke out,” wrote an Australian journalist in late 1915, “and one of the greatest is that the New Testament is the soldier’s book.” Trying to force the Scriptures on soldiers was, he added, “a thing unknown. The men are eagerly asking for copies.”³⁷ Appreciation for the gift of a New Testament was almost universal among soldiers and sailors. Soldiers in the Middle Eastern campaigns, for example, were particularly appreciative of Bibles with maps so that they could trace their journeys through biblical lands, all of which were enhanced by chaplains’ immensely popular lectures on biblical events and stories that were given *in situ* to thousands of soldiers.

Scores of testimonies—like the one that introduced this article—pervade the reports of chaplains and deputation agents distributing Testaments among Australian soldiers.³⁸ On the battlefield the Testament was usually the only book soldiers could take into the line on account of their heavy packs and weapons. An Australian YMCA worker reported significant numbers pledging to read Scripture daily:

efforts were being made to enlist men in what we termed “The Army Testament Corps,” members of which pledged to read a passage of Scripture thoughtfully each day. Six hundred of the now historical 10th Battalion joined this Corps. An officer who took part in their gallant charge at Gallipoli last April testified that on the following day, when men were sent out to gather up the overcoats which had been taken off to cover the wounded in the chill hours of early morning, there was to be found in the pocket of nearly every overcoat one of these Testaments.³⁹

Another battle-hardened Army officer reported that it was a common sight to see the men quietly reading the Scriptures when resting after a battle.⁴⁰

Numerous stories also emerged of Australian soldiers whose lives had been saved from bullets and shrapnel that entered Testaments instead of their hearts. This literal putting on of a “breastplate of righteousness” was

due to many soldiers' custom of keeping their Testaments in the left breast pocket of their tunics.⁴¹

The provision of the Testaments also called forth many pledges of financial support from grateful returned soldiers and parents of sons who had fought (especially if those sons had been wounded or killed). Mrs E. Weeks wrote to the Victorian Bible Society in 1916 enclosing £1 6 3. The children had performed a short drama ("dialogue") about Bible Society work during wartime and then taken up a collection. "The dialogue touched me very much," she wrote, "because I had a son killed in the that dreadful battle in the Dardanelles, so I can feel for others. Any time that you want help from the Sunday School children we shall be only too pleased to help on your grand work."⁴² In the published lists of donations are poignant entries such as this one from September 1917: "Ex-Soldier, converted through reading a B. & F. B. S. New Testament ... £1 0 0."⁴³ Testaments were among the personal effects of dead soldiers that were sent back to families, providing a meaningful and tangible link to lost loved ones. "At one of my meetings recently," reported an agent,

at the close of the lecture, a gentleman in the audience asked to be allowed to say a word or two, and said: "I have always had a warm corner in my heart for the B.& F.B.S., but I think more of it to-day than ever. My boy went to the war, and before he left for the front it was a great comfort for me to know he was morally fortified in this far: that he carried with him a "Khaki" Testament presented by the Bible Society. My boy will never come back, but the little "Khaki" Book has come back, and gold could not buy it. I prize it more than I can tell. God bless the British and Foreign Bible Society."⁴⁴

Theological responses

Most Australians responded to the news of war with enthusiasm and resolution to support Britain and the empire of which they were an important part. There prevailed a popular sentiment that the battlefield was where nations were born and the mettle of a people was tested. The *Sydney Morning Herald* rejoiced that the war would be "our baptism of fire."⁴⁵ Australian churches responded in the main with public calls for sacrifice and service of nation

and empire against German (and especially Prussian) militaristic aggression—in doing so, churches enjoyed strong community support. Some church leaders were convinced that war would serve as a purifying agent to cleanse Australian society and ennoble its people, inculcating sacrifice and spiritual priorities in place of complacent ease and a growing materialism.⁴⁶ Some Christian leaders were far more circumspect, however.⁴⁷ Bible Society leaders and thinkers did not question the justice of Australia's going to war in support of the empire. They also rehearsed a long-held and popular notion that the Bible was the “secret of England's greatness.” Another oft-quoted verse in this line was that “righteousness exalts a nation.”⁴⁸

Yet, in keeping with the “marks” of the evangelical Protestantism that had undergirded the Bible cause—of conversion, the centrality of the cross (namely the atoning sacrifice of Christ), the supreme authority of Scripture, and activism—national and imperial aims were consistently subordinated to the imperatives of a transcendent kingdom of heaven.⁴⁹ On this view, Australia and the British Empire were providentially ordained conduits for the extension of Christ's kingdom globally, in the vanguard of which were the Bible and Christian missions. Accordingly, a strong sense of providential trust provided powerful theological ballast and intrepid optimism regarding worldwide missionary efforts.⁵⁰ “These awful years,” observed the editor in the BFBS's 1916 annual report,

are indeed appointed for the test and trial of our faith, our fortitude, our sacrifice. Yet now, when God makes bare His arm, it is surely a solemn and inspiring thing to be alive. We feel that the Bible was written for such a time as this. It speaks to our hearts now, as it never spoke before. And when we face the tumult and agony of nations in the light of the New Testament, we are “utterly convinced that of all kingdoms there is but one that has no end.”

Such an optimistic providential outlook enabled Bible Society advocates and supporters to lift their gaze beyond their circumstances, no matter how bleak these appeared in earthly terms. As we saw above, the universal imperative of the gospel also enabled a vision for generosity that transcended ethnic, national or imperial allegiances of combatants.

They also retained a sense of historical perspective, observing more than once that the whole Bible enterprise was birthed during a time of crisis

amid the Napoleonic Wars of 1799–1815. “We call to mind,” wrote one Bible Society advocate put it in 1915, how those

of faith and courage girded themselves for their task amid the gloom of a national crisis, while England was wrestling in a life-and-death struggle with Napoleon. And though Europe to-day is enduring another ordeal, not less stern and terrible than theirs, we stand pledged to persevere in the same sacred mission—by the grace of our fathers' God.⁵¹

Nevertheless, as advocates pointed out, their forebears' faithfulness and perseverance had laid the groundwork for the production and global distribution of 300,000,000 copies of the Scriptures.

Bible Society leaders' theological posture also reflected a critical yet chastened conservative theological engagement with a century's worth of higher criticism, liberal Protestantism, and intellectual challenges arising from modern philosophy and science (it is worth noting, on this point, that Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth's commentary on Romans, *Der Römerbrief*, would fall like a high-explosive artillery shell on liberal Protestant positions during the tailend of these war years). Another important theme of Bible Society writings concerned ecumenical unity, which is not surprising given that the Bible Society was the most important locus of ecumenical cooperation among Australian Protestants. That need for unity resonated amid a greater collective national and imperial struggle.

Conclusion

Several themes emerge from this brief survey of leaders and supporters of one of Australia's largest and most important ecumenical religious organisations during a time of crisis. In the first place, there was a consistent commitment to, and rehearsal of, the society's *raison d'être*: to maintain its mission to fund and distribute Scriptures for Australians and to raise funds for Bible provision overseas.

This commitment was retained, in spite of financial pressures and temporal challenges, by flexibility, creativity, historical perspective (aided by a robust corporate memory), and an optimistic confidence in the transcendent kingdom and providential care of God: for example, in various creative fundraising means (such as patriotic meetings and Bible collections) and, at times, by sacrifice that included temporary reallocation of resources

and a stepping-up of reliance on volunteer effort. A supporter like the Revd Pierce volunteered his time and energy as honorary deputation agent in the place of a paid agent, even as he grieved the loss of his son on the battlefield; Mrs Weeks likewise grieved the loss of her son at Gallipoli as she and her Sunday School class raised funds for soldiers' Bibles.

The historical record also reveals the extent to which a period of crisis was seen as a chance to “turn the great emergency into a great opportunity,” which was most vividly expressed in the provision of several hundred thousand free Testaments to soldiers, sailors, nurses, internees, and even enemy combatants. In effect, the crisis was a catalyst for one of the largest combined youth outreaches in Australian history. This also occurred at a time when church leaders were concerned about a larger proportion of women than men in pews; and when a generation of young Australian men were hitting existential bedrock on the battlefields of the the Dardanelles, the Middle East, and France. Hundreds of extant statements of the moral, spiritual, and psychological impact of these Testaments on AIF soldiers' lives bear eloquent testimony to the legacy of this work. This evidence further contributes to a growing body of historiography that is revising the irreligious assumptions about the AIF that many Australian historians have made.⁵² The outward focus of the Bible Society reflected what one of its leaders described as the “sublime paradox” that “the more Christians do for missions the more are they able and willing to do for themselves.”⁵³

Professional historians are generally nervous and reticent about drawing “lessons from history,” especially given the rapid pace and intensity with which modern historical contexts have changed. Nevertheless, taken together, the findings of this article are a reminder that our contemporary challenges may be less “unprecedented” than we think, and that the life and work of the church is never expressed in “ideal” or “perfect” circumstances this side of the Fall—indeed, historically the Christian Church has survived and even thrived in circumstances ostensibly far less promising than our own.

Church history is filled with tales of missionary exploits, theologians, and great leaders who rose to the occasion during times of crisis. Yet, equally important during these times are the unsung quiet achievers, whether businessmen, clergy, or ladies sitting on committees in major cities; committed laypeople labouring faithfully in far-flung rural religious associations; or those who quietly volunteer to collect door-to-door for a greater cause. In this sense, otherwise mundane sources such as committee minutes, periodicals,

and annual reports offer a valuable window into how a range of Australian Christians responded to a period of intense and sustained crisis—in a way that might even be described as “living graciously,” to refer to the theme of this number of *St Mark's Review*.

That juxtaposition of quotidian faithfulness with the great crises of history is neatly captured in a brief vignette of war-torn central Europe in the Bible Society's annual report of 1915. It is a fitting image with which to conclude.

A soldier has pictured one furious battle in the Carpathians, full of blood and fire and roar of cannon and vapour of smoke, where death was reaping a dreadful harvest. Yet close by, on the verge of the danger-zone, a peasant with his yoke of oxen was ploughing long furrows across the field, while another peasant cast seed into the earth—seed for the future, germinating new life.⁵⁴

Endnotes

- 1 BFBS, *The Bible in the World: a Record of the Work of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: BFBS, 1916), 206.
- 2 The author is currently writing the first full-scale scholarly history of the Bible Society of Australia (forthcoming 2021).
- 3 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1899), appendix, 21.
- 4 Steer, *Good News for the World: the Story of Bible Society* (Oxford: Monarch Books, 2004), 224–25.
- 5 M. H. Becher, diary entry for May 19, 1856, BSA/FC/1856/B, BSA/D1/2, BFBS Archives, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge; Alexander T. Thompson, *Bible in Australia* (London: BFBS, 1935), 184.
- 6 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1865), 211.
- 7 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1856), 46–47.
- 8 Figures are given in the 1914 *BFBS Annual Report*.

- 9 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1863), 210; *BFBS Annual Report*, 1898, 27. See also Meredith Lake, *The Bible in Australia: a Cultural History* (Sydney: New South Publishing), 123.
- 10 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1916), 5.
- 11 The BFBS supplied 1.5 million volumes during the first eight months of the war; half a million of these were German Testaments given to German and Austrian troops, in addition to French and English Testaments for French and British POWs in Germany. See BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1915), 3, 5.
- 12 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1916), 4–5.
- 13 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1919), 6.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1914), 5–6.
- 16 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1916), 4.
- 17 NSW Auxiliary committee minutes, Nov 19, 1919, 207/1/BFBS NSW Auxiliary/Minutes 1911–1920, BSA Moore College, Sydney, f. 666.
- 18 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1917), 250; NSW Auxiliary committee minutes, March 9, 1915, 207/1/BFBS NSW Auxiliary/Minutes 1911–1920, BSA Archives, Moore College, Sydney, f. 238.
- 19 BFBS Victoria, *Notes of the Month*, July 1, 1917, 64.
- 20 BFBS Victoria, *Notes of the Month*, December 1, 1915, 65.
- 21 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1917), 250.
- 22 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1918), 136.
- 23 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1915), 349–50; John Harris, ‘Women and the Bible Society’, unpublished MS, 2018. I am grateful to the Revd Dr John Harris for loaning me the MS of this important work. Also quoted in Stuart Piggin and Robert Linder, *The Fountain of Public Prosperity* (Melbourne: Monash University Press, 2018), 131.
- 24 NSW Auxiliary committee minutes, May 12, 1915, 207/1/BFBS NSW Auxiliary/Minutes 1911–1920, BSA Moore College, Sydney, f. 258.
- 25 See the BFBS’s annual reports for 1914–19.
- 26 NSW Auxiliary committee minutes, October 13, 1914, 207/1/BFBS NSW Auxiliary/Minutes 1911–1920, BSA Archives, Moore College, Sydney, f. 212.
- 27 Ibid., 16 Feb 1916, f. 313.
- 28 Ibid., 16 Dec 1919, f. 671.
- 29 Ibid., 19 Jan 1916, f. 308.
- 30 Ibid., 3 Nov 1914, f. 216; 18 Nov. 1914, f. 218.

- 31 "Digges La Touche, Everard," <https://www.anzacs.org/pages/AODigges.html>; Emma Little, "EVERARD DIGGES LA TOUCHE: Brilliant, passionate, but flawed man of God," *Societas* (2014): 64–65 (online at: https://issuu.com/moorecollege/docs/societas_web/66.)
- 32 NSW Auxiliary committee minutes, April 8, 1919, 21 May 1919, 207/1/BFBS NSW Auxiliary/Minutes 1911–1920, BSA Archives, Moore College, Sydney, ff. 611, 619.
- 33 *Ibid.*, September 17, 1919, f. 650.
- 34 *Ibid.*, October 21, 1914; February 9, 1915; February 17, 1915; March 9, 1915; June 18, 1919, ff. 214, 218–21, 232, 237–38, 624, 627–28.
- 35 *Ibid.*, June 13, 1916, f. 344.
- 36 *Ibid.*, May 13, 1919, f. 617.
- 37 Excerpt from *Warnambool Standard*, reprinted in BFBS Victoria, *Notes of the Month*, December 1, 1915, 75. See also *BFBS Annual Report*, 1919, 7 for the "Khaki Testament" that had gone with him all through the fighting at Gallipoli. The leaves were doubled back, the corners turned down, the verses pencil-marked. Reading that little book, he said, had wrought a change in this heart: "That was the best chum I had: for it made me understand my duty both to my God and to my fellow-man."
- 38 See, for example, the multiple testimonies in *Notes of the Month*, April 1, 1916, 23. Scores of other similar testimonies fill the pages of the Bible Society periodicals, *Notes of the Month*, and *Bible in the World*.
- 39 BFBS, *The Bible in the World* (London: BFBS, 1916), 87.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 24.
- 41 See, for example, the photograph of a Testament that saved one soldier's life (marked by dried bloodstains and shrapnel damage) in *Notes of the Month*, March 1, 1916, 15. See also the story in *Their Sacrifice*, ed. John Harris (Sydney: BSA, 2015), 27–40.
- 42 BFBS Victoria, *Notes of the Month*, May 1, 1916, 38.
- 43 BFBS Victoria, *Notes of the Month*, September 1, 1917, 91.
- 44 BFBS Victoria, *Notes of the Month*, July 1, 1918, 182.
- 45 *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 6, 1914.
- 46 Michael McKernan, "Religion and War," in *Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, ed. Peter Dennis et al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 446–47, at 446.
- 47 Ian Breward, *A History of the Australasian Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 241.

- 48 BFBS Victoria, *Notes of the Month*, July 1, 1917, 59.
- 49 This definition, known widely as the “Bebbington quadrilateral,” is drawn from David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman), 2, 4–17. It has yet to be bettered for its comprehensiveness and flexibility in terms of both doctrinal and practical emphases.
- 50 See, for example, the reported speeches in BFBS Victoria, *Notes of the Month*, May 1, 1916, 30; July 1, 1917, 56–58.
- 51 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1915), 3.
- 52 See, for example, Michael Gladwin, *Captains of the Soul: a History of Australian Army Chaplains* (Sydney: Big Sky Publishing, 2013), as well as the numerous monographs and articles of historians John Moses, Daniel Reynaud, Colin Bale, and Bob Linder, among others.
- 53 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1894), 252.
- 54 BFBS, *BFBS Annual Report* (London: BFBS, 1915), 11.