



Support EFSL News

January 2024

<https://supportefsl.org>

Dear praying friends,

Happy New Year to you all! I don't what 2023 was like for you. Maybe it was a difficult one full of trials. Perhaps there were also moments to enjoy and to treasure. Paul's letter to the church at Philippi is often known as his 'Letter of Joy.' Yet it is likely he wrote it while in prison or under house arrest in Rome. In his letter Paul says, "But I press on to take hold of that for which Christ took hold of me.... But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. *Philippians 3:12b & 13b*. So let us heed Paul's words, leaving behind 2023 with all its highs and lows, and press on to serve the Lord in 2024.

Paul and other writers have likened the Christian life to a long-distance race. Running a marathon is not easy and requires stamina. There may be times when we 'hit the wall' that marathon runners describe happens to them at around the 20-mile mark; but God can give us the strength to endure. In Matthew, Jesus speaks of the signs of the end of the age: "Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he that shall endure to the end will be saved." *Matthew 24:12,13*. So, as the writer to the Hebrews encourages us: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.... Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you do not grow weary and lose heart." *Hebrews 12: 2a & 3*.

Thanks

Having just encouraged you to leave 2023 behind, this letter will try to describe some of the work carried out in the Lord's name by EFSL during 2023 with your support both in prayer and giving. I would like to thank everyone who responded to the appeal last year to raise funds for study Bibles to give to rural pastors who attend the Travelling Bible School organised by EFSL. Your giving raised funds for **165 study Bibles**, and **124** have already been given out – most of them during the TBS seminars held in October and November last year. Support EFSL Chairman, Rev Ken Wiebe is planning to be a part of the teaching team again for two TBS seminars being held in February, where the remainder of the Bibles will be handed out.

I want to highlight and thank all those Support EFSL supporters who donate by monthly direct debit. Thank you for your support! It is very valuable to receive a regular income to pass on to EFSL for it to meet its regular commitments: supporting the staff of the Evangelism and Church Ministry Department, six rural pastors and EFSL regional representatives, ten Muslim Background Believers, and EFSL's radio ministry. I would encourage those who do not donate regularly to consider supporting EFSL in this way.

Sewing machines

Your specific donations for sewing machines continue to be used by EFSL to empower disadvantaged women. These women had gone through training, but were struggling to acquire their own machines, so they could put into practice their newfound tailoring skills and raise income that could help them come out of poverty. The sewing machines are helping **nine women** to restore dignity

and improve their economic status. All of the women are now generating income to support their homes and their respective churches. The women pictured are Adama Solomon (left) and Isatu Gbakie (right).



Travelling Bible School

One of the main ways Support EFSL is helping EFSL to achieve one of its goals – to Mobilize and Equip the Church for Evangelism, Discipleship and Leadership Development in Sierra Leone – is through its support of the Travelling Bible Schools. In October and November last year, EFSL trained **181 pastors** and other church leaders in Moyamba, Pujehun, Yele, and Lungi on servant leadership, church administration, and marriage and family principles. The training also encouraged pastors and church leaders to develop a culture of hard work, challenging them to change their perceptions of cultural norms and poverty.



Rev Michael Abdulai at Moyamba



On their way to Yele, the TBS team stopped to attend a church service at **Yambama**. From well up the road they could hear the church's enthusiastic singing as they worshipped. And the church was already full when they entered. The building has a **shiny new roof**, built with funds given by a Support EFSL donor last year, and is made from well-constructed mud-block walls. This is an amazing testimony to those in their community who believed the church could not possibly be successful.



Teaching at Yele

Ken returned to Bonthe to present study Bibles to pastors that had not received them the previous year

The 124 study Bibles entrusted to pastors are valued for their usefulness in sermon preparation and in their personal Bible study. Virtually none of these pastors have any other study aid.

One of the fruits of the Travelling Bible School in 2022 continues at Bonthe, where two new churches have been planted, and a prison fellowship has also been initiated. Praise God!

Matters for Praise and Prayer

- For peace and stability in Sierra Leone (in an attempted coup in November more than 20 were killed)
- That God will direct, guide, and protect all those involved in planning for, and participating in the Travelling Bible School seminars being held in 2024
- For continued protection for the churches and believers in Sierra Leone, particular those converted from Muslim backgrounds
- That Support EFSL will be able to fund one study Bible for each church represented at TBSs in 2024, and meet the ongoing need for sewing machines

God's richest blessings!

Steve Manktelow, Support EFSL Treasurer

In addition to your prayers, if you wish to give to EFSL to help in its support of the churches and people of Sierra Leone, please send your gifts to Steve Manktelow, Blackdown Cottage, Willand, Devon, EX15 2QH. Cheques can be made out to Support EFSL (No.1141005) or you can donate instantly using PayPal or Just Giving through our website. Just click [Donate Now](#) to be taken to our donation page. Please indicate clearly if you wish your donation to be used to support a specific work of EFSL e.g. bikes and study Bibles for pastors, sewing machines etc.