



BES news Conference Edition

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Introduction

In this latest edition of BES News, we celebrate the recent International Conference in Enniskillen, honour the retirement of Stephen Gillham as a BES Trustee, and report about the BES Trustees. The conference was a truly remarkable and enriching experience for all the delegates, BES Trustees, staff and volunteers in attendance and we are excited to share a report on it. We have a special section dedicated to the retirement of Stephen Gillham, a valued BES Trustee and Secretary to the Trust. Additionally, we'll shine a spotlight on the Trustees themselves, providing an overview of their roles and backgrounds to help you get to know them better.

BES International Conference 2024

On May 29th, 2024, 71 dedicated volunteers from 37 countries gathered in Enniskillen for our highly anticipated 2024 International Conference. Throughout this inspiring week, attendees acquired valuable knowledge as they engaged in enriching educational sessions. They gleaned invaluable insights through networking, fellowship and sharing their diverse and Divine experiences, further solidifying the global family ties and BES mission. The atmosphere was filled with a sense of God's presence, and we were deeply moved by personal testimonies, prayer requests and stories of how the Bibletime resources have made a positive impact on children across the globe. We were delighted that Bert and Wendy Gray were present for the first few days of the Conference. They began this work in southern Ireland over sixty years ago, and it was wonderful to see them once again. We are thankful to God for their unwavering vision and dedication over so many years.



Wendy, Bert, Stephen & Jean

The Conference had a packed schedule of practical seminars, training sessions, and engaging discussions throughout the week. **Each day began with a thought-provoking devotional talk by Dr Alan Wilson**, a distinguished Bible College teacher and speaker from Northern Ireland. Dr Wilson's messages centred around the theme of 'Connected to Christ', exploring the Biblical concepts of 'Come to Me', 'Learn from Me', 'Remain in Me', and 'Follow Me'. Following these powerful devotions, various speakers delivered insightful presentations on the topic of 'Compassion for Children', emphasising our 'Effectiveness', 'Urgency', 'Faithfulness', and 'Growth (discipleship)'. The sessions were inspiring and left a lasting impact on some delegates, prompting many of them to reevaluate their work-life balance, their time with God and spiritual growth outside of their professional ministry.

Every day before lunch, the delegates had a chance to join together in **Break Out sessions** to prepare and video a Bibletime lesson. They used translating apps to bridge any language barriers and became very creative, using props, drama, and visual aids to bring Bible stories to life in engaging and fun ways. Although time was short and there were some technical difficulties, everyone had a great time watching some of the different presentations that highlighted the group's creativity. These Break Out sessions emphasised the need for teachers to take time to plan, and to present the Bibletime stories using methods which children could relate to and understand.

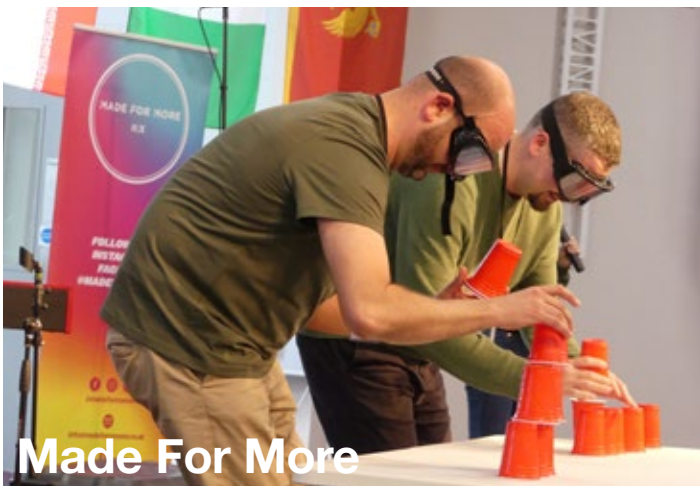
After lunch, the afternoon featured a series of seminars by a diverse group of speakers on how to work better with colleagues. The **'Cooperation with Coworker'** sessions focused on personal spiritual development, effective team leadership, accountability within



Dr Alan Wilson



Break out sessions



Made For More



Pauline Wilson

the team and strategies for maintaining positive mental health. One of the highlights was the hands-on workshop with **Made for More**, a Christian-based charity working in Northern Ireland which focuses on improving the mental health of young people. The workshop was full of fun and friendly competition between the delegates, with interactive games and practical strategies designed to equip delegates with the skills to support young people and enable them to feel valued and live healthier, happier Christ-centred lives. **Stevie Walls, our International Development Manager**, led engaging and interactive safeguarding sessions which sparked healthy debates. Often known as the 'graveyard session' when everyone is full from lunch and sleepy, these methods made the afternoons more fun and enhanced the overall experience of the day!

During one of the evening sessions, we had the pleasure of listening to **Pauline Wilson**, an experienced Biblical counsellor, who delved into the topic of the Spiritual Disciplines. She spoke about how easily depression and burnout can creep up and quietly take hold of us as a result of overwork. Pauline provided a warm, caring perspective on the Biblical understanding of mental health, offering a refreshing and thoughtful approach to this crucial aspect of well-being.

On Friday evening we hosted an International Night, where the gathering of "nations, tribes and languages" (Revelation 14) worshipped and praised God. We were delighted to welcome back those who have previously attended Conferences from countries and organisations where BES work is well established, including Albania, Austria, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Croatia, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Ireland, Kenya, Moldova, Pakistan, Romania, Rwanda, Spain, South Africa,

Tanzania, Turkey, Ukraine, USA, UK, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. It was wonderful to have BES representatives from countries that are passionate about expanding the work, but where Bibletime translation, design, printing, and distribution are still in the early stages. This applies to nations such as Armenia, Argentina, Australia, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Mongolia, Malawi and Poland. As our coworkers shared prayer requests and personal experiences, we all felt encouraged and united in a common purpose. We praise God that a good foundation has been laid for the growth and development of BES in the future.

On Saturday the delegates headed to the North Coast and visited the Giant's Causeway, Northern Ireland's iconic World Heritage Site. After enjoying a lovely lunch at Portstewart Baptist Church, we headed from Portstewart to Portrush. For many of the delegates, this marked their first encounter with the stunning north coast of Ireland and their first visit to a beach. Audible gasps of admiration filled the air as we turned a corner in Portstewart, revealing a breathtaking coastal view of the Atlantic Ocean flanked by rugged rocks and clifftop trails. After a short walk in the sunshine, we arrived at the world-famous geological wonder. Despite the legends, fables and poems written about the formation of the Giant's Causeway, the delegates couldn't help but reflect on the beauty, awe and wonder of God's creation. We climbed the famous hexagonal basalt stones to take some photos, which resulted in a sea of blue BES T-shirts. The atmosphere was full of joy as the delegates spontaneously broke into the song "God Is So Good", adding a delightful touch to the experience and entertaining the passing visitors. After that, we made our way to Dunluce Christian Fellowship for a hearty fish and chip supper before heading



International Night



Day Out



Aminadab

back home. The combination of sea air and delicious food left the delegates peacefully quiet on the return journey, as they reflected on the memories and experiences of the day.

On Sunday evening we heard Aminadab's personal story of survival in Rwanda during the genocide against the Tutsi; how his family hid in the forest to conceal him from the opposing tribes trying to kill them, the details of when he came to know and love God and how the Lord protected him and united his family against all odds many years later. Many of the delegates felt humbled by his testimony, and it was lovely to hear that he and his family have been blessed by God. The work of BES is growing in Rwanda and the number of children in school who are learning about God through Bibletime is increasing. We praise God for Aminadab's love, steadfastness and vision to grow the work.



Prof. John Lennox

On Monday evening, over 500 people gathered at the conference venue to listen to Dr Alan Wilson interview Professor John Lennox about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the future of humanity. In a relaxed and multinational atmosphere, Professor Lennox explained the difference between narrow artificial intelligence and artificial intelligence in general, and how AI impacts our daily lives. He discussed the potential impact of AI on our perception of God and Salvation, and how followers of Jesus Christ can respond to it. He highlighted that AI is prevalent in the modern world, present in smartphones, medical devices and in secret surveillance through our personal choices when 'clicking' on shopping apps, social media posts, newsreels, and marketing. As Christians, Professor Lennox emphasised that we are distinct from machines, made in the image and likeness of God, with a soul and



Praise & Worship



Stevie (IDM)



Ulster Farmers' Mart



Some of the Catering Team

moral sense. His thought-provoking answers sparked the curiosity of many. For more information, you can refer to his book: "2084 Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity".

Despite numerous challenges, we were delighted to hear during the Conference that the work of BES was expanding, and we found inspiration in the unwavering dedication of Bibletime coordinators who made sure that children in their countries could access the booklets. Bibletime is an essential tool for supporting and nurturing children's spiritual development in many places and stands as a vital resource where children's ministry materials are lacking and often non-existent. As we exchanged reports, experiences and prayers, we were all uplifted and united in our mission to impart the wisdom and love of Christ to the next generation.

We are thankful for the positive and evolving relationships between BES, Emmaus Worldwide, Every Day Publications (EDP), Opal Trust, Ireland Outreach, Sunschool, Teens for Christ, ZAM and many other organisations which were all represented at the Conference. Our partnerships are proving to be very fruitful. We are grateful for the strong and unwavering partnership between **BES and Revival Movement** and for their commitment to printing and distributing materials for this children's ministry. We deeply appreciate the incredible work they put into printing millions of Bibletime booklets in more than 12 languages and delivering them in containers and on pallets to over 20 countries worldwide, all without any charge. We pray for blessing on the Revival Movement team and for the financial provision necessary to continue this vital work.

We are so thankful and wish to express our sincere gratitude to Fermanagh Christian Fellowship (FCF) for graciously granting us access to their building and facilities for the entire week. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to Ulster Farmers' Mart for generously providing us with delicious evening meals and Sunday lunch. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the numerous businesses and individuals who contributed to catering, supplying and driving the mini-buses, hosting, and providing assistance in various other capacities. Without their invaluable support, the Conference would not have been possible, and we praise God for their servant-hearted sacrifice.

“Following this Conference, we feel uplifted, encouraged and strengthened in our spiritual journey and walk with God.”



We would value prayer as we consider the impending needs and challenges of each country, and look to God as our source of wisdom and guidance for the future.

Quotes and thanks from the delegates

“Communication with delegates from other countries and the methods they use to distribute Bibletime children’s courses helped me a lot.” **Armen Grigoryan, Armenia**

“This time spent communicating and learning with children’s ministers from different parts of the world inspired me to be even more dedicated to ministry and encouraged me to seek support and comfort in God every day.” **Tanya Kulakovska, Ukraine**

“Well coordinated, friendly, caring. I am leaving this country with a debt in my heart. The warmth, a smile and a giving heart from everyone. The volunteers in every sector were great. I am grateful beyond measure and humbled to have gotten this opportunity to attend the conference.” **Subirah Mwamaso, Tanzania**

“Mountain top experience! Thank you for making the conference a place to get encouragement, refreshment, share experience, feel like we are one team in Christ. Thank you for helping delegates stay connected and get answers to their questions. Thank you for being the example of Christ followers and ministers.” **Nikolay and Katy Abkairov, USA**

“A GAME CHANGER, I never realized how much we could do with Bibletime booklets at SIM Zimbabwe. I have actually realized it can be a great way of reaching both the young and old and it fits in everything that we do. I am truly grateful for being invited to this conference. I also learnt that being organized makes things mean what they should mean. THANK YOU SO MUCH BES.” **Nyasha Manjeya, Zimbabwe**

“I really appreciated the themes and the staff members are a model for us through their commitment to serve Christ.” **Priscilla Kabore Sawadogo, Burkina Faso**

“What an incredible experience this week has been. The organization and communication were top notch. The kindness and family feel was truly felt. A week of spending time with people around the world where time was given for learning but also fellowship and networking has been quite an experience! The commitment of those serving the Lord around the world is a testament to the power of God and the vibrancy of the Christian faith. Don’t believe the lie - we are not in a post-Christian world. Jesus is alive!” **Rich and Mallory Rakay, Teens for Christ, USA.**

“A great week meeting like-minded workers from around this planet, with a passion for reaching children and bringing hope to a world in darkness, through the Light of the Word.” **Lance Foley, Australia**

“I can’t tell you what a blessing it was to meet and spend time with others who are involved in the same ministry - many for much longer than me. I have met many friends and been challenged by many role models. And this includes the lovely group who hosted the conference and worked so tirelessly to make the week possible. Thank you!” **Anna Vallance, Malawi**

“It was enriching, refreshing, and a spirit-lifting time. God bless all the efforts of BES team.” **Peter and Virginia Calvin, Pakistan**

“It was a great learning experience with many ideas helping us with encouragement for when we get back to work.” **Alexandre and Geovana Torres, Brazil**



Words of Appreciation for Stephen Gillham

Retired from BES as Editor, Trustee and Secretary to the BES Trust in June 2024



For the last 50 years, Stephen Gillham has been the one we've turned to for words of wisdom, inspiration and advice. It has been difficult to find fitting words to describe his servant-hearted leadership and the impact his ministry has had in the world of Bible Educational Services. So let us begin where Stephen would choose to begin; with the words of Scripture. In Acts 20: 24 we read, "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God."

Teaching the truths of God's Word has been at the centre of Stephen's life and work. Stepping out in faith from careers in teaching and accounting, Stephen and his wife, Jean, became Dorset Counties Evangelists in 1973. Their ministry focused on children and young people through Camps, School work, Church Missions, Holiday Bible Clubs and Bible Exhibitions. In 1975, Stephen and Jean started an 'Adventure Time Club' to stay in regular contact with the children they had met over the summer. Stephen wrote a Bible lesson for children of all ages, which was posted out each month and this continued for about a year until he attended a conference in London. At this conference, Stephen met the visionary Bert Gray who had been sharing about the work of Postal Sunday School in Southern

Ireland. Bert and his wife Wendy had corresponded with children all over Ireland with Bible lessons. Stephen and Jean decided to adopt these lessons and form the Dorset Postal Bible School in 1976. This Divine appointment led to the development of a movement which has seen the Gospel spread worldwide!

The growth and popularity of the lessons led to the need for an Editorial Committee responsible for reviewing the spiritual content and presentation of the tasks. Bert and Stephen attended their first meeting alongside Paul Hocking (Cardiff), Ivor Cooper (Midlands), Peter Smith (Devon) and George Hall (Northern Ireland). The task required meticulous attention to detail, writing, re-writing and analysis. It's no surprise that Stephen has led this committee from 1985 until now, guiding it through many iterations.

Following the formation of Bible Educational Services (UK) in 2002 as caretakers of Bibletime, Stephen has embraced the roles of Editor, Trustee and Secretary to the Trust. He has demonstrated tireless dedication, genuine care and unwavering faith. His commitment to hours of study has enabled children all over the world to deepen their understanding of God's Word and live as disciples of Christ with purpose and conviction. In addition to Bibletime, Stephen has been instrumental in, and driven the development, of Gleaners, Bibletime Going Deeper (formerly NewLife), the International Teacher Guidelines and BES News.

Over the years, Stephen has been a friend, mentor and spiritual guide. We have been inspired by his vision and leadership, and encouraged by his wise counsel. Although he has stepped down from his role as Editor, Trustee and Secretary to the BES Trust, he will continue to represent and promote BES as an Ambassador. It is our prayer that his legacy of faith will continue to bear fruit for generations to come.



“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”

Numbers 6: 24-26

Meet the Trustees



Sam Balmer
BES Executive Director

Sam & Louise serve the Lord full-time in three areas of ministry. They have been involved with Bible Educational Services since 2003 and Sam is the Executive Director. They are also involved in Fermanagh Christian Fellowship and Sow2reap Trust. Louise coordinates PBS Fermanagh, Tyrone & Armagh. Sam & Louise have been involved in children's and youth ministry for over 30 years. They have three grown-up children and three grandchildren.

Allison Hill
BES Editorial Consultant

Allison Hill took on her role as a Trustee in 2015. Allison presently works at the GLO Centre as PA to the General Director, Stephen McQuoid. She teaches Sunday school, runs Holiday Bible Clubs and camps in the UK and overseas. She also advises BES on issues about Teaching Guidelines and Safeguarding Children. She lectures in Children's Ministry to the Tilsley College students.



Stuart Price
BES Strategic Consultant

Stuart and Susan have three boys and live in South Wales. For work, Stuart has held several Marketing and Managing Director roles. Their involvement with Postal Bible School began during university when they would spend their summer holidays in Southern Ireland "helping" Bert and Wendy Gray; Stuart remembers Bert being very patient and Wendy laughing a lot!

Pam Harknett
BES Secretary

Pam works with a couple of groups engaged in school work in the Bishop's Stortford and Harlow area. This covers over 30 primary schools. Her work includes assemblies, puppetry, and special children's events. Pam is also part of the GLO admin team. Richard and Pam are members of Bishop's Stortford Christian Assembly where Pam serves as children's ministry leader. They have two children, Lucas and Emily.



DJ Watts

BES Chairman

DJ is married to Heather and has two children, Tom and Rachel. DJ is a Consultant Psychiatrist, specialising in mental health addiction. Both DJ and Heather have long been associated with Postal Bible School, helping in Postal Sunday School camps in Southern Ireland and developing and leading the Living Word Postal Bible School in Stoke on Trent.



Pamela Rainey

BES Trustee & Volunteer Finance Officer

In November 2021 Pamela became a BES Trustee and accepted the role of BES Finance Officer the following February, volunteering one day a week in the office. She is married to Ken and has four adult children. Pamela is a Chartered Accountant and has considerable experience in her field. She enjoys walking and racket sports.

John Aitken

BES Mission Consultant

John, originally from Scotland is now based in Bristol having moved south to take up roles in mission with OMF International and Echoes International. He has travelled widely with both charities and has a special interest in the Far East and China. John has two married daughters and four grandchildren who take up some of his time. He enjoys humour, sports, especially athletics and soccer and keeps fit by walking and cycling.



Contact BES

Registered BES Office:

c/o Angela Johnston,
37 Belmore Street,
Enniskillen,
Northern Ireland,
BT74 6AA

Telephone: 028 6632 2462

Email: info@besweb.com

Executive Director:

Sam Balmer - sam@besweb.com

BES Ambassadors:

Bert Gray - bert@besweb.com

Stephen Gillham -
stephen.gillham@besweb.com

UK BES Trustees:

Sam Balmer (Executive Director)
Allison Hill (Editorial Consultant)
Stuart Price (Strategic Consultant)
Pam Harknett (Secretary)
DJ Watts (Chairman)
Pamela Rainey (Finance Officer)
John Aitken (Mission Consultant)

Support BES

How to support BES

You can make a one-off donation or choose to support us regularly by cheque, standing order, or any other means. You could also consider leaving a legacy to BES, so we can continue bringing the Good News of Jesus to the next generation. For more information, contact finance@besweb.com

BES Prayer Diary will be available:

Winter 2024

Next BES News:

Summer 2025

focus on Africa.

Further copies of this BES news can be downloaded from www.besweb.com

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