



## Background.

The charge... The Bible is dusty, irrelevant and outmoded and people can't connect with it.

The plea... Not guilty.

The proof... A new Bible which will open your eyes to the fact that on the biggest issues of our day – issues close to many people's hearts – God got there first.

*The Poverty and Justice Bible*, launched by Bible Society in March, is the first ever to highlight more than 2,000 verses on God's attitude to poverty and justice.

It has been backed by leading thinkers such as Rob Bell, Tony Campolo and Mike Pilavachi. But it was US pastor Rick Warren who started the ball rolling. He had studied theology, he said, he'd been a pastor for decades – so how did he miss more than 2,000 verses that speak of God's heart for the poor? If Christians don't speak out against poverty and injustice, he claims they lose their credibility as God's witnesses.

So Bible Society staff spent months scouring the Contemporary English Version (CEV) Bible, locating verses relating to poverty and justice. After weeks of debate, the team were left with more than 2,000 sections. Some verses which simply make reference to poverty – or a poor person – were not highlighted.

But verses that tell us about God's attitude towards poverty and justice made the final cut. From the words of Genesis to Revelation, almost every page emphasises just and fair behaviour.

Martin Luther King often pointed out it was the Sermon on the Mount that inspired the non-violent resistance of the civil rights movement. And William Wilberforce

sparked a campaign that freed millions from slavery – after being challenged by Scripture.

Action is also a focus for *The Poverty and Justice Bible*. Produced with support from aid agency World Vision, it includes a 32-page study guide written by bestselling authors Nick and Claire Page.

Topics range from equality to education, farming to Fairtrade. The studies highlight that concern for the oppressed is foundational to faith, and encourage action – from giving, to praying to living responsibly.

‘We want the world to see that the Bible is relevant to life and not full of rules, finger-wagging and old-fashioned ideas,’ said Bible Society’s Chief Executive James Catford. ‘In fact, on something as contemporary as addressing the issues of poverty and justice, God got there first. The Bible has something to say about life.

‘There is also a generation of Christian young adults who are passionate about their faith but who struggle to connect it with the Bible. So this Bible starts where they are – with issues close to their heart. This special *Poverty and Justice Bible* gives them a way to begin to engage with Scripture, and we hope and pray this will be the first of many encounters for them.’

He added, ‘This is at the heart of our mission – to people beyond the church to see the Bible as more relevant and help the church engage with it more effectively. This is just as important as our work to make the Bible available. It’s all part of the fight against Bible poverty.’

They are available to buy now at [www.biblesociety.com.au](http://www.biblesociety.com.au)