

VIEWPOINT

BIBLE POUNDS



DO YOU sometimes feel overwhelmed by the many voices crying out for Scripture around the world today? I've discovered that God uses the little that we have and multiplies it many times over. It's as if the Christian – or 'Bible' – pound goes much further when we give what we can.

God has a breathtaking vision for Bible Society work. And earlier this year as I

joined delegates for the African Prayer breakfast in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, I caught sight of its scope and power. Here men and women expected God to make a difference in Africa by setting the Bible free.

In China too I have seen God's reach. Over 70 million Bibles printed and distributed already. And yet millions more Christians still hunger to hear God speak to them. With the 'Bible pound' we are helping to print some

of those Bibles.

In this magazine you can read more about what is being achieved. Today more than ever I see that God can change the world through using what we give to Him. And he does this one Bible at a time.

James Catford Group Chief Executive, Bible Society

NEWS

GETTING POLITICALLY ACTIVE

- **Leaders from across an entire continent see Scripture as their guide.**
Claire Smith reports

More than 250 political, civic and church leaders from across Africa claim that although the Bible has been used to support 'exploitative behaviour and attitudes', it's now more relevant than ever for their continent.

That was their message when they met for the first time recently to focus on the Bible – and what it has to say about governance, poverty and leadership.

Members of the Ethiopian parliament, former British Ambassador to South Africa Paul Boateng – and the high court Malawian judge who heard Madonna's case for adoption in 2009 – were among those who gathered at a conference centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the event.

They signed a declaration at the end of the African Biblical Leadership Initiative Forum: 'We confess that in Africa, the Holy Bible has not always been used for the common good,' said the statement.

'It has been misinterpreted to facilitate and justify exploitative behaviour and attitudes based on one group's superiority over another. However, we believe that the life and teachings of Jesus Christ are as relevant to Africa today as they have been at any time in history.'

Supported and organised by Bible Society, the

forum was the first of its kind. It coincided with the African Union Prayer Breakfast in January.

'There were a couple of moments when I couldn't believe it was happening,' said Bible Society's International Programme Manager David Smith, who helped run the event. 'To hear African leaders speaking passionately about how their faith and the Bible shaped their politics was incredible.'

He described how many listened, spellbound, as former President of Nigeria General Dr Yakubu Gowon told how his faith persuaded him there should be peace, not victory, at the conclusion of war.

Challenges like this impact every area of African life. National leaders are coping with wars and warlords, huge movements of homeless, frightened people, groups facing famine and others dealing with floods and child-led families trying to survive amid the HIV/AIDS endemic.

Talks focussed on poverty and social exclusion, good governance and leadership and reconciliation. Over two days these senior figures from the United Nations and African Union, ambassadors, denominational heads and members of the Ethiopian Parliament discussed the Bible's wisdom.

I couldn't believe it was happening

The event is part of the mission to show Scripture has a role to play in governance. Just as Bible Society serves MPs in Westminster, its work overseas is about equipping national Bible Societies to also engage in politics.

'Most African cultures are quite distinct from ours,' said David. 'People generally have a very high view of the Bible. The question is – what impact does that have on real life decisions?'

'This conference was all about putting the Bible to work in the public square, bringing the Bible into the everyday cut and thrust of politics and leadership.'

Working on the event with the Bible Society in Ethiopia, he added, 'As with anything we do globally, our role is to serve the national Bible Society. We provided resources and people to help make this event happen – and it was authentically African.'

The hope now is that Christians involved in politics globally will engage with the project through its website, abliforum.com. Plans are underway for another event in 2011. In the meantime, it's hoped leaders will continue to support one another and attend again next year.

'There's no question but that this is a long-term project and we'll do it again next year to build momentum,' said David. 'To have credibility, you need to be in relationship. This is about a serious engagement with the Bible and with real-life issues. That takes time.'

• **Claire Smith** is Bible Society's Head of Communications

Photo: Bible Society in Sudan



POWER WALK: A March for Jesus preceded the Kadugli Book Fair run by the Bible Society in Sudan

WAR GIVES WAY TO WORD

SUDAN. The light of Scripture breaks through the darkness of war for the people of Kadugli, in Sudan's Nuba Mountains. For 20 years they were cut off from the rest of their country by civil conflict. Now God's written Word offers true liberation.

Africa's longest running civil war ended in January 2005 – and this region of South Kororan State endured the worst of it. Once the breadbasket of Sudan, many landmines had to be cleared before normality could return.

However, on a recent five-hour March for Jesus through Kadugli city, the Bible Society in Sudan distributed about 5,000 Scripture portions and selections in Arabic and English.

'We began with prayers at the Episcopal Cathedral and walked with church leaders of different denominations, stopping in seven different locations to preach the importance of the Word of God,' said Executive Secretary Revd Ismail Abdulrahman Kanani.

'We finished in the Roman Catholic church, where we were warmly received.' The ecumenical outreach was organised after the

Society took part in the cathedral's re-opening in December.

'This event was attended by many people from different denominations and government officials,' Ismail recalled. 'It was a wonderful opportunity for us to introduce Bible Society and display our Scriptures.'

'People were so excited to see the Word of God available again after so many years. We were so encouraged by their response, and decided to organise more activities here.'

VIETNAM. Donations are helping to meet an overwhelming demand for the Bible among a growing church movement in this socialist republic.

Supporters' giving means Bible Society can help Vietnam's church leaders by printing and distributing low-cost Scriptures.

What began as a small house group in the 80s – defying the threat of persecution – has since become United Gospel Outreach (UGO). And the movement is now officially registered.



Photo: Malta Bible Society

Vulnerable, traumatised illegal immigrants are helped to safety in Malta.

REFUGEES THIRST FOR TRUTH

MALTA. Refugees fleeing poverty and war are creating Christian communities on Malta and Bibles are desperately needed.

In holding centres, or tents, 12,000-plus wait, with nothing to call their own. Now they are receiving the Bible in their language from the Malta Bible Society. 'Most popular are those in Arabic, Tigrinya, Tagalog, French, Chinese, Urdu, English, Swahili, Amharic and Somali,' said General Secretary Grace Cilia. 'So far, we have given away 3,400 Bibles, thousands more are needed.'

In their desperate flight from poverty and war, thousands of North Africans have been trying to escape to other shores. But they end up being rescued from flimsy boats in Maltese waters, traumatised and exhausted.

'It's the refugees themselves who are asking for the Bible,' Grace added. 'They're creating communities with people from many different countries who come together in God's name and his Word.'

UGO has 16,000 members in some 200 churches. But with this growth has come a hunger for Scripture. The church aims to give a New Testament to every new believer – and a Bible to everyone who is baptised.

'There are many disillusioned people looking for something to believe in,' said UGO leader Pastor Daniel. 'So God's Word is important, especially for new believers. Thanks to the many, many people around the world who pray for Vietnam.'

• **Caroline Price** is a freelance journalist



Rt Revd James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool.

FAITH LEADERS FRONT CLIMATE TALKS

AFTER THE disappointment of the 2009 Copenhagen climate talks, Bible Society hosted a follow-up 'no-fly' conference for faith leaders.

The summit on faith and climate change connected leaders via internet video from London, Washington, Nairobi, Jerusalem, Geneva and the island of Trinidad. Delegates discussed the practical role the Bible can play, following what some saw as the failure of the Copenhagen accord.

'We have to use every means at our disposal to secure a future for the planet,' said Bishop of Liverpool the Rt Revd James Jones. 'It belongs to God. We have it on trust. The question is, will we merit God's faith in us?'

Talks took place inside a new social network, *Faith Climate Connect* (faithclimateconnect.com). This also has a search function, allowing visitors to browse the Bible for verses supporting climate care.

'It's inspiring to use modern technology to enable Christians globally to discuss how the Bible inspires them to preserve God's creation - without the need for flying,' said Bible Society spokesperson Rachel Ward.



Photo: Bible Society

The Mary Jones Walk looks set to become a hit with hikers.

WALKERS WELCOME MARY'S 'MAP'

WALKERS WILL SOON be following a new guidebook that traces the footsteps of the young girl who inspired today's global network of Bible Societies.

Published by Bible Society and funded by the Countryside Council for Wales, *The Mary Jones Walk* looks set to become a hit with hikers.

Author Mary Thomas details the more than 25-mile walk taken by teenager Mary Jones to buy her first Bible in 1800. Taking six years to save the 17 shillings (85p) purchase price, the 15-year-old had braved the lonely Welsh hills to achieve her dream.

Today, the Llanfihangel-y-Pennant to Bala route is a popular long-distance walk along public footpaths and bridleways. Bala Tourist Office is ready to receive copies of

the new 56-page Welsh/English booklet. They claim walkers often ask about the path.

Mary Thomas produced the guidebook to re-create the journey. She started to piece together the route in 2000 to celebrate its bicentenary. The first draft of the walk was tested on local youngsters and proved a success.

'We hope walkers, youth groups and church groups will have a go,' said Bible Society's Welsh Development officer Dr Watcyn James, 'and follow in Mary Jones' footsteps, capturing some of her joy in the Bible's teaching along the way.'

The booklet is available from Welsh Tourist Boards or as a download from biblesociety.org.uk/walkingguide

RUSH – SUMMER TOUR LATEST

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS of the first Rush, Live it, Give it tour six more gigs are lined up for summer 2010.

The tour is headlined by thebandwithaname for one of their final performances.

The evening is packed: videos, worship, freebies and a chance to engage with the Good Samaritan project in Tanzania, which uses Scripture to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.

And there's a challenge to catch the Rush when spirit and truth collide in Scripture and Jesus is revealed.

Get the full tour details at biblesociety.org.uk/rushliveitgiveit



A passer-by accepted a free Bible at the shop's opening and later became a Christian.

ENGLISH CHURCHES PUT FAITH IN EGYPT

ENGLISH CHURCHES are putting their money where their mouths are as far as mission is concerned. They're funding Bible ministry on the streets of Egypt.

All Saints in Branksome Park, Poole, and St Mary with St Matthew in Cheltenham, are filling the financial gap for a Bible bookshop they've adopted in the city of Minya, 150 miles south of Cairo.

'It's through their annual pledges of support that the shop can stay in the marketplace, on the street, near to those who need it,' said Ramez Atallah, General Secretary of the Bible Society of Egypt.

There couldn't be a more prominent spot for Minya's bookshop. It's at the heart of a provincial capital – sandwiched between clothing and jewellery shops, a bakery and ice-cream parlours.

With its inviting posters and products, the store has become a focal point for seekers asking about the Bible. Local donors of all denominations give a few dollars when

they can, with appreciation and pride.

The Society admits from a commercial point of view, its chain of 11 shops should be shut down. Income from sales and fundraising is simply not enough to cover running expenses.

But from a spiritual view, these outlets are the backbone of Bible ministry. In this country where evangelism is illegal, but selling is not, the Society has taken its shops out of the churches and onto the streets.

They claim it's the only way to make God's Word available, understandable and affordable to Egyptians – and to reach the 80 per cent of nominal Christians who don't attend church.

The Society was 'encouraged and enabled' by the commitment of the churches in England. 'We want them to see this as their mission outpost in Egypt – to make a personal connection,' added Ramez.

For All Saints, a long-time Bible Society supporter, the project has boosted giving and made mission 'more real,' said Revd John Byrne. 'Updates are frequently received,' he added, 'which we can include in our prayers.'

The Minya mission partnership was initiated by Bible Society's *Touch a Nation* programme, through which churches can support specific areas of work. For more information visit biblesociety.org.uk

• **Caroline Price** is a freelance journalist

the
power
of one



*Anything can happen
when just one person
engages with the Bible ...*

Supporters of Bible Society have helped change a prisoner's life in the west African state of Sierra Leone.

'The Bible given to me has become my best friend,' said the anonymous inmate from Kenema State Prison, who'd received the Scriptures thanks to the help of supporters. 'I cherish it so much. Thank God for those who donated it to us.'

He went on to share something of his story. 'I hated people and killed two people,' he said.

'That led me to this place. I didn't want anything to do with God. But through *Alpha* in our prison I've encountered God personally – and I now encourage others to chapel worship every week.'



SELLING POWER

ONLINE AUCTIONS can boost Bible Society's work across the world – thanks to *eBay for Charity*.

Through eBay.co.uk, buyers can help provide Bibles at affordable prices. Sellers can give a percentage from any sale to Bible Society – and Gift Aid their donations.

All *eBay for Charity* items qualify for a fee credit on basic insertion and final value fees equal to the percentage donated by the seller. Find out more at eBay.co.uk/eBayforcharity/help.html.

Obtain your Bible Sunday pack, or find out more about your church funding a large overseas project by calling 01793 428222.



01793 418222



contactus@biblesociety.org.uk



biblesociety.org.uk



Since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, when the Bible was banned, confiscated and burned, it has become China's bestseller.

The breath of God is fanning flames in Chinese hearts. Fifty million Bibles later, they're on fire with his Word. *Hazel Southam* explains

Scripture put a smile on her face. In fact, 70-year-old Jin couldn't stop smiling. She'd walked for three hours in sub-zero temperatures to get to church – because free Bibles were being given out.

And thankfully, she got one.

This is Yiyang, China's rural heartland. Despite the astonishing rise of cities like Beijing and Nanjing, 70 per cent of China's 1.3 billion population live in the countryside. Fifty per cent live on little more than £1 a day.

In this context, buying your own copy of God's Word can be a virtual impossibility. Bible Society is helping to subsidise the Scriptures, which can cost under £2. But in the countryside, some are distributed for free.

About four million Bibles were printed in China last year alone. To date the figure tops 70 million – 50 million of which have been for China's churches, the rest exported around the world. Yet, as thousands of people are thought to be coming to faith each day, millions more are still needed.

The small brick church in Yiyang, where the Bibles were distributed by a local pastor, was packed. More than 250 people crowded its hard, wooden pews. Jin was one of them, sitting near the open door swathed in scarves to protect her from the cold, biting wind.

Outside at least 300 more people were sitting on low wooden benches under bare trees. A small dog rooted around for food and, in the winter sunshine, a tabby cat had a wash.

It was Jin's second Bible. She showed me the





Photo: Bible Society/Claire Kendall

Reading the Bible is like having God talk to you

The congregation applauded the Bibles' delivery. Soon a chain gang of ten women were passing Bibles out to every adult.

► first, 20 years old, battered with daily reading, and missing a substantial section of Genesis, that had simply fallen out. 'Reading the Bible is like having God talk to you,' she said, clutching her new black copy.

Jin became a Christian 20 years ago. She earns her living as a watermelon grower, but always suffered from travel sickness on the bus journey to the nearest town to sell her wares.

'One day I prayed, "Lord, if you let me not feel sick on this journey, I will take whatever I earn today and buy a Bible",' she recalled. 'I didn't feel sick and I bought a Bible. After a year I was baptised and changed my name. It means "God's love".'

China stands up for Scripture

A leading Chinese civil servant believes in the Bible – even though he's not a Christian himself.

Senior Religious Affairs official Gu Chuanyong personally approves production of the Scriptures at the Amity Printing Co – and gives copies as gifts to business associates.

'I can see no reason that Bibles should not be published and provided to Chinese Christians,' he said. 'I'm happy to see Christianity flourish in China. I

Photo: Bible Society/Claire Kendall



think there will be a greater development of Christianity.'

The days of resisting Christianity have ended, according to the Nanjing-based official. 'Today in China, we still call Westerners "foreigners",' he said, 'but we no longer call Christianity a "foreign" religion.'

'It has already been moulded into our blood

... and has become a Chinese characteristic.'

Thirteen men had carried the boxes of 500 Bibles down a dirt track into the village past courtyards and ditches thick with rubbish. Small children and dogs milled around.

The whole congregation applauded as the Bibles were brought in and placed on a wooden table at the front. Very soon a chain gang of ten women – including some members of the choir, robed in white over their coats – were passing Bibles out to every adult.

I was baptised and changed my name – it means "God's love"

Word gets around

Sometimes one Bible has to be shared between four in rural China. And that's still only possible because of a financial gift.

In a village in Henan Province, live two sisters-in-law, Cao and Du. Both in their late 40s, they are subsistence farmers, growing maize that hangs drying from the front of the house. Their fields lead out to the village graveyard – mounds lying among trees.

But money from a relative has meant Cao and Du have just bought their first copy of the Scriptures. They share it between the two couples – four people, one Bible. 'It's very exciting,' said Cao.

Cao lights the fire in the outdoor kitchen, as the family dog looks warily from its brick kennel. They each earn around £92 per year.

They wouldn't usually have money for a Bible, according to Cao. 'We have to afford fertiliser, food and an education



Photo: Bible Society/Clare Kendall

for our children,' she said. 'There's not enough money to purchase a Bible. We'd

need to sell another 20kg of corn or 40 eggs to buy one.'

▶ Since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, when the Bible was banned, confiscated and burned, it has become China's bestseller. What's more, it's now printed in China, rather than smuggled into the country.

Nanjing's Amity Printing Press is one of the world's biggest Bible producers. And most of its Bibles go to Chinese Christians. 'When we started, we couldn't have imagined we would've expanded so much,' said

board chairman Qiu Zhong Hui. 'It's amazing growth.'

Bible Society helps fund the paper on which the Scriptures are printed. So they can be sold at a knock-down rate in China's cities – and given free to Christians like Jin in villages where low incomes prevent people from buying.

At St Paul's Church, Nanjing, 67-year-old Zhang Fang Rong raised her arms in thanksgiving. She had just bought five Bibles at the church's tiny bookshop.

'I want to preach the Gospel to my neighbours and friends,' she said. 'I've been saving money every month to do this. Hallelujah. I'm so excited to be buying these Bibles.'

Official estimates say there are 28.6 million Christians in China, but it's believed as many as 90 million could be attending churches. And every day, thousands more are becoming Christians, according to local experts. So the demand for Bibles continues to grow.

'As more and more people are joining the Church they're asking for a Bible,' said Kua Wee Seng, Co-ordinator of the United Bible Societies' China Partnership. 'This is China's time of opportunity. We mustn't miss it – or people will

turn to something other than Christianity.'

Jin walked home past chickens scratching in the hard soil. This 'descendant of the dragon' – an old name for the Chinese – had a new fire in her heart.

• **Hazel Southam** is Bible Society's Editor in Chief

Fact

PEOPLE

Officially there are 28.6 million Christians in China. Unofficial figures take that up to 90 million.

PRINT

Around 55,000 churches and meeting points distribute the Bibles printed by Amity Press in Nanjing.

PIETY

In 2009, four million Bibles were printed and distributed in China. Local experts believe thousands of people are becoming Christians each day – possibly as many as 500,000 a year.

Act!

MISSION

Learn more about the China mission, go to www.biblesociety.org.uk or call 01793 418222.

RECEIVE

Get the China church pack see details above.

SHARE

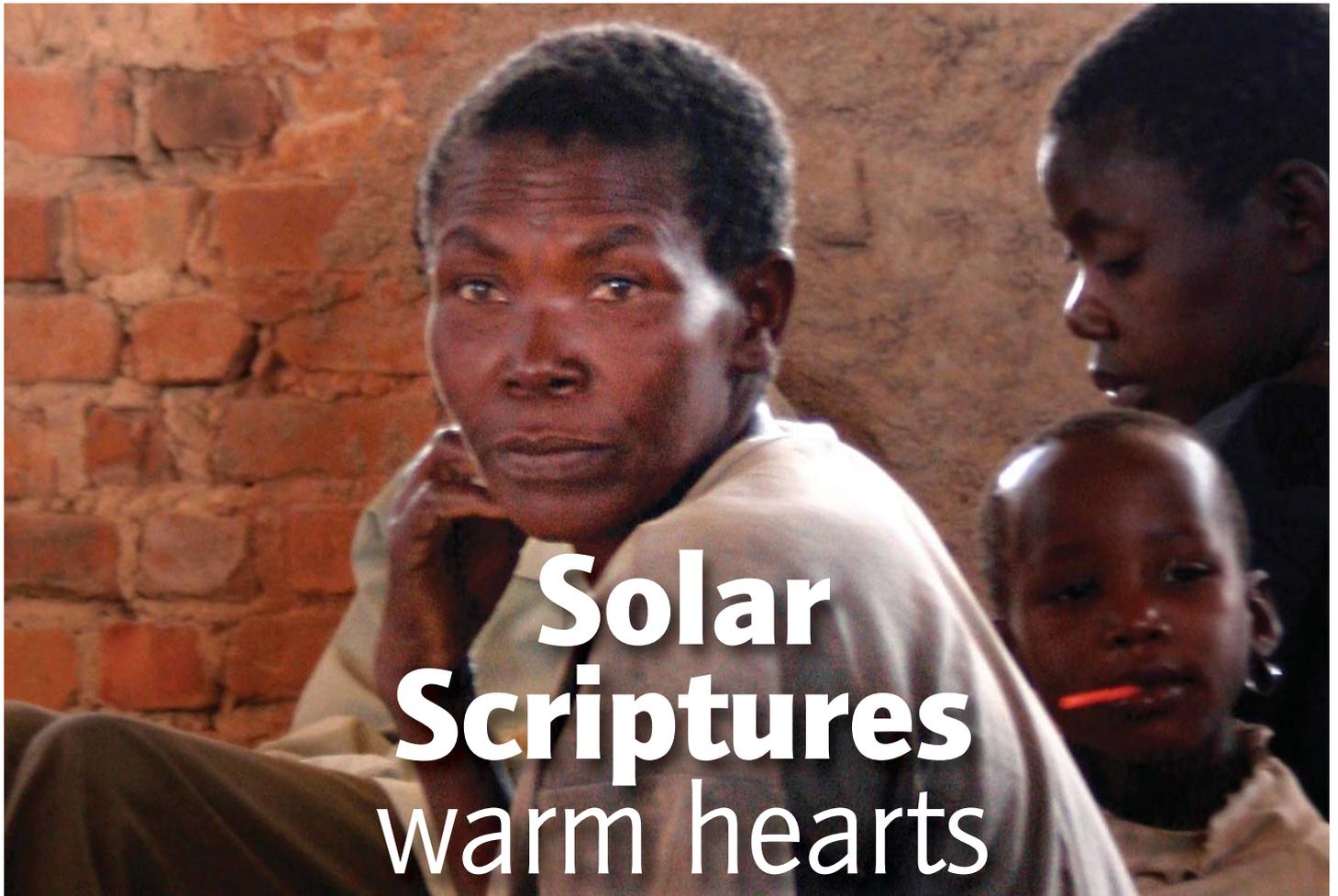
Share a Chinese supper with friends and raise funds to buy Bibles for people like Cao and Du.

PRAY

Pray for China. See prayer bulletin page 3.

MAKE

A roll of paper costs £360 and makes 600 Bibles.



Solar Scriptures warm hearts

Margaret Lucinde, has lived all her life in Nala village. She now attends the listening group every week.

How is the sun affecting the spiritual climate in rural Tanzania? Hazel Southam finds out

Sitting like statues in a dimly-lit church, about 15 adults and children hardly move in case they miss a word from the black box in front of them. It carries the name *Proclaimer*.

It's a solar-powered audio Bible, part of a Bible Society-supported *Faith Comes By Hearing* programme. Small groups meet weekly in a church at Nala village, listening to short passages in Chigogo, their local language.

Their farming village is in one of the nation's poorest regions. Literacy rates are very low among adults. Singing, dancing and storytelling are preferred methods of communication.

Margaret Lucinde, a farmer in her 60s, has lived in Nala all her life. She now attends the Bible-listening groups every week.

'I've been a Christian all my life,' she said, 'but I knew I wasn't saved until I heard God speak to my heart for the first time through the *Proclaimer*. It's introduced me to God's great love.'

Listening in Chigogo brought real changes to her life. Now she can relate to the God of the Bible. 'The *Proclaimer* is my only source of faith because it's the only way I can hear what God is saying to me,' she said.

'These listening groups have a strong impact on the lives of people. It's the only way some people can connect with God's Word,' said *Faith Comes by Hearing* co-ordinator Edward Kwamela. 'Even non-Christians are drawn by the stories – and some have come to faith through it.'

The *Proclaimer* takes centre stage in Tanzanians' lives in different ways. Some listen on their farms, others tune in as they herd cattle. But they all share one thing – they hear God speak in their own language.

• **Hazel Southam** is Bible Society's Editor-in-Chief

Fact

TRIBES

There are over 130 tribes in Tanzania – and just as many local languages.

HEAR

Speakers of only 11 language groups can hear the Bible in their language through Faith Comes by Hearing.

LISTEN

There are now 3,095 listening groups in Tanzania.

Act!

TRANSFORM

Discover lives transformed by FCBH at biblesociety.org.uk/fcbh. Support them by calling 01793 418222.

PROVIDE

£40 provides a *Proclaimer* for a village in Tanzania to listen to Scripture.

Banned books return to Albania

Greg Watts tells the story of an ex-Muslim who is translating some formerly seditious literature

Bibles were banned when he was growing up in Communist Albania. Now Oldi Morava finds himself translating the Old Testament into his native language.

The translation will be published by the Interconfessional Bible Society of Albania.

Fact

ASK

Local church leaders ask the local Bible Society for new or revised translation.

PROJECTS

Worldwide Bible Societies are working on up to 550 translation projects at any one time. These could impact more than four billion people.

They produced an Albanian New Testament in 2008.

Like many of the 550 Bible Society translations currently underway, the Albanian Old Testament is ecumenical. Oldi works alongside a Catholic and an Orthodox translator.

Biblical translation is highly complex. 'Each translator works on a particular book and then invites the others to comment,' he explained. 'The three then meet to discuss each verse.

'Once agreement is reached, a text is submitted to an Albanian linguist to check and improve style. A group of selected readers are then given copies of a draft and invited to make further comments.'

Books like Jonah and Ruth are the easiest parts to translate, because their style and vocabulary is simple. Poetic books – such as Psalms and Job – and some prophetic works, are the most difficult.

Oldi was born into a Muslim family when Albania was an atheist state and Christianity was outlawed. But by 1990 Communism was collapsing, and the Church in Albania began to re-emerge. The seeds of Oldi's Christian faith were planted by a missionary who gave him a children's Bible.

'I'm not sure whether it was just reading something that we weren't allow to read, the

coloured illustrations, or the Holy Spirit,' he said, 'but my first Bible left such an impression on me that all the previous state propaganda didn't make any sense.'

After leaving school he went to university to read theology. Later he gained an MA in Biblical Hebrew from Oxford.

When not immersed in ancient Greek and Hebrew texts, he helps wife Larissa run a Christian bookshop in Swindon. He relaxes by playing football or watching sci-fi TV programmes.

Biblical translation isn't just an academic task. 'It's a privilege and responsibility to transmit God's Word,' he said, 'in a way that other people might discover its life-changing power.'

• **Greg Watts** is a freelance journalist and author

Act!

SOW

A gift of £30 will translate a short parable like that of the sower.

SUPPORT

Pray for translators like Oldi. Some must still use pencil and paper to prepare their translation.



Oldi is pictured (far left) with the Albanian translation team, which includes Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant linguists and scholars.

FREE to GO



Act!

PRAY

Pray for Kikagulu translation projects. See Prayer Bulletin, page 19.

SHARE

Start your own your own lyfe group to share and discuss the Bible with friends. For more information go to lyfe.org.uk

LEARN

Learn more about Bible Society and translation at biblesociety.org.uk

CREATE

£200 could translate the creation account in Genesis.

Josephine Mkala Mungi reads a Bible to her children. She is the first in Msingisi, Tanzania, to read it in her own language, Kikagulu.

Free to Go, this year's Bible Sunday is all about freedom of the kind Jesus came to bring. The freedom that the Bible announces and aims to release in our lives. And the freedom that God's written Word brings when it is set free in people's own language and lives for the first time.

People like 33-year-old Josephine Mkala Mungi – the first woman in her Tanzanian village of Msingisi to be given a Bible to read to her three children in her own language of Kikagulu.

Sitting and reading to them outside their simple home, it sounds like an unremarkable scene, but it is ground-breaking.

For although Tanzania has had the Bible for 200 years in Swahili, the national language, until now there has never been a word of Scripture in Kikagulu – the only language most people in this area read or properly understand.

'It feels as if God is my best friend because he is now speaking to me directly,' she says.



Photo: Bible Society Clare Kendall



Revd Michael Nhonya

Today Jesus is speaking here

'This is great,' says Revd Michael Nhonya. He's watching Josephine (see main story) read the Bible to her three children in their own language for the first time.

Michael was one of three translators who have spent years translating the New Testament into Kikagulu, his native tongue. It's one of

Tanzania's 120 languages and is spoken by some 350,000 people.

Swahili is the national language in Tanzania. And although it's meant to bind the nation together, it doesn't. Some 56 per cent of Kikagulu speakers can't speak Swahili. The majority can't read it, so the Swahili Bible is literally a closed book to them.

'But now Christianity will grow. This feels like heaven,' said Michael.

• **Hazel Southam** *Editor in Chief*

▶ Bible Sunday set it free in your church

Thousands of churches who join in the Bible Sunday celebrations this year will receive a free video showing the joy of this freedom day for the Kikagulu. Churches like yours can spread the freedom, by funding translations like this one in Tanzania and elsewhere.

And, by choosing from Bible Sunday's variety of popular *Free to Go* worship materials, each church, large or small, can explore again the freedom God wants to bring to our lives and our world through his liberating Word.

'We're looking at Jesus' own freedom manifesto in Luke 4.16–21,' says Bible Society Group Chief Executive James Catford, 'And it's thrilling stuff!'

'So often people unfamiliar with the Bible get the wrong end of the stick, thinking it's a rulebook to tie us in knots, when actually it describes the life of freedom Jesus offers us. Freedom to live fully as the people God made us to be.'

Well-known Bible teacher Revd Ian Coffey,

Fact

FIRST

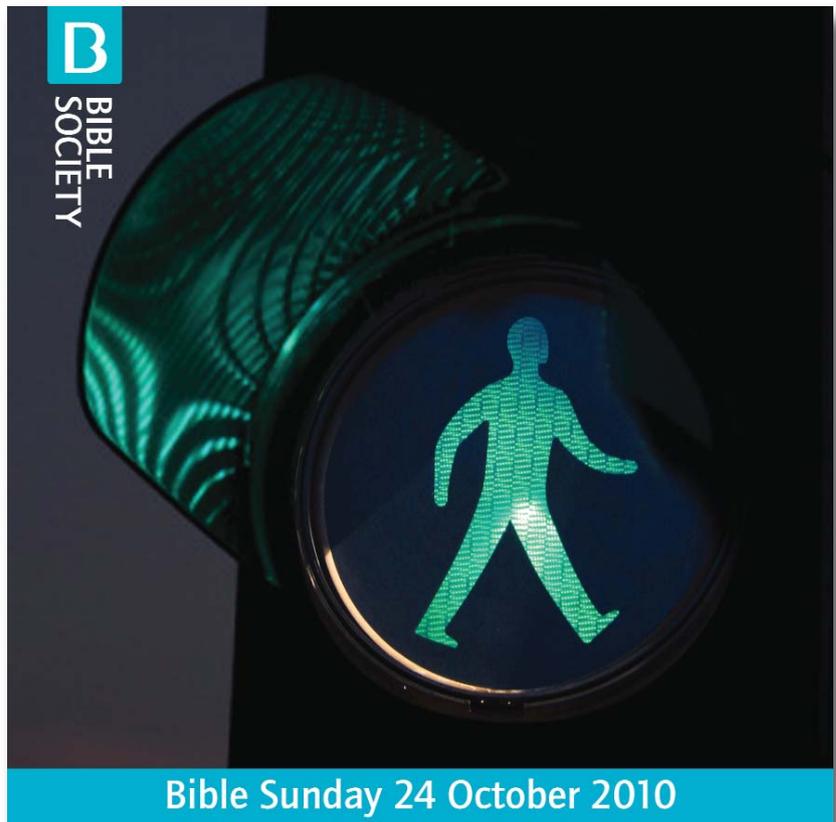
The first 'Bible' translation (Septuagint) was done in 3BC for Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria, Egypt.

BASICS

When we translate the Bible we translate from three languages Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

TRANSLATE

It takes around 12 years to translate the Bible.



who has written an inspiring adult sermon and Bible background, agrees. 'I enjoyed writing this material,' he says, 'as it was a forceful reminder that Jesus came to set people free.'

Another easy-to-use element is a drama sketch. The performers don't need to be RADA graduates – just ordinary church members willing to spend a few minutes rehearsing.

Alongside prayers you can adapt for your church's chosen style of worship, there is also an imaginative programme of children's material by children's poet and author Jan Dean and a choice of youth group resources. Youth writer Danny Brierley supplies a feast of ideas for 10–14-year-olds, while Bible Society Youth Officer Jamie Hill and Media Officer Ed Powell have produced another

thought-provoking Nooma-style short video and discussion materials.

Suitable for older teenagers and adults, it could complement the sermon, be used in a separate youth meeting, or in follow-up midweek home groups.

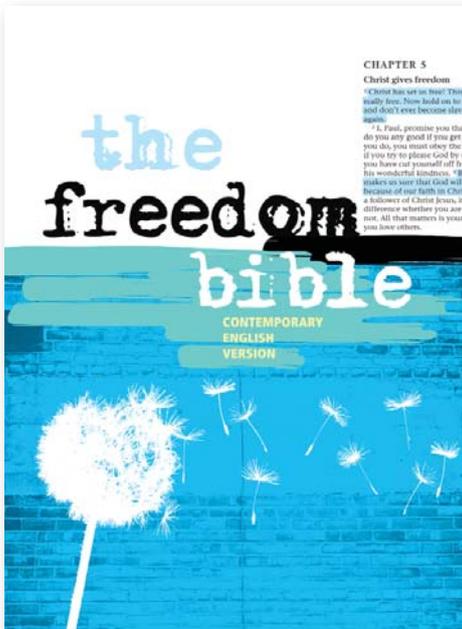
All the *Free to Go* materials will be free, either as downloads from biblesociety.org.uk/biblesunday or on a DVD-Rom your church can order from Bible Society.

Available from mid-July, they will give you and your church plenty of time to get ready for Bible Sunday on 24 October. Or any day you choose that better fits your own programme.

• **Lindsay Shaw** is Bible Society Project Manager for Bible Sunday

The Word cries, 'freedom!'

What does God say about freedom? And how does he offer it? Such questions are tackled in a liberating new project, *The Freedom Bible*.



Hot on the heels of *The Poverty and Justice Bible* – which drew support from key Christian leaders like Soul Survivor's Mike Pilavachi – this latest presentation of the Scriptures will go on sale in October.

Using the award-winning CEV translation, *The Freedom Bible* features more than 3,500 highlighted verses on what God says about freedom. 'It's like the key to a treasure chest,' said editor Revd Sandie Barton, 'a humble device that can open up the way to riches that will amaze and delight.'

Eleven in-depth articles have been written by spiritual leaders who've discovered biblical freedom for themselves. They take readers

deep into the promises tucked away in some familiar and other less familiar verses. *The Freedom Bible* shows:

- how God sets people free to fulfil his plans;
- how to draw on his strength to help the hungry, poor and marginalised;
- how to help free others by sharing the Bible's truth.

Whether for personal study, or as a gift to a new Christian, *The Freedom Bible* tells of God's purpose, promises and forgiveness. It shows how the liberation he offers will be the ultimate fulfilment.

'Highlighting isn't perfect, and it certainly isn't the only way you should read the Bible,' said Sandie Barton. 'The book in your hands is full of multi-layered meanings often too subtle to be brought out with a coloured pen.'

From October 2010 *The Freedom Bible* will be available from Bible Society Resources at a special introductory price of £9.99.

It's like the key to a treasure chest

University guide launched

A new guide to biblical and theological courses in the UK has been launched by the Bible Society.

The Good Universities' Courses Guide details courses at UK universities ranging from distance learning undergraduate degrees to PhDs.

The idea is that students will consider making use of the significant resources these courses offer in order to improve their knowledge of, and competence with, the Bible. Funding is not available from Bible Society, however.

James Catford, Bible Society's Group CEO, said, 'We want to help people engage with the Bible more fully so they can become better advocates for the Bible within churches and the wider culture. I hope that potential students will

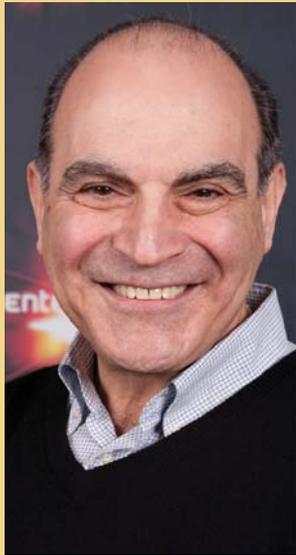
make use of this excellent new booklet.' It is available online at biblesociety.org.uk/gucg

The production of the resource is part of Bible Society's mission to help the Church have more confidence in the Bible. It builds on longstanding partnerships with eight universities including St Andrews in Scotland, Durham, Exeter and King's College London. And hopes are that the next edition will be much larger.

David Spriggs, Dean of Studies at Bible Society, added, 'If Christians get involved with these courses we will impact the quality of Bible knowledge and skills that become available to everyone.'



quotes



High drama

'There's no collection of books in the world with so much drama in it as the Bible.'

- **David Suchet**, actor and judge for Bible Society's Pitch competition.



Presidential decree

'I encourage all citizens ... to re-examine and rediscover its priceless and timeless message.'

- **Ronald Reagan**, former US President marking 1983 as Year of the Bible.

Bible people

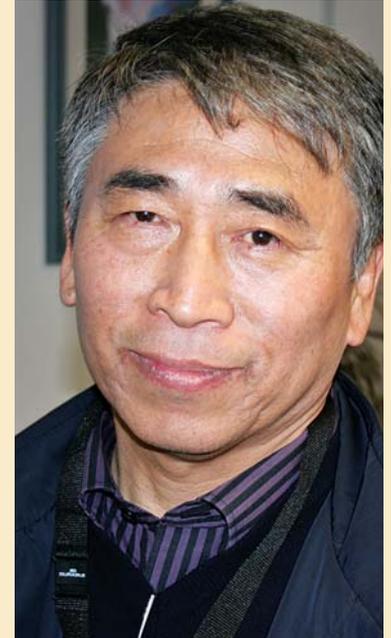
A Korean pilgrimage

For Eui Hyun Kwon, General Secretary of the Korean Bible Society, the visit to Bible Society in Swindon was something of a pilgrimage. 'We have so much to be grateful for,' he said. 'In 1895 the Korean Bible Society began as a branch office of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Just 15 years later the Korean Bible was published, based in part on a New Testament translation by Scottish missionary John Ross. Next year we celebrate the Bible's centenary.

'Christian missionaries and the Bible had a profound effect on Korea,' he explained. 'Many became Christians and these people were hungry to read the Bible. So churches started big literacy programmes and for the first time, ordinary people had a chance to receive some education. This has left us with a strong Christian work ethic and a country committed to the Bible.'

Unusually for Asia the Korean Bible Society is self-funding. It donates more than £1m a year to needy Bible Societies in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

As part of the centenary celebrations, the Society, which



Eui Hyun Kwon

annually prints Bibles in 160 languages, plans to tour an exhibition of historic Bibles through major Korean cities.

'Perhaps my mother's prayers have been answered,' said Eui Hyun Kwon with a smile. 'She always prayed for me to serve God. And that's just what I have spent 30 years of my life doing here at Korean Bible Society.'

1 verse

You've got the love

The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle* is heard in our land ... Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Song of Songs, 2.12,13b AV

It's always been my favourite book. So I asked for this passage from Song of Songs for my wedding.

The poetry is exquisite, which is important in itself. Scripture is a varied library - of racy history, exciting drama, eye-witness

Photo: Serena Atkins



Anne Atkins

journalism, chatty letters, true myth and mystical fantasy.

Yet we often read all this wealth as if it was a flat plain - rather than a wild mountain range, alive with flora and fauna, darkened by terrible shadows and splashing with laughing streams. As if it was inspired by God perhaps, but not inspiring in itself. Song of Songs is worth reading if you believe nothing at all, it gives such pleasure.

I also love it because it's earthy. No mention of God - only human relationships. Most specifically, erotic love. I've sometimes heard it said our love for God is higher than our love for others. But how can we express it? Can I cook him a meal or buy him a gift? I only know how to love God by loving his creatures.

And first and foremost by loving my lover. This poem celebrates my love for Shaun, the most vibrant way I know to love our creator.

• **Ann Atkins** is a popular author, agony aunt and broadcaster.

*In other translations this appears as turtle-dove or dove