



Cancer kids find hope

*Bible strengthens
families in
Nicaragua*

2 OLYMPIC WORKOUT
Blending sport and Spirit

5 THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE
Winning Westminster

12 OUTCASTS NO MORE
Global message of hope



CELEBRATION AND HOPE

WHAT ARE GOING to be the big stories, the big ideas for people in 2012? In addition to the Olympics, The Queen's Diamond Jubilee will certainly receive significant media attention. The Queen is Bible Society's Patron and there's something of a royal theme running through our work at present.

In November, we were at Westminster Abbey for the KJV 400th anniversary service, attended by Her Majesty. As part of this celebration, we presented a bound volume of *The People's Bible* – a fitting way to conclude a project that literally took the Bible to the public square, and saw people from all walks of life writing out more than 43,000 verses of Scripture.

Then, in December, the Queen delivered her Christmas message, concluding with the prayer that 'we might all find room in our lives for...the love of God through Christ our Lord' – a remarkable testimony heard by millions of people.

And then there's the Diamond Jubilee itself. With 'jubilee' being a biblical concept, we have a remarkable opportunity to show the world that the Bible is bursting with joy, celebration and hope. It's difficult to think of a bigger idea the world around us needs to hear.

James Catford

James Catford Group Chief Executive, Bible Society

Thank you for your support of Bible Society.
Donations to our work worldwide enable us to respond quickly where the needs are greatest. Please use the enclosed response form.



8

Front cover: Genibe Lopez, 5, receives treatment for a pelvic tumour in Managua, Nicaragua. She is one of hundreds of children who are being supported by Bible Society. See page 8. Photo: Bible Society/Clare Kendall

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CHURCHES W

As the UK prepares for the world's biggest sports event, **Lindsay Shaw** shows how Bible Society will help churches make an Olympian impact

Churches will become champions of the Word, in sweeping plans to blend sport with Spirit during the Olympics.

The scramble for tickets may be over. But preparation for the Games is hotting up, pulling in communities up and down the land. Thousands of activities are already underway – from community programmes modelling Olympic values to preparations to welcome the Olympic Torch.

As this global event comes to Britain, Bible Society is helping churches seize the day through its partnership with *More than Gold*, and its own specially focused *Bible: Body and Soul* programme.

'We want to equip churches both in sharing the Good News and embracing the Olympics as an opportunity to see our faith afresh through the disciplined, determined eyes of sport,' said Bible Advocacy Officer Matthew van Duyvenbode.

Fact

NOTE THE DATES

- *The Olympic Games take place 27 July – 12 August 2012*
- *The Paralympic Games run 29 August – 9 September*
- *The Torch Relay tours the UK 18 May – 21 July.*

Bible Society has been instrumental in the multi-agency *More than Gold* response. This mobilises churches in outreach, hospitality and service.

Linked through *More than Gold*, churches are working together to be right at the heart of the Olympic party. Some will host community festivals. Others will offer hospitality on the streets or run sports-themed events and clinics.

The Salvation Army has even loaned its 900-acre farm in Essex to the Games. The site will receive a dramatic makeover as the official Olympic mountain biking venue.

'We can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with others in our town, deepening relationships with them and cheering the athletes

WORK OUT FOR OLYMPICS

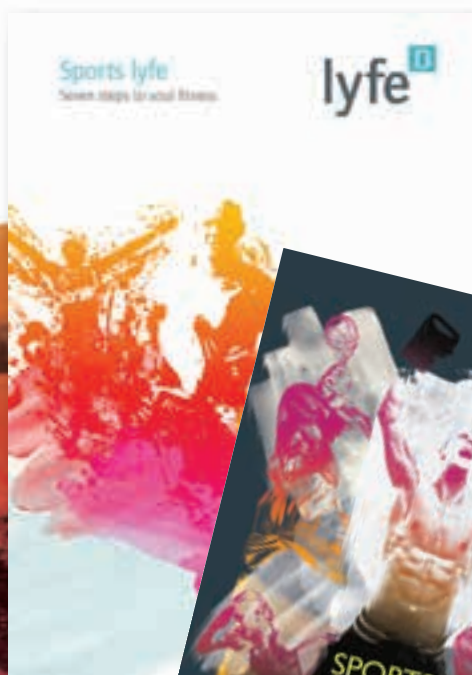


Photo: Bible Society/ Lloyd Kingsley artwork

has been grappling with all this. He's led his church into a dynamic community partnership that's been awarded the Olympic *Inspire* mark.

'If we're true to our Christian roots, we'll see that our bodies really do matter – and life in its fullness has this physical aspect,' he said.

That's one reason the church is leading a partnership with a local running shop, school and Cubs and Scout groups. Under the *Inspire* initiative, it's spearheading an ambitious programme of community health and sports for all ages. It's even lined up nine Olympians, past and present, to be part of it.'

Bible: Body and Soul offers a gentler community option, too. 'The 5k trail' calls churches to plan a five-kilometre neighbourhood route to walk tourists and locals round cultural highlights – showing how the Bible has impacted their communities.

With the Anglican Diocese of London, Bible Society will run two flagship versions in East and West London. They will connect tourist locations with the Olympic sites, taking participants on a 21st century pilgrimage.

• **Lindsay Shaw**

The Bible refuses to split mind from body or spirit

on,' said the Salvation Army's *More than Gold* Co-ordinator Sarah-Jane Alley.

'Engaging with sports makes the Church relevant and accessible,' she said. It could 'unlock the door towards Church that's been slammed shut in so many people's hearts'.

That divide between sports and the spiritual life is something *Bible: Body and Soul* is keen to bridge in its own distinct contribution. Three Olympic-themed resources do just that.

'The Bible – a book about real people in the real world – refuses to split mind from body or spirit,'

said the Bishop of Bradford Rt Revd Nick Baines.

Writing in a new Good News edition, the *Sports Bible*, he added, 'In [the Bible], we see God calling people out of their comfort zones and into a team event where the performance of every individual counts.

Inspired by Jesus...we run harder, renewed in energy and power to cross the line'.

Packed with contributions from athletes and sportsmen, the *Sports Bible* helps us grasp how virtues like perseverance and courage, teamwork and vision are essential to both body and soul.

Olympic inspiration: Duncan Parker is a distance runner. His story is among many in one of our Olympic themed resources.

Sports lyfe, the latest group resource from Bible Society's *lyfe* project, grasps this baton, too. It mixes stories of everyday sports players with 'seven steps to soul fitness'.

With teenagers in mind, Bible Society has worked with Youth with a Mission England, to produce an innovative graphic novel. More than 3,000 young missionaries will use the booklet to reach young people around the games venues.

'The whole of the Bible is about training in godliness,' Bible Society's Matthew van Duyvenbode explained. 'It's even been said the Bible is the "gymnasium of the soul".'

Triathlete and minister of Redland United Reformed Church, Bristol, Douglas Burnett,

Act!

SHAPE UP

for the Olympics at *Bible: Body and Soul* visit biblesociety.org.uk/2012 and morethangold.org.uk

BUY

The *Sports Bible* and *Sports lyfe* from shop.biblesociety.org.uk

Photo: Bible Society/Neema Kiswaga



Hope: Muslims living with HIV now hear the Good Samaritan

MUSLIMS TO HEAR GOOD SAMARITAN

① **TANZANIA.** Muslim religious leaders have asked Bible Society to run its *Good Samaritan* programme for members of their communities.

The Bible-based scheme has already helped around 6,000 people affected by HIV/Aids. 'Some imams asked if we could do training outside the churches so their people could also benefit,' said Neema Kiswaga, Bible Society of Tanzania HIV/AIDS Project Co-ordinator.

'The solution was to run this in schools where Christians and Muslims could attend together.'

Local mosque member Mariam said, 'I'm so grateful for the *Good Samaritan* trainings'. Tested positive for HIV, she 'was afraid of being rejected and accused as a sinner'.

She added, 'The *Good Samaritan* training taught me God's promises for those living with HIV/AIDS. I felt so relieved because I know God loves me, despite my HIV status.'

Muslim participation means 'even more people are hearing about the goodness of Jesus', said Neema Kiswaga.



TRIBUTES FOR TRANSLATION GURU

TRIBUTES have been paid to Bible Society linguist and computer expert David Robinson – whose pioneering work underpins almost all new translations.

An Anglican priest and 'a pastor with a huge heart', David died of cancer last September. His mathematical problem-solving played a key part in translation technologies.

His computer checking helped cut the time of translating a Bible by ten years to between ten and 15 years, according to Linguistic Computing Team Leader Jon Riding.

'What we're doing now – and what workers in almost every Bible translation agency are doing – couldn't have happened without him,' said Jon.

David's early work showed such potential, Bible Society formed a team dedicated to building programmes to improve the reliability and consistency of Scripture translations.

These have enabled translators to check their work automatically. They're even being used on first drafts for workers to correct. 'These are systems which couldn't have been dreamt of before this century,' Jon said.

GROWING CHURCH EMBRACES NEW BIBLE

② **ALGERIA.** A new Bible in a language that was banned until a decade ago has been launched in Algeria. The Berber Bible was launched last year, just two months before the Protestant Church in Algeria received official recognition from the government.

It's a sign that things are changing in North Africa – and it's a story that's being repeated across the region and into the Middle East.

Berber is spoken by a third of Algeria's population (most are Arabic-speakers), and when the translation project began, Berber was a banned language



Photo: Bible Society/Matt Parkes

Future: 'We've written a new page in history,' says Ali

in public. Now, this Bible will resource the small but growing church in Algeria.

In the last four decades, the Church has grown from an estimated 3,000 to 'probably

100,000 today', according to Bible Society in Algeria's General Secretary Ali Khidri. Most come from Muslim backgrounds, and some 40,000 attend church openly.

'Over the last 30 or 40 years we've written a new page in history,' said Ali. 'People cried when they saw the Berber Bible for the first time. Even church leaders and pastors. This is a wonderful, blessed time for the churches.'

Bible Society is one of a handful of organisations supplying Scripture to the Church in countries where Christianity is a minority religion.

THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE AT WESTMINSTER

ATTRACTING more than 22,000 contributors, *The People's Bible* completed its 17,000-mile journey to Westminster Abbey last November.

Along the way, it touched the lives of everyone from schoolchildren to royalty, from anti-capitalist protestors to the Prime Minister.

A bound copy of Genesis was presented in front of HM the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales. All three were attending a special service celebrating the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible.

Attended by 2,000 worshippers, the service was the climax of a project that started on 19 June



Celebration: Part of the People's Bible was presented at Westminster Abbey in the presence of the Queen

at Edinburgh Castle. James I of England/VI of Scotland had been born there, exactly 445 years earlier.

Over recent months, 22,000

people used a digital pen to create the world's first handwritten digital Bible. This was published in real time on *The People's Bible* website thepeoplesbible.org.

After the Prince of Wales wrote the first two verses, the tour visited all points of the compass. It took in county shows and festivals, market places and schools – even *Occupy London* camp outside St Paul's Cathedral.

In Downing Street, Prime Minister David Cameron chose two verses from Philippians (4.8-9) and said,

'The King James Bible is a book that has shaped not only our own country, but also the world.'

Celebrity participants included actors Prunella Scales, Timothy West and Andrew Lancel (Frank Foster in *Coronation Street*) – and broadcasters Gyles Brandreth and Frank Skinner.

The People's Bible also had a daily presence at the Abbey itself. 'One or two were moved to tears,' said co-ordinator Kizzy Donaldson, 'as they were given verses which had special meaning for them.'



Web festivity: Milton Jones launches *Roll on Christmas*

FACEBOOKERS HAVE FESTIVE FUN

SOCIAL NETWORKERS have seen the nativity in a new way, thanks to an interaction animation from Bible Society and Christian webzine *Ship of Fools*.

With narration by TV and radio comedian Milton Jones, *Roll on Christmas* was a two-minute, animated Nativity play – set, of course, in a Bethlehem stable. But there the play broke with tradition.

This version was staged on Facebook with a cast drawn from players' Facebook friends.

'Roll on Christmas caricatured the way we behave over the festive period,' said Bible Society's Rachel Rounds. 'Shopping, partying and celebrating to excess – while the child at the centre gets forgotten.'

PITCH WINNER ANNOUNCED

AN ASPIRING film-maker from Nottingham was announced as the winner of *The Pitch* film competition last month, after a nailbiting finalists' weekend at London's Pinewood Studios.

Tim Bassford, 34, won with his short film idea, *Samson*, and will now receive £25,000 of production support to create the film and take it to Hollywood. He'll meet industry professionals including Ralph Winter, producer of *X-Men* and *Fantastic Four*.

Tim, head of video production at Spinning Clock design and marketing agency in Nottingham, said, 'I am stunned to have won such an amazing prize, to get the funding to make my film and all the support that entails. I am looking forward to working with professionals from the industry to develop the concept. No other UK-based film competition offers advice from screen writers and Oscar winners.'



Photo: Bible Society / Clare Kendall

Unity: *B the Word* links you with Christians around the world

ENCOURAGE YOUR CHURCH TO BECOME A PARTNER

whole world. And it's about sharing our experience, resources and opportunities to make us more effective together, locally, nationally and globally.

As a *B the Word* church, your commitment to give an annual gift and pray for Bible Society's work enables you to take God's Word around the world. You'll receive:

- News updates three times a year about the difference your support is making
- New resources, such as *You've Got The Time* (our Bible listening programme)

BECOME an official mission partner with Bible Society by encouraging your church to sign up to our new *B the Word* partnership.

This is all about fulfilling the mission that Jesus gave his disciples – to take the good news from Jerusalem to the

- and Bible Sunday packs
- Reports from Theos, the public theology think tank
- Membership of *More than a Book*, giving your church money back as it buys resources from biblesresources.org.uk/mtab

- A guest speaker to visit your church or event
- The opportunity to visit an aspect of the work you're supporting

'B the Word is about helping you and your church to be confident in Bible use and more effective in witness and mission,' said Head of Community Giving Andy Bissex. 'In partnership with Bible Society, you'll become part of mission on a much wider front – in Parliament and media, education and the arts, and internationally.

'We've such a wide reach through 146 Bible Societies, you can make a worldwide impact.'

To find out more, go to biblesociety.org.uk/btheword or call 01793 418222 and ask for the *B the Word* brochure.



Photo: Bible Society / Clare Kendall

Inspiring: Heather Clements is keen to encourage your Church

WE'LL GIVE YOU A LIFT

LET'S GO TO another level. That's the invitation to Bible Society's vision events as they criss-cross the country – or when you book one in your area.

'It's all about encouraging, inspiring and resourcing our supporters, volunteers and Action Groups,' said Volunteer Development Manager Heather Clements.

Church leaders aren't forgotten, either. A leader's lunch is typically held during the day before an afternoon or evening vision event. The vision events are an ideal eye-opener for those new to Bible Society, too.'

London-based volunteer Eric Boateng, 39, was bowled over at an event in Beckton. 'My enthusiasm for Bible Society was raised to a new level through the vision event,' he said.

To find out when a Bible Society vision event is in your area, go to biblesociety.org.uk/support-us/local-events.

To request a *B the Word* brochure or a Bible Society vision event in your area, please call...



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biblesociety.org.uk

The Bishop's gambit

Photo: Bible Society/ Geoff Crawford

Bible Society's new president – the Bishop of London – believes its mission is essential for our times

President: James Catford meets new Bible Society president, the Bishop of London

This is the century when the Bible will once again take its rightful place as 'a storm centre, a provocation, and a comfort'. That's the belief of Bible Society's new President, the Bishop of London.

Right Revd Richard Chartres said he was 'deeply honoured' to be offered the presidential role. 'I'm a huge admirer of Bible Society and really impressed by its leadership,' he added.

He believes passionately in making the Scriptures available – 'there couldn't be more important work in the 21st century'. And he sees his own role as supporting Bible Society's endeavours to provide the Scriptures and make them understood.

'I've been in touch with the thrilling developments of the Christian faith in China,' he pointed out, 'and admire the role Bible Societies are playing

there – and in so many other cultures.'

Here in the UK, foundations of British culture are built on the Scriptures. Bishop Richard believes those foundations are today being re-examined – and potentially undermined.

'Ideas of human dignity, human rights, equality – these are intimately related to Judeo-Christianity,' he explained. 'Although it's become difficult to use the language of the Bible in this country, it will become increasingly obvious these values and principles will be unsustainable without the Christian ground.

'In Britain that ground has been biblical since our earliest days. And you don't sacrifice that without sacrificing much of what has been built upon that ground.'

Bishop Richard warned unless a strong biblical influence is maintained to safeguard those values, they will inevitably weaken. 'There's a real threat to our sense of the dignity of each individual human being – the preciousness of life,' he said.

He also sees a growing danger of individualism in society, whereas the Bible 'looks at us as a community'.

To Britain's leaders, Bible Society's new

Act!

PRAY

Please pray for Bishop Richard, the board of Trustees and Bible Society Executive Directors in their work to increase the circulation and use of the Scriptures.

president commends the Scriptures as 'the living Word, which, if you engage with it, will change your perspective on the world – the context in which you live and take your decisions'.

His personal preference is for the King James Version, which he likes to read out loud. 'If you read out loud, you're hearing Scripture as it was meant to be – an address, a communication,' he said. 'It's something that judges us. And we are to be hearers and doers of the Word.'

His prediction for the years ahead? 'The Bible, temporarily hidden from view in the UK, is once again going to take its rightful place as the soil in which God will make something new and fresh.'

• **Andrew Boyd** is a freelance journalist and media trainer

Fact

WHO'S WHO?

- *The Bishop of London is the Society's 12th President and succeeds former Bishop of Durham Dr Tom Wright, who stepped down last year.*
- *Bible Society's Patron is HM The Queen.*

'God is telling us

Poverty is rife across Latin America. With it comes sickness and unemployment – and children feel the effects the most. *Claire Smith* reports on Bible Societies' response to families in crisis

In the small hut she calls home, five-year old Genibe Lopez prepares for a trip to hospital (pictured right).

She faces a 20-minute walk and two bus journeys before she reaches La Mascota Hospital, in Nicaragua's capital Managua. It's tough and tiring for Genibe. She has cancer.

Genibe was just 14 months old when doctors discovered a tumour in her hip. Her chances of survival were slim. But Genibe responded well to treatment, and her consultant is hopeful.

Her 43-year-old mother Maria puts this miracle down to God's grace – and Bible Society's intervention.

'God told me about a Bible passage in a dream,' she said. 'It was Ezekiel 37, where God breathes life into old bones. I feel God is breathing life into my daughter.'

Genibe is just one of 600 children helped every month by an ambitious project by the Bible Society in Nicaragua.

It's one example of many life-changing projects Latin American Bible Societies are running in Nicaragua, Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador. All are designed to

God told me about a Bible passage in a dream



Fact

- Every week, Bible Society of Nicaragua helps 150 children and their families – running Bible studies, distributing Scripture and giving practical support.
- Over the next three years, Bible Society wants to hand out 18,000 children's Bibles and 90,000 children's Scripture booklets.

we're not alone'



Photo: Bible Society/Clare Kendall

bring the Scripture's hope and comfort to children or families facing abuse, sickness, loss and pain.

And they're having a dramatic impact.

The scheme in Nicaragua is about providing Bibles and spiritual support to children with cancer and their families. Around 70 per cent of the project funds go towards this. But a portion is also given over to meet the practical needs of these children and families, such as travel to and from hospital, food and accommodation.

In a situation like this, it's essential to provide practical support alongside our focus on bringing God's Word.

A bus ticket to La Mascota hospital – the only one in the country treating children with cancer – costs \$2.50.

A single mum, Maria scrapes a living by washing and drying clothes, and \$1.40 is the most she can earn in a day. But without the frequent hospital trips, Genibe would simply not survive.

'Without the help Bible Society gave me for transportation, my daughter couldn't get the treatment,' said Maria. 'And if she didn't get that treatment, my daughter would have died.'

As well as paying bus fares for poor households, Bible Society runs a 22-bed shelter at the hospital. This houses families from rural areas who would otherwise not be able to afford accommodation. It also supplies food and toiletries.

Before Bible Society launched this project, around a third of children failed to complete their treatment. Almost certainly, these children died.

But at the heart of this mission is the profound need to address a child's pain and a family's fear with God's life-changing Word.

'For me, the world came down,' is how Maria described receiving news of Genibe's cancer. 'I went into shock because I said to myself, "my daughter is going to die". It's very hard

Act! GET INVOLVED



- Look out for our fundraising pack which you will be able to download from our website in April. It includes a DVD featuring Genibe's story, and will give you fundraising ideas to help you raise vital funds for Bible Society's work.

when that kind of news is given to you. I said to myself, "My life has no sense anymore".

Maria received a Bible on her first visit to La Mascota. Today, she finds hope in God's Word. 'We're sad, but there we find encouragement. God is telling us we're not alone,' she said.

As well as handing out Bibles, the Society has trained a team of 285 volunteers from 52 churches. They visit the hospital three days a week to offer Bible studies, counselling and prayer.

Medical staff welcome the support. 'The children receive healing not only from medicine, but also from God's Word,' said Head of Oncology Dr Luis Fulgencio Báez. 'It's important because they can pray and be positive.'

For Freddy Fonseca, General Secretary of the Bible Society in Nicaragua and founder of the project, it's moving to see God's Word touch people who are helpless and desperate.

'Parents are reading the Bible, by night,' he said. 'When the hospital is silent, they're reading and praying. For me, the most important treatment they have is the Bible.'

'It's wonderful. They finish the treatment and they're clean of cancer. They are closer to God and they go to the church and give thanks.'

Back at home, Genibe is sitting on the bed she shares with her mother, her dolls lined up against the wall. 'The Bible says Jesus Christ died for all of us,' she said with a smile. 'I don't feel alone because I'm with Jesus.'

• **Claire Smith** is a freelance journalist

Journey: Genibe Lopez, 5, who receives treatment for cancer with her mother Maria Lopez, 43, set out for hospital

Children sing a new song

Thousands of abandoned, abused young people have a brighter future in Bolivia thanks to your generous support. *Lindsay Shaw* reports

It's a project full of dreams. A twisting road scales the vertigo-inducing slopes between the world's highest capital, La Paz, and El Alto, a ramshackle city perched even higher on the rim of Bolivia's Andean plateau.

Every day, nine-year-old Javier Gomez would travel this route on the wheezing old buses and literally sing for his supper. Six years on, Javier is one of 5,000 young people receiving care and inspiration from a Bible Society partnership with 28 Christian-run children's homes.

Back in those days his life was typical of so many of Bolivia's abandoned children. After losing his parents to cancer, Javier ran away from his aunt and uncle's home to escape frequent beatings.

'I sang on the buses and I'd ask for food or money,' Javier explained. Nights were spent on wind-swept

streets, sniffing glue to fend off cold and hunger.

In fact, Alalay, the name of the centre where Javier has rebuilt his life over the last three years, means 'I am cold' in Aymara, the indigenous language. It was chosen by the first of the 10,000 children who've received Christian love and care through Alalay's nine homes.

Today, Javier has a new song. Watching him shovel delicious-smelling bread from the Alalay bakery oven and hearing him speak of his relationship with God, it's clear much has changed.

'Now I'm more motivated and do things with more determination,' he said. He's earned Alalay's best student diploma this year. 'With the Bible I'm getting to know God better. I've learnt to love other people, to love God and not idols.'

Along with Javier, another 70 children aged two to 18 are cared for at the centre. Its cluster of buildings 40 minutes from La Paz is a hive of activity. It's a place of joy in stark contrast to the children's past.

Primary age children proudly show off their rooms, teenagers work out on the basketball court, and an eight-piece string orchestra rehearses for a



Photos: Bible Society/Clare Kendall

Home: Javier Gomez, 15, at the Alalay Residential Centre

visit to Vienna.

'It's a project full of dreams,' said 29-year-old Marcela Losantos, one of Alalay's co-ordinators. 'With the constant practical, emotional and spiritual support, you see each of these people growing up and becoming a "together" person. It's a beautiful experience.'

Bolivian Bible Society's General Secretary Fanny Cossio is passionate about the part supporters can play through prayers and gifts. They can bring a brighter future to such young people.

'We have a vocation from Jesus: "let the children come to me",' she said. 'Only God can fill the gap of love and security that's left when children are abandoned.'

Since last year, Bible Society has given children in homes like Alalay a curriculum of Christian education materials to boost their grasp of Scripture and God's love.

From primaries to secondaries, the colourful, interactive books teach age-appropriate skills alongside biblical stories. They underscore the value of every young person in God's eyes. Fanny is 'amazed and delighted at how the materials are being used'.

• **Lindsay Shaw**

I sang on the buses and I'd ask for food or money



Dramatic moments change a mum's life



Photo: Bible Society/Richard Franklin

Questions: Louise Hicklin from St Helier, Jersey found hope in difficult times

Hope came to Louise Hicklin in her darkest days – through a dramatised New Testament. She tells *Richard Franklin* how it happened...

Handle with care! Downloading Scriptures on audio can dramatically change your life. That's what happened to Louise Hicklin.

Three years ago, her husband Tim was diagnosed with leukaemia. At a time when they needed more than ever to be together, they were separated.

Tim had to go to London for treatment. Pregnant with their son George, Louise had to stay at their Jersey home until he was born.

'I seriously questioned where God was,' she said. 'The rest of the family were already involved in the church. I felt God had abandoned them.'

While Tim was ill, Louise began to read the Bible in her search for

answers. But it wasn't until Tim recovered and the family were reunited that she found some.

Louise downloaded *You've Got The Time*. This New Testament from Bible Society is dramatised in 40 half-hour audio clips by The Riding Lights Theatre Company. It spoke to her in a way the written Word had never done.

'It's as if a conversation is going on,' she said. 'You can put yourself in the position of these people when they're meeting Jesus. It helped me focus on the fact Jesus had got us through – that God was there.'

Louise isn't the only person to be inspired by the recording. In September, church leaders in Jersey were so impressed, that they raised £10,000 to put Mark's Gospel on CD and deliver it to the island's 42,000 homes.

'We thought it was exactly the way we wanted the church to be presenting the Bible in the community,' said Revd Martyn Shea, one of the project organisers. 'I just love the way they use different actors and different voices from all walks of life.'

Louise still has the audio on her iPod. She's using it at a house group she

Act!

TAKE PART

- *Share You've Got The Time with friends and neighbours, as people did in Jersey.*
- *Your gifts could provide audio Bibles to people around the world, so they can listen in their own language.*

attends. 'I'm sure we'd all have loved to have met Jesus,' she said. 'I think this is the closest you're going to get.'

Bible Society's Head of Community Giving Andy Bissex said, 'It's been thrilling to see, through stories like Louise's, how the drama of this recording can speak to people in ways the written Word sometimes doesn't.'

'I hope this Lent many more churches will take up the *You've Got The Time* challenge – both to listen to the New Testament and to give towards helping Christians in the developing world have access to audio Bibles.'

• **Richard Franklin** is Senior Press Officer at Bible Society.

Fact

FREE

- *You've Got The Time is a free download at www.biblesociety.org.uk/ygtd*
- *Church resources are available on CD. Call 01793 418222.*

You can put yourself in the position of these people when they're meeting Jesus

No longer outcasts

A year ago, you gave generously in response to an appeal for Braille Bibles for people with visual impairments. Here, we show how your gifts have brought God's Word to life for people who cannot see.

Helen Namuwawu was born blind. From the moment she entered the world with this disability, Helen has faced rejection and challenge.

Her father denied that she was his, and left the family when her mother refused to give Helen up. The primary school she went to initially refused to teach her. Her mother was ridiculed for working to pay for Helen's education.

Helen's story mirrors that of so many other blind and visually-impaired children in Uganda, growing up as outcasts in their communities and even their families. But Helen was introduced to God's love in the Bible – and discovered that God was her 'helper and protector, as is written in Psalms 91 and 27,' she says.

Today, 36-year-old Helen is a

God has saved me from being a beggar

teacher and Braille transcriber. She has had a number of operations on her eyes and is now partially able to see. Recently, she received a large print New Testament from Bible Society of Uganda.

'Tonight, I may not sleep because I will be reading God's Word,' said Helen, thrilled to receive her copy. 'I'll believe that these Scriptures are mine when I reach home and have them in my possession.'

She added, 'I know that God loves me. He preaches through me and uses my brain to teach my students. God has saved me from being a beggar as so many others.'

Your generous response to our appeal last year has brought the Bible's message of acceptance and love to Helen, and thousands of people like her. And it's helped Bible Society of Uganda launch a major ministry to blind and visually-impaired people across the country.

Thrill: Helen didn't sleep with excitement on receiving a Braille Bible

Blindness is a big problem in Uganda, triggered by water-borne diseases and poor medical aid. Even worse is the stigmatisation which goes with the disability. Children with sight problems are sidelined by parents and siblings. They have limited access to education and health services. Many are unable to travel or move safely about their villages as they have no sight guides.

Emmanuel Turinawe, project co-ordinator for Bible Society of Uganda, said, 'Children do not want to play



Photo: Bible Society of Uganda

Your gifts have brought the Bible's message to blind people around the world

China

- ✓ Two new Braille printing machines, to replace the old machine that broke down in January 2010

IMPACT: thousands of Braille Bibles for Chinese Christians

Philippines

- ✓ 16 complete Braille Bibles in Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines
- ✓ Seven Braille Bibles in Cebuano, a major local language
- ✓ 20,000 copies of Braille magazines and Scripture portions
- ✓ 180 Braille Scripture portions for blind children
- ✓ 800 digital audio Bibles distributed to blind Filipinos

IMPACT: thousands of blind Filipinos touched by God's Word

Uganda

- ✓ 40 blind Ugandans attending Scripture Union camps
- ✓ 5,000 Braille Scriptures, 100 audio Bibles and 150 New Testament CDs delivered to an area 600km around Kampala
- ✓ Teaching church leaders in ten dioceses how to reach blind people in their communities
- ✓ Taking 150 blind Christians on a residential conference where they share their faith with others

IMPACT: the Bible's message brought to life for thousands of blind Ugandans, and a church more sensitive to their needs

with children who are blind. Some parents, when asked how many children they have, exclude the visually challenged children.'

It was Emmanuel and Bible Society of Uganda General Secretary Simon Peter Mukhama who devised and launched this ministry.

'When you give Scriptures to blind people, they begin to live with hope. They are no longer outcasts, but people of confidence.'

Bible Society now supplies Braille, large print and audio Bibles around the country.

They run workshops to help churches overcome the marginalisation of blind people in their communities, and have launched an annual conference

hope can only be raised through the scriptures

bringing hundreds of blind people together to share their faith. It's become a major part of their work to help Ugandans engage with the Bible's message, and Bible Society is now the primary co-ordinator of organisations working with blind people in the country.

'Seeing a young person read Braille Scripture for the first time, and discover that God loves them, is a very special thing to watch,'

said Simon Peter.

'Without the help of donors in the UK, we wouldn't have started this ministry. The vast majority of this project is funded by supporters in the UK, and I want them to know that their support and prayers is having an impact on people's lives here.'

'My thanks goes to Bible Society for giving people with a visual disability a Bible to read and listen to on their own,' said Helen, who also broadcast her testimony on national radio thanks to Bible Society.

'Some visually impaired people have been made to think that God does not love them and that they are cursed. Their hope can only be raised through the Scriptures.'

• **Claire Smith** is a freelance journalist

Open all hours

It's a one-stop Scripture shop – with a virtual cashback-style service for churches.

It offers everything from a gripping re-telling of the New Testament for inquirers to an action-packed resource to help children explore the Bible – or a foreign-language edition for a friend whose first language isn't English.

Making it easier to search and faster to buy is this new online store from *Bible Society Resources*. Customers can also boost their church funds simply by signing up for the no-obligation *More Than a Book* scheme.

'What people already value about our site is its extensive Bible range and generous discounts on multiple orders of lots of English Bible editions,' said Executive Director of Enterprises Stuart Rivers.

'But to meet their needs even more, we're putting much work into expanding our range of Bible-related books, DVDs and other resources – including more of our own new resources.

'We've also made buying easier. With our enhanced search engine customers



will find what they want more quickly. And we're adding look inside windows where you can browse before you buy.'

By registering at *More Than a Book* (shop.biblesociety.org.uk/mtab), your purchases will also put a smile on the church treasurer's face. When congregation, friends and family shop using the church's unique reference number, your church receives ten per cent of sales value*.

'Plus, with each purchase you know you're supporting Bible Society's ministry around the world,' Stuart said, 'so you benefit and others do, too.'

And what about that gripping New Testament re-telling or that resource to launch your children on a Scripture discovery voyage? For the first, read our next article. For the second, *The Big Bible Challenge* offers junior age children 100 exciting Bible adventures with fun activities and online extras.

Whatever fresh reading and viewing you're looking for – to spur you or your church on in Christian living – finding what you want just got a whole lot easier.

(*not including post and packaging)



Divine dialogue

A vivid re-telling of the New Testament will help those who struggle with Scripture – and those haven't tried to tackle it yet.

With its intriguing title *Who?*, Bible Society's latest publication helps readers quickly get to grips with the question of who is Jesus – the person at the heart of the New Testament.

With lively dialogue that lifts off the page, the first three Gospels run together in a free paraphrase style makes *Who?* An easy read.

'I see it as a bridge into the Bible,' said Bristol-based writer and church leader Paul Langham. 'My dream is that *Who?* will do for non-Christians



Who?: Paul Langham

what *The Message* did for Christian readers.

Who? Will be available to buy from 4th April. Just visit our online shop at shop/biblesociety.org.uk

Quotes

All or nothing

'It's basically all or nothing, following Jesus. I don't believe in pick 'n' mix Christianity. I believe the Bible is the Word of God, so who am I to ignore something in it?'

Euan Murray, *Scotland rugby union player (BBC Sport)*



Photo: Press Association Imagery / David Davies

Powerful legacy

'Even though I'm not a Christian, I can't think of anything more fascinating than observing the reality of the human being whose legacy became one of the single most powerful forces on earth.'

Brett Anderson, *rock musician, Suede (The Guardian Weekend)*



Photo: Rex features / David Fisher

One verse

Home coming

HENRY OLONGA, former Zimbabwean fast bowler, fled his country in the face of death threats following his 2003 cricket World Cup black armband protest against the human rights abuses of President Mugabe's regime. Now a singer and evangelist, Henry explains how he is inspired by Revelation 21.3-4:

'I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: "Now God's home is with human beings!" ... He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain ...'

To me that is the good news, the culmination of all that the ages

The doctor who transforms text

It's the least understood ministry – that's how Dr Reinier De Blois describes Bible translation. But he's helped streamline the process, with some revolutionary software.

'It's slow, painstaking and isolated,' he said of people's perceptions. 'Locals often wonder what they're up to – and why it's taking so long!'

Dutch-born Reinier speaks from experience. He was a translator in Nigeria before becoming a consultant to Bible Societies – first in West and now in East Africa.

The biggest support he's given is a computer software tool – used today by almost every Bible translator.

Paratext allows the experts to look at both languages on screen, scrolling together. They can have other translations beside them to make comparisons.

'It was an incredibly simple idea,' he said, 'but it transformed the process.' Behind the software are all kinds of artificial intelligence.

Much of it was developed by Bible



Dr Reinier De Blois

Society's England-based Linguistic Computing Team (see p5) – that also gives translators invaluable, time-saving help.

Reinier continues to focus on people as much as technology. As chair of the Institute of Computer Assisted Publishing (ICAP), he's constantly training and equipping Bible Society and other agency translators around the world.

'Our motto is building tools, building people,' he explained, 'so we come alongside whenever people ask us.'



Henry Olunga

have ever believed in. In the new heaven and earth God has wiped away all sin, all that is evil, all that contaminates.

For me the heart of the gospel message is that people can have eternal life through Christ Jesus. It's not just an escape from hell we focus on but this incredible new place God is going to create for those who were bold enough to confess I'm a sinner, I need to be saved.

I mean, imagine a world where we can live in which moth cannot destroy, thieves do not break in and it doesn't corrupt. We're seeing God face to face and hanging out with Jesus in a paradise.

Follow Henry's movements or book him for your event at henryolunga.net

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