



*Bisantina Achola, 56, with her family and Jasper, 23, who reads her the Bible.*



**YOUR SUPPORT** is helping hundreds of people like Bisantina know that they are loved and valued through reading Braille Scriptures. Lorraine Kingsley went to meet Bisantina – you can read her story and more about the incredible work the Bible Society of Uganda is doing to help those with visual impairments.

You can also read an update from the Bible Society of Egypt, who, in the face of opposition, continues to distribute Scripture from their warehouse. This year, thanks to your support, they look to rebuild their bookshops that were destroyed in the protests last year.

Thank you for your committed support, and please pray for our work, both at home and around the world.

**John Ranford** Bible a Month Co-ordinator



Photo © Bible Society/Clare Kendall



By Lorraine Kingsley

**EXUBERANT SINGING FILLS THE AIR**, as Reverend Richard Opio leads the crowd in a rousing chorus of Hallelujah.

I have come to the peaceful village of Dokolo to meet with Reverend Richard and Bisantina Achola, a blind lady who has witnessed a transformation in her community's attitude towards people with sight loss.

When the song comes to an end, Reverend Richard beams at the 30 – strong group of women and children who have gathered by the large tree in the open space by the church. And he effusively thanks Bible Society of Uganda for their excellent work.

Revd Richard then goes on to explain just how much Bible Society of Uganda means to him.

'Before they invited me to a workshop, I was not aware that we had blind and partially sighted people living here,' says Revd Richard. 'I did not know that they were hiding in their homes, afraid to come out.'

'When I heard about this, I felt ashamed. 'I thought, "The church is sinning. We are ignoring a portion of our sheep."'

It was a turning point for Revd Richard. He speaks of how God used the workshop, run by Bible Society of Uganda, to set a fire in his heart. 'I knew I had to do more, so I started

# Bible Society in focus



## HAVE YOU VISITED CRE LATELY?

Christian Resources Exhibitions (CRE) has grown beyond recognition since its first show almost 30 years ago.

Now CRE features four events every year, and they're so much more than exhibitions – they equip and resource the church with seminars, workshops, presentations and performances.

CRE continues to be the UK's largest and most successful Christian exhibition with events being held across the UK. We look forward to seeing you at one of our CRE soon.

## Dates for your diary:

CRE Wales – Cardiff 26 March 2014

CRE International – Sandown 13 – 26 May 2014

CRE North – Manchester 8 – 9 October 2014

For more information and to get your tickets, visit [CREonline.co.uk](http://CREonline.co.uk)



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to look out for blind people at weddings and funerals. Slowly, I began to identify them among us, and I made a point of getting to know them.'

'The Lord showed me that blind people are not just disabled people. He showed me their value,' he continues. 'And I think people in the church are more aware now.'

Bisantina Achola, a 56-year-old widow, testifies to the way the church has changed in its attitude towards her. 'I go to church, and people don't step on me anymore,' she says. 'Now, they take care of me by giving me food.'

Bisantina started to lose her sight in 2007. Today, she cannot see at all. She is extremely poor; she has no Bible. A single book of the braille Bible would cost her £21 – a prohibitive cost for a woman without an income.

Thankfully her 23-year-old son Jasper is able to read to her every night. So she has the comfort of God's word in her life.

Revd Richard's prayer is that every blind person in his community – and indeed every community in Uganda – would have access to braille Bibles and audio Bibles. 'We need to make sure that blind people are being fed by God's word. I ask you to please join with me in this prayer.'



Bisantina Achola, 56, with Revd Richard Opio, 45, in Dokolo, Uganda.

Photo © Bible Society/Clare Kendall

## YOUR SUPPORT IS HELPING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES READ GOD'S WORD

When 9-year-old Eark Kong began attending a Scripture-based literacy class, she just wanted to learn how to read. She had tried the local school but it was a 25km journey from her home on the outskirts of Damdek, in the Siem Reap province of Cambodia.

'I studied very slowly because I had to work in the fields, and sometimes it was just too far to walk to school when instead I could spend time working' says Eark, who helps her mother and grandmother each day.

When a local pastor visited Eark's home and invited her to a Scripture literacy class in a nearby village, supported by Bible Society in Cambodia, Eark's mother encouraged her to attend. It wasn't long before Eark began to read fluently.

But learning to read was not the only change in Eark's life, she also began to attend church with her mother. After reading the Bible in class and learning more about the Gospel in church, both Eark and her mother became Christians. 'I learned about how I am a sinner, but that Jesus loves me, my mother and all the people on earth,' Eark says.

Through programmes like the literacy classes and Bible distribution, Bible Society in Cambodia is helping to shape the next generation of Christians.

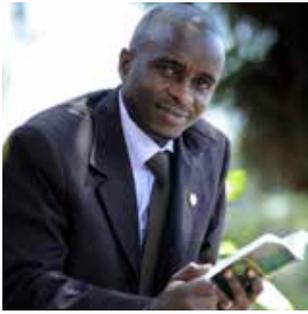


Eark Kong (right) at her literacy class.

Photo © Bible Society/Grace Smith

## UGANDA

Photo © Bible Society/Clare Kendall



*Simon Peter Mukhama, General Secretary of the Bible Society of Uganda.*

**FIVE YEARS AGO**, Bible Society of Uganda had a dream to reach blind and partially sighted people in Uganda with God's word.

In 2009, an invitation arrived on the doormat of the Kampala office, inviting staff to a workshop in Nairobi. Bible Society of Uganda seized the opportunity.

As General Secretary Simon Peter Mukhama recalls, 'The invitation felt like a God-appointed opportunity. They were speaking about the

very things that we were already challenged about.

'We went to Nairobi with our heads full of statistics, and knowledge about what causes blindness, and about the need to help blind people access the Bible. We came home knowing that we could do something significant as a ministry.'

Since then, Bible Society of Uganda has been distributing complete sets of braille Bibles, large print Bibles and audio Bibles among the 300,000 people in Uganda with blindness and partial sightedness.

Next year, it plans to distribute a further 43 braille Bibles to schools, organisations that serve blind people, and churches.

'Society thinks that people who are blind have nothing to contribute,' says Simon Peter. 'But that is changing slowly – and the work of Bible Society is important in getting people to see the value of blind people, and give them a voice in society.'

## PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray that workshops run by Bible Society of Uganda will reach more church leaders and help educate and dispel the myths surrounding visual impairments.
- Pray for church leaders like Revd Richard Opio, that they would begin to build a ministry for visually impaired people in their communities.
- Pray for Bisantina Achola, that she would find confidence and value through hearing God's word.
- Give thanks for Simon Peter Mukhama, General Secretary of Bible Society of Uganda, and all the staff. Give thanks for their dedication in working with churches, schools and other organisations to offer Braille Scriptures to those who are visually impaired.
- Pray for others who are visually impaired, that they would be able to have access to Braille Scripture and find freedom and acceptance in their community.

To discover other ways of making the Bible heard visit [biblesociety.org.uk](http://biblesociety.org.uk)

## EGYPT

Photo © United Bible Societies



*Bookshops in Assuit and Minia, Egypt were destroyed in last years protests.*

In some countries, the situation for Christians has become so dangerous in recent years that many are fleeing. According to United Bible Societies (UBS), recent figures indicate that, in 2012, Christian Scriptures were in more demand than ever before, including in some of the countries where Christianity is under extreme pressure.

Despite the increasingly difficult situation for Christians in Egypt, Scripture distribution rose by

25% in 2012, with more than 2.8 million Scriptures distributed. The main increase was in Scripture booklets and leaflets, which are easy to hand out and easy to read.

Ramez Attalah, General Secretary of the Bible Society of Egypt said 'with so many mass gatherings taking place in Egypt, such as those in Tahrir Square, we took the opportunity to produce and distribute simple Bible booklets on topics such as the Sermon on the Mount.' He continued, 'there has been so much stress and tension in our country and people are increasingly interested in spiritual things and are grateful to read about peace and hope in these booklets.'

Last year we asked for your help following the burning of the bookshops in Assiut and Minia in Egypt. Thanks to your support, both of these bookshops are being repaired. With a high demand for Bibles, they have continued trading from their local warehouse.

## PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray for Ramez Attalah, General Secretary of the Bible Society of Egypt, and for all the staff at the Bible Society. Pray for wisdom in their response to the difficulties in Egypt.
- Pray for protection over Ramez and all the staff at the Bible Society of Egypt.
- Pray that the rebuilding of the bookshops will go smoothly and that they will continue to be able to distribute Scripture through the warehouse.
- Give thanks that Scripture distribution has been able to continue despite the difficulties. Pray that this will continue.
- Pray for creativity in coming up with new ways in offering the Bible.
- Pray for the churches and Christians in Egypt, that they will continue to reach out to their neighbours with hope and love.

*'I want you to know all about Christ's love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is.'* Ephesians 3.19 (CEV)

## UGANDA FACTFILE



Area: 241,038 sq km approx. similar size to the UK.  
Population: 34,758,809 approx. 55% of the UK pop.  
Literacy: 73%  
Languages: English (official), Swahili, Ganda or Luganda, other Niger-Congo languages, Nilo-Saharan languages, Arabic

We recently received a letter from George, who gave a legacy gift from his brother's estate to Bible Society and discovered that there can be an inheritance tax saving through a legal document called a deed of variation. Through this George increased the gift by 40%.

'Apart from service in the Royal Navy during the war, Fred worked as a bank clerk and while he passed all the examinations he never achieved recognition or promotion to management. Fred was 87 when he died and had been retired on a modest pension. We always lived together for neither of us married. We always looked after each other until he died, when I found I had not only lost my brother but also my best friend and companion.

Fred never left a will, but when we discussed it he mentioned only a specific donation to our church and the rest to Bible Society. I would never have dreamt of doing other than his wishes, and even more so knowing Fred would have been very pleased to have been able, through Bible Society, to provide Bibles to people in their own language.'

Thank you George for your gift from your brother's estate, and for highlighting to others that they too can maximize an inheritance gift to charity through a deed of variation.

To submit your story to Club Corner, please email [bamc@biblesociety.org.uk](mailto:bamc@biblesociety.org.uk) or write to us at the address at the bottom of the page. Your Club Corner story may be edited and we cannot guarantee its inclusion. Please ensure you include a return address so we can return any materials.

FOLD

To discover other ways of making the Bible heard visit [biblesociety.org.uk](http://biblesociety.org.uk)

Tear along perforation

*'I lift up my hands to you in prayer; like dry ground my soul is thirsty for you.'*

Psalm 143.6 (GNB)

## EGYPT FACTFILE



Area: 1,001,450 sq km approx. 4x larger than the UK  
Population: 85,294,388 approx. 30% more than UK pop.  
Literacy: 74%  
Languages: Arabic (official), English and French widely understood by educated classes

Look out for your next *Bible a Month* prayer letter which will feature reports from **England and Wales**

Thank you so much for your faithful support. We understand that for some it is still a difficult economic climate so we want to make it easy for you to be giving at a level that is right for you. If you are paying by direct debit and would like to change your gift, please just indicate your new gift amount below, sign it and return to us at the address at the bottom of this prayer letter. Alternatively, please call us on 01793 418222.

I would like to change my monthly gift to .....

Please sign here.....

If you are giving by standing order and would like to change your gift amount, please call us on 01793 418222.