



12-year-old Loub Didier (left) reading the Beembé New Testament to his friend



OUR FOCUS for the next several years is on reaching children with the Bible through a variety of projects.

You will have read about *The Big Mission* in Club Corner of your last *Bible a Month* and there will be lots more about it in *Word in Action* later this month.

Where you see *The Big Mission* logo, your support is helping to open Scripture for children, ensuring the next generation have the Bible.

In this issue you can read an eyewitness report from Grace Smith. She went to the launch of the Beembé New Testament in Congo Brazzaville and met 12-year-old Loub Didier. He shared with Grace the importance of having the Bible in his heart language.

This is an example of *The Big Mission* in practice and how your support is giving children the opportunity to discover Scripture for themselves.

John Ranford
Bible a Month
Co-ordinator



Photo © Bible Society/Grace Smith



By Grace Smith

12-YEAR-OLD LOUB DIDIER places my hand on the Bible and asks me to repeat after him; 'Mu Sa Mu, Wa Mu Bwe Te'. This means New Testament in Beembé, he tells me.

Running his fingers over the embossed lettering of his New Testament, Loub happily shows off his new Bible to his friend. As they sit there on the scruffy curb in the middle of Loutete, a village in Congo Brazzaville, I wonder what impact this book will have on their lives.

Loub's story is a reflection of poverty across rural Congo Brazzaville. After a tragic mining accident that killed his father, Loub and his

two siblings lived with their mother who scraped a living selling vegetables. The family used to sleep on a tattered mat in a one-room, ramshackle house. Life is slowly improving now that his mother has got a job at the local cement factory.

'Things are a bit better now. The house is cemented, with two rooms and a door', he says with pride as he points out his house. His smile is short-lived as he goes on to tell me that the harvest that year has not been good and there is little food at home.

I learn about the harsh working conditions and that his mother often comes home exhausted



Bible Society in focus

REFLECT ON WORLD WAR ONE

Bible Society has produced a website with inspiring stories from World War One and a new book entitled *Hear My Cry* to help communities reflect; to 'give words for when there are no words'.

Hear My Cry is an illustrated collection of psalms, poetry, hymns and prayers, as well as personal stories.

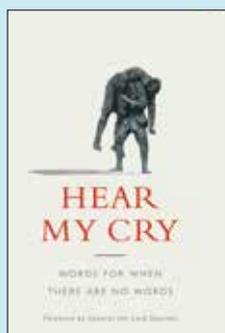
Bible Society distributed some 9 million Bibles, in 80 different languages, between 1914 and 1918, to combatants and prisoners of war on all sides.

This summer, to mark the centenary of the outbreak of war, we're uncovering just what those Bibles meant to young soldiers at the front, to prisoners of war, conscientious objectors, chaplains and those left at home.

Stories include an elderly Bible salesman in Serbia, Wilhelm Lichtenberger, who sold Bibles through out the War. A report states, 'The city has again been under fire for three days and one shell burst very near the Bible Society depot. Wilhelm, however, has quietly continued at his post all through the war, distributing Scriptures – and in a way which would put to shame many a younger man. The day I reached Belgrade he had carried 56lbs of books on his back, for over seven miles, across rough country, at the age of 71.'

Wilhelm's story and more are available on our website biblesociety.org.uk/worldwar1-bam

We hope that *Hear My Cry* will be used at Remembrance Sunday services across the country in November. There are also accompanying resources for schools to help children understand the significance of World War One this year (available from the WW1 website).



Hear My Cry includes selections of psalms, hymns poetry and personal stories from World War One and is available from our online shop: shop.biblesociety.org.uk or call **0800 652 5369**.



and wheezing from the white dust. A nearby factory foreman tells me that workers are paid a mere £20 a month. 'Life is hard here', he says, 'and there's not much hope for the youngsters if they stay'.

'I will make something of my life', interrupts Loub, with a determined look on his face, 'I have this book in Beembé – the only book in our language, and I have it' he says as he proudly holds it up.

Loub benefits from the country's free schooling but he has never owned a book and there is no Bible at home. His mother has taught him to

memorise verses: 'there is a Bible I can use at church, but it's in French. Now I will be able to learn all the verses in Beembé,' he says, 'it will be a wonderful day for my mother. She will be so happy to hear me read the story of Jesus in Beembé. I will read it to my family every night' he says excitedly.

The sound of the station bell signals our imminent departure back to Brazzaville, the capital city. Grabbing my bags I step onto the train. When I look back I see Loub standing like a preacher with an imaginary pulpit, preaching to his friend. Perhaps next time I visit he will be leading his own church congregation.



Celebrations at the launch of the Beembé New Testament in Kolo, Congo Brazzaville

Photo © Bible Society/Grace Smith

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

Once again the Arab Israeli Bible Society partnered with 30 local churches for this year's Mothers' day celebration in March and 1,000 women attended the annual event.

The *Prayers from Psalms* book, a collection of contextualised prayers, was distributed at the celebration. Pastor Salim said 'we thank God for your generosity and for the *Prayers from Psalms*. It really resonated among people in our church because it speaks into everyday life. Every morning these prayers are a source of blessing for us.'

2,000 copies of *Prayers from Psalms* have been distributed in just one week. 'The book only includes 90 of the Psalms, but it has been so well received' said Dina Katanacho, the General Secretary of the Arab Israeli Bible Society. 'We would really like to print the rest.'

Pastor Salim said 'a member of our church called Habeeb told me how great this book is and how it has really helped him grow in his faith. We pray that you will print the second half of the Psalms'.

The Mothers' day celebration is part of the work that Dina is doing to resource and equip Arab Israeli Christians. At Less than 2% of the population, the Arab Israeli Christian community is small and faces lots of challenges. 'Our identity is often misunderstood among both the Jewish and Muslim communities' said Dina. 'That is why it is important to have resources that speak into our context. One pastor said to me that this book is like a mirror to everyone who reads it, because we see ourselves and our emotions, and our spirit is impacted when we are praying through this book.'



The *Prayers from Psalms* book was warmly received at the Mothers' day celebration, with over 2,000 copies being distributed in under a week

Photo © Bible Society/Arab Israeli Bible Society

CONGO BRAZZAVILLE

Photo © Bible Society/Grace Smith



Landry Enzonga, General Secretary of the Bible Society in Congo Brazzaville, at the launch of the Beembé New Testament

THIS TIME LAST YEAR the Beembé New Testament was going through its final revisions and being carefully checked against the original Greek texts using Paratext, our Bible translation computer programme.

You may remember reading the story in *Bible a Month*, that for more than 20 years Evangelical church Pastors

Francois Mabounda and Jacques Mberi along with Catholic priest Alphonse Kombo, dedicated their lives to translating the New Testament into their language, Beembé.

Now – thanks to your committed support – the Beembé New Testament is finished and available as a beautifully bound leather book. People like Loub Didier, who you can read about in Grace's eyewitness report, can now hold the Beembé New Testament in their hands and are able to read Scripture in their heart language for the first time.

Landry Enzonga, General Secretary of the Bible Society in Congo Brazzaville, is thrilled with the launch of the New Testament and said 'thanks to you the dream of having the New Testament in Beembé is a reality! We are very grateful for your support for this project year by year and for your faith in us to bring it to completion. Thank you.'

To discover other ways in which we offer the Bible to the world visit biblesociety.org.uk

CAMBODIA

Photo © Bible Society/Grace Smith



Saliep recently received a New Testament, it is the first book she has ever owned.

SALIEP CAN STILL REMEMBER the first time she heard a Bible story and says it was the best day of her life.

Saliep lives with her mum and sister in northwest Cambodia. They scratch out a living by farming, but Saliep can't afford to go to School and doesn't have any toys. One day she was invited to an event at a nearby church, where she heard her first Bible story.

Recently our *Big Mission* team in Cambodia visited Saliep's church group with a delivery of Bibles to hand out to the children.

Saliep was delighted. 'When Bible Society brought the boxes out of the car, we were intrigued. We had no idea it would be free Scripture for us. My sister and I had never owned a book!'

She said 'I want to thank you. This New Testament is my most prized possession now. I know I will treasure it forever. Thank you!'

Last year, thanks to your support, 3,000 New Testaments and 14,500 Scripture portions were distributed in Cambodia. Over 5,000 people, like Saliep, were able to attend a literacy class to learn to read the Bible.

With family being such a strong theme in Cambodian society, each Bible or New Testament distributed reaches more than just one person. God's Word is placed at the heart of the home.

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray for 12-year-old Loub Didier (see eyewitness report) that his enthusiasm for the Bible would continue and his knowledge of Scripture would be deepened.
- Pray that the Beembé New Testament will resonate with people and bring a fresh understanding as they read God's Word in their heart language.
- Pray for Landry and the team at Bible Society in Congo Brazzaville as they set up literacy classes to help people read the Bible for themselves.
- Pray for the work of translating the Old Testament that gets underway this year. Pray for wisdom, patience and guidance for the translators as they work diligently and faithfully.
- Pray for close collaboration with the churches, and for unity as they work together on the Old Testament translation.

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray for Saliep, that as she reads her New Testament, her faith would be rooted in Scripture.
- Pray for children attending literacy classes that they can learn to read the Bible.
- Pray for Arun Sok Nhep who leads Bible Society's work in Cambodia. Pray for wisdom in directing resources as he leads the Bible work there.
- Give thanks for the team at the Bible Society in Cambodia as they open the Bible to people, many who live in poor, rural areas.
- Pray for the volunteers who teach literacy classes. Pray that as the project expands more teachers can be found and trained to help children read the Bible.

Bible a month

June 2014

'Remember these commands and cherish them. Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working.' Deuteronomy 11.18-19 (GNB)

CONGO BRAZZAVILLE FACTFILE



Area: 342,000 sq km approx. 40% bigger than the UK

Population: 4,492,689 approx. 7% of UK population

Literacy: 83.8 %

Languages: French (official), Beembé, Kikongo, Lingala and Monokutuba

Bible a month

Club Corner

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

This year marks the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.

Over nine million Bibles were distributed through the war years – including pocket new Testaments, Gospels and Psalms.

Bearing these vast numbers in mind, we are thinking there must be thousands of stories of the Bibles impact in existence. Within your own family and homes there may be stories or heirlooms that you can unveil – particularly from those who served in or lived during World War One.

We would love to hear your stories; stories about the Scriptures within the context of World War One and would love you to share them with us!

If you feel you are able please let us know by email bamc@biblesociety.org.uk

To submit your story to Club Corner, please email 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.

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To discover other ways in which we offer the Bible to the world visit biblesociety.org.uk

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Bible a month

July 2014

'Remember that ever since you were a child, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.'

2 Timothy 3.15 (GNB)

CAMBODIA FACTFILE



Area: 181,035 sq km approx. 74% bigger of the UK

Population: 14,701,717 approx. 25% of UK population

Literacy: 73.6%

Languages: Khmer (official), French, English plus 23 indigenous languages

Bible a month

Look out for your next *Bible a Month* prayer letter which will feature reports from **Bolivia** and **Ethiopia**.

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.