



Bible
Society

Photo credit: Layton Thompson



BIBLE A MONTH

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Issue 199

Rekindling a love for Scripture in Jordan

EYEWITNESS
REPORT

“
Thousands of
young Christians
are growing deeper
roots and maturing
in their faith
”

Having battled through the Wednesday evening traffic, our journey punctuated by the occasional blare of a car horn, we arrived at a church in an ancient town to the south-west of Amman in Jordan. Stepping out of the car, I marvelled at the impressive, beautifully-lit edifice with its frescoes and stained glass windows.

I was 2,300 miles from home, but going through the gates and stepping onto the church concourse felt just like home. Mixed groups in their 20s and 30s clustered around, greeting each other with hugs, talking excitedly, catching up on each other's news. I felt a familiar sense of warmth and fellowship.

This would be a heartening sight anywhere in the world, but it's particularly encouraging here. Christians make up only three per cent of the population in Jordan and although there is religious freedom

for Christians to practise their faith, there's been a long-standing trend of young adults abandoning the faith.

'Their experience of church didn't seem to answer the questions they had; many felt they didn't have a personal relationship with the Lord,' explained Rama from our team in Jordan.

Started back in 2013, the focus of the 'Truth for the Youth' project is on rekindling a love for the Scriptures and providing the tools needed to understand and live by it.

Thanks to your generous gifts, the project is able to resource a whole range of opportunities such as an evangelistic summer camp, follow-up discipleship events, 'faith booster' days and leadership training for youth leaders.

Six years into the project, the 'good news group' I attended is evidence of the fruitfulness of this approach.

The Bible study started out as a small Monday night gathering but grew so big that a second one now takes place on Wednesdays.

Soon we were filing into the church and getting comfortable in the pews. I was struck by the stripped-back and authentic nature of the evening, free from gimmicks attempting to tap into popular culture.

Haya, who runs this group with her husband, led us in prayer and worship alongside a guitarist.

Rama translated for me as Haya's husband shared the gospel. He spoke of the value of the cross, the power of the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection. 'These are not just historical incidents,' he said, 'But something that brings real transformation. Our sin was carried to the cross and crucified!'

Going back to Numbers 21 and the story of Moses lifting up the bronze snake so that the Israelites could look to it and be saved, he traced this idea through the New Testament in the Gospel of John and the letters to the Corinthians and Colossians. Jesus, the son of man, was lifted up. 'Will we turn to him and be saved?' came the simple appeal.

The talk was lengthy and deep. Everyone listened intently with Bibles out. Some scribbled in notebooks and there was plenty of laughter too.

It's thanks to your support through Bible a Month and the dedication of our team in Jordan that thousands of young Christians are growing deeper roots and maturing in their faith.

We finished with more songs which Rama explained were all about what Jesus achieved on the cross. I wished I could understand the Arabic on the projector screen and join in with the singing! But the lyrics of *How deep the father's love for us* were swirling round in my head and I sang them in my heart.

Afterwards, chatting enthusiastically with some of the group, I asked if they knew that song and sang it. The guitarist asked if I knew *How great is our God* and there started an impromptu worship session in Arabic and English, segueing into *Above all powers, above all kings*. It was incredible!

Thank you so much for your support, which is making this work possible. Please pray for these young people and ask God to use them as mighty witnesses in their country.



Rama Haddadin, project co-ordinator for Bible Society of Jordan

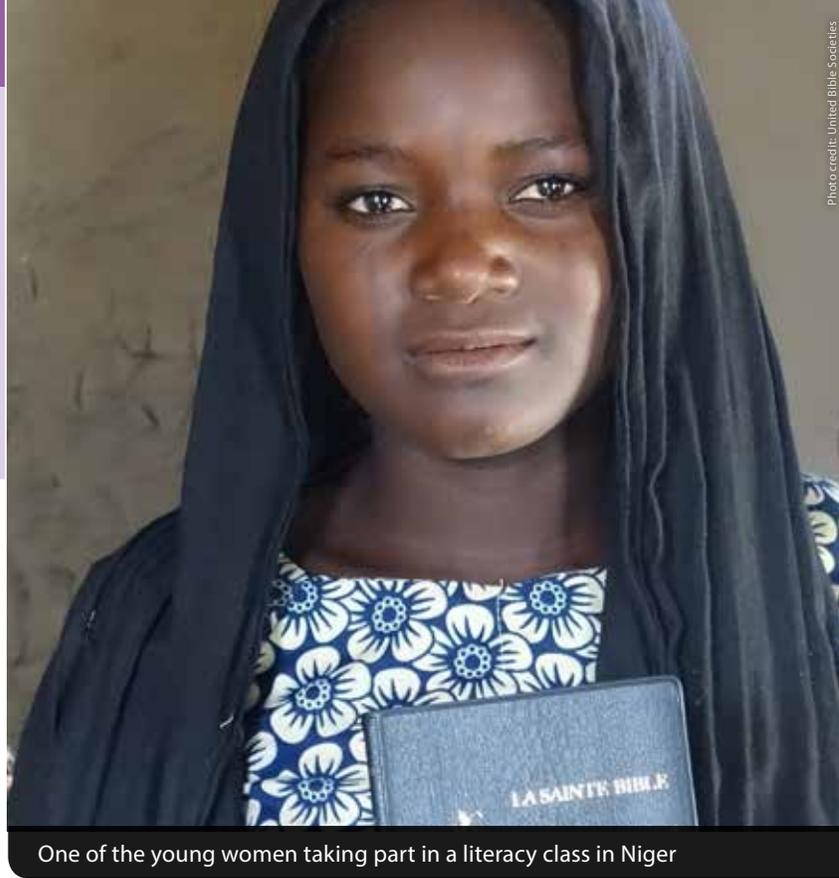


The group enjoying precious worship time

Changing lives through literacy classes in Niger

MISSION UPDATE

“
May God be praised and thank you to everyone who has opened this window of knowledge
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One of the young women taking part in a literacy class in Niger

Photo credit: United Bible Societies

Yamdieba found life tough as a trader in rural Niger. Because he was illiterate, it was hard to remember payment deadlines or the names of people he owed money to. Often, he had problems with customers.

But after Yamdieba attended a literacy class, funded through Bible a Month donations like yours, everything changed. ‘Now I give thanks to God because the confusion is lifted!’ he said. Yamdieba jots down the names of people he trades with, and in church he’s started noting verses so he can re-read them at home. The literacy class taught him to care for the environment too, so he plants a tree for each one he cuts down.

‘May God be praised and thank you to everyone who has opened this window of knowledge,’ added Yamdieba.

More than 400 people have attended our literacy classes in the last 12 months in Niger, one of the world’s poorest nations. They study for six months, in classes of 25 students, and receive workbooks and a Bible as they learn.

Many students are new believers who have listened to the New Testament through our Faith Comes By Hearing programme, and want to be able to read Scripture for themselves.

These classes are vital. Only three out of every ten people in Niger can read and write – and in rural areas, there’s often just one literate person out of ten.

Illiteracy affects everything. Lifting yourself out of poverty is hard when you can’t trade effectively. Health and hygiene will always be poor when you can’t read advice or the date of your doctor’s appointments. And for Christians, illiteracy means missing out on the joy and wisdom of God’s word.

Your Bible a Month support is having a profound impact, transforming the lives of people like Yamdieba, inspiring new believers, and changing communities as they engage with the Bible.

Prayer pointers

Pray that Yamdieba’s faith will be strengthened as he reads more and more of the Bible, and ask that his great enthusiasm for God’s word will continue to flourish.

Ask God to direct Yamdieba’s footsteps in his business so that he will live and work in joy as a positive example of Christian faith.

Thank God for the literacy teachers, for their patience and wisdom in educating the students. Ask the Lord to help them keep going with their important work.

Please pray that Bible-based literacy will transform communities in Niger.

JORDAN

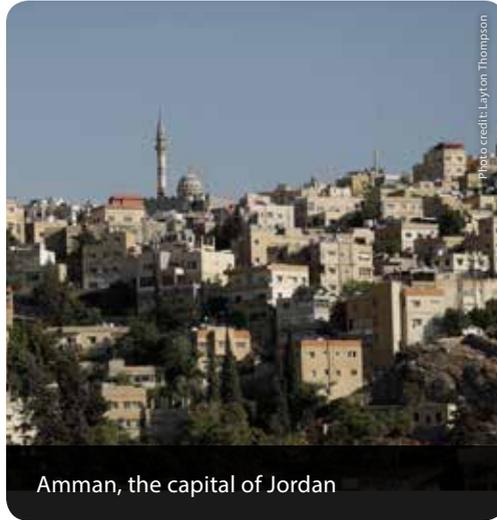
Considered one of the most stable countries in the Middle East, Jordan is providing safe harbour to an estimated 3 million refugees. That's about 30 per cent of its entire population.

Refugees arrive traumatised, with few possessions and little means of generating resources as they are not allowed to work. They hope their stay will be temporary but often face years of uncertainty as the conflict in the region rumbles on.

Jordanian Christians welcome refugees with open and warm hearts. Thanks to your generosity, our team in Jordan can provide crucial support as Christians reflect God's love in practical ways to refugees in their local communities.

The aim is to be 'the hand behind' the church, equipping them to provide

food and shelter, and meet deeper needs for education, health care and trauma healing. Please pray for the relationships and trust this is building between Christians and refugees and for lives to be transformed through this vital display of God's love.



Amman, the capital of Jordan

February Prayer pointers

Ask God to protect the staff and volunteers that make up our team in Jordan and bless the relationship they have with Jordanian churches.

Pray for all Christians in Jordan, that they will continue to be a light in the darkness, displaying God's love in their communities. Help them to abide daily in Scripture so that their foundation in our Lord will be strengthened.

Thank God for the young people being discipled, that they might grow in their faith.

Please pray for the Middle East. Pray for healing and true hope for those who are suffering.

SOUTH SUDAN

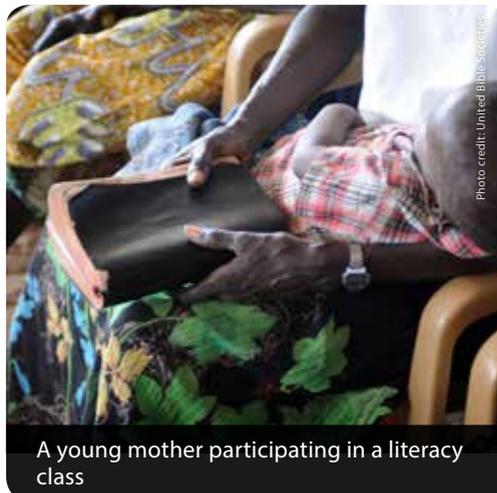
South Sudan is a nation weighed down with challenges. Civil war has gripped the country since 2013, and ethnic violence has killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced many more. It's one of the poorest nations in the world, and its people are among the least happy, according to the UN.

But here, your regular gifts and prayers are making a great difference. You're helping to equip and develop our staff, including Edward Kajivora, one of the most respected Christian leaders in the country and the man who leads our team.

In areas where one in seven people is illiterate, you're helping teach women to read and you're providing them with Bibles. And you're funding a

revision of the Bari language Bible, so a community of half a million people will have access to God's word. Thank you so much!

Please continue to pray for the vital Bible work in this struggling nation.



A young mother participating in a literacy class

March Prayer pointers

Give thanks for the vision and faithfulness of team leader Edward Kajivora. Pray that he will continue to be invigorated as he relies daily on God's strength and grace.

Please pray for peace across the nation, and for an improved economy, infrastructure and education system.

Praise God for the translators working on the Bari Bible revision. Pray for clarity and wisdom within the team.

Please lift up to God the women taking part in the Bible-based literacy classes this year.

JORDAN



FACTFILE



Area

34,495 sq
miles, approx.
37% of UK



Population

10.5 million,
approx. 16%
of UK



Languages

Arabic (official),
English



Literacy rates

95.4%

'And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him.'

COLOSSIANS 2.13 (ESV)

SOUTH SUDAN



FACTFILE



Area

248,777 sq
miles, approx.
2.6 times as
large as UK



Population

10.2 million,
approx. 16%
the size of UK



Languages

English (official),
Arabic, regional
languages



Literacy rates

27%

'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.'

PSALM 119.105 (ESV)

PLAN AHEAD FOR THIS SUMMER!

We love festival season! It's such a great opportunity to share the exciting work you fund. And we couldn't do it without the help of wonderful volunteers like you.

Each year a team of volunteers come to festivals with us to enthuse people about Bible missions around the world. Perhaps you're thinking, 'I could do that!' If so, keep reading!

What would you be doing?

- Representing Bible Society on a stand or serving delicious refreshments in one of our cafés
- Talking to delegates about how they read the Bible
- Offering Bible Society resources
- Serving with staff and other volunteers on a rota system

What do we offer you?

- A free ticket to the festival
- An opportunity to meet like-minded people and put your skills and talents to good use
- Expenses to cover your food, drink, accommodation and travel
- A uniform top to wear during the festival

Opportunities this summer:

23–24 May Big Church Day Out, West Sussex

25 July–8 August New Wine, Peterborough

And for any Welsh-speakers out there...

1–8 August Eistedfodd, Treragon

If you'd like to volunteer, get in touch by calling us at 01793 418222 or emailing volunteers@biblesociety.org.uk Thank you!

YOUR STORIES & COMMENTS

You are part of a community of over 23,000 people, committed to seeing God's word change lives around the world. Here's a snapshot of what some of you have to say!

Kathlyn

I have always thought that the Bible was the most important book ever. If I've helped one person get one and that person found Jesus, I know my life has not been in vain.

Kathleen

I grew up in a Baptist church where we had young people's Scripture Union evenings. It was all a great help to us as young people. Now in my eighties I love it when I hear about Bibles going out to countries that have none.

Bryan

Praise Almighty God that his word is being brought alive to young children. What a privilege and blessing for me to support you in this way.

Beckett

It is a privilege to partner in the work of Bible Society and to see all the people around the world that have been – and are being – blessed through the Word of God.

We love to hear from you. Email us your thoughts at bam@biblesociety.org.uk or use the comments form attached. You can also find an online version of the prayer letter at biblesociety.org.uk/bam