

# Gulf

## FACTFILE



### AREA (all in square miles)

Oman 119,499, Bahrain 293, Kuwait 6,880, Qatar 4,473, UAE 32,278 (UK is 93,630)



### POPULATION

Oman 3.8 m, Bahrain 1.5 m, Kuwait 3 m, Qatar 2.5 m, UAE 9.9 m



### LANGUAGES

Arabic, English, other languages



### LITERACY RATE

Oman 95.7%, Bahrain 97.5%, Kuwait 96.1%, Qatar 93.5%, UAE 93.8%



‘No one could distinguish between the joyful shouts and the crying, because the noise they made was so loud that it could be heard far and wide.’

EZRA 3.13 (GNB)

# Niger

## FACTFILE



### AREA

489,191 square miles, five times bigger than the UK



### POPULATION

25.4 million



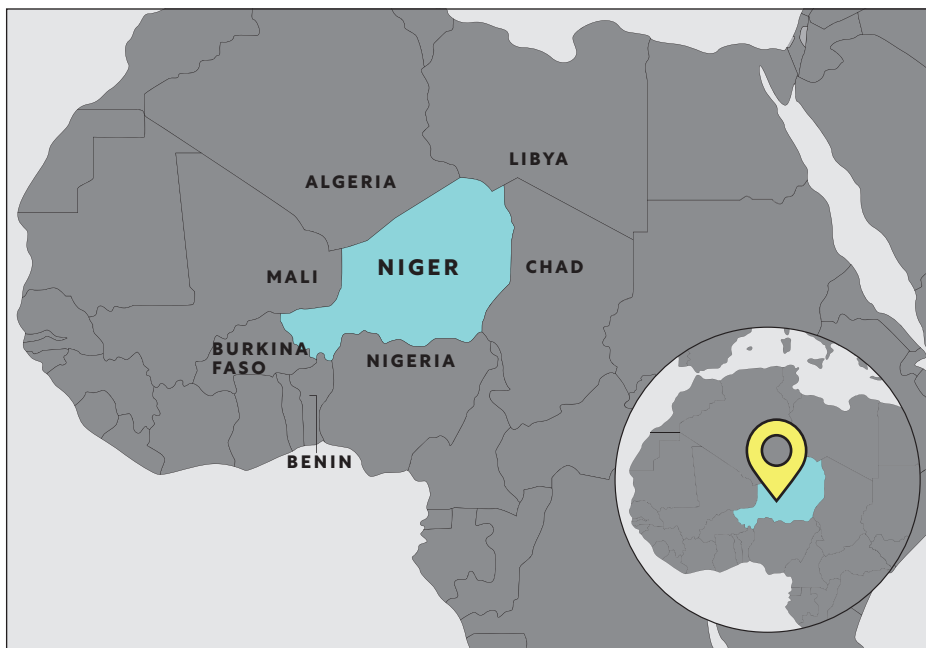
### LANGUAGES

French (official), Hausa, Djerma



### LITERACY RATE

37.3%



‘For the Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, his Spirit fills us with power, love, and self-control.’

2 TIMOTHY 1.7 (GNB)

# Answer to prayer ...

## Libraries in China filled with Bible books



'The best way to thank you for these books is to share the gospel and spread the Christian love to more people in China,' says Ding. Photo credit: UBS-CP

**Ding Yunying's father and father-in-law, both loving people she respected, died within a month of one another.**

Ding was inconsolable until a friend invited her to a local church in China where she found peace and joy through Jesus. She was baptised that same year and felt called to ministry. But there was a hurdle to

overcome, something that required much prayer.

'I was not confident in preaching the gospel and shepherding the believers in my church because I was not equipped. There were hardly any resources to help me fully understand the Scriptures.'

Ding felt led to a place on a lay preaching course at Shaanxi Bible School in northwest China. Here her prayers were answered. The library was brimming with Bible reference books that Bible a Month supporters helped provide.

'Your loving contribution of the library resources gives us an opportunity to learn much. We are seeing them for the first time in our life!'

Ding is now building up her knowledge of the Bible, and her confidence in sharing it with others.

Thanks to your regular giving, Bible Society partners with theological seminaries and Bible Schools in China on a long-term basis.

### OCTOBER PRAYERS

Lay preachers are crucial in China as there is only one ordained minister for every 6,700 Christians on average. Pray that more Christians in China will feel confident to enter the mission field, knowing they have the full prayerful backing of Bible a Month supporters.

Thank God for the success of Bible Society's partnerships with Bible colleges in China. Pray for the many projects we are currently engaged in to supply even more resources.

Pray for a stable relationship between Bible mission in China and the authorities. Pray that any obstacles to our work will be overcome.

## Adventure with Romans

**Have you climbed the mountain that is Paul's letter to the Romans? You wouldn't believe the view from the top.**

Countless people – starting with the letter's first readers 2,000 years ago and running through theologians to perhaps the person sitting next to you on a Sunday – have all found it life-changing. Sir David Suchet became a Christian reading Romans in a hotel room. But it's a hard trip and well worth taking a guide.

Dr Andrew Ollerton, author of *The Bible Course*, has created *The Romans Course* with Bible Society to release the power of this challenging and rewarding piece of Scripture for you and your church.

Explore Romans through ten sessions, with half-hour teaching films recorded in Rome and extra resources for church leaders.

Try the first session for free right now at [biblesociety.org.uk/theromanscourse](https://biblesociety.org.uk/theromanscourse)

**Explore the letter to the Romans**

**The Romans Course**



MIX  
Paper from  
responsible sources  
FSC® C022174





# Bible a Month

AUTUMN 2023 | AUG / SEP / OCT | ISSUE 218



Young Nepali women from migrant-worker families receive Scriptures at the Bible Tent set up by Bible Society in Salalah, Oman. Photos: Bible Society in the Gulf

## Eyewitness Report

*'Migrant workers are in dire need to have Jesus in their lives. Bible Society is here for them.'*



**By Lydia Abraham**

Bible Society representative in Oman

## Bibles galore in the Gulf



It is incredibly exciting for me every time a little child holds his or her first colourful Bible in their hands, and I see the innocent eagerness in their eyes to learn more about the faith that we teach them in Sunday school.

Every time a housemaid picks up her first copy of the Bible in her own language and feels such a joy that she hugs it tightly, I say a little prayer.

When someone so far away from home is surprised they can find a Bible in Kiswahili or when a pastor asks for a Bible in Kannada and hands it to a new believer from Andhra Pradesh, I praise the Lord for translators.

And I thank God for supporters such as you at Bible a Month whose regular contributions help all of this Bible work take place.

Indeed, we are not simply providing Bibles in many languages to the Christian population here in Oman, we are in some form aiding them in their decision to live a life of faith and also in furthering their knowledge of the hope that is found in Christ. I hope and pray that every single copy of the word of God finds a suitable individual for whom this will be a source of hope in the dire times of their life.

Scripture distribution is at the core of what the Bible Society in the Gulf is about. The challenge is to



always make sure that our centres are constantly stocked with Bibles and New Testaments not in one, two, or three different languages but in more than 60 different languages. But we are used to this work, we love it, and we are grateful that we have always been able to support all the churches in the Gulf with all their Scripture needs.

**‘We try to provide Bibles to everyone because many cannot afford to buy them.’**

We distribute Bibles in English, German, Hindi, Kannada, Kiswahili, Malayalam, Nepali, Punjabi, Sinhala, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and, well, the list goes on.

The fundamental aspect of the Scripture distribution ministry is the impact it has on its recipients and the changes Bible engagement makes in peoples’ lives. Migrant workers make up 95 per cent of congregations here and due to

social and economic circumstances they are under a lot of pressure (see Country Profile) and are in dire need of Jesus. Bible Society in the Gulf is here for them.

Pastor Ricardo, of the Open Bible Baptist Church, told me, ‘We are growing amazingly in our ministry as a result of the books and the Scriptures that Bible Society is providing. In Oman, it is really difficult to find good Christian reading material and resources, and the Bible Society is such a blessing to us. Your love for Jesus is evident and it overflows. For this reason, we are eternally grateful. As we all wait for the Lord’s return may we all continue to be a blessing and reach and win more lost souls at any cost in this region.’

Theresa, a church worker at the Living Waters International Church, touched on the struggle of migrant workers to make ends meet. ‘We try to provide Bibles to everyone because many cannot afford to buy them,’ she said. ‘We are thankful to the Bible Society that runs the shop at the local compound.’

One way to reflect God’s love in a tangible way is by meeting peoples’ needs. Many migrant workers experience social and financial difficulties, and when the challenge seems overwhelming, they become depressed.

God draws these people to us to meet their immediate needs. However, we know that it is not primarily the immediate basic needs they need but a provision that will last for eternity - Jesus. By sharing God’s word with them, it brings them new hope and an assured future.

**‘Bible Society centres are constantly stocked with Bibles in more than 60 languages.’**

We definitely could not have reached so many with the word of God if it were not for the vision and mission-mindedness of Bible a Month supporters. May God bless you.



This Nepali migrant worker was delighted to pick up a Bible in her own language at Bible Society’s tent in Salalah, Oman.



Your support means the Bible Society shop in Oman is always stacked with Scriptures in more than 60 languages.





Thanks to your support, Hassia in Niger can now read Bible stories to her children.  
Photo credit: Paul Kiema / Bible Society

## Mission Update

*'The interaction with my Bible has transformed the life of people around me.'*

**Hassia was finding it hard to grow her faith in Jesus in a dusty sub-Saharan village in the Muslim-majority West African country of Niger.**

The 40-year-old mother had a Bible in the Hausa language, courtesy of Bible Society, but she was unable to read it. 'If I wanted to hear a passage I'd have to call out to my children to read it to me,' she says.

That was before she attended one of the Bible-based literacy classes that are part of a long-term project supported by your regular giving through Bible a Month.

## 'Before it was only children who read the Bible'



'Before it was only the children who read the Bible to us during our morning prayers, but now I know how to read and it's me in person who reads the Bible, and I tell you, it has transformed my spiritual life and I have come closer to the Lord through his word,' she says.

More children now are learning to read and write at school, but many adults, especially in rural areas, have received little to no formal education. In rural regions of Niger, such as Hassia's village, up to 92 per cent of the community are illiterate.

Hassia says her ability to read the Scriptures has now impacted her family and friends. 'The interaction with my Bible has transformed the life of people around me.

'Because now I understand what I read I am able to guide the children to understand too, and help my husband read and remember the Scriptures as we study them together,' she says.

Since 2019, 3,135 people have learned how to read and write through the

Bible-based literacy classes. The classes enable people to read God's word and tell others about the good news.

One of the aims of the project is to help churches grow by educating Christians in the country so that they can play greater roles in society.

The Bible is giving people like Hassia hope in a society that is targeted by Islamist extremists, and is plagued by drought and poverty.

**The Bible is giving people like Hassia hope in a society that is targeted by Islamist extremists.**

'My faith has really grown through reading and meditating on the word of God every day, which I am now able to do. Thank you for helping us,' says Hassia.

**Story by Simon Bartz**

# Gulf



Migrant workers worship in a cramped space in the Gulf.

**Thanks to your support at Bible a Month we were able to help provide copies of John's Gospel to thousands of migrant workers and football fans in Qatar during the FIFA World Cup Finals.**

The football might be over, but the suffering of migrant workers in the region continues. They work long hours for low wages, and most are stuck in migrant camps outside of regular society.

Your support in providing them with Bibles is crucial, but they also require guidance, and thanks to you, training courses for pastors and other Scripture resources continue to be regularly provided in Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

This year a series of seminars focuses on questions Jesus asked during his ministry, even when he was a child (Luke 2.49).

Budding Bible-worker Ramesh said of the seminar, 'What was driven home to me is that the believer is a servant of God, and that he has to do God's work according to the gift given by the Holy Spirit. I decided to start praying to see what gift I have to serve the Lord. Thank you Bible Society supporters for this wonderful teaching.'

## AUGUST PRAYERS

Pray for pastors in the Gulf region, that they will be firmly grounded in the true teachings of the Bible. Pray that their faith will be strengthened as their understanding of the Scriptures grows.

Pray for Ramesh (and the hundreds of others who attend the seminars), that the Holy Spirit will work through him as he ministers to others.

Pray that more laws will be passed that improve the living conditions of migrant workers.

# Niger



The church in Niger is growing, and one of the reasons for this is your support of Bible-based literacy classes. Photo credit: Hama Yaye / Bible Society

**Niger is one of the poorest nations in Africa and one of the toughest for Christians, who face the threat of persecution from Islamist extremists.**

More than 99 per cent of the population are Muslim, but you are supporting a growing Christian minority through our literacy project.

Christians, and interested nonbelievers, attend Bible-based

literacy classes that enable them to read the Bible and study other topics such as agriculture and animal husbandry. This initiative enables them to familiarise themselves with God's word, as well as giving them dignity and equipping them with practical tools to play an active role in the economy.

Amina M, aged 42, said, 'I didn't feel like working, but now I can read and write and I have a burning desire to do something in my life. Thank God for this training!'

Since 2019, 3,135 people have attended classes. We plan to reach 5,500 in total.

We also support the equipping of Sunday school teachers in Niger and a family Bible-reading programme. None of this would be possible without your continued kind giving.

## SEPTEMBER PRAYERS

Thank God for the success of the literacy project. Pray that those who can now read and write will be blessings to their communities and guide people to Jesus.

Ask God to bless those Christians who are training to be educators and supervisors in the literacy programme.

The wife of Hama Yaye, Bible Society leader in Niger, tragically died recently after a sudden illness. Please pray for comfort and strength for Hama and their three children.