



Our team in Republic of Congo are hoping to reach 100,000 people with the Beembe Old Testament.



Photo © Bible Society

Hope in the toughest places in Congo

By Oldi Morava

In this issue we'll hear reports of how the Bible is being brought to life for people in the toughest situations. My colleague Oldi reports on his visit to our team in Republic of Congo and we've got an update on our Bible distribution work in migrant churches in Qatar.



We couldn't do any of this work without your gifts. Thank you so much for your prayer and donations. Together we'll continue to see lives changed for good as the Bible is brought to life at home and around the world.

John Ranford
Bible a Month
Co-ordinator

After flying for more than seven hours we were finally approaching Republic of Congo (also known as Congo-Brazzaville). I was excited to visit this country for the first time, and transfixed by the view. I was greeted by an ocean of greenery as the tropical jungle spread out as far as I could see.

Congo is blessed with tremendous natural resources and beauty, but its long history of political unrest and civil war has left a significant scar on its people and economy. My colleague Liz and I had tried to visit our team in Congo last November, but an escalation of civil unrest forced us to cancel the trip at the last minute. For our second attempt we were restricted to only visiting the capital – Brazzaville.

In the middle of these unsettling times, Landry, who leads our work in Congo, remains a confident and wise visionary. Every morning he leads his staff members in devotions. We joined them in reading

the Bible, reflecting and praying for the work of Bible Society and the severe situation in the country.

I was deeply touched by their unwavering faith that the word of God has the power to change people's lives and their country. This hope permeates and sustains all their mission activities. And over the last few years this work has expanded from Bible translation to trauma healing and the Good Samaritan project.

I was privileged to meet people who are currently translating the Bible into four local languages, Beembe, Villi, Mbosi and Lari. When I asked what the main challenges in translating the Bible were, a translator pointed out that local languages display various nuances according to the tribal or geographic use. So making decisions on the suitable words is important to reduce the likelihood of tribal or ethnic tensions resurfacing.

In focus

Get inspired this Bible Sunday

Bible Sunday is all about bringing the Bible to life at home and around the world. And we'd love you to join us as we celebrate the Bible and its amazing message.

We've put together a range of inspiring resources for you and your church this Bible Sunday. These resources include a sermon reflection, all-age activities, prayers and a film. Through the resources you'll hear stories from people around the world who have found the Bible to be essential to them in the challenges they face.

And we'll be inviting you to live out the message of the Bible with thousands of others in the run up to Christmas through our #AdventChallenge. You'll be a living example of our conviction that when people engage with the Bible lives can change – for good.

Each day of December until Christmas you'll be challenged to positively impact others in practical ways, like sending Christmas cards to neighbours you don't know, or recycling as much as you can. Over 5,500 people joined in last year – don't miss your chance to be a part of it!

This year Bible Sunday is on 23rd of October. To join the celebrations sign up now at biblesunday.org.uk and we'll let you know when the resources are available to download.

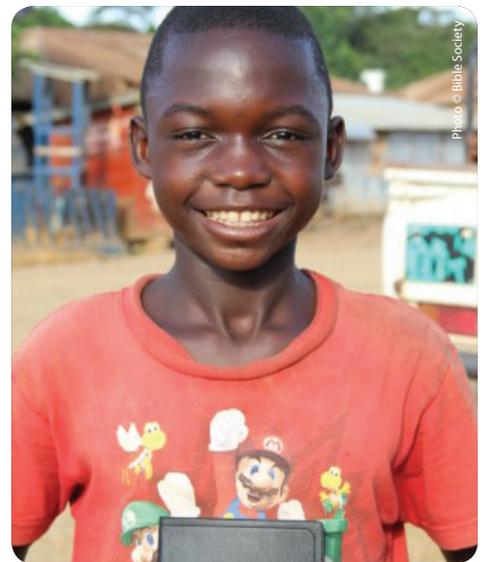


We'd love you to join us as we share our excitement about the Bible and its message – sign up now at biblesunday.org.uk.

Here I thought was a glimpse of God's people wrestling together to reconcile their church and ethnic identities for the sake of bringing the Bible to their language. What an amazing and humbling task!

What's more I was amazed to hear that, despite the ongoing political problems, Landry's team is struggling to keep up with demand for Bibles. Their warehouse is often empty before the next delivery.

At the end of our visit we travelled to the outskirts of the capital (the furthest we were allowed to go). And after a very bumpy journey we arrived at a sports centre to see one of the Good Samaritan projects. This is a project that serves orphans and vulnerable children that have been infected or affected by HIV. We were met by 80 children who were full of joy and enthusiasm. For two hours we heard many stories of how their encounter with the word of God through the programme had changed them. I remember a little girl who shared how before she joined the programme she used to be bitter and angry, but now she has found joy and friendship.



Congolese boy receiving a Beembe New Testament.

After a week we left Republic of Congo feeling encouraged to see how God is at work even during some of the darkest moments in the country. And with a sense of gratitude from our colleagues, that we're standing with them and not forgetting their struggles and challenges.

Just as Landry prays with his team each morning, please pray with them for all their work this month.

Scriptures for migrants in Qatar

Qatar hasn't experienced unrest on the scale of Syria, Iraq, or some other Middle Eastern countries – but it's definitely not free from problems. There are many migrant workers living in Qatar – in fact over half of the population is non-Qatari. Many of these people are paid poorly and feel alienated from the people around them.

Foreign workers in Qatar are a very diverse group from places like Yemen, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and many more. Some of these people are Christians but the Bible is not readily available to them because of restrictions on religious freedom. And if the Bible is available to them it's likely in Arabic – a language that many ex-pats don't speak.

So our team in Qatar is addressing the need in migrant churches by providing them with Bibles and audio Bibles. We should reach 8,000 migrant workers this year.

Linus* is a church leader in Qatar and told us how excited he was that the Bible had been brought to the lives of his congregation. He told us, 'This project has touched my heart a lot. Only the word of God can help these migrant workers. It will help them keep their eyes on Jesus so that they can endure hardship.'

Thanks to your generous support many people in Qatar have the opportunity to be changed as God speaks to them through the Bible in a language they can understand.

Please pray for our team in Qatar as they work hard to offer the Bible to these people far from home.

*Name changed to protect identity.



A man receiving an audio Bible at a migrant church in Qatar.

Republic of Congo

October 2016

Thousands of children across Africa are orphaned every year as their parents pass away because of HIV/AIDS. In Republic of Congo nearly 30% of all orphans are orphaned this way. So Landry and the team in Congo are addressing this need by running our Good Samaritan programme for children.

The Good Samaritan programme is a Bible-based course running in 19 African countries which gives teaching and support to people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. During the course people learn about health, hygiene and citizenship using Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan in the hope of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in the future.

Our team in Republic of Congo aim to run the Good Samaritan programme for 5,000 children this year and distribute 7,000 booklets about health and hygiene along with Luke's Gospels.

Pray with us that as these children are taught about HIV/AIDS and begin engaging with the Bible that their lives would change – for good.



Children from the Good Samaritan programme in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.

Prayer pointers

- Ask God that all the parties involved in the civil and political tension in Republic of Congo will work together for the good of the people.
- Thank God for our translators. Pray for them to have wisdom in solving complex and difficult linguistic challenges.
- Thank God for the Good Samaritan programme. Pray that we'd be able to bring God's love and hope to more children affected by HIV/AIDS.
- Pray that Landry and his team would grow their infrastructure so they can bring the Bible to life for the people around them.

Ethiopia

November 2016

Ethiopia has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world. So our team in Ethiopia wants to bring the Bible to thousands of people through our Faith Comes By Hearing programme.

We provide illiterate people in Ethiopia with Proclaimer audio Bibles so they can listen to Scripture and have the opportunity to engage with the Bible in an accessible way. We already have audio Bibles in Amharic – Ethiopia's main language – but this year our team is translating and producing audio Bibles in minority languages like Borana too.

As Hirpo listened to the Bible in his listening group, he told us that his community's encounter with the Bible had changed the way people thought. When talking about the impact of Faith Comes By Hearing on his listening group he said people 'discovered the word of God is shaping our spiritual, moral and social life. It is a guide for us.'



We're aiming to set up 1,000 listening groups in Ethiopia this year.

Prayer pointers

- Give thanks for the thousands of people who have already received Proclaimer audio Bibles in Amharic. Pray that as people continue to listen to the Bible they would be transformed.
- Pray that the new minority language translations will be completed on time and that as the listening groups are set up people will be changed as God speaks to them through the Bible.
- Pray that our team in Ethiopia would have the strength necessary to do their work and that through God's help they'd be able to set up 1,000 new listening groups.

Republic of Congo

'Most important of all, you must sincerely love each other, because love wipes away many sins.'

1 Peter 4.8 (CEV)

Factfile



Area – 342,000 sq km approx. 1.4x larger than UK

Population – 4,448,000 approx. 7% of UK population

Literacy rate – 82.8%

Languages – French (official), Kituba, Lingala, Beembe, Mbosi and other local languages.

Club Corner

A lasting legacy

David Petch's first memory of his wife of 60 years, Mary, was seeing her pedalling round North Yorkshire country lanes on her bike collecting money for Bible Society. Now he's leaving us a gift in her memory.

'She was always a great lover of the Bible,' said David. 'She was the secretary of the local Bible Society group in Great Ayton, and she always found space in the day for her quiet time.'

David cared for Mary throughout her illness, until her death at home on 2 January 2015. He added, 'I couldn't think of a better way of using her money than to pass it on to a charity that was an important part of her life.'

Howard Barker Head of Legacy Giving said, 'We're grateful to all our supporters who bless us with a gift in memory of a loved one. If you'd like information about leaving a gift in memory of a loved one please contact me on 01793 418222 or inmem@biblesociety.org.uk'

Ethiopia

'No one can have faith without hearing the message about Christ.'

Romans 10.17 (CEV)

Factfile



Area – 1,104,000 sq km approx. 4.5x larger than UK

Population – 94,100,000 approx. 1.5x larger than UK

Literacy rate – 39%

Languages – Amharic (official), Oromo, English and other local languages.

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

Thank you so much for your support which is bringing the Bible to life at home and around the world.

Remember that if your circumstances change you can alter your gift at any time. To increase or decrease your regular donation call us on 01793 418222.

If you're paying by direct debit you can fill in the form below and post it to us at Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7DG.

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