



Local children at a rural Bible-based literacy programme in Mozambique.



One of the things I love about this newsletter is getting to share with you how far your gift is reaching and having an impact around the world.



In this edition, hear from my colleague Ken about how your support is enabling new Bible work in Mozambique, and find out about an exciting new mission we're supporting here at home too.

It may be the 40th year of *Bible a Month*, but your gift is helping us continue to connect people to the Bible in brand new ways. Thank you so much.



John Ranford
Bible a Month
Co-ordinator

I arrived in Maputo, in the south of Mozambique, to meet our team there for the first time at the end of last year. Maputo is a beautiful modern African city. It's full of warmth and energy, overlooking the Indian Ocean.

We have just begun a new partnership with the team in Mozambique which I'm really excited about. It will mean more people have access to the Bible, more Bible translations and more help for the marginalised and displaced. And this has been made possible because of your generous gifts. But nevertheless, there are many challenges affecting Bible work in Mozambique.

Firstly, this is a huge country. From Maputo to Pemba, in the north, it's 1,500 miles. That's Land's End to John O'Groats and back again. Around 26 million people live here – less than half the population of the UK – and altogether they speak more than 40 languages!

Our team in Mozambique only has two working vehicles to cover the entirety of this vast country. So effective Bible distribution is a pressing issue. Areas in the north are currently looking to the neighbouring countries of Malawi and Zambia to get Bibles.

With so many languages spoken across the country, translation is also one of our primary focuses for the team. Ten translations are currently underway.

On a very basic level, our team lack infrastructure. They are scattered between an office in downtown Maputo, a warehouse and Bible shop, and an apartment used by translators. Bibles are stored in a warehouse located at a residential block. Due to the faulty drainage system, there's persistent leakage which could certainly destroy the Bible stock.

I spent three intense days with the team preparing their 2017 project plan for Bible

In focus

Mission to Wales

This summer and autumn, we are supporting New Wine Cymru in a mission to Wales. Teams of ordinary Christians from many different churches and denominations across Wales are being trained up before going into their communities to share the message of the Bible.

We are really excited about this new collaboration: it is the first of many – as we seek to engage and support every denomination of the Church in its mission.

As we go to press in mid-July, over 2,500 people have responded during just two weeks of street work. There is a real sense of faith and expectation amongst the team about what God wants to do in this generation.

We have produced a special edition of Luke and Acts in English and Welsh, which is being given out free of charge to anyone who wants one.

We've also worked with New Wine Cymru to produce a discipleship booklet called *Six* for people who respond on the streets as well as providing print copies of mission material to be used by church teams.

Please pray for great conversations, for openness for wisdom and protection. Pray for a fruitful and growing church in Wales and across our nation.



work. We pulled out a map and talked about what we could do right across the country. They told me they had prayed for this kind of support and help, and it's thanks to your gifts that it's now possible.

Our plan is to create regional hubs to help Bible work grow across Mozambique – offices that replicate the Maputo operation – to run Bible distribution, translation and literacy programmes, as well as contextualised programmes.

For example, in Tete, in the north, we'll run Bible-based trauma healing groups to minister to the many displaced people who fled there during the civil war. In Beira, a strategic port city towards the middle of the country, we'll run programmes which share the Bible with those of other faiths.

This way, we won't just have a Bible Society of Maputo, we'll genuinely have a Bible Society for the whole of Mozambique. We want to set up the first Bible hub in 2017, and have at least two others by 2022.



Ken (top left) with the team at the Bible Society in Mozambique during his visit last year

The opportunities for mission are enormous in Mozambique. We're right at the beginning of our five-year programme with our colleagues there, and there is huge potential. But it will be a big challenge.

Thank you for your gifts, which are enabling this partnership to grow. And please hold the team in Mozambique in your prayers as together we approach this major expansion and growth, to share the Bible more widely in Africa.

Fleeing Syria to Jordan

Oum Ousama's voice shakes as she talks about happier days in her home in Syria, before the war.

'We were happier in Syria,' she says. 'It's really difficult to think about Syria and all that destruction as my relatives are still there,' she adds. 'We came here alone and lonely, and so all I can do is pray that our family has survived. Because of the war our family is scattered around the world. That's very painful.'

Oum Ousama (67) is one of some 20,000 refugees from Syria who have fled to the border regions in northern Jordan.

Here, she was among some 500 families who are currently receiving pastoral care, monthly food rations and basic provisions such as mattresses and second-hand clothes from the local church, which we support.

Evangelism is outlawed in this predominantly Muslim society. But kindness and generosity aren't. And Jordanians are known for their hospitality. The Christians of Jordan are no exception.

So, perhaps it's not surprising that something else is happening here: people from a Muslim background are finding faith in Christ. Oum Ousama is one of them.

'Yes, they brought food packages,' she says of the local Christians who we work with, 'but what I really cared about was the spiritual help that I received. Believing in the Lord is all the money that you need.'

'It has made such a difference to know that God is always with me. My three daughters have accepted Jesus Christ as their saviour. It's enough that he is with us always. I'm thankful for that.'

Thanks to your generosity, Oum Ousama has been given a Bible. She says that her favourite passage is the Lord's Prayer, and recites it in Arabic.

'It connects me with the Lord and it makes me feel that I am not in the world any more. It is my daily prayer,' she says.



Oum Ousama with her Arabic Bible.

Photo © Claire Kendall

Mozambique

August 2017

Forty three languages are spoken in Mozambique, making Bible translation one of the primary focuses for our team there. Currently there are ten translation projects underway. One of those is a translation project for the Changana language group based in southern Mozambique.

There are an estimated 2.1 million Changana speakers in Mozambique – that’s roughly two thirds the amount of people in the whole of Wales. Changana people have a passion for their language and are longing for their first ever complete Bible.

It is expected that the Bible for the Changana people will launch in 2019. The team in Mozambique hope to distribute at least 7,500 copies every year after the launch.

The new Bible will increase accessibility and Bible literacy for the Changana tribe, as well as helping Christians to interpret and wrestle with theological questions. It will help them grow in faith and discipleship. Thank you so much for your regular gift which will help to bring the Bible to life for the Changana people and many others across Mozambique.



The new Gitonga Bible was launched in Mozambique in 2016, and was so popular it sold out almost immediately.

Prayer pointers

- Pray that the translation team would be energised as they work to translate the Bible into more languages.
- Pray for protection over the Bible stock in the main warehouse that is at risk of damage by leakage from the faulty drainage system. Pray that the leak would be fixed.
- Pray for wisdom for the local team as they set-up their regional Bible hubs to reach more people with the word of God.
- Give thanks for the many opportunities for mission across this vast country and pray for the team as they grow.

Serbia

September 2017

The word of God was recently brought to the Romani people through the four Gospels and a children’s Bible. Soon they will have the whole New Testament for the first time in their history.

Our team in Serbia is now helping young Romani people acquire literacy skills, as well as engaging them with the word of God. Romani children have difficulties in learning and integrating into society, which is why the team in Serbia are working hard to help them, through the Bible.

Misa Bakic, who leads the work in Serbia, said, ‘It is a great pleasure and privilege to teach children their native language through the Bible texts. They are very happy because they praise the Lord through this learning. Every time they meet me on the street they run after me, asking me about the next class.’

‘During these classes they learn Bible stories, they learn about the true values, morality, and family values. The Bible is the root that will give stability to these children throughout their lives.’

There has been a four times increase in the number of children finishing their school grade since last year, as well as more young people completing Bible schools. These children now have a brighter future.



Romani young people with their children’s Bibles.

Prayer pointers

- Pray that the Bible message would have a great impact on Romani children.
- Give thanks for the success of the literacy program in helping more children finish their school grade and engage with the Bible.
- Pray for the translation work on the New Testament in the Roma language, that all Roma people would have the word of God in their own language.
- Give thanks for Misa Bakic and pray for his work with Romani youth.

Mozambique

'Then he told them: Go and preach the good news to everyone in the world.'

Mark 16.15 (CEV)

Factfile



Area – 799, 380 sq km, approx. 3.3x larger than UK

Population – 25.9 million, approx. 40% of UK

Literacy rate – 58.8%

Languages – Portuguese (official), Emakhuwa, other local languages

Club Corner

More than 40 years

In this 40th year of *Bible a Month*, we are so grateful for all that has been given and done over the last four decades. We're also excited at what is still ahead, and legacies help ensure the work can continue for the years to come.

Eric and Violet Roulet felt called by God to help translate the Bible for Fulfulde-speakers in Cameroon, Africa.

Eric once wrote, 'No foreign language, no matter how well it may be spoken, can quite replace one's mother tongue in understanding the message of the gospel.'

Their work came to fruition in 1963, when the New Testament in Fulfulde was published. Eric died in 1984, and when Violet passed away in 2010, she left a legacy.

Their gift went directly to Cameroon, to continue the work the couple began more than half a century earlier.

In 2014, the new Bible was finally completed and launched. Today, more than 4.6 million Fulfulde-speakers can read and hear God's word in their heart language, thanks to this couple's vision, faithfulness and generosity.

Your legacy could help reach many more lives with God's word, just like Eric and Violet. Find out more by visiting biblesociety.org.uk/legacy

Serbia

'They shall be like trees growing beside a stream – trees with roots that reach down to the water, and with leaves that are always green.'

Jeremiah 17.8 (CEV)

Factfile



Area – 77, 474 sq km, approx. 32% of UK

Population – 7.1 million, approx. 11% of UK

Literacy rate – 98.1%

Languages – Serbian (official), Hungarian, Bosnian, Romani

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

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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