



Bible  
Society

# wordinaction



**4** A heart for China since 1800

**6** God is beyond bars

**8** Exciting expansions for Open the Book

## Chat with our Chief Exec



Photography by Layton Thompson

**Q: As we celebrate the centenary of the completed translation of the Chinese Union Version of the Bible in 1919, what can we pray for China in their future?**

A: What strikes any visitor to China is the vibrancy and growth of the Church there, but also the incredibly complex and challenging environment in which the Church operates. We believe it's vital that the Chinese Church's roots go really deep into Scripture and into Jesus, through a deep understanding and rootedness in the Bible. That's what will enable them to stand under the pressure they're under and amidst the challenges that they face.

We pray for open hearts for Chinese Christians, church leaders and the government. We pray for an openness amongst the government leaders that we interact with to see that the Church is not the enemy of order and stability in China, but it's actually the underpinning of stability in society.

We pray for the government to be willing to allow the Church to engage properly with the Bible as Chinese people. We are committed to people reading the Scriptures within their own cultural context.

**Q: We are inspired by the work of the Earl of Shaftesbury as he brought about prison reform in the 1800s. How can we catalyse change through our prison work?**

A: I was powerfully impacted by my experience of visiting prisoners in Guatemala in a maximum security prison for ex-gang members. These were prisoners who had been involved in drug-connected violent crime who had very little freedom and yet, because of the work of Bible Society, there was an inner freedom that they had discovered in encountering God through the Scriptures.

I think our prison work, abroad and in this country, is remarkable in that the Gospel is an incredibly liberating message, even for those who are in prison. Psalm 107 is a wonderful Psalm about those who were cast in gloom and imprisoned, and how God's presence and word brings liberation. We want to see people whose lives have led them to suffer external restriction on their freedom being in a position to encounter an enormous inner freedom through the Scriptures, which will then work its way out into every aspect of their lives.

*We're delighted to send you the summer edition of Word in Action in biodegradable wrap, there are details of how you can dispose of it on page 15.*



*I was moved by the photo on the front cover of the man with tears in his eyes as he holds his first Bible in the minority language of Black Yi. It spoke powerfully to me of how God speaks to us through his word. I pray you are inspired by moving stories from around the world and here at home where God is at work. Thank you so much for your prayers and support, we are so grateful to each of you!*

*Every blessing*

*Larissa  
Word in Action editor*

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## Jonah and the Bony-Finned Asteroid Fish

If you were asked to imagine a mix of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, The Discworld Series and the sci-fi film *The Fifth Element* – with perhaps a touch of *The Wizard of Oz* – which Bible character would immediately spring to mind?

*Jonah and the Bony-Finned Asteroid Fish*, by author Jo Sheringham, is a humorous, futuristic retelling of the story of Jonah that takes it well beyond the realm of the children's Sunday school tale. In this version, God's call to Jonah arrives on the screen of a rusty metal message-bot, and Jonah responds by running away to the space-port of Joppa, Planetary Gateway to the Stars, where he boards a scruffy haulage cruiser called Sheol II, headed for the far-flung planet of Tarshish. It proves to be a bad move!

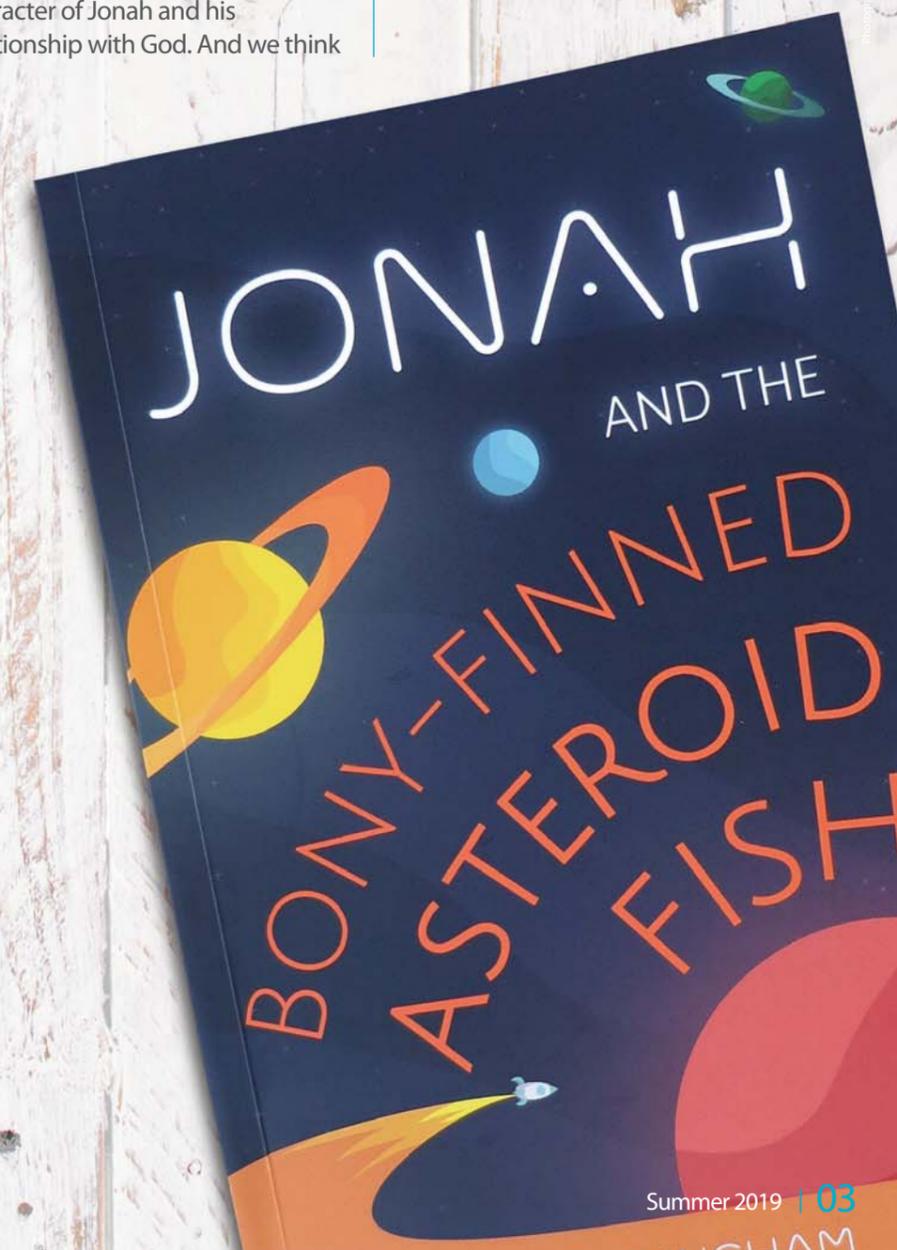
The Old Testament mentions Jonah in just one other place outside the book that bears his name. 2 Kings 14.25 tells how Jonah, son of Amittai, gave an important message from God to King Jeroboam II of Israel. So Jonah was once a prophet to royalty and Jo Sheringham uses this as an important bit of background to her book. In this story, his days of being involved in high-level politics are well behind him. He's 'semi-retired', and really can't be bothered to get involved in the messy, dangerous business of 'prophesying' again. But God knows Jonah better than he knows himself. There's one more big adventure in store for him – one more chance to prophesy to royalty – only this time it's going to be the king of Nineveh, not the king of Israel.

The characters Jonah meets along the way (including the no-nonsense captain and crew of Sheol II, the king of Nineveh in his hermetically sealed chamber, the post-bot on the cold outskirts of the city) all teach him something important about the heart of God and the prophet's role.

So what's the value of a Bible story retelling like this? We hope it will help some readers to look at an over-familiar story with fresh eyes and think more deeply about the character of Jonah and his relationship with God. And we think

it's got great crossover appeal to a non-Christian audience, giving them a way into the Bible that they might otherwise never find.

*Jonah and the Bony-Finned Asteroid Fish is available now from the Bible Society online shop for £5.99. Visit [biblesociety.org.uk/shop](http://biblesociety.org.uk/shop) to get your copy.*



# A heart for China since 1800



By 2020, it's predicted that including the registered and unregistered churches, there will be well over **100 million** Chinese Christians



Chinese Bibles are distributed through a network of **80 distribution centres**



More than **46 million** people over the age of 15 are illiterate



**500,000** baptisms annually

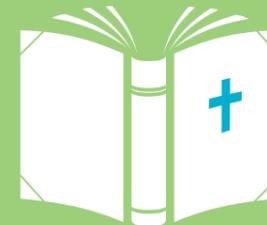
2019 marks the centenary of the Chinese Union Version (CUV) Bible, the main translation used by all Chinese-speaking Protestant Christians. The occasion is being celebrated with a number of events in Hong Kong and China, and a UK event at the British Library.



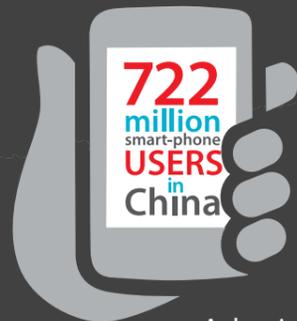
Only one trained Protestant pastor for every **6,700 Christians**

**1.4 billion**

**1.4 billion** people live in China, almost 1/5 of the world's population



An estimated **four million** Chinese Bibles a year printed for people in China



Back in 1799, a church minister called Revd William Willis Moseley was in the British Library when he discovered a dusty Chinese manuscript. Curious, he showed it to a Chinese man in London. Moseley realised that it was part of the Bible.

It turned out the manuscript was a translation, from the Latin Vulgate, of a harmony of the four gospels and most of the New Testament. It had been collected by a member of the East India Company and eventually found its way to the British Library. Revd Moseley understood the significance of this for a nation where the vast majority were not yet exposed to Christianity. He started campaigning for the formation of a society to publish the translation.

A drawing depicting Robert Morrison and his assistants working on the Chinese translation.



If you know much about Bible Society's history, you'll know that it wasn't until the following year, in 1800, that Mary Jones made her famous 26-mile walk across the Welsh countryside to buy a copy of the Bible. Her story is often told as the inspiration behind the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. But it was one man's passion for sharing God's word in China that was just as much a factor.

Revd Moseley wrote to many distinguished people proposing the formation of a Bible Society. Crucially, he also showed the Chinese translation to a man called Robert Morrison. Morrison copied out the script and took it with him to China

in 1807. He then learnt the language, completed and printed the New Testament in 1813, and the whole Bible in 1823. He went on to baptise a number of Chinese believers.

From there, Christianity spread rapidly in China. In 1853, we ran our first 'one million Bibles for China' campaign. In 1890, we gathered a



**One Bible** is printed every second at our China factory

group of mission agencies and agreed to work together on the Chinese Union Version Bible. In 1919, the first CUV Bible was printed, popularising the Mandarin form of the language and becoming the main translation used by Chinese-speaking Protestant Christians all over the world.

Today, we continue to be passionate about providing the Bible in China – and our ministry over decades has put us in a unique position.

In 1987 we helped to establish the Amity Printing Company in Nanjing. Today, it is the world's biggest Bible printing factory. Our unparalleled access to the Chinese government means we've been printing millions of copies for the Chinese Church.

Now, we operate in China as the United Bible Societies China Partnership. With your support we translate and distribute Bibles, teach people to read using God's word and support the training of new pastors. We even advocate for the relevance of Scripture within public life among government officials, business leaders and academics. We have seen the Bible change the lives of many people, for good.



**Claire Smith**  
Freelance writer

# God is beyond bars

I distinctly remember the first time I visited a prison. It was an intimidating experience, the walls creating two separate worlds – the world outside and the world inside.

As I crossed through gates, past barred windows and guards, I felt a huge swell of anxiety. Then, as the door opened to the courtyard, I was stunned by so much beauty. Gardens tended by the inmates themselves, bird boxes brimming with life. There are no walls for creation, and there are no walls for God.

Up in the chaplaincy, not dissimilar to some school classrooms I've been in, I spent time with the lads, getting to know them and their relationship with God, through the Bible. I saw pain, fear, remorse, but also so much hope. That was probably the first time I had felt true humility. We were no different.

Bible Society has a rich history of working in prisons and alongside prisoners, dating back to our very foundation in 1804. Born out of the Clapham Sect, a group of evangelical Christians committed to social reform, Bible Society's founders and early leaders, including William Wilberforce and the Earl of Shaftesbury, were committed to prison reform and changes to the penal system. In fact the Earl of Shaftesbury's campaigns to improve the care of those detained for mental health reasons, or the Lunacy Laws as they were known, are arguably one of his greatest, yet least known, achievements. Another early figure in the life of Bible Society, Thomas Foxwell Buxton, was a major campaigner for prison reform, particularly around improvements

in conditions for prisoners. Buxton was a keen advocate for the work and campaigns of renowned prisoner reformer Elizabeth Fry, 'the angel of prisons,' and even featured alongside her on the back of the old £5 note in a painting of them visiting Newgate Prison.

Bible Society is committed to carrying on that legacy, and I am privileged to lead that work. Working with prison chaplains, and prisoners directly, we aim to improve access to Bibles and engagement materials in whatever language prisoners need, in the strong belief that by engaging with the Bible their lives can be changed, for good.

The need has never been greater. There are over 82,000 prisoners in England and Wales, a figure that has doubled since the 1990s and is set to continue to rise. Reoffending is also an issue, particularly among young people. At the end of 2016/17, the reoffending rate among young people was a staggering 42.2%, compared to 28.2% among adults. This is particularly pressing as the crisis of knife crime among young people continues to grow. Since 2012, there has been an 11% increase in offences involving possession of a knife or offensive weapon by young people, with 2018 likely to be the worst in 10 years for the numbers of young people in England and Wales killed by knife attacks.

That is why Bible Society wants to offer every prisoner in England and Wales the chance to engage with, and be changed by, the Bible. In the last year Bible Society gave 3,345 Bibles and engagement resources to 38 prisons in England and Wales, in 23 different languages, completely free.

We're not stopping there. 2019 will see the largest shift in Bible Society's work in prisons, moving away from just distributing Bibles and instead developing a new strategy in tandem with our wider programme of holistic mission. We will launch an intentional programme of prison mission designed to catalyse Bible-inspired change in prisons, and to see the transformative embodiment of the Bible among prisoners.

The first step on this journey was a trial of our hugely successful *The Bible Course* in three prisons in England. *The Bible Course* shows how the key events, books and characters of the Bible all fit together, and our belief is that this will help prisoners to see the big picture of Scripture and discover how the Bible applies to their life, both while inside prison and when they leave.

As a result of these trials we are now developing a specific edition of *The Bible Course* for prisons, which we're aiming to launch in the summer of 2019. Alongside this we're planning to launch two new gospel editions, to help develop a sense of discipleship and spiritual direction to support the work of chaplains. And there is even more to come in 2020.

Prisons are complicated places, but the Lord is doing incredible things there. Together we can see the Bible alive in prisons, transforming hearts and changing lives.



**Chris Auckland**  
Programme Officer

# Exciting expansions for Open the Book

An interview with Alison Clark, Training and Development Manager for Open the Book (OtB)



**Q: Hi Alison, can you tell us about the pilot project running in Birmingham?**

A: Our pilot project started two years ago when Lynn, our Training and Development Officer in the West Midlands, identified that OtB was more successful in rural areas than in cities. At that time we had very few teams working in inner cities and she wanted to understand why. So she approached Birmingham City Mission (BCM) and said what do you think works well and what can be improved about OtB? From that conversation we partnered with BCM to run a pilot project.

Some of the barriers to working well in cities were the multi-faith requirement and our Storytellers being aware of the context that they were going into. We needed to place more emphasis on building a strong relationship with the headteacher and understanding the cultural and faith background of the children in the school. We want to honour our statement that OtB is suitable for children of all faiths and children of none.

Through the pilot we've learnt a variety of useful lessons, things like using banners rather than actors to portray prophets and being more

conscious of not putting Bibles on the floor or tea towels on children's heads – things which may accidentally cause offence. As we're coming towards the end of our two-year pilot we're starting to identify key things which will be incorporated into our training so we are more accessible and inclusive. We are seeking to be respectful to people of all faiths while still being unapologetically Christian.

We've been training groups in partnership with Birmingham City Mission to go into inner city schools, we currently have 12 trained teams and are aiming for 18 by the summer. In June, BCM are inviting all the other city missions around the country to share our findings and show how we can work together in an exciting partnership.

**Q: Can you tell us about the OtB project in the Northeast?**

A: About a year ago Martha, our Training Officer for the Northeast, was asked by Hexham and Newcastle Diocese to host a workshop for their Catholic headteachers' conference.

Afterwards the Education Officer for the Diocese invited us to work with them to deliver OtB. We decided to

initially pilot OtB in eight Roman Catholic schools, with the aim of ultimately being in each of their 136 primary schools. To ensure it was a diverse pilot, we chose a variety of different schools in rural and inner city areas and we've been working with the Diocese to form teams, all of which are ecumenical.

The headteachers have loved the pilot, they can't see any downsides to having OtB in their schools. Louise Gardner, a deputy headteacher, said, 'It has been one of the best things we've ever done for our children and for our staff. It's really helping our staff with their curriculum, and involving the community as well. It's been fantastic.'

We delivered the findings from the pilot at the recent Catholic headteachers' conference and now we're looking at how we can spread it into the other schools in the area.

*If you would like to find out how you can join an OtB team, please call us on 01793 418355 or go to [biblesociety.org.uk/openthebook](http://biblesociety.org.uk/openthebook)*

# COMMUNITY



## An interview with Nigel Langford, Bible Society's Head of Church Relations

**As well as working for Bible Society, you're a church leader in East London. How does that help you in your role with us?**

Both my roles bring empowerment in a number of ways. Being a church leader means that I understand the pressures and challenges of leading a church, all the way from developing leaders, recruiting volunteers, thinking about finances and who we work with in mission. As I engage other leaders I can see things from their point of view – their experience is my experience. I feel that it helps me understand what is happening in the Church and keeps Bible Society rooted and grounded. It makes for a strong connection between our organisation and the people we serve.

**What have you heard from church leaders in your first nine months in the job?**

Earlier this year we conducted a listening tour where we heard church leaders speaking about their challenges and opportunities. This helped us understand different ministry contexts and how Bible Society could best partner and support churches in their mission.

One thing that really struck me was that while we can design great resources and experiences, they have to be relevant and useful to church leaders. I heard a lot about the challenges churches face when it comes to the Bible and how Bible Society can support those who are seeking to communicate its message. I've also had opportunities to engage younger audiences and create new church partnerships.

**As a church leader, what is your experience of trying to engage people with the Bible?**

The main reactions have been misunderstandings about the Bible – there's a perception that it's irrelevant and even dangerous to a progressive society. My approach is trying to get people thinking out of the box, to try and change the conversation around the Scriptures. Many have not realised what's in the

Bible – the poetry, wisdom books, letters and much more. And all of this is linked to a big story that ultimately connects with our own story on a daily basis.

**What are your hopes for the way Bible Society can partner with churches in England and Wales?**

I hope that by listening and responding we will continue to enrich and deepen our relationships with the Church. As we do this we will develop a deeper understanding of each church's missional context and how best to support them. My hope is that Bible Society would be perceived as a vital mission partner, so that whenever a church seeks inspiration or has questions about the Bible they come to us. In everything we want to see confidence in the Scriptures increased. We need to work together for this to be achieved.



**Nigel Langford**  
Head of Church Relations

# The challenge of Chad

**It's 80% desert, with less than 200 miles of tarmac road, the truck keeps breaking down and terrorist groups are active. But the need for God's word is overwhelming. Africa Programme Adviser Ken Dachi experiences first-hand the challenges of Bible ministry in Chad.**

I've travelled in many of Africa's toughest, hardest places, so I went to Chad thinking, "What new thing could I face?" But this was something else...

It started at the airport. There was no one there, and when I stepped off the plane it was deserted. For security reasons, no cars are allowed within half a mile of the terminal. So my colleague walked to find me and we hiked back, in the searing heat, to the Bible Society truck.

Chad is an extremely vulnerable country. It's vast – about five times the size of the UK – but has almost no infrastructure. People groups from Niger, Cameroon, Nigeria and

Sudan have all sought refuge here. It's also been hit by climate change: since the 1960s, Lake Chad has shrunk to about a tenth of its original size. And terrorist groups like Boko Haram operate here.

On my second day, we headed out to visit a refugee camp where our team run Bible-based counselling for traumatised children. Most are orphans, their parents kidnapped or killed by Boko Haram.

We disappeared into the desert in the Bible Society truck. But before we'd even reached the first stop, the truck broke down. After three hours spent trying to fix it, and with night falling, we gave up and sought refuge in a local settlement. I slept on the sand, under a rough shelter, with my backpack as a pillow.

I was woken at 1 am. Another group had come to rescue us, and drove us to an abandoned church. We spent the rest of the night asleep on the floor of the chapel. At 6 am, we drove another two hours to the refugee camp.



Photography by Ken Dachi

It was a hard journey – and the camp boss told us we'd been through a notorious rebel area, so were lucky to escape without incident – but I can see why the team do it. The children in the refugee camp (pictured above) have witnessed horrible atrocities, things that can't be printed. But with our team they are learning to smile again. They listen to Bible stories, experience God's love, and begin to have a little hope for the future. It made my heart melt.

Despite all the challenges, I realised you can't hold back God's goodness; the Bible is changing lives here, for good.

To find out how you can make a difference go to [biblesociety.org.uk/wiachad](http://biblesociety.org.uk/wiachad)



**Ken Dachi**  
Africa Programme  
Adviser



# Youth mentorship programme in Kenya



Photography by the Bible Society in Kenya

**ABLI 2019 will be held in Rwanda this October. To find out more go to [abliforum.org](http://abliforum.org)**

Christianity is growing very fast in sub-Saharan Africa. Pew Research predicts that in 2050, nearly four-in-ten of the world's Christians (38%) are expected to be living in sub-Saharan Africa, up from 24% in 2010 and less than 2% in 1910. As a result, Africa is an increasingly Bible-friendly culture. However, the endemic corruption, conflict and poverty has shown no sign of declining. This shows that there is a disconnect between faith and practice, especially among leaders.

Our African Biblical Leadership Initiative (ABLI) sits to bridge the gap between private faith and public behaviour of leaders. It promotes the values of integrity in public office, social harmony and peaceful coexistence. Its yearly gathering attracts leaders from the areas of governance, business, civic society and church.

Another pocket of society that is of critical importance in Africa is the youth. Africa is the youngest continent – 60% of its population are under 25. This, depending how

this youthful energy is channelled, could be an amazing opportunity. If the youth are equipped with the values of integrity, hard work and creativity, Africa will have tremendous human capital. However, growing unemployment also means that they're vulnerable to be weaponised by political entrepreneurs.

In order to address this need, ABLI started a pilot project of mentorship in Kenya. This project pairs promising young Christian leaders with veteran Christian leaders with exemplary professional lives and Christian testimonies. The project was created in response to the growing demand by the youth in Africa to be included in decision making spaces, by training young people and giving them the capacity to occupy positions of influence. It's a thriving mentorship programme where some young leaders have already joined local government, NGOs and other institutions as volunteers, and more are spreading their wings into other sectors.

Eunice Anyango, one of those being mentored, said, 'ABLI mentorship really helped me to know where I come from and to believe in my story – a story that is very unique and something the world is awaiting to be revealed'. Jim Idia, an ABLI fellow now employed by the Emerging Leaders Foundation, said, 'In order to lead others first you need to learn to lead yourself. To lead yourself you need to get to the point of self-discovery. Before I came to the ABLI mentorship programme, I was walking around as a shell of a mind who didn't know who he was.'

Mentees that are not currently engaged in the market place will be linked up with various internship programmes to put into practice the values acquired during the mentorship programme.



**Girma Mohammed**  
International  
Advocacy Officer

# A man on a mission



For years, our work in Algeria has been led by one man – Ali Khidri. He's been instrumental in the growth of the Church in this Muslim nation.

Now, Ali is handing over the reins. We meet Rezki Ouaked, (pictured above with Tim Foggin, our Programme Adviser for the Middle East), a 34-year-old father-of-one, who's preparing for the challenge of a lifetime.

## Q: Tell us a little about yourself, and how you came to faith.

A: I am a Kabyle (Berber), a minority group in Algeria. When I was 19, a Muslim friend told me his family had a Christian book they wanted to get rid of. They didn't even want to touch the book! So I took it – an Arabic/French New Testament. It confused me at first, but I was interested in Jesus' miracles and message of peace.

I heard there was a Christian living in a nearby village so I went to talk to him. This man explained the Gospel to me. I went home and read all four Gospels and 20 chapters of Acts. I read until 3 am, I liked it so much! After that, I told people I was a Christian.

## Q: What did your family say about that?

A: When Ramadan arrived, I told my family I wouldn't do it – and

they were horrified! It was difficult for them at first. Now my eldest brother and sister have also accepted Jesus.

## Q: Did you join a church?

A: The closest church was 20 miles away – a long way for a young man with no car or transport. However, I got to the town and asked a builder where the church was. That was risky – but the builder said warmly, 'I am your brother, welcome.' He was a Christian! There were 50 people in the church back then, in 2002. Now there are 1,500.

## Q: How did you get into ministry?

A: I worked for a student ministry for a few years, then planned to move to the USA. But I felt torn about going, I was in a big crisis. While I was preparing to leave, I was arrested for not doing my military service. I was jailed for 19 days – and my relationship with God was re-established. I was in the army for two years, and it brought me back to God. I knew I had to stay in Algeria.

## Q: How do you feel about taking up leadership of Bible Society in Algeria?

A: When I was asked, I refused. I said I can't replace Ali, he's a legend! But I believe I will find my place. I just want to serve God in my country with my family. God gave me this opportunity with Bible Society, and I will put all my energy into it.

A view of Bejaïa, a port city on the Mediterranean coast of Algeria

Photography by Walid Amghar on Unsplash

# The inspirational witness of Christians in Egypt

## One of our staff, Malcolm Fleming, recently went to visit the Bible Society in Egypt and shares his experience with us:

Egypt is the oldest living civilisation on earth. It has one of the largest populations in Africa. The country is vast but most of its 97 million people live along or close to the Nile. The streets are teeming with life. I live in a city of over 200,000 people but nothing prepares you for the cacophony of sights, sounds and smells of Cairo. We were hosted by the Bible Society of Egypt and their genial leader, Ramez Atallah.

He described how the Bible Society has grown slowly and organically in God's way and according to his timing. His initial experience in the early 80s was of a dark and dusty office and a couple of shelves of large black Bibles. They are now a thriving organisation with a nationwide network of 17 bookstores and ministry centres, employing 220 staff up and down the country.

The demand for Bibles is stronger than ever. Mumtaz, who works with Ramez, told us that, having spent 20 years away in North America, he had noticed a marked change in the Church on his return: 'They have moved from a focus on tradition to an outright focus on the Bible – and they are ready,' he said.

There are an estimated 10 – 12 million Christians in Egypt and the vast majority worship in the Orthodox Coptic Church. Any misconceptions I might have had of the Coptic Church were blown away when we took part in one of their inductive Bible studies. This programme began over 30 years ago and is now growing exponentially. It's a simple yet exciting immersive approach with a focus on self-discovery that creates a deep and intimate connection between the participants, God and his word for their lives. One person likened it to cooking and eating rather than getting a ready meal off the shelf.

We were inspired by the Church's response to the pressures they face. Christians really do seem to live in

community here, much like the early church. And they provide for the educational, spiritual, emotional, health and vocational needs of their flock.

Bible Society in Egypt runs many programmes to support them in this. We were privileged to witness a series of literacy classes working with children and adults at different levels. When asked what they took from the story the most common theme was to respect, love and serve those around you. And this, both Ramez and Mumtaz told us, is the number one reason that people turn to Christ.

In the face of marginalisation and adversity, the love and respect of Jesus in the behaviour of Christians is a great witness. They have a deep love of the Bible, they are confident in their faith and they are ready.



**Malcolm Fleming**

Key Relationships  
Manager

View of the Cairo skyline from the Mosque of Ibn Tulun

# YOUR LETTERS & COMMENTS

We have recently visited Egypt and been encouraged not only by the faithful witness of both Coptic and evangelical churches but also by your interview from Ramez Atallah. Keep up the good work.

ROBIN, LARNE

I am greatly delighted at Bible Society in being actively involved in carrying out the command of Jesus Christ to Christian believers to continue to spread his message far and wide.

ELIZABETH, RAINHAM

It's always thrilling to hear about God's activity around the world through his servants and humbling to see how faithfully persecuted followers still serve their Lord and share their faith.

KAY, CHIPPING NORTON

Excellent, very positive. My grandchildren thoroughly enjoy Open the Book and my grandson (aged 7) can readily pass on the stories.

TIMOTHY, SHEFFIELD

Informative and inspiring. Helps you identify with those in other countries running Bible Societies so you feel you almost know them and you are motivated to pray for them (*Prayer in Action* really helps with this). Broadens your horizons and is a source of encouragement.

VICTORIA, HULL

Congratulations – you strike just the right note! Wishing you many blessings as you spread the gospel.

BETTY, STAMFORD

I enjoyed very much reading *Word in Action* and found it most informative. I was blown away reading about Open the Book. I have never heard about it before and wish it had been happening while I was teaching.

MARY, COVENTRY



## WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Email us your thoughts and comments at [wia@biblesociety.org.uk](mailto:wia@biblesociety.org.uk) or use the comments form attached. We reserve the right to edit letters for style and length. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of Bible Society.

### One verse



*Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15.58 (NRSV)*

I'm prone to taking on too much at work, at church and at home and then getting overwhelmed by all the commitments I've made – not wanting to let anybody down but struggling to follow through. I've started using this verse as a daily reminder of what's important in God's eyes.

Firstly, I'm reminded that I'm loved by God. He sees me, knows me and loves me so much he sent his son to die for me.

Not only that, but I'm part of the family of God – a sister of the risen Christ!

Secondly, no matter what is going on, God is my rock and my salvation – he's unshakable and in him, so am I. In Christ, I can be steadfast and immovable, standing firm in the faith.

Thirdly, as I live for God, my life and the things I do are not in vain. I know that the Holy Spirit is working in me and through me to achieve everything God has planned.

**Esther King**  
Fundraising Officer at Bible Society

## Biblepeople:

I grew up in a Christian home and gave my life to Christ at the age of 14. I was such an awkward teenager but the Bible was a constant companion.

I remember having regular misunderstandings with my friend but she never apologised to me. I was hurt by this constantly and amidst tears during prayer one day, I opened the Bible to the book of Proverbs 6.2–3: 'Have you been caught by your own words, trapped by your own promises? Well then, my child, you are in that person's power, but this is how to get out of it: hurry to him, and beg him to release you.' (GNB)

I interpreted this Scripture as, 'Go and apologise to your friend' and that's exactly what I did. Many years later, I received an email from her apologising for never saying sorry. She explained that she had issues in her life but through apologising now she was finding restoration.

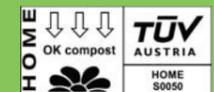
The Bible has changed my life in so many ways and I love sharing about its transforming power. One day I was searching online for ways to spread the gospel when I came across Bible Society. I read through the mission statement and I really bought into it.



The rest is history and I now volunteer with Bible Society as a speaker in churches.

**Ayoola Bandele**  
Bible Society volunteer speaker

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