



BIBLE SOCIETY
NORTHERN IRELAND

W@W!

Word at Work

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

SUMMER 2021



THE 'FRIENDS FOR LIFE'
SPORTS CENTRE, PAGE 14-15

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Cover photo shows a coach from the Friends for Life Sports Centre in Albania.



Welcome

Catherine Little
General Secretary, Bible Society NI

2021 has been a strange year so far. Lockdown restrictions are easing a little as I write but for most of this year we have been at home, we have been watching church online, we have been missing people and the normal things that we used to take for granted.

I remember thinking that in March 2020, as restrictions started, it felt like my diary had been pruned of many of the things that I love – trips to meet family or friends had been taken out, church in person was gone and my work as General Secretary of Bible Society NI was looking very different. However, with pruning comes new growth – things I could not have anticipated or expected have happened, new ways of connecting, staying in touch and deepening relationships.

Last year I had more time at home to look after a few plants. I don't really have a garden where I live but I brightened up my space with pots. I planted bulbs last October and honestly seeing cheery daffodils and other brightly coloured flowers appear in recent months has been so encouraging. When I planted those bulbs, they looked dry and lifeless, now months later they look vibrant and alive.

“I could not have anticipated or expected have happened, new ways of connecting, staying in touch and deepening relationships. Life might not look like it did but there is still so much to be thankful for.”

At the beginning of COVID-19 restrictions in March 2020 it was hard to imagine how life would work and now, well over a year later, we have all seen ways that we have overcome the challenges of lockdown. Life might not look like it did but there is still so much to be thankful for.

This year marks the 75th Anniversary of the creation of United Bible Societies and our celebrations will include so many more people than an in-person event could ever have. We will be gathering online with people all over the world to mark the beginning, the present and the future of our global Fellowship.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Word at Work where we tell you news from here, like how our new 52 resource has been used, and from around our Bible Society family.

As we continue to look for new growth after the pruning of COVID-19 restrictions we need to 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3:18). Let's keep reading and engaging with the Bible as we step into whatever comes next.

Every blessing and stay safe.

Catherine Little

Local News

52

A Bible engagement resource for the whole family.

Since January 2021 we have been journeying through our brand new Bible Engagement resource – 52 – which takes users on a journey of discovery through the BIG STORY of the Bible. Here, Ruth Bromley, a member of 1st Holywood Presbyterian Church and the Children's Development Officer for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland shares her experiences of the resource.

"The '52' resource caught my imagination because I have a love for

seeing children, young people and adults reading and understanding the big story of the Bible.

As a congregation, we promoted '52' as a resource that families could use to read the Bible together. "We also decided to start using it in our children's ministry. The families read the passages during the week and then the children's ministry on a Sunday morning recaps what we have learnt over the week and does some of the application for the kid's lives.

As a family, we have used the resource 6 times a week since the beginning of January. We have a 5 year old and the repetition of the questions works really well for her but, to my surprise, my husband and I have also enjoyed the repetition in the questions and we have all found ourselves really looking at the verses and seeing what we see of God and about



ourselves in them. When I asked Bess (aged 5) what she liked most about '52' her simple answer was "It helps me learn about God". As a parent, I am not sure that there is much more I could ask for as she takes her early steps of faith."

If you have a story to share of your experiences using 52 get in touch with us today – we'd love to hear and share it!

Check out our website: www.biblesocietyni.co.uk/2020/12/14/52-bible-resource to begin the 52 journey with us today!



Deputations

One of the things we have missed most because of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions has been the opportunity to meet our supporters and to talk to people about the wonderful work of Bible Societies around the world.



Before COVID-19 our diaries were often punctuated with speaking engagements all over Northern Ireland. We spoke with groups and with whole congregations. In the last year this has looked very different. When restrictions allowed, we were able to speak at a few church services in person, but we have mostly been sharing our work through video and other online platforms. We prepared video content for use in churches for Bible Sunday as well as specific videos for individual churches to use in their online services. We have popped in on Zoom calls with Youth Fellowships and Mid-Week meetings

and even been part of live stream events through Facebook.

Preparing video material takes time but it does have the potential to reach more people than a face-to-face meeting will.

We don't know when we will get back to full diaries of speaking engagements in person again; however we are keen to keep on sharing about our work in the ways that we can.

Get in touch to arrange a speaker from Bible Society NI for your church or group – we are happy to join you on Zoom or send a video for you to watch.

LOOKING FORWARD



Tommy Stewart, new Chair of the Bible Society NI Board.

In Spring of 2021 Tommy Stewart became the new Chair of the Board of Bible Society NI, succeeding Rev Captain Colin Taylor. At the same time, in 2021, the United Bible Societies are celebrating their 75th anniversary. We asked Elaine Duncan, CEO of the Scottish Bible Society and Chair of the UBS Global Council, and Tommy to share a bit about themselves and what their hopes for the future are.

It is my honour to have been asked by my fellow trustees to become the Chair of Bible Society NI. As I do, I want to firstly acknowledge the wise and faithful leadership of our previous chair, Rev Captain Colin Taylor and the good stewardship that current and previous chairs, trustees and General Secretaries have brought to the work of the Bible Society in Northern Ireland.

full time on encouraging, equipping and empowering Christian leaders, churches and missional organisations to fulfill the mission God has given them. In addition to chairing Bible Society NI, I am also privileged to support the work of several other ministries here and overseas. Church wise, my wife and I are part of the leadership team of Mid Antrim Vineyard.

As for me, I live in Ballymena and I am married to Roberta. We have three sons, who are now all 'adults'. After 15 year in public, private and voluntary sector management, during which I was also ordained as a lay minister, I set up a consultancy company in 2002 providing strategic development support to community focused organisations. Following on from completing a Masters in Missional Leadership, since 2016, I have been focused

Having joined the Board of Bible Society NI in 2018, I still feel like a relative newcomer but my passion, for as long as I can remember has been to help people engage with the truth of God's Word. I see the work of Bible Societies as being a key ministry that helps to do that through Bible translation, through access to scripture and through the provision of resources that enable people to engage with, and understand, the Bible.



Tommy and Simon Peter Mukhama, General Secretary of the Bible Society of Uganda at the Giant's Causeway in 2019.

In the coming months and years I look forward to Bible Society in Northern Ireland continuing to support the work of Bible Societies around the world and to further partnership with others to promote Bible engagement in Northern Ireland. I look forward to meeting many of you in person, post lockdown, and very much value your prayers for wisdom for myself, the trustees, Catherine and the staff team as we seek to advance the work of the Lord through the Bible Society in Northern Ireland. I am encouraged daily by reminding myself of the words of Paul to the Philippians when he said: "I can do all this through him who gives me strength." May you too know His strength in all that you do for him.



Tommy at the Gathering, our 2019 supporters' event.

75 Years of United Bible Societies



Elaine Duncan, CEO of the Scottish Bible Society and Chair of the UBS Global Council.



Delegates to the meeting in Elfinsward, England, 1946, when United Bible Societies was founded.

This year, 2021, marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Bible Societies. When much of Europe was in ruins after the devastation of the 2nd World War, leaders came together in 1946 to develop a more coordinated and collaborative approach to Bible Society ministry. It was recognised that the work would be more effective with cooperation from many countries together.

Bible Society work had started in 1804 after the story of Mary Jones inspired a movement to provide Bibles to the world. Today there is Bible Society activity in almost every country in the world. God has been gracious to us.

A 75th anniversary gives us an opportunity to look back and remember all that God has done – in our own Bible Societies as well as across our Fellowship. It is a good time to ponder the principles that motivated those who worked for partnership and collaboration. Those who recognised that coming

together was going to be for the good of God's Kingdom.

The richness of our 75 years as the UBS has not just been down to the leaders who have gone before us but to the many who have made our mission and ministry possible. We thank God for those who have faithfully prayed for every aspect of our work. We praise God that he moved many around the world to give sacrificially to support the work financially. Without these people we would not be where we are today.

Then there are the frontline workers. Those in each Bible Society and those serving on the Global Mission Team of UBS. From translators to typists, from secretaries to scholars, from printers to preachers – so many servants of God have aided the growth of our work. We rightly call them heroes of the Bible cause!

But there is one overall hero in the story of UBS. It is God himself. It is God who inspired leaders to take risks in collaboration and cooperation

in the aftermath of the 2nd World War, and God who continues to inspire us to work together as one United Bible Societies family.

As we look ahead to the work the Lord is calling us to in our generation, may we approach it with that same dedication to the power of the Bible in our own lives; with that same commitment to pray and seek God together so that he receives the glory as he builds his Kingdom.

Thank you for all that you do in Northern Ireland to further the Bible cause around the world.

Elaine speaking at the UBS World Assembly in Philadelphia, 2016.



AN INTERNSHIP FROM Home

In our Spring W@W magazine, we introduced you to Lucy, our intern who has been working with us over the past few months. Lucy has only been able to be physically in the office with us for a couple of days, completing most of her internship with us remotely from home. We asked her to share a little bit about how she's found the last few months.



“The task of being “strong and courageous” on our own is impossible, but when we trust in God and His abilities and strength, we are able to live boldly for the Lord, glorifying Him.”

Lucy

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has made spending time in person with all of the Bible Society NI staff impossible, I have been greatly blessed by the morning ‘working from home’ Zoom calls. A Bible study and time to pray together, before we each complete our tasks, has really allowed me to feel connected with the team. I am thankful for this way of communicating, as we work from different parts of the UK, and feel it has made working from home less isolating. As we use computers very frequently when completing our work, working from home feels relatively normal in one sense.

However, it is the interactive side that is a real miss. Therefore, the chance to hear about how people are keeping and learn of what is going on in their lives has been a massive help. I am thankful that God has granted us the blessing of morning Zoom calls, and has provided the necessary equipment for this to happen. Even though working from home has made my placement look very different to how we first envisaged, I feel thankful to

have been able to share this time with the staff and Board Members of Bible Society NI, at the start of each day.

I have recently been working on some of the material for the 52 resource, and have been massively encouraged by Joshua Chapter 1. In this passage, the words “strong and courageous” are referred to over and over, which struck me. They are two qualities that can seem out of reach and difficult to live out on a day to day basis, as we face daily battles. However, I was reminded that this is only true when we are acting alone and are living in our own strength. Rather, the strength of the Lord provides us with the ability to be “strong and courageous” in His strength, rather than our own. We have the privilege of being able to ask Him to help us to be “strong and courageous”! In Proverbs 3:5 we are instructed; “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding”. The task of being “strong and courageous” on our own is impossible, but when we trust in God and His abilities and strength, rather than trying to tackle the task through our understanding, we are able to live boldly for the Lord, glorifying Him.

Please join us as we pray for every Bible Society and their work throughout this year.

Terms & Abbreviations
FCBH: Faith Comes by Hearing - A programme providing audio Scripture for listening groups, set up mainly through local churches.
Trauma Healing: Bible-based counselling for survivors of traumas such as epidemics, disasters or war.
Good Samaritan Project: A Bible-based HIV/AIDS education programme. Workshop based, multi-media training.
OT/NT: Old/New Testament.
GS: General Secretary.
CEO: Chief Executive Officer.

30 MAY – 5 JUNE

England & Wales
 Pray for Bible projects which seek to help people engage more with God’s Word in England and Wales. Pray specifically for their work among children and young people. Praise God for the financial support they are able to provide to projects all over the world. Pray for Chief Executive Paul Williams and the rest of the team in England and Wales.

Scotland
 Pray for the translation of the Bible into modern Gaelic, and that this would be a blessing to Gaelic speakers. Pray for continued good relationships with churches and other Christian organisations, that they would be a good witness to the people of Scotland. Remember Chief Executive and Chair of Global Council Elaine Duncan and the team in Scotland.

6 – 12 JUNE

Ireland
 Pray for the reopening of the office on Dawson Street and for the planning of their Autumn schedule. Please pray for the different platforms they are using for Bible engagement, including facilitating the Bible Course on Zoom and creating a digital Bible engagement guide. Pray for Julia McKinley as she carries out the work in the Republic of Ireland.

Northern Ireland
 Pray for those who use our Bible engagement tools and resources, and that these would help people to deepen their faith. Praise God for his provision over the last year and ask that He would continue to bless our work. The staff team in Belfast is led by GS Catherine Little, please pray for her as well as Campbell, Andrew, Keren and the Board.

13 – 19 JUNE

USA
 Praise God for the world’s first complete Sign Language translation into American Sign Language. Pray that this would be a blessing to those with auditory impairments who use Sign Language as their first language. Pray for good relationships with other Christian organisations and churches. The work in America is led by CEO Robert Briggs and his team.

Canada
 Pray that the Canadian Bible Society can make strong connections with churches and other Christian organisations across Canada. Pray that God would bless the work in Canada and that they will be able to reach more people with the Gospel this year. The work in Canada is led by National Director Rupen Das and his team.

Mexico
 Pray for the Scripture distribution projects in Mexico during the COVID-19 pandemic. These projects aim to bring hope through Scripture to those struggling. Pray for GS Julio Splinker Martinez and his team as they oversee these projects in Mexico.

20 – 26 JUNE

Hong Kong
 Pray for the Hong Kong Bible Society as they seek to engage more people with the Bible through digital media. Pray that people would be blessed by online resources. Pray that the Christian church would be united and work well together to spread the message of the Bible. The work in Hong Kong is led by GS Tseun Yuen and his team.

China
 Pray for the “Affordable Bibles for China’s Millions” project which seeks to meet the ever growing demand for Bibles with free or affordable Bibles. Pray for translation projects into minority languages in China. Pray for projects equipping Seminary students, teachers, parents and leaders of the next generation. The work here is led by Director Wee Seng Kua and his team.

Bangladesh
 Pray for the Bangladesh Bible Society as they seek to make the Word of God available to the people of Bangladesh through translation and distribution projects. Pray for literacy projects and the work among children and young people. Pray that God would bless the work here, led by GS Liton Mrong and his team of staff and volunteers.

P@W!

Prayer at Work

PULL OUT AND KEEP PRAYER GUIDE

SUMMER 2021

BIBLE-A-MONTH PROJECT JUNE: UGANDA

People with visual impairments often cannot access the Bible for themselves; they need someone to read it for them in order to know what it says. The Scriptures for People with Visual Disabilities project in Uganda is working to provide Braille and audio Bibles to those who may not be able to access God’s Word through sight. When Christians with visual impairments are able to access the Bible, they are able to grow in their faith. They are able to participate in church services, following along with the passage and even reading from the front. This is something that could not happen without the Bible in a format that they can access.

- + Pray that people will volunteer to read the Bible to people with visual impairments, who cannot do this for themselves.
- + Pray that Braille and audio Bibles are provided, so that people can access the Bible without having to rely on another person.
- + Pray with thanksgiving, that Christians with visual impairments are able to grow in their faith and participate in church services, thanks to various Bible formats.



27 JUNE – 3 JULY

Singapore Please pray for the Bible Society of Singapore as they seek to reach people with God's Word. Pray for their work amongst migrant workers, providing them with free Bibles. Pray for the work that is done online, that their media would reach people with the message of the Bible. The team in Singapore is led by GS Ezekiel Tan.

Malaysia Pray for the work serving the migrant workers and refugees within Malaysia. Pray for Scripture distribution among these groups and that these would be a positive impact on people's lives. Praise God for the completed Study Bible translation and ask that it would be a blessing to those who use it. GS Mathew Punnoose leads the work in Malaysia.

Philippines Pray for translations of the Gospel of Mark into 8 Bikol languages, these will be the first translations of Scripture in these languages. Pray for the Faith Comes by Hearing Bible listening groups for those who cannot read. Pray for the work providing accessible Scriptures. The work in the Philippines is led by Nora Lucero and her team.

4 – 10 JULY

Burundi Pray for the ongoing Kirundi Study Bible translation. Pray for Trauma Healing programmes going on across Burundi and for those recovering from trauma in their lives. Pray for the Faith Comes by Hearing project, and for literacy programmes seeking to improve literacy in churches. The work here is led by GS Marjorie Niyungeko and her team.

Cameroon Pray for the Bible Society as they help those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pray for translation projects into Gude and Podoko, both of which will be the first translations into these languages. Pray for Bible distribution projects and for GS Luc Gnowa and his team as they carry out God's work reaching the people of Cameroon.

Gabon Pray for the publication and distribution of the Fang Bible. Pray for the translation of the Bible into the Kota and Omyèmè languages. Pray for the Faith Comes by Hearing project going on in Gabon and for those participating in this project. Pray for Thierry Mabilia and his team as they carry out the work here.

11 – 17 JULY

Cambodia Pray for the Literacy Through Listening programme, and for the participants as they learn to read through this Scripture based course. Pray for the work among people of all ages, especially children and young people. Pray for the first translation of the Bible into ethnic minority languages. Pray for the Board and staff of the Bible Society in Cambodia, led by Pisit Heng.

Vietnam Pray for the 'Learning Through Listening' project as it teaches literacy through a Scripture based course. Pray for the translation projects of the Bible into the Muong, Tai Dam and Tai Don languages. Ask God to bless the work to provide accessible Scriptures to those with disabilities. Pray for Executive Director Vu Hoang Anh Le and his team here.

Thailand Pray especially for the translation of Scripture into Thai Sign Language. Pray for those who are eagerly awaiting the completion of this project. Pray for the Thailand Bible Society's projects to engage more young people with God's Word. Pray for the Trauma Healing programmes ongoing in Thailand. The work here is led by GS Seree Lorgunpaia and his team.

18 – 24 JULY

Congo Pray for the translation and publishing of the Bible into Téké, up until recently there has only been small portions of the Bible translated. Pray for those who are participating in Trauma Healing programmes across the country. Pray that God would touch many people's lives through this project and that they would find comfort in Him. Pray for the Staff team and Board.

DR Congo Pray for the many translation projects going on here. Ask God to bless the translators in their work and that people would be able to read Scriptures in their own language as soon as possible. Please pray for Director of Programmes Bienvenu Masingende and his team as they carry out these projects in the Democratic Republic Congo.

Chad Pray for the work among those with HIV/AIDS and for the Trauma Healing programmes. Pray for the revision of the Old Testament in Nangjéré. Pray for good relationships with other Christian organisations and churches. Ask God to bless the Bible work in Chad. The Bible Society of Chad is led by GS Roland Koulanoudji.

25 – 31 JULY

Netherlands Antilles & Aruba Pray for the mission work in Aruba as they seek to reach everyone with the Word of God. Pray for the 'End2End' project which encourages people to engage with their Bible through film, audio and written resources. Pray for the family Bible engagement resources and for the families who use them. Please pray for the Bible Society team, led by GS Armin Elisa.

Suriname Pray for the translation of the Bible into Sranantongo Braille and for those with visual impairments eagerly waiting to read the Bible for themselves. Pray for their work among refugees, that they would find comfort in the Scriptures given to them. Pray for the Akawaio Old Testament translation. Pray for the team in Suriname led by GS Erny Van Axel.

Venezuela Pray for the printing of Bibles within Venezuela, and for the distribution of God's Word among the people. Pray for the Bible work among those living in poverty and food insecurity. Pray for the translation of the Bible into the Sign Language of Venezuela. Pray for the team, led by Managing Director Javier Chacon, that they can support the church in Venezuela.

1 – 7 AUG

Costa Rica Pray for the Bible Society here as they translate the Bible into Sign Language for those who are deaf. Pray also for the work distributing Spanish Braille Bibles. Pray for the work helping churches to teach the Bible and for the work helping young people to engage with their Bible. The work in Costa Rica is led by GS Mayra Ugalde.

Panama Pray for the translation projects going on in Panama, especially the Gnobé translation. Ask God to bless the church in Panama, and that He would strengthen believers in their faith. Pray for those who have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pray for the staff team and Board in Panama is led by GS Marco Gómez.

Nicaragua Pray for the work among children with cancer, helping them to find hope in Jesus Christ during a difficult time in their lives. Ask God to bless the 'Literacy with the Word of God' project in both Mayanga and Miskitu. Pray for continued good relationships with missionaries in Nicaragua. Pray for GS Freddy Fonseca as he leads the team here.

8 – 14 AUG

Cote d'Ivoire Pray for the Bible Society here as they seek to make the Bible available to every inhabitant of Cote d'Ivoire. Pray for literacy projects, teaching people in the church to read the Bible for themselves. Pray for distribution projects and other Bible engagement projects.

Liberia Ask God to bless the translation projects going on in Liberia, including the Dan and Mann first translations. Pray for the 'Scriptures for New Believers' project, as well as literacy and Faith Comes by Hearing projects which run alongside this. Pray for the Bible Society here as they seek to equip rural pastors to lead and teach their congregations.

Sierra Leone Pray for the work among young people encouraging them to engage with their Bibles. Pray for the 'Hope for the Hopeless' Trauma Healing project and for all those participating in it. Pray for the Braille Bible for those with visual impairments. Pray for the people and projects impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. The work here is led by Executive Secretary Christiana Jones.

15 – 21 AUG

Croatia Ask God to bless the translation of the Bible into Croatian Sign Language and for those eagerly awaiting to have the Bible in their heart language. Pray for the translation of the Bible into Modern Croatian and that it would be a blessing to the next generation. Pray for work reaching out to the Muslim community. GS Damir Lipovsek leads the work here.

Serbia Pray for the Christian community in Serbia, that there would be good relationships and they would work together to share God's Word. Pray for the updating of the current translation of the Bible. Pray for the work among Romani youth as they teach the Bible through literacy classes. The work in Serbia is led by Executive Secretary Vera Mitic.

Romania Pray for the Trauma Healing programmes, including the work among people with cancer. Pray for the work advocating for the Bible in Romania. Pray for the work among children with Down Syndrome and other disabilities, helping them to engage with the Bible. GS Emilia Iorgandopol leads the Bible Society in this country.

22 – 28 AUG

West Indies Pray for the Bible Society of the West Indies as they seek to provide Scriptures at an affordable price and in appropriate formats so that as many as possible can access them. Pray that many people in the West Indies would have their lives transformed by the Word of God. Pray for the team led by GS Courtney Stewart.

Cuba Pray for the Cuban Bible Commission as they seek to provide a Bible to every Cuban. Thank God for the work distributing Bibles so far. Pray that the Bible would have a positive impact on the society and that people would come to faith through reading the Word of God. The projects in Cuba are led by GS Alain Montano.

Haiti Pray for Faith Comes by Hearing projects among those who are not able to read the Bible for themselves. Pray for those who have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, ask God that He would comfort those in need. Pray that the staff, led by GS Magda Victor, would be able to carry out the projects, pray for safety as they do so.

“ Pray that the Bible would have a positive impact on the society and that people would come to faith through reading the Word of God. ”

Cuba

BIBLE-A-MONTH PROJECT JULY: NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRY

There are some places in the world where it is so dangerous for Christians that we cannot even tell you the name of the country we are working in. This work is so sensitive only a handful of people within the United Bible Societies are allowed to know the details. This month we are supporting one such North African country. It has a very small Christian population; the majority of people here are Muslim. It takes a lot of bravery to reach out and ask for a Bible, yet many are taking this bold step, trying to find out what the Bible teaches and how it impacts their lives.

- + Pray that the Lord would provide strength, protection and peace to Christians in the most dangerous places on earth to be Christians.
- + Pray for bravery and courage to proclaim Christ in a Muslim majority population.
- + Pray that people are bold enough to seek out the Bible, so that they can learn from it and give their lives to Christ.

BIBLE-A-MONTH PROJECT AUGUST: CUBA

Over the years we have supported the Cuban Bible Commission as they provided one million Bibles to the people of their country. This was completed in 2018, and since then they have adapted the project to a much more ambitious scale: A Bible for every Cuban. In Cuba it can be very hard to obtain a Bible. Bible poverty is very high, and it takes the average person a full two weeks of wages to buy a Bible. Even then it can be hard to find somewhere where Bibles are for sale. The Cuban Bible Commission is working to change this and make Bibles more accessible to everyone in their country.

- + Pray that the success of the Cuban Bible Commission will continue, until every Cuban has their own Bible.
- + Pray that Bible prices become more affordable for people, so that they can readily rely upon God's Word regardless of their income.
- + Pray that Bible access becomes easier, so that when people can afford a copy of the Bible, they can access it quickly and easily.



Cyprus

Praise God for His provision for the Bible Society over the past year. Pray for all projects which have had to be adapted or stopped due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Praise God for the New Testaments distributed in schools and pray these would have an impact on the children who receive them. The work in Cyprus is led by GS Michail Chatzigiannis.

Turkey

Pray for the Old Testament Bible translation into Kurdish. Pray that this would greatly benefit those who are waiting on the full Bible in Kurdish. Pray for the revision of the Bible in Turkish and for the work going on among refugees in the country. The work in Turkey is led by Executive Secretary Tamar Karasu.

Syria

Praise God for His protection over the last year. Pray for the distribution of Scriptures to those who are exploring the faith. Pray for their work among young people and that they would find hope in Jesus Christ. The work here is led by GS George Andria. Please pray for safety while staff travel within the country.

5 – 11 SEPT

Poland

Please pray that young people in this country would recognize the need of God's Word in their lives. Pray for the work distributing Scriptures to people around the country. Pray for good relationships with other Christian organisations, that they would be able to work together to share God's love. The work in Poland is led by GS Jadwiga Zalisz.

Czech Republic

Pray for their ongoing projects, particularly the new bilingual New Testament editions for young people. Ask that God would reach many through this project. Pray also for the impact that COVID-19 has had on Bible work here, as many projects had to adapt to restrictions. The Bible Society here is led by GS Pavel Novak.

Slovakia

Praise God for the work being done on the Slovak Sign Language Bible. Pray that this would be a blessing to those who use Sign Language as their first language. Pray for the work producing giant print Bibles for those with visual disabilities. Pray for the staff team and volunteers here led by Deputy GS Štefan Ševčík.

12 – 18 SEPT

Denmark Praise God for His faithfulness over the last year, as it has been difficult adapting projects. Pray for good relationships with local churches and other Christian organisations. Pray that God will bless the church in Denmark. Pray for Denmark's current translation project translating the full Bible into contemporary Danish. Pray for the team of staff, volunteers and board led by GS Birgitte Larsen.

Sweden

Please ask God to bless the Bible translations in progress into indigenous and other minority languages, as well as for the good reception and impact of the completed translations. Pray also for the members of staff as they seek to make God's Word available and accessible to the people of Sweden. The team here is led by GS Anders Göranson.

Finland

Pray for the completion of the new translation of the New Testament into contemporary Finnish. Pray that those who read this modern translation will find faith, hope and love in Christ. Praise God for Churches and donors who support Finnish Bible Society projects. Pray for Bible publishing projects. Pray for the team led by GS Markku Kotila.

19 – 25 SEPT

Dominican Republic

Pray that God would speak into the Dominican Republic through Bible projects such as 'No to Violence' and 'Bibles Instead of Weapons'. Pray for projects among Haitian immigrants and children and young people. Pray for the team, led by GS Carmen De Acosta, and that God will use them to spread His Word to those who need it.

East Caribbean Pray for the Bible Society in the East Caribbean as they work among their people to spread God's Word. Pray for partnerships with local churches and that they would be an encouragement to local Christians. Pray for their outreach work and that people would respond positively to the Gospel. Pray for the staff, volunteers and Board members in the East Caribbean.

Puerto Rico Pray for the Bible Society of Puerto Rico as they work with the local church to reach everyone with God's Word. Pray for work among different ages and that many would come to faith in Christ. Pray for the team of staff, volunteers and Board as they carry out the work, led by GS Heriberto Martinez-Rivera.

26 SEPT – 2 OCT

Egypt Pray for the adaptations to the "Kingo Festivals" due to COVID-19. Praise God that these adaptations have resulted in a more personal experience for children and young people who participate. Pray that the work to digitise the Bible for a new, younger audience would be beneficial for future generations. The work here is led by GS Amir Elhamy.

Jordan Pray for the work to provide Jordanians with the Word of God in a format they can access and understand. Pray for those who participate in Bible-based Trauma Healing programmes across the country. Pray for the Bible Society here as they work in a predominantly Muslim country. GS Munther Al-Namat leads the Bible Society here.

Lebanon Praise God for His provision following the blast in Beirut. Pray for those still struggling in light of the blast and the COVID-19 pandemic. Ask that God would bless the work among refugees and migrants, that they would see God's love for them through these projects. Pray also for their supporters, staff, and Board led by GS Michael Bassous.



Support from
the Methodist
Church in
Ireland,
World Mission
Partnership

For many years Irish Methodists have been supporting our work through World Mission Partnership. Between 2018 and 2020 this support went to projects in Austria, the Gulf region and Togo. A new cycle of support has begun with a gift of £30,000 over three years to projects in Portugal and in Cuba.

We rely on the generous support of churches and church groups from across Northern Ireland – from individual congregations as well as from denominations. It is wonderful to be able to connect local churches to global Bible mission through our work.

The projects selected for World Mission Partnership in Portugal and Cuba both have strong links with the Methodist Church in those countries.

In Cuba, World Mission Partnership are supporting 'A Bible for every Cuban' project. Many of you will be familiar with the work in Cuba by the Bible Commission (Bible Society in Cuba) to carry on the work of

reaching out with Scripture and Bible engagement tools in a place where the church is growing and access to Bibles is still difficult. After reaching their 1 million Bibles for Cuba target in 2018 the Bible Commission wants to reach everyone in Cuba (Population of approximately 11 million people) with the Bible. As well as Bible distribution the Bible Commission are involved in Bible engagement programmes through the network of churches with young people, leaders of small groups and pastors encouraging Bible reading and study.

World Mission Partnership are also supporting a new translation project in Portugal to revise and update the Almeida Version of the Bible. The last revision of this Bible version was in 1898. The Bible Society in Portugal want to update this so that everyone can easily understand the language used. The Almeida version is popular in Portugal and in other Lusophone (Portuguese speaking) nations in Africa including Angola and Mozambique. It is hoped that

the four Gospels and the book of Psalms will be completed by the end of 2021.

We are delighted to be partnering with World Mission Partnership on these projects and very grateful for their ongoing support and encouragement.

Catherine was able to visit the project in Cuba in 2018.



BIBLE-A-MONTH PROJECT SEPTEMBER: CAMBODIA

Despite Scripture being available in the Khmer language, many people are still unable to access it due to illiteracy. The Bible Society in Cambodia has partnered with many local churches to offer over 600 literacy classes a year to both disadvantaged Christians and non-Christians. These people are taught to read through studying the Bible. One of those who participates in these literacy classes is 12-year-old Srey Aun. She has a very low literacy level as she often has to skip school to work to support her family. She told the Bible Society staff that she was excited to be able to learn to read and write, and perhaps one day have a good job with a decent income.

- + Pray the literacy rates increase, so that the Bible can be accessed by a greater amount of people.
- + Pray for the churches that are helping to offer literacy classes, so that their partnership with The Bible Society in Cambodia can continue.
- + Pray for Srey Aun, and others like her, to be able to attend literacy classes where she studies the Bible, whilst under pressure to support her family through work.



International News



Ugandan Braille Bibles

Bible Society of Uganda General Secretary Simon Peter Mukhama holds up a portion of the Runyankore-Rukiga Braille Bible.

In a country with a population of around 42 million, it is estimated that 2.6 million are visually impaired or blind—one of the world’s highest rates of visual impairment. The Bible Society of Uganda, recognising this need, has implemented a wide range of innovative ideas to reach this audience. Since 2011, the Bible Society of Uganda has done considerable work in helping blind people learn to read Braille, advocating for inclusivity in church activities, and providing Scripture materials in Braille, audio, and large-print formats.



A blind woman reads a portion of the Runyankore-Rukiga Braille Bible.

In the early 1960s, the publication of the very first Runyankore-Rukiga Bible provided the Nkore and Kiga peoples of south-western Uganda with access to God’s Word in their mother tongue. More than 50 years on, the Bible Society of Uganda celebrated a new version of the same Bible, but one with a difference. Standing two metres tall and weighing over 30kg, the Runyankore-Rukiga Braille Bible has brought the Word of God to people with visual disabilities.

“The impact that a Braille Bible has is great. It allows those with visual impairments to read God’s Word for themselves.”

Following on from the launch of another Braille translation, the Luganda Braille Bible in 2018, the new Runyankore-Rukiga Braille Bible is yet another important milestone in ensuring that people with visual disabilities can access and engage with Scripture.

The launch celebration took place in November 2020 in Mbarara, western Uganda. With face masks worn by all attendees, it was obvious that COVID-19 has impacted daily life in the country, but that could not prevent the expression of great joy and thankfulness amongst the 180 people in attendance.

“God hears my language,” exclaimed one of the beneficiaries, with another remarking that, “It is now the Bible that comforts me.” The event was also streamed online for those who, due to COVID-19 restrictions, were unable to attend in person.

The impact that a Braille Bible has is great. It allows those with visual impairments to read God’s Word for themselves, without someone reading it to them. The Bible Society in Uganda has found that provision of Braille Bibles can lead to lasting change, raising the self-esteem of blind and visually impaired people, their inclusion in church and community activities, and the sharing of God’s Word in the community.



AN UPDATE FROM LEBANON

On 4th August 2020, a massive explosion erupted in Beirut, Lebanon. Over 210 people died in the blast and the damage to the city was extensive. Thankfully, no Bible Society staff were killed in the incident, but their office building was left uninhabitable. The office is a hub for the rest of the Bible projects run in Lebanon, and this disaster had an impact on many projects.

As a response to the explosion, Bible Societies around the world rallied together to help. In Northern Ireland we ran an emergency online appeal to help the Bible Society in Lebanon as they sought to deliver Scripture and aid to those affected. We also wanted to aid them in the repair of their building.

Since August, the reconstruction of the Bible Society building has been completed and their damaged equipment has been replaced. The progress was slow due to the demand for construction workers and materials, but the office is now fully functional again.

Over the course of the Autumn and Spring months, the Bible Society here worked hard to distribute Bibles to all those who have been impacted by this crisis. They wanted to share hope in a time where many were feeling particularly hopeless.

One of our colleagues sent us a report on the Bible distribution over the last 6 months:

“The staff morale is much better since the reconstruction and having witnessed how the UBS fellowship and partner agencies have supported the Bible Society during this unexpected crisis.

One of the ladies receiving a Bible after her home was reconstructed was very happy. She said that it was a beautiful surprise for her and especially that the Bible was in Armenian (her mother language) and added that she was planning to read it regularly.

Another woman receiving her Bible thanked our staff a lot and said that this Bible will always have a special place not only in her house but also in her heart.

When she learned that the Bible Society was offering a full Bible at a highly subsidized price, one of the ladies contacted all the persons in her prayer group that wanted Bibles but could not afford because of the crisis and organized the list and names, collected from them and arranged for the Bibles to be delivered to them before Christmas. “For most of them”, she said, “it will be the only present they can afford because of the crisis, and it is in fact the only one they need.



The van ministry in Russia is important for reaching remote communities with Scripture.

Russian Van

Russia is a vast country, many parts are incredibly remote and hard to access. The transportation of Bibles and other Scripture resources is often hard, and the van used for distribution had travelled many miles and had begun to fail. It was no longer a viable option for Bible distribution.

We were able to help fund the purchase of a new van for mission work in

Siberia. This van has been a real blessing over the last few months; it has allowed the Bible Society to continue to provide Scripture to those in the most remote parts of Siberia.

The Russian Bible Society wanted to express their gratitude for the support they have received and ask that we remember them in our prayers.



Summer Appeal



The 'Friends for Life' Sports Centre ALBANIA

"The Friends for Life" Sports Centre in Albania is an exciting project which aims to engage people with God's Word through football and other sports. This sports centre is located in Tirana, the capital of Albania and will act as a hub for many Bible engagement projects. Once completed this centre will be the headquarters of Bible Society work in Albania, as well as an outreach project. We have been supporting this project over the last number of years as they continue to construct the building and sports facilities.

To date, the football pitches have been completed, as well as a few of the office and conference buildings. The team rooms and other facilities are also almost finished. The cafeteria and dressing rooms were completed at the end of January 2021, and the third building with the Bible Society headquarters and meeting rooms is still in the process of being built. While some of the buildings are not fully finished, they have already begun to run football camps, training and Bible studies with the facilities already completed.

One of our colleagues in Albania, Altin, recently shared with us his thoughts on the past year. At the beginning of 2020 the Bible Society was celebrating; the Albanian Bible translation had been completed, the Friends for Life Sports Centre was under construction and everything seemed to be running well.

"It is hard to explain 2020 in a few words but for the Interconfessional Bible Society of Albania it looked like the wedding of Cana.

"We were expecting a wonderful celebration of 20 years of hard work to produce our Bible translation, translated for the first time from the original languages into Albanian. We were also expecting to get the first fruits of a long-term strategy of holistic ministry through the Sports Centre that we have been carefully building for several years.



"Instead, we saw the "wine" of the celebration disappearing because of the global pandemic. Suddenly everything became almost impossible. It was hard to bring the printed Bibles to Albania, difficult to do a launch and the new Sports Centre was almost lost too due to the financial impact. But when our plans and provisions dry out, God has a better solution, and the "best wine" is about to be served.

"The situation in April should have called for some of the staff to be made redundant, for projects to be halted, for funds to be drastically and dramatically reduced and for people to stay at home. But the Albanian BS staff and volunteers continued to work harder with a selfless attitude going out, serving people, continuing the work among children and making sure the preparation for the publishing of the Albanian Bible was completed."



The Friends for Life Girls' team along with their coach.

After receiving special permission from the government to open their facilities, the Bible Society of Albania was able to allow access to the football fields for people to come and exercise at a social distance. This was very positive, allowing the Bible Society to engage with their local community and support them in a time of need. While not able to run their full programme of training, studies and tournaments, they were able to engage with their communities and begin to build relationships.

In 2021, the Bible Society of Albania has been able to continue to build the Friends for Life Sports Centre, with help from other Bible Societies through the Solidarity Fund. They continue to pray that restrictions are lifted and it will soon be safe to meet and resume their regular programme of outreach activities.



Pray for this project:

- + Pray for the staff and volunteers as they seek to share the message of the Bible through small groups and sports coaching.
- + Pray for the community in the surrounding area of Tirana. Ask God that the Bible society sports centre would be a positive addition to this community and that people would engage with the activities held there.
- + Pray for the Bible society of Albania as a whole, as they seek to recover from the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their projects, staff and finances. Praise God but he has been faithful throughout this time.

Donate

All Bible Society work depends on the generous giving of supporters. You could help to support this project:

- + £20 could supply a football group with a course of Bible study resources.
- + £60 could provide the resources and equipment needed for a children's football camp.
- + £100 could support a football coach for a week.

If you would like to donate to this project simply fill out the form that was included with this magazine. You can also donate online on our website at www.biblesocietyni.co.uk/project/albania-friends-for-life-sport-centre or scan this QR code with your smartphone.



Reaching Everyone with God's Word



Our priority at Bible Society NI is to reach everyone with God's Word. Across the world we support projects translating the Bible, distributing it and promoting engagement, and every year the United Bible Societies produces a set of statistics to track the progress of how accessible the Bible is.

When United Bible Societies was established, 75 years ago, fewer than 200 languages had the full Bible in their language. Only slightly over 230 had their version of the

New Testament, and 620 had Scripture portions. Since then, huge progress has occurred, with the number of languages with some Scripture more than tripling!

We have been so encouraged over the last year by the progress being made, especially in Bible translation where over 704 translations have been completed as of March 2021. In 2020, despite the obstacle of COVID-19, 66 Bible translations were completed alone, directly benefiting 707 million people. For 46 languages, this was the first

Scripture translation. One of these completed translations was the American Sign Language Bible, which is the only Sign Language in the world (out of an estimated 400) with a full Bible translation.

However, whilst this is huge cause for celebration, more than half of the world's 7,359 languages have no Scripture at all, with 1.5 billion people still not having a full Bible translation in their language. Such statistics show that while drastic progress has been made, the work of Bible translation is not complete.

Bible Translation Landscape: February 2021

How many **people** have Scripture in their language?



How many **languages** have Scripture?



Source: United Bible Societies and ProgressBible™ (February 2021)

1. Figures for the number of language users are based on the best available data, which, when rounded up, totals 7.2 billion people - less than the world population of over 7.8 billion people.

2. Includes 242 sign languages without recognised language codes.



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