



'After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about.'" Luke 2.15 (CEV)



WE ARE ALWAYS DELIGHTED to see how your gifts are changing lives, and this month is no exception.

In this prayer letter you'll read about the incredible journey that pastor Wang Hai makes to deliver Bibles and minister to the people of rural communities in China.

You can also read about the exciting launch of the new ecumenical translation of the Bible in Latvia — So popular it sold out in just three days.

I hope you'll be inspired by what you read and that you'll continue to support and pray for all these projects. Thank you for being part of the worldwide mission to share the Bible where the need is greatest.

Have a peaceful Christmas



John Ranford Bible a Month Co-ordinator



Wang Hai uses his new bike to deliver Bibles to rural areas in China

Photo © United Bibles Societies China Partnership/Jenise Lee



By Yeo Tan Tan, Communications Manager for the China Partnership

WE ARE THANKFUL TO GOD that we are able to partner with preachers like 29-year-old Wang Hai, to bring God's Word to remote areas of China. I'd love to share with you his story...

Wang Hai is a preacher and church planter from the Miao ethnic group. He's one of 24 young preachers who recently received a motorbike from Bible Society to help his ministry and Bible distribution. Before receiving this bike, Wang used to walk for days up and down the mountains. Now, his journey to visit remote villages is on average five hours.

Wang has been the only preacher in his village for the last 12 years. He ministers among the poor — and endures harsh conditions just like them. 'After graduating from Bible seminary I was leading a group of 200 Miao believers,' he told me. 'Poverty was rife and I drew no salary. During a poor harvest we would often go hungry.'

From a young age, Wang knew he wanted to dedicate his life to serving God. His family sacrificed much to put him through Bible college. Afterwards, he returned to Trinity Church — his home church in the mountains — and under his leadership it has gone

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Bible Society in focus

SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

Do you look for ways to share the real story of Christmas with family, friends and neighbours?

For several years now, Bible Society has produced beautiful stickers with a gentle Christian message so that you can do just that.

This year, in response to popular request, we have also produced gift labels, so that your presents too can carry a reminder of the Saviour.

We hope that as many people as possible will join the campaign this year, and so we are encouraging churches to give out sticker appeal leaflets to their congregations. This contains some sample stickers, as well as some information about the Child of Bethlehem project, which sticker appeal donations are supporting. You can order some leaflets for your own church by visiting biblesociety.org.uk/churchpack

So please join us this year in sharing the real story of Christmas by ordering your free stickers and gift labels; just visit biblesociety.org.uk/stickerappeal or give us a call on 01739 418222.

Thank you for helping us to share the Good News!



continued from front page



from strength to strength. He has helped reach out to other ethnic groups and runs bilingual services.

Wang heads out on his motorbike at least two or three times a week. 'There are places where there are new believers and they don't have Bibles. I use the motorbike to bring Bibles to them,' he explained. He often shares the Gospel in other villages on his journey. In 2010 he began preaching in one village, and there are now 50 Christians there.

Wang told me it's not unusual for these communities to meet in worship until 2am or 3am during his visits. Maybe it is difficult for them to see their shepherd often, or maybe it is because they thirst for God's Word that they treasure every moment together.

'There is a shortage of pastors and God is willing to use me,' says Wang. 'Thanks to Bible Society supporters I now have this motorbike to visit people in the mountains. My body may ache after riding long distances, but my heart is happy. In winter, when the road is icy, I tell God that the



Congregation at a Miao church in Manpo, Yunnan Province, China

steering is in his hands, and I have never fallen. This bike is a tool for God's service.'

Despite his young age, Wang is wise, selfless and dedicated. We are grateful to God for the chance to serve alongside him, and I'd ask you please to keep him in your prayers.

NEW MODERN LATVIAN BIBLE A SELL-OUT

Latvian Christians have had their first taste of God's Word in today's language, with the launch of a new ecumenical translation of the Bible – and it sold out in just three days.

The translation was launched in Riga, Latvia's capital, and the event was covered on national television. Among those who queued outside a bookshop to buy a copy was theology student, Eva.

'We're so excited that the new Bible has arrived and I want to get it as soon as possible,' said Eva. 'We've waited so long for this and are really grateful this day has finally arrived!' She said the old translation, which dates back to 1965, contains words which are hard for people to understand.

All 3,000 copies of the Bible were sold within three days, at the launch events and via churches and bookshops.

Bible Society General Secretary Valdis Teraudkalns said, 'We must do everything we can to make sure the Bible is accessible to anybody who wants it, so the next step will be to make it available to download.'

'We are committed to experiencing the Bible in our own lives every day and to letting other people know that it can surprise and encourage us in all life's circumstances.'

The Latvian Bible is one example of the many translation projects managed by United Bible Societies, which your donations support.



Janis (left) and Eva were very excited to see the new ecumenical translation of the Bible in modern Latvian when it went on sale at a bookshop in Riga, Latvia

Bible a month

December 2012

Thank you for helping others to encounter the Bible.

CHINA

Photo © Bible Society/Clare Kendall



Printed pages waiting to be bound at Amity Printing Press, Nanjing, China

IN NOVEMBER, China's Amity Printing Company celebrated as its 100 millionth Bible rolled off the presses. Two thirds of these have gone into the hands of Chinese Christians. The rest have been exported around the world.

The landmark is testament to the continued extraordinary church growth in China – and

the Bible has seen an amazing turnaround from banned book to bestseller. Just over 40 years ago, copies of Scripture were confiscated and often burned. When the Cultural Revolution ended, the Bible was first printed on the press that had formerly produced Mao's *Little Red Book*. Today, the printing factory is vast, and the state-of-the-art equipment can produce a Bible every second.

Thanks to your support over the years, millions of Chinese Christians now hold the Bible they longed for. Through subsidising paper, you have put copies of Scripture into the hands of a whole generation.

PRAYER POINTERS

- ★ Give thanks for the amazing church growth in China. Pray that Amity Printing Company will be able to meet this huge appetite for Scripture. Pray for staff there, for energy and wisdom in their work.
- ★ Pray for preachers like Wang Hai (see eyewitness report), ministering to rural communities in China. Pray for strength and safety as they travel long distances, and pray for the spiritual growth of these remote groups of Christians.
- ★ Part of our mission in China is to train pastors, by supporting them at Bible college, giving them resources and skills to minister to their church. Pray that the programme reaches the right people and equips them to lead.
- ★ Many Christians in rural China are illiterate and are unable to read the Bible for themselves. Thanks to your support, we're now running literacy classes to help them. Pray that students would be diligent in their studies and would be motivated by the reward of reading Scripture for themselves.

To discover other ways of making the Bible heard visit biblesociety.org.uk

Bible a month

January 2013

Thank you for your faithful prayers.

ETHIOPIA

Photo © Bible Society/Clare Kendall



Thanks to your support Brehanu Tadesse's life has been transformed by the Bible

IN YOUR LETTER with *Bible a Month*, you can read the story of Brehanu Tadesse, 42, who lives in Ethiopia. He used to be an angry man who used to fight and beat people up in the street. 'I hated everybody,' he said. 'It was a miserable life.'

But thanks to your regular gifts, he encountered the

Scriptures through listening to an audio Bible called a Proclaimer – and everything changed.

Faith Comes By Hearing project manager in Ethiopia, Endrias Kacharo, said, 'It's the time of God now. It feels like the biggest revival I have ever known. People are becoming Christians. In the next year we would expect more than 10,000 converts because of the Proclaimer.'

The Proclaimer is available in 10 languages in Ethiopia, but up to 80 languages are spoken across the country.

Bible Society in Ethiopia has set up around 1,500 Bible listening groups in the past year thanks to your support.

PRAYER POINTERS

- ★ Give thanks to God that so many people like Brehanu Tadesse are being transformed through the listening programme. Pray that they will be rooted in the Bible, and will find strength from meeting with others to hear the Scriptures.
- ★ Please pray for the teams currently recording the Bible into new languages. Pray that they will bring the Scriptures to life through the audio recording.
- ★ Please pray for Endrias Kacharo and all the team in Bible Society of Ethiopia. Pray for wisdom and safe travels as they work.
- ★ Give thanks for all the projects in Ethiopia. From distributing Scripture to poor families and students, to Bible translation, to setting up listening groups in prisons and orphanages. Pray that a nation will be transformed through this ambitious Bible work.

Bible a month

December 2012

'The LORD is my protector; he is my strong fortress. My God is my protection, and with him I am safe. He protects me like a shield; he defends me and keeps me safe.'

Psalms 18.2 (GNB)

CHINA FACTFILE



Area: 9,596,961 sq km approx. 39 x size of the UK

Population: 1,336,718,015 approx. 22 x size of UK.

Literacy: 92.2%

Languages: Standard Chinese or Mandarin, Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghainese) and other languages.

Bible a month

Club Corner

Thank you to those who recently told us you would like to continue to share the Bible with future generations by leaving a gift in your will. Rozel Poole has kindly left a gift in her will, and like many of you she shared with us why this is so important. 'The Bible has kept me steady through all of life's difficulties and has been a wonderful help and guide,' says Rozel. 'Investing in the work of getting Bibles to new Christians brings people into the kingdom – what can be more valuable than that?'

This year alone legacy gifts have paid for hundreds of thousands of Bibles, enabling millions to experience God's living and transformative Word.

We thank God for every one of you that faithfully give each month, and for those of you who have let us know you have made a gift in your will. If you would like to find out more about how you can extend your love for the Bible into the future by leaving a gift in your will, please contact us on 01793 418222.

To submit your story to Club Corner, please email bam@biblesociety.org.uk or write to us at the address below. Your Club Corner story may be edited and we cannot guarantee its inclusion. Please ensure you include a return address so we can return any materials.



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To discover other ways of making the Bible heard visit biblesociety.org.uk

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Bible a month

January 2013

'And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.'

Ezekiel 36.26 (ESV)

ETHIOPIA FACTFILE



Area: 1,104,300 sq km approx. 4 x size of the UK

Population: 90,873,739 approx. 50% larger than UK

Literacy: 42.7%

Languages: Amharic (official), Tigrigna (official regional), Oromigna (official regional), English

Bible a month

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

It's been a difficult economic climate lately and many people are finding things tough. That's why we want to make sure that you are giving at a level that is right for you. If you are paying by direct debit and would like to change your gift, please just indicate your new gift amount below, sign it and return to us at the address at the bottom of this prayer letter. Alternatively, please call us on 01793 418222.

I would like to change my monthly gift to

Please sign here.....

If you are giving by standing order and would like to change your gift amount, please call us on 01793 418222.