

**The Bible Society of Uganda is advocating for the inclusion of visually disabled people in churches. Here, a pastor from the Northern Region of Uganda shares a laugh with a 56-year-old visually disabled woman.**

PHOTO CREDIT: © CLARE KENDALL

# **BRAILLE SCRIPTURES BRINGING HOPE IN UGANDA**

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In Uganda, research indicates that over two million people have a visual disability (PVD). The Bible Society of Uganda is committed to helping these individuals by providing access to Scriptures in various formats, including Braille, audio, and large print. Additionally, they advocate for the inclusion of people with visual impairments in church activities.

One person who has personally experienced the impact of this work is Pastor Paul, affectionately known as “the man with the big Bible.” Paul lost his sight at the age of twenty-nine, but instead of letting it mark the end of his journey, it became the start of a profound transformation.

Encouraged by a friend, Paul enrolled in a primary school dedicated to teaching Braille. Although he initially felt out of place due to the age difference between him and the younger students, he was determined to succeed. Within a year, not only had Paul mastered Braille, but he had also discovered a new passion—his Braille Bible. This Bible became a source of comfort, filling his days with hope and guiding his faith journey.

Even after enrolling at university to pursue a degree in primary education, Paul frequently returned to the primary school to borrow the Braille Bible, which had become his most treasured possession. Upon graduating, he was fortunate to secure a teaching position at the same school, allowing him continued access to the Scriptures he cherished.

Paul’s connection to the Bible deepened, and soon he felt a divine calling to become a preacher. Enrolling in a theological school, he excelled and graduated at the top of his class of fifty-one students. Paul credits the Braille Bible for nurturing both his faith and intellect.

Today, Pastor Paul is a well-known figure in Busoga, Eastern Uganda. Through his ministry, he has touched countless lives and led many to Christ.

**Thank you to our Bible a Month Regular Givers who are supporting this project this year.**

Dear Friends of Bible Mission,

Welcome to the Spring issue of *The Word at Work*. I am excited to share with you some inspiring stories from around the world that showcase our global mission. In this issue, we highlight projects like providing Braille Scriptures to visually impaired individuals in Uganda and distributing Bibles to rural, underserved communities in Liberia. In the Solomon Islands, Bible Society is offering much-needed literacy classes, while in Brazil, Bible Society is celebrating over sixty years of service to isolated communities along the Amazon River.

The United Bible Societies (UBS) fellowship recently reaffirmed its commitment to seven mission priorities through the Egmond Affirmation. These include Bible engagement, Bible Translation, Mission Resilience, Digital Transformation, Creation Care, Serving Diaspora communities, and Printed Bible distribution.

The Bible calls us to pursue justice, peace, and kindness in every area of life—whether relational, economic, or environmental. UBS places a particular emphasis on addressing global inequalities, climate change, and human migration, believing that meaningful engagement with Scripture has the power to bring about real transformation.

Our fellowship remains dedicated to its core mission of translating and distributing the Bible in every language and format. We continue to collaborate with churches of all denominations to develop relevant programmes, ensuring that no barrier prevents people from accessing the message of the Bible. The Bible's message is alive and active today!

As a supporter of the Bible Society—whether through financial contributions, prayer, or volunteering—you play a crucial role in our mission. We sincerely thank you for your faithfulness to Bible Mission, for standing with us during these challenging times, and for everything you do to support the cause. On behalf of our team at the Bible Society Group, I wish you a blessed Christmas and look forward to our continued partnership in the coming year.



A blue ink signature of Neels Janse van Rensburg.

Neels Janse van Rensburg  
CEO



**Grace is a student who expressed excitement when she heard the audio Bible for the first time. "I feel good by hearing God's word through the proclaimer; I feel the touch of His spirit," said Grace.**

PHOTO CREDIT: © J. WOLLO FORKAY



# LITERACY A LINK IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

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In the Solomon Islands, despite 90 per cent of the population attending formal schooling, functional literacy rates in the major provinces remain alarmingly low, ranging from just 7 to 17 per cent. Recognising the profound effects of illiteracy on both livelihoods and spiritual growth, the Bible Society in the South Pacific (BSSP), in partnership with the Literacy Association Solomon Islands (LASI), has launched a transformative literacy project. "Literacy is an essential life skill that enables people to engage with the printed Word of God, understand its meaning, and apply it to their lives, fostering personal, societal, and spiritual development," says Mansueto Casquite, UBS Asia-Pacific Literacy Advisor.

While the New Testament is available in nineteen local languages and the full Bible in three, many people still read the Scriptures in English or Pijin because they are illiterate in their own languages. Literacy serves as a

crucial bridge between Bible translation and meaningful Bible engagement.

"We've found that 85 per cent of participants are adult female learners," shares Mrs. Ledua Turaganivalu, BSSP's Manager of Operations. "In this patriarchal society, men often hesitate to admit their struggles with literacy, so women have become the primary beneficiaries and champions of this initiative." By learning to read, these women are not only gaining personal empowerment but are also making a positive impact on their families, churches, and communities.

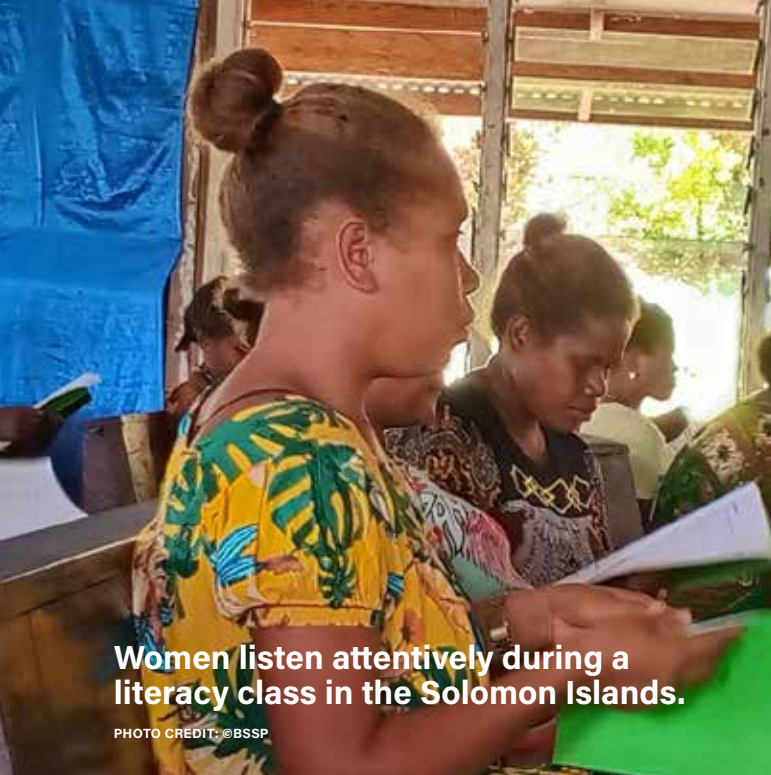
The project is focused on Malaita Province, the most populous of the Solomon Islands' nine provinces, specifically targeting the Baeggu, Kwaio, and Fataleka languages. Recently, the BSSP project team visited Malaita, where they were warmly welcomed as they travelled through twenty-two villages, witnessing the life-changing effects of the literacy classes

"One woman shared that before attending the classes, she could not read the signs in town, but now she can navigate streets, and help her children with homework. Another mentioned that after completing the literacy programme, she feels confident speaking in church," Mrs. Turaganivalu recounts.

Through this literacy project, women are gaining confidence and actively participating in church and community activities. Their new



**In the Solomon Islands, literacy is a powerful tool that is transforming the lives of women like these ones.**



**Women listen attentively during a literacy class in the Solomon Islands.**

PHOTO CREDIT: ©BSSP

skills are fostering a deeper understanding of the Bible, enriching their spiritual lives, and enhancing their overall well-being. This empowerment is also creating a ripple effect, as entire families are being exposed to and transformed by the Word of God.

# SCRIPTURES FOR LIBERIA'S RURAL CHRISTIANS

In Liberia, 85% of the population identifies as Christian, yet eight out of ten people in rural areas live in poverty. To address both spiritual and material challenges, the Bible Society of Liberia has launched the End2End programme, providing Bibles, Testaments, and Scripture portions to new converts in rural communities.

Recipients receive these Scriptures after completing the Faith Comes by Hearing (FCBH) listening programme, which also helps them develop literacy skills. At the conclusion of the programme, group leaders

encourage participants to join a Bible-believing church, deepening their spiritual journey.

## Testimonies

*One of the programme's recipients, Moses, shared how it has transformed his life: "Life has been challenging for me since childhood. I grew up believing that hard work alone leads to success, so I kept myself busy, striving for success on my own. But it was not until I joined the listening sessions and heard the teachings from the Bible that I understood what true success means. Before, I was working endlessly but achieving little. It was Matthew 6, particularly the verse, 'But seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well,' that moved me deeply. I realised that true success comes from faith in God's word, not just through our efforts."*

- Moses

*Another recipient, Hawah, a teenager who had struggled with addiction, also found new direction through the programme. Having dropped out of school and been abandoned by her family, she was receiving counselling for her addiction. During a Bible Society visit, she shared that while counselling had helped her recovery, it was the Scripture discussions during the listening sessions that truly convicted her heart.*

*"Listening to the proclaimer has changed me. I was touched by the teaching and the discussion we had on James chapter 4, 'Submit yourselves to God.' Drawing near to God with a single heart has strengthened my soul and opened my mind. Many of us leave therapy early because of doublemindedness, but through this teaching, God helped me recognise my mistakes and see my potential as I grow to serve Him."*

- Hawah



# REACHING COMMUNITIES IN THE AMAZON

Over 2.2 million indigenous people from more than 500 distinct groups call the Amazon River home, relying on its vast network for their livelihoods. In 1962, amidst this expansive region of winding rivers and dense rainforests, a humble mission took root. On December 8 of that year, a modest wooden boat, operated by the Bible Society of Brazil (BSB), set sail on a journey that would forever alter the landscape of healthcare, education, and spiritual nourishment in the Amazon.

This groundbreaking initiative, later known as the 'Light in the Amazon' programme, embarked with a singular mission: to bring the Word of God to isolated river communities. For more than 60 years, this small boat and its successors have been a lifeline, providing comfort and solace to those living in remote and inaccessible areas.

As the needs of the local population grew, so did the scope of the programme. In 1980, a significant milestone was reached with the introduction of healthcare services, through partnerships with health entities. In the 1990s, the programme continued to expand with the launch of the 'Light in the Amazon II'. This new ambulatory boat brought dental and laboratory services, further enhancing the programme's ability to address diverse health needs.

In 1997, the launch of 'Light in the Amazon III' elevated the programme's impact and

reach. In 2003, a new methodology was introduced, focusing on Bible engagement and community empowerment through social impact projects. By 2012, the 'Light in the Amazon II' was refurbished into the "Bible Boat," a floating bookshop offering affordable Bibles and deepening spiritual connections across the riverside communities.

In 2020, the 'Light in the Amazon III' was fully renovated thanks to the support of local churches and Bible Society supporters. It now distributes a variety of biblical resources—Bibles, New Testaments, and Bible portions addressing topics such as family, violence, drug abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases—while continuing to offer vital healthcare services.

Rev. Erní Seibert, Executive Director of the Bible Society of Brazil, describes the initiative as "perhaps BSB's most exciting programme." He acknowledged the



**An Amazonian woman with a Bible she has received from Bible Society.**

PHOTO CREDIT: ©OLEH SYROTKIN

challenges posed by the region's isolation: "The Amazon is vast and inaccessible. There are no roads, and boats are our only means of reaching these communities."

Emilene Araujo, Social Action and Fundraising Manager for BSB, echoed this sentiment, saying, "The Light in the Amazon programme is bringing life to thousands, reaching them with the transformative power of God's Word."

This project was previously supported by our Bible a Month Regular Givers.

## LEAVE A LEGACY

Did you know that nearly half of New Zealand adults—47 percent—do not have a will?

In the spirit of giving, we are excited to introduce "**Gathered Here,**" a platform designed to help you create a Free Will for those who may not have one in place.



Including a charitable gift will not impact your finances during your lifetime, but it will leave a lasting legacy and make a meaningful difference in the world. To create your free will, visit [www.biblesociety.org.nz/onlinewill](http://www.biblesociety.org.nz/onlinewill)



Scan the QR code to get started and leave a lasting legacy!

## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Would you prayerfully consider making a gift to support Bible translation projects in Thailand, the South Pacific, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam and Burkina Faso?

## IN MEMORIAM

Bible Society has learned of the passing of the following friends. Gifts towards the work of Bible Society's mission have been made in their memory. Their work of love goes on.

Soleman & Alice Andi-Lolo  
Bernadette Downs  
Lyn Harrison  
Mrs SE Runciman of Te Awamutu  
Joyce Palfreyman

## A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

To find out more visit:  
[www.biblesociety.org.nz/bequest](http://www.biblesociety.org.nz/bequest)



## THE LAST WORD

*Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Matthew 4:4 (NIV)*

0800 424 253 ▪ [www.biblesociety.org.nz](http://www.biblesociety.org.nz)  
[bibles@biblesociety.org.nz](mailto:bibles@biblesociety.org.nz) ▪ November 2024  
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