

# Newsblast

## Issue 2025-2

Welcome to the latest edition of Compass Braille's newsletter. In this issue, we share inspiring stories from Uganda, Nepal, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, introduce an exciting new project in Ghana, and provide the latest updates on our production and transcription work.

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## "Jesus loves children like me"

Most of the books Compass Braille produce and dispatch are braille Bible portions. We make sure we keep this focus knowing the power of God's Word to bring hope and to transform lives. Visually impaired children especially need to know that God loves them and so in May of this year a number of braille Lion Children's Bibles, produced by Compass Braille, were presented to children in Uganda. The following is taken from an article by the Bible Society of Uganda and recounts what happened next:

It was a bright and joyful morning beneath a decorated tent, filled with songs, prayers, and the laughter of children. The occasion was the United Bible Societies (UBS) Day of Prayer, a day of global unity, but for four young friends in Uganda: Catherine (10), Alfred (12), Jane (9), and Aidah (13), it was much more than a celebration. It was a life-changing moment.

For the very first time, these four children, all visually impaired, received their own personal copies of the Children's Braille Bible.

As each name was called and the Bibles were placed into their eager hands, joy radiated across their faces. Aidah's fingers gently traced the raised dots on the cover. "It's real," she whispered in awe, overwhelmed by the tangible presence of God's Word.

Catherine laughed with delight. "Now I can read Bible stories to myself whenever I want, just like other kids do!"

Alfred's smile widened. "I've only ever heard these stories at church," he said. "But now, I can read them on my own. I want to start with David and Goliath."

Jane hugged her copy tightly. "Jesus loves children like me," she said quietly, her face beaming with newfound confidence.

The four sat side by side, fingers gliding over the braille pages, reading aloud, helping one another, and sharing in the wonder of Scripture made accessible.

This sacred moment was made possible through the generosity of donors and the unity of sister Bible Societies around the world. What may seem like just a book to many was, for these children, a door to hope, faith, and belonging.

On the UBS Day of Prayer, hearts around the globe were lifted in worship and in a small corner of Uganda, four children received a priceless gift, the ability to read God's Word for themselves.

Thank you for bringing light into their world.

## Special Gathering in Nepal

Nepal Fellowship for the Handicapped (NFH) is an organization that ministers among blind and disabled people in Nepal. The NFH Center has been working to meet spiritual and physical needs among these people since 1993.

Their goals are to:

- reach out to all the disabled people in Nepal with the gospel, sharing the message of Christ
- help members integrate into local churches
- enable members to become independent with skills training and education
- provide audio and braille Bibles, hymn books, and other Christian literature to the blind and disabled.

In the early years of NFH, Compass Braille was able to send a number of Nepali braille Bibles and hymn books to them. Last year we received news from Bonnie Thapa, the founder of

NFH who now lives in the USA, that most of these had been destroyed in a flood. This was mentioned in 'Newscast' and Compass Braille supporters duly responded by sending us gifts enabling us to send out one complete braille Bible. We recently heard that most of the volumes reached NFH. However, one box containing the last half of the New Testament has gone missing and we will need to send replacements.

At the end of May, Bonnie wrote to tell us that she was travelling back to Nepal for a very special NFH gathering – a retreat and general assembly meeting to be held from 14th - 16th June in Kathmandu. There will be 45 people, most of whom are blind or partially sighted, including Bonnie herself. She writes, "We have not had such a gathering since I moved to the USA, so this will be our biggest gathering in 20 years ... I am sharing all this to you, so you can remember us in your prayers."

Let us pray for Bonnie and all our brothers and sisters at NFH, that God will bless and protect them and supply all their needs.

## "Gold from the Fire" in Zimbabwe

Last year Compass Braille sent a large quantity of braille books to Zimbabwe. They included 135 Shona Bible volumes, 249 English RSV Bible volumes and 300 booklets of various titles. Jotham Masuku from the rural villages of Nkayi District in Matebeleland North Province, is someone who has benefitted from them.

In the print version he is pictured holding two of the books. The following is based on an article about Jotham written by the Bible Society of Zimbabwe:

Now aged 22, Jotham lost his sight when he was 8. This resulted in him having to drop out of school – a huge blow for Jotham who is described as "smart, eloquent and God-fearing" with "great aspirations of life". After some time he was able to enroll at a suitable school but he faced disappointment again when this was closed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally he enrolled at Capota School for the Blind where his life began to show meaning, especially coming from a background where many think that when one becomes blind, the world has come to an end. Using braille became a lifestyle and he excelled in his studies, including passing well in 8 Ordinary Level subjects including mathematics and science.

Apart from school work, Jotham is a poet, a preacher and a director of ceremonies who aspires to help the world appreciate the fact that through him, God may be glorified. Asked on how he treats or views disability, Jotham said, "Disability is not the end of life; be strong and courageous. Learners should be serious with education not to live a life where visually impaired people end up being beggars in the streets. The future is in your hands and minds; disability cannot destroy your future. Revelation 3:18 says, 'buy from me gold tried in the fire that you may be rich ...'"

## **"This is the Word that touched me"**

In April and May of this year we sent 475 Sinhala braille Bible volumes to Ceylon Bible Society in Sri Lanka. Below we hear from one of the recipients of a previous shipment.

Hi, my name is Chamika Rukshan Appuhami. I studied at the Blind School in Ratmalana, and now I am studying at Adara Sevana Special Needs School. I am 39 years old. I am the fourth in my family, and I am the only blind child. I make use of all the talents Jesus has given me, and I can manage everything on my own. I am able to help my parents with the blessings of Jesus.

My parents are Buddhist, and I am the only one in my family who has accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. I am thankful to the Ceylon Bible Society for giving me and my friend Seth a set of Braille Bibles, which are so useful to us. We always read the Braille Bible and meditate on the Word of God during our prayer time. I wake up early in the morning, around 4:30 AM, and read while others are still asleep.

The Word that touched me was Matthew 20:30-34: "Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!' The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!' Jesus stopped and called them. 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked. 'Lord,' they answered, 'we want our sight.' Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him." This is the Word that touched me.

I am still searching for a job. I would prefer to work in packaging since I have a little experience in that area. I feel bored staying at home alone, and I don't go anywhere alone because I find it difficult to manage. This is one of my challenges.

I have many blind friends, and I want them to receive a Braille Bible of their own and come closer to Jesus.

## **Missing Boxes**

The UK is a member of the Universal Postal Union, and is therefore obligated to ensure braille can be sent by post to most places in the world free of charge. By and large the scheme works very well and we are truly thankful to God for this provision. However, recently there has been an increase in the number of boxes of braille going missing in transit. This results in us needing to produce and send the braille volumes again, sometimes even needing to pay for a commercial courier. The outcome is both a disappointing delay for the recipients and also extra costs that have not been budgeted for.

Please pray that all boxes will reach their destinations.

## **Updates**

### **New project for Ghana**

As mentioned in the last Newscast, Jake Kyle met representatives from the Bible Society of Ghana whilst in Uganda. This spurred on a braille Bible project in the major Ghanaian language of Asante Twi. Progress was smooth and quick, especially thanks to the help of staff at Akropong School for the Blind as proof readers. Two complete Bibles were dispatched and received in time for the launch which will be part of the 60th anniversary celebrations of Bible Society of Ghana. We hope to bring news from this in a future issue.

## Transcription

- Asante Twi - a language of Ghana. Transcription completed within two months (see above).
- Urdu. Having transcribed the Gospel of Matthew last year, and Genesis to Deuteronomy in previous years, we are now working on completing the whole New Testament. This has been a challenging language to work on over the years but finally we are seeing the fruit of the labours of all involved.
- Spanish. We are transcribing the deuterocanonical books of the Spanish "Dios Habla Hoy" version so that they may be produced and distributed in Latin America alongside the Protestant Canon we transcribed a few years ago.

## Production

At the time of writing, since the beginning of March we have dispatched the following quantities of braille Bible volumes in the following languages:

- Asante Twi to Ghana - 86 (see "New project..." above)
- Kinyarwanda to Rwanda - 225
- Lusoga to Uganda - 14 (to replace those missing, see "Missing Boxes" above)
- Hindi to various destinations in India - 638
- Telugu to various destinations in India - 115
- Sinhala to Sri Lanka - 475

In addition we have dispatched 58 braille portions of the English Lion Children's Bible to Uganda.

## Contact

Newscast & Prayer Pointers are available on request in text, braille, giant print or by email.

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