



YOUR MONTHLY MEMBER'S REPORT **OCTOBER 2023**

LAOS

Laos is one of Southeast Asia's poorest countries with an estimated 18 per cent of the population living below the poverty line, and it remains heavily dependent on foreign aid. Christianity first reached the country in the 19th century during the French colonial era, but after the communist Lao People's Revolutionary Party came to power in 1975, it tried to eliminate Christianity with Christians experiencing harsh persecution between 1975 and 1978.

Today, Laos is a Buddhist-majority country where 1.7 per cent of the population identify as Christian. Much of the growth of Christianity has been among ethnic minorities such as the Hmong, the Mien and the Bru. The Lao Evangelical Church has more than 200,000 members, one of whom is Thaungxay. He is a soldier who came to faith after losing his weapons in a river, something which is severely punished in the Laos Army. But after prayer from his

wife and mother-in-law they were miraculously returned to him.

As a new Christian, Thaungxay drifted from village to village with his family looking for somewhere to settle, but each time they were driven away. Then, a pastor who came to visit them was murdered on the way home. Thaungxay built a house, but it was burnt down. However, through all these trials Thaungxay was grateful to have his Bible by his side. "The Bible is my new weapon," says Thaungxay.

Your gift to Bible a Month Regular Giving will help to provide Bibles, New Testaments, and children's Scripture to poor and ethnic minorities in rural areas of Laos.



Photo Credit Laos Partnership



Give thanks for rapid church growth in both rural and urban areas despite restrictions and persecution.

Pray for house church leaders who are singled out as targets of persecution to persevere with grace.

Pray for the building of good relationships between the Laos Partnership and its church partners.

Pray for trained leaders both for the churches and for the house churches as the church has never recovered from the mass exodus of church leaders in 1975.



Scan to get a look at our latest Prayer Booklet!

FURTHER BIBLE MISSION PROJECTS



ALGERIA

Christianity reached North Africa during the Roman era and became established among the Berber people. During the Islamic invasion of the 7th century some Berber people fled to the Atlas Mountains. Since the 1980s, it is among them that revival has been taking place. Today, there are around 200,000 Christians although the number may be more as many people hide their faith.

An Algerian person's first contact with Christianity is often through Christian broadcasting. At the end of the programmes the Bible Society phone number is given. When a person phones the number, this may be the first contact they have had with a Christian. These are the challenging conditions under which the Bible Society of Algeria is working.

Photo Credit © Bible Society in Algeria



MOROCCO

In Morocco, Christianity is seen as a foreigner's religion, and the Bible is considered by many Moroccans to be distorted and corrupt. Christians may risk being arrested, fined, interrogated or beaten for even owning a Bible. But despite the risks the church in Morocco is growing and the need for Bibles is greater than ever before.

It is thought that there are up to 40,000 Christians in Morocco, although some say there may be tens of thousands more hidden believers who keep their faith a secret for fear of repercussions. The Bible Society of Morocco has been in Morocco for thirty years leading Scripture translation, with the first Moroccan Arabic New Testament produced in 2012, and distribution.

Photo Credit © Dag Smemo



INDONESIA

In the 16th century, Christianity was brought to Indonesia by the Portuguese. The Franciscans arrived in the Spice Islands (the Moluccas) in 1534. Subsequently, the country came under Dutch, British and Japanese colonial rule. In 1945, Indonesia declared independence.

Today, the government recognises six religions: Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Catholicism and Protestantism. Christianity is the country's second largest religion with eight provinces having a majority Christian population. In 2023, the Bible Society of Indonesia is running a literacy project in the Mentawai Islands. The aim is to enable illiterate people to be able to read, write and do simple arithmetic, to be able to engage with the Bible, and to be able to communicate in Bahasa Indonesia.

Photo Credit © Geoffrey Stamp



SRI LANKA

According to tradition, the Apostle Thomas came to Sri Lanka during the first century. In 1505, the Portuguese reached Ceylon which saw many locals convert to Catholicism. The Portuguese were followed by the Dutch, and then the British, who, by 1815, ruled the entire country. Under the British, the Church of England established a presence.

In 1978, Buddhism became the country's official religion under the constitution. Although freedom of religion is assured there have been attacks on Christians such as the Easter Sunday attacks in 2019 which saw 269 killed and 500 injured. The Ceylon Bible Society is providing a trauma healing programme, subsidised Bibles in Sinhala and Tamil, and literacy classes for children.

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