



MISSIONS FOCUS

From bulletin: May 29, 2022

Our Missionaries, their health and ministries affected by Covid-19
From today's bulletin / Missions Report from Missions Team

The Church Around the World June 2022

This month's newsletter highlights efforts to make available Christian literature to all the high school students in Uganda, a Laos mother whose Christian faith is at odds with her adult children who are her means of support--one child immediately disowned her; how blasphemy laws in Pakistan put Christians at risk for imprisonment, death or having to leave their country; and the difficulties Muslims face in Djibouti when considering the claims of Christ --whether to trust in Him.

Each article has a prayer prompt so you can actively respond to the article. Also included is this month's prayer for the persecuted with scripture, a believer's story and a prayer for that believer facing persecution.

Read the entire newsletter online or get a hard copy from the MC Lobby.
(pdf of the complete *Church Around the World* June 2022 newsletter follows)

Thank you for reading about and praying for our missionaries, countries and people locally and globally!

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significant news for christians

Some news that's
encouraging—some
disturbing. Read with
discernment. Watch
and pray.

THE Church Around the WORLD

June
2022

Step Publishers: Sharing Christian Literature in Uganda



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Step Publishers: Sharing Christian Literature in Uganda (1)

Step Publishers has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 1979 as a monthly Christian magazine based in Kenya. With the support of Youth for Christ International, it soon reached other parts of Africa, including Zimbabwe, Uganda, Ghana, and Zambia. Eventually, Step further expanded to include book publishing, while continuing to produce the magazine. Today, Step Publishers produces novels and children's stories, as well as personal development and educational resources. Step has published more than 100 books from more than 50 authors and is estimated to have reached more than one million readers throughout Africa.

As Step Publishers continues to grow, new initiatives have presented new opportunities for God to demonstrate his grace and provision. One such goal is to place Christian literature in the hands of students in senior high schools in Uganda. "When we submitted our book to the Curriculum Department of the Ministry of Education in Uganda, we had no clue that our book would be selected. They usually receive dozens of books from across Africa," said a Step Publishers representative. "We prayed, trusting that the Lord would grant

us the opportunity to impact the youth in Uganda with Christian literature. And he did, for which we praise him."

In working with Ugandan schools, Step Publishers has a five-step vision for its five-year plan:

- to instill a reading habit in the youth and their teachers;
- to increase interest in reading and studying Christian literature;
- to expose teachers of English literature to the power of Christian literature;
- to help youth grasp the benefits of Christian faith in their lives; and
- to enhance adults' care for children in vulnerable conditions.

With approval from the Ministry of Education and enough initial funding to kick off the project, Step Publishers began conducting feasibility studies and training workshops with distributors and English literature teachers in two areas: Gulu, in the north, and Kampala, in the south. They printed 110,000 books and began distribution through bookshops and schools. In addition to handling administrative duties like stock and invoice management, Step Publishers worked directly with teachers and students to facilitate successful implementation.

"We joined a WhatsApp group platform that enabled us to monitor the issues the

PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED

Recommended Scripture:

Genesis 8:1–10:32 | Matthew 4:12-25 | Psalm 4:1-8 | Proverbs 1:20-23

When Asif, a Pakistani Christian, dared to lead his coworkers in prayer, the factory owner told him to stop praying. But Asif continued, even giving his boss a Bible. The owner brought an Islamic cleric to persuade Asif to accept Islam. Asif's refusal led to an ultimatum: accept Islam or lose his job. Asif's response: "My God will provide."

Lord, provide for Asif and all the brothers and sisters like him whose love for you costs them their livelihoods. Keep their zeal fresh. May they stay eager to share you with their friends, family, and coworkers. Amen.

More prayer prompts are available in *The One Year Pray for the Persecuted Bible*.





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teachers were discussing in relation to literature studies,” said a Step Publishers representative. “We prepared a study guide for students.”

As for many organizations and businesses throughout the world, the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenging logistics for Step to navigate. The country was in lockdown and schools were closed. Yet despite COVID-19, the initiative is now in its second year and is incredibly successful, having made progress toward each of the five steps outlined in their vision. Step Publishers estimates that more than 126,000 people have been directly impacted by this project, and sales are strong enough that they do not anticipate any problems reaching their five-year goal.

A Step representative says, “We testify of God’s goodness for the books that entered the country before the lockdown and the distribution that commenced. Many students took advantage of the lockdown, staying at home and reading profusely. We believe that the Lord is with us in the implementation of this project and that he will continue to use this Christian literature to impact the life of the youth in Uganda.”

Financial support for this project was provided to Step Publishers as a Tyndale House Foundation grantee. Tyndale House Foundation is a grantmaking organization that partners with Christian ministries around the world. To learn more, visit tyndale.foundation.



Laos: Adult Children Reject Christian Mother (2)

After accepting Jesus Christ as her Savior, Suiy decided to call her son and daughter: “I told them that I believed in God, and my sickness went away. My health was strong, and I was so happy.” Her children did not receive the news well. Her daughter told her to stop believing in God, or she would not come visit her mother and would not love her anymore. Her son was even angrier, disowning her completely. Both her children told her that if their employers discovered their mother was a Christian, they would be fired.

“After hearing these words from my children, I felt discouraged and embarrassed,” Suiy

said. "I am old and all my source of income is from my children." She called her pastor, who encouraged her to stay faithful to God, no matter the circumstances. Afterward, Suiy called her children again and told them she could never stop believing in God, but that she would always love them the same.

Pray that Suiy will see God supply all of her needs. Pray that her children would come to know God.



Pakistan: Blasphemy Laws Put Christians at Risk ⁽³⁾

Because of Pakistan's blasphemy laws, Christians are at constant risk of being falsely accused of blaspheming Islam, the Quran, or Muhammad, and they receive harsh punishments when convicted. Street evangelism is legal under Pakistani law, and several bold evangelists take advantage of the opportunity to share the gospel publicly. Many Christians live together in closed neighborhoods known as colonies, which provide a measure of security amid the widespread oppression. Still, several large-scale attacks have occurred in these areas in recent years, including some during Christmas.

Some Christians have been imprisoned for years under the country's blasphemy laws,

and many of those have been killed or forced to permanently flee the country upon release from prison.

Pray that Christians in Pakistan would have courage, wisdom, and protection when sharing the Good News. Pray for blasphemy laws to be overturned and for the wellbeing and release of those currently imprisoned for their faith.

Djibouti: Muslims Find It Difficult to Convert ⁽⁴⁾

Djibouti, mainland Africa's third smallest nation, is dominated by two majority-Muslim groups, the Afar and Somali, and is nearly surrounded by parts of neighboring countries that serve as safe havens for Islamic terrorists. Despite this, Djibouti itself is not dominated by extremists, and even though Islam is the official state religion, the rights of Christians are generally respected, Bibles are legally available, and there is no law preventing Muslims from converting. Still, Djibouti seeks to maintain its Muslim identity, and Christian organizations are not allowed to officially register.

The government tries to limit the spread of Christianity and the growth of evangelical churches by prohibiting public meetings and the construction of buildings for Christian activities. The only churches allowed to worship openly are French Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Ethiopian Orthodox. Evangelism and the discipleship of new believers are discouraged. Muslims who express an interest in Christ face the risk of persecution from family and friends, and those who convert are isolated, beaten, and sometimes killed for abandoning Islam.

Pray for Christian converts from Islam, who face pressure and persecution from their communities, and pray that the gospel will continue to spread.