

Oct-2020

*Gift and Kathryn Asiku and family are based in Entebbe, Uganda. Gift is a Language Programmes Coordinator and Kathryn is the Literacy & Scripture Engagement Assistant.*



Dear Friends,

Greetings from Entebbe! We are all keeping well and are grateful to God for His provision and protection as we go through the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Family update:** You may remember that we had a household of 8 when the lockdown started. However, in June the travel restrictions were lifted and we waited to see if schools would be reopened. When that didn't happen, we decided in August that Gift would take three of our nephews (Titus, Clifford and Destiny) to Arua to stay with their parents, whom they hadn't seen since February. We are grateful to God for the 5 months we stayed together with them and pray that our lives and witness may have had a positive impact on them. Our nephew Patrick is housesitting locally, but we currently have our nephew Daniel (9) from Jinja staying with us.

As the schools in Uganda remain closed, we have been blessed to have some friends who are teachers come twice a week to teach the children since June. Kathryn has also been teaching our neighbours' two younger boys, who are in Primary 1. It has been announced that children in candidate classes (final year of primary, secondary and A-level students) will return to school on 15<sup>th</sup> October, but no indication has been given as to when the other year groups will be allowed to return. Meanwhile, the boys keep busy with Lego and football, but have also done some baking, woodwork, gardening and looking after rabbits and a goat in the last few months.

We have made very good progress on our building project, with the first floor ceiling slab being laid in July. We have created two classrooms upstairs with desks and blackboards for the boys and teachers to use. In the compound we have fenced off two areas for grass, planted some trees and harvested maize, greens and tomatoes from our vegetable garden.

#### **Two highlights of the last few months:**

- **The launch of the Kupsapiiny New Testament:** In mid-September we travelled as a family to Kapchorwa, the home of Stephen Kiprotich, the long-distance runner, on the slopes of Mount Elgon in eastern Uganda, to attend the launch of the New Testament and Psalms in the Kupsapiiny language. We were excited to be invited, because Gift was involved in the start of the translation work in 2010, when the Gospel of Luke was translated. After the participation of the translators in the Luke Partnership Project, the Bible Society of Uganda took on the management of the translation work in a partnership with Wycliffe Bible Translators. The preacher of the day, Bishop Paul Kiptoo Masaba, spoke about God's Word being Light, Life and Truth. He pointed out that while some people in Uganda had recently celebrated 55 years of having the Bible in their language (Runyankole-Rukiga), the Sebei people were just receiving it now, around 100 years since the Gospel first reached their area. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, only limited numbers of people were allowed to attend the event, however, the Bible Society media person live-streamed the celebration on Facebook for those unable to be present, both in Uganda and abroad, including the Translation Consultant in Denmark. Click here to watch a video of the event: [https://www.facebook.com/BibleSocietyOfUganda/videos/launch-of-the-kupapiiny-new-testament-bible/310036840295482/?so=\\_permalink&rv=\\_related\\_videos](https://www.facebook.com/BibleSocietyOfUganda/videos/launch-of-the-kupapiiny-new-testament-bible/310036840295482/?so=_permalink&rv=_related_videos)
- **Celebrating James and Simon Peter's birthdays:** In September, Simon Peter turned 10 and James turned 12. Both of them celebrated with our own chicken for lunch and their choice of hot dogs (Simon Peter) and pizza (James) for supper, followed by birthday cake. All meals were shared with our neighbours and their three boys,

and a couple of guests, so we had enough people for a party! They received guitars as presents and are starting to learn some chords.

**Work update:** We both continue to work from home most days, although the office is open and Gift works there a few days a week. We are enjoying the flexibility which allows us to be available to the children and to supervise work on our house or in the compound.

**Gift:** We give God the glory that in spite of Covid-19 and the restrictions, Bible translation is continuing. Some translators are working from home, while others are able to travel to their offices to work. Reviewing translations with the community has been challenging, but is now able to take place in small groups with social distancing and other precautions in place. Meanwhile, some translation consultant checks are being carried out remotely on Zoom, while others have been postponed because of travel restrictions and safety concerns. We thank God for the technical capability to connect with colleagues in other parts of the country and the world. During Covid-19 our Monday morning Entebbe office prayer time has become a virtual prayer meeting in which Entebbe office staff and translation teams in their homes or offices connect on Zoom to pray for one another and the translation work. We also regularly welcome supporters from outside Uganda who join us in prayer at 7am GMT.

**Kathryn:** I recently participated in some online training on how to write project proposals and apply for foundation funding. In connection with that, I am writing a proposal for a literacy project to take place in Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. I'm enjoying working with colleagues in different countries and appreciate the opportunity to put a proposal together that I am excited about. In each country the "Let's Read Together" project will involve producing reading materials in two languages and setting up reading clubs for primary age children to promote access to reading materials and support fluency and confidence in reading.

I am also producing some Covid-19 information posters in various Ugandan languages. In addition, I am part of a team carrying out pre-publication checks and have recently worked on the New Testament in Simbiti, a language spoken in northern Tanzania, and other Scripture portions for Tanzania and Uganda.

**Outside of work:** During this time we have been responsible for hosting our church's mid-week fellowship on Zoom, which has been a good way of connecting with fellow Christians regularly and encouraging one another. Gift has been busy coordinating various activities in his ancestral village, Fundo, including tailoring and business training, tree planting and bore hole repairs. Kathryn has been meeting up with other ex-pat ladies once a fortnight for fellowship in a garden café, which has been a blessing.

Thank you for your prayers and gifts, we appreciate your support and pray that God will bless you and be near you.

With love from Gift, Kathryn, James and Simon Peter

**Prayer points:**

- We praise God for good health and His protection.
- We praise God for His mercy and that Covid-19 has not hit Uganda very hard.
- We thank God for the opportunity we had to travel to Kapchorwa for the launch of the Kupsapiiny New Testament.

Please pray with us...

- ...for James and Simon Peter to continue to focus on their school work and do well as they learn at home.
- ...for God's protection for translators and their families as Covid-19 is now spreading in rural communities.
- ...for God's continuing provision for Bible translation and related ministries during this season.
- ...for patience and perseverance through this season as we spend more time at home together as a family.

How you can be involved: We appreciate your prayers and support for us in this work. To support us financially, please use the secure on-line giving option on the Wycliffe UK website: <https://www.wycliffe.org.uk/donate/> or send a cheque payable to Wycliffe Bible Translators with a note saying it is a gift towards Gift and Kathryn Asikus' ministry. Thank you.

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