

Saving faith is a gift from our creator given to His elect. The means by which He has established, to give His elect faith, is “the ministry of the Word,” (Westminster Confession of Faith 14:1), as “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” (Romans 10:17)

On a recent trip to Gambia, on the west coast of Africa, there was a wonderful opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost in a land that is dominated by Islam. A small group of 5 of us travelled over 4,000 miles from Stornoway to Gambia and sought to take the opportunity to share the Good News that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). As Spurgeon said, “it is neither your task nor mine to guess who God’s elect are.” However, we can have great confidence that God does indeed have an elect people, from every nation, tribe, people and tongue, who will hear the Word of God and be brought to saving faith, as the Spirit accompanies the Word to make them receptive to the message. The Spirit penetrates our souls with a knowledge of our sin, the hope of salvation found only in and through Jesus Christ and elicits a response of saving faith in the lost. Scripture is central as the means by which saving faith is worked, therefore the Scriptures, rather than gimmicks, ought to be central to any missionary effort, both at home and abroad.

In Gambia, there are few churches and few villages where the Gospel is faithfully proclaimed from the pulpit. One way of bringing people into contact with the Word is to provide them with their own copy of the Bible. However, as strange as it may sound, that is in itself can sometimes prove problematic for a few reasons. Firstly, people working in the village, particularly the ladies, are often so busy that they don’t set time aside from their daily routine to read the Bible. Secondly, there are those who are illiterate or blind and are unable to read the Bible for themselves.

In recent years, we have come across an excellent resource in bringing the Word of God to the Gambian people, most of them not having the privilege of a Gospel ministry, by which they are taught the Word of God. The resource is an Audio Bible, which is a solar powered digital MP3 player. It is a very suitable means of reaching out to the lost, to the illiterate and blind, as well as to those who are busy with village life. Moreover, the audio Bibles are available in the people’s own native language.

It has been very encouraging to meet people and see them enthusiastically accept the offer of an audio Bible and later to walk through the village hearing the audio Bible play as people either sit with friends and family or are working on the land and on other duties. The problem we have experienced is not that people are unwilling to accept the Bible, a problem we would face here in Scotland, but that there are so many requests for audio Bibles that we run out of stock very quickly.

One particular man, who is responsible for an idolatrous shrine in the village, attended our evening Bible study on two occasions. We gave him an audio Bible in the Jola language and the next night, he brought his wife along who also requested an audio Bible, which we were glad to provide her with.

Please remember the Gambia in your prayers, as it is a land, like Scotland, which is in great need of the Gospel. However, unlike Scotland, it is a land that is very open to the Gospel. In fact, it is an open door.

SM

