



# BIBLE DISTRIBUTION ENHANCES LITERACY



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**AFNET**  
AFRICA NETWORK EVANGELISM TASK

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Dear Friend and Supporter;

Years ago, while traveling with a board member around southern Africa, we crossed the border from Zimbabwe, into Zambia. Stopping by a remote village along the road for my guests to get a feel of the remoteness and lifestyle of people so far away from any form of Western civilization, we quickly were surrounded by children, who seemed to swarm in from every direction. Of course, they all had their hands out for something, which we quickly filled. I always travel with lots of goodies for just such occasions.

However, one little girl, probably around 9 years old, eventually asked us whether we might have a Bible for her. That surprised us. With a box of Bibles in our vehicle, my friend suggested that we test her to see whether she could read. And so we took out a children's Sunday school booklet, and asked her whether she could read a sentence in it. While handing it to her, she ignored the request, rather looking over into another box. And, in perfect English she said: "I'd like to have one of those *"New International Version – Gospel of St. John!"* Amazed we realized that she had just read from the cover of one of the Gospel Booklets that we had brought with. Needless to say, we gave her one, but also left her with a full Bible. We knew that we could trust her to be the reader of God's Word to her whole Clan in that village.

Now, years later, just this week, statistics were released in South Africa on the state of literacy in our country. It be-cried the fact that only around 16% of South Africans read. One of the facts mentioned from the survey was that the vast majority of the population had not read a single book in years – and this included the Bible. It further stated that less than 2 in 10 people actually owned a book.

For us this was not only revealing, but also acknowledgement

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of a very sad chapter in our history: an indication of a major flaw in the character of our society. For we also know that where people don't read, there development is stifled.

And so, I could not help but be reminded about that incident with the little girl in a deep rural village. Not only could she read well, but also more so, she told us that nobody in the village even owned a Bible. Thus we realized the incredible need to be able to place a good quality Bible into the hands of every pastor we train, and wherever possible, to provide quality training manuals and reading materials where we can. But this has been hard. We have not had the budget to do always, and also Bibles and such materials tend to be much more expensive here than in the West.

Also, reading these recent statistics on the literacy of our African Brethren, I'm convinced that its not because people can't read. Rather as the article also pointed out, and as our experience with the young girl also proved - people don't read, not because they can't, but probably because they don't own books and/or even a Bible.



Therefore, one of the decisions that we as a ministry had made, and which goal we would like to fulfill, is to be able to put at least a good quality Study Bible into the hands of each of our graduating students. During our most recent graduations, and with the help of some of our sponsors, we were able to do exactly that. And the response was overwhelming. Now we hope to do so with every graduating class of Pastors and Christian Leaders.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Johan Combrinck". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Johan Combrinck



Johan Combrinck  
AFnet: President

“ But we want to do more. And so, we would like to appeal to you, our friend and supporter: Will you consider helping us place a good Bible into the hands of each one of the leaders and pastors whom we train. Likewise, we'd like to make sure that each one of our staff members, and also all of our orphans each be given a Bible. And wherever we see the need, we also would like to place good quality Biblical literature into the hands of our graduates. At the same time, we want to ask each sponsor of our orphan children, to please not forget to continue contributing towards our children's on going education fund. However the Lord leads you to give, kindly designate your special, and/or ongoing gift as such in the attached response slip. Your contribution DOES make a difference! ”