

# Translators' News

## Institute for Bible Translation

March  
2005

[www.IBTnet.org](http://www.IBTnet.org)



These Ossetic Sunday school children have received the New Testament

### **“I am grateful to God that right from the start IBT thought of Ossetia”**

*On 14 January 2005 the official presentation of the Ossetic New Testament was held in Vladikavkaz, the capital of North Ossetia. One of the speakers was Peter Lunichkin, an Ossetic mission leader, who said:*

“I have known the Institute for Bible Translation since 1978. That year we received 200 copies of the Gospels via Estonia. At that time it was a crime – the Bible was considered an anti-Soviet book, although we could not understand why. But they were joyfully received.

“Today I am grateful to God that right from the start IBT thought of Ossetia. I want to say a big thank you. Today is a big day for us. We have [on the translation team] Suren, the translator, and Vazha, the coordinator, from

the Baptist Church. I can imagine how the translator kneels before the Lord and prays for blessing. And today we can hold the Word of God in our hands and read it.

“It is a small edition, and I hope that there will be funds for a reprint. Nevertheless, I believe that today is a great day, a real celebration. Today we have received what we should have had long ago. People needed the Good News. Now I congratulate everyone, and thank the Institute for Bible Translation. I also beg you to concentrate on the North Caucasus. We have many problems, wars and terrorist acts. But if people come into contact with the gospel they become more humane, more loving and instead of taking up arms they begin to bless people. A big thankyou!”



A male voice choir gave a resounding welcome

## **I just could not miss the Ossetic New Testament presentation!**

***Barbro Lindström writes about her visit to North Ossetia:***

We landed at Vladikavkaz Airport after a flight of nearly three hours. It was dusk, and suddenly I noticed the high Caucasian mountains silhouetted in indigo against the pink and lilac sky. Indescribably beautiful!

“Welcome to Vladikavkaz!” Vazha, the local coordinator, stood waiting, and soon the five of us were packed into a minibus and on our way into town. There were Marianne, Sergei and Ketevan from the Moscow office, Susan representing IBT UK, and myself from the Stockholm office. We were in Vladikavkaz for the official presentation of the Ossetic New Testament – an event that I just could not miss, even though I am on sabbatical to study Russian in Moscow.

### ***A sign of God’s care in the midst of a monstrous tragedy?***

This is not the first time that the Ossetes have the New Testament. The first time was in 1993 when IBT published an old translation of the Gospels together with a hitherto unpublished translation of the rest of the New Testament by the well-known Ossete, Gappo Bayev, during his exile in Berlin after the Revolution. But today’s Ossetes find that first New Testament difficult to understand, and a new translation in

modern language was needed. The text has taken twelve years to finish, and it was arduous work. But the remarkable thing is that the Ossetic New Testament arrived from the printing house in that very week in September 2004 when terrorists seized School No. 1 in the North Ossetic town of Beslan and when more than 300 people lost their lives. A coincidence? Or a sign of God’s care in the midst of a monstrous tragedy?

The presentation could not be held earlier because of the events in Beslan, but now on 14 January 2004 the book could finally be handed over to the Ossetic people. A lot of copies had, of course, already been distributed through the various churches since the books arrived in Ossetia last October.

### ***A great celebration at the National Library***

The presentation of the Ossetic New Testament was a great celebration at the National Library in cooperation with the North Ossetic Ministry of Culture. It began in the foyer with a resounding welcome sung by a male voice choir. The men were wearing big Caucasian fur hats and long beige tunics with rows of cartridges on their chests and exquisitely decorated knives in their belts. Then we were invited into the great hall where speeches and songs followed one another. There was great gratitude to have the New Testament in modern Ossetic. “This is a great gift to our people,” said one, and another continued: “The New Testament is very important for spir-



The New Testament was distributed to all those present

itual life in Ossetia and will also help the language to develop.” Members of the translation team reported on their work and were warmly thanked. Supporting organisations were also mentioned, including Light in the East. A performance by a children’s choir ended the meeting, as copies of the New Testament were given to all those present. Afterwards refreshments were served while IBT colleagues were interviewed for television, radio and the press.

### *A big smile lit up her face*

In the evening a couple of us had the opportunity to attend a home bible study. What a joy it was to see a big smile light up the face of our hostess when she held the Ossetic New Testament and began to read!

### *I’m not a believer, but I’d really like to read the New Testament*

Meanwhile our colleague, Sergei, had been talking with a security guard at our hotel. “Could you arrange for me to have an Ossetic New Testament,” he asked. “I’m not a believer, but I’d really like to read that book. Several friends of mine are also interested, so I’ll pass it on when I’ve finished it.”



The school in Beslan

### *We could not hold back our tears as we walked through the cemetery*

The day after the presentation we were taken to Beslan. The cemetery was a sea of flowers, soft toys and other toys. Most of the graves had pictures of the dead. On one plot containing the graves of six children of two brothers, who are pastors, was a small Christmas tree. At the top was a sign that read “God loves you”. None of us



Children in Beslan have received the Children's Bible

could hold back the tears as we walked through the cemetery. The school where the tragedy took place was totally devastated. In the gym were rows of flowers and bottles of water – a reminder of the fact that the terrorists would not allow the children to drink during those days when the drama was taking place.

### *The New Testament has already been distributed to many of the afflicted in Beslan*

Back in Vladikavkaz we visited the North Ossetic Mission of Mercy for a meeting with the leader, Peter Lunichkin. He told us of various projects now underway to help the families in Beslan and thanked us for the New Testament which they had already distributed to many of the afflicted.

IBT colleagues were interviewed on a live radio programme and were able to say more about translation work. Later we looked in on the studio where the Ossetic New Testament is being recorded with the help of well-known actors. For those Ossetes who are not used to reading their language, or for those with impaired sight, these cassettes will be a great asset.

We had not eaten since breakfast and were really hungry when we arrived in the evening at the home of one of the translation team members. Tamara and her mother had prepared a table laden with Caucasian delicacies – salads, meat dishes, Ossetic bread, home-made cheese and much more. They tasted wonderful!

The next day we returned to Moscow, grateful for all we had experienced and asking God that the New Testament would be a great blessing and joy to the Ossetic people.

## Project of the month

We are planning to reprint the Ossetic New Testament, this time with Psalms, in the autumn. Funding for this is almost covered. That leaves the work on the Old Testament. Genesis and Exodus are all ready for printing but lack funds. Your donation to this month's project would give the Ossetes access to the Old Testament as well.

## IBT publications in 2004

### New Testaments

Karakalpak  
Ossetic

### Bible portions

John's Gospel, 1-3 John and Revelation in Khakass  
Luke's Gospel and Acts of the Apostles in Lezgi  
Luke's Gospel in Nenets  
(first bible book in this language)  
Four Gospels and Acts in Nogai

Mark's Gospel in Shor

(first bible book in this language)

Four Gospels and Acts in Tabasaran

John's Gospel in Tatar (reprint)

Luke's Gospel in Chechen (reprint)

Luke's Gospel in Chukchi

(first bible book in this language)

Jonah in Udmurt

### Bible stories

*Jesus, Friend of Children* in Russian (reprint)

## *Institute for Bible Translation*

Institute for Bible Translation was founded in Stockholm, Sweden in 1973, its main task being to publish Bibles for "non-Slavic peoples in Slavic countries." In the CIS 130 different languages are spoken. Since then we have worked on Bible translation in more than 80 of these languages. We have printed the Bible or portions of it in over 60 languages, including three whole Bibles, in Georgian, Moldavian and Tajik, and 19 New Testaments. We welcome your support for our continuing efforts in bringing the Word to those in the former Soviet nations. All peoples of the world should have the Bible available in their native language.

### In the US:

PO Box 216  
Alhambra, CA 91802  
Tel. 1-626-281-4740  
ibtna@IBTnet.org

### In Canada:

45-2301 Arbot Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9R 5K3  
Tel. 1-626-281-4740  
ibtcn@IBTnet.org

### In the UK:

PO Box 6481, Colchester  
Essex CO4 3AF  
Tel. 01206 870688  
rhwillcol@aol.com

### In Sweden:

Box 20100  
SE-10460 Stockholm  
Tel. 08-722-2340  
info@IBTnet.org

IBT also has offices in Russia and Finland.

\*Institute for Bible Translation is a registered, non-profit organization in the US, Canada, and the UK. To the extent that national legislation allows, contributions to IBT's ministry are tax deductible.