



A group of Yakut women outside their worship centre

First New Testament for the Yakuts

May 11, 2005 was a great day for the Yakuts in north-east Siberia - the day they received their first New Testament. The presentation ceremony was held in the Yakut capital, Yakutsk, and not only were many bishops and priests there, but even the president of Yakutia attended. The translation team and Marianne Beerle-Moor, director of the work in Russia and the CIS, represented IBT. The occasion received extensive media coverage.

Unfortunately the team's philological checker was unable to attend – he will be 100 next year and felt too weak after a period in hospital. Nevertheless, since this man is well-known and loved throughout Yakutia, just the fact that he took part in the translation work means

that everyone will want to read the Yakut New Testament!

The New Testament in Yakut is the ninth publication in the framework of the project, “The New Testament in 15 languages in the CIS by 2005”, launched at IBT's 25th anniversary celebration 7 years ago. We are very grateful to all who have faithfully supported the project all these years, both prayerfully and financially. To God be the glory for the fact that this year the project is entering its final stage (see back page).

Although this project is coming to an end, the work of translation continues. We expect to print soon the New Testament in several more languages, including Chechen.



Picture: Gultyera offers a delicious pie

A Tatar woman's journey to God

During a trip I made in February I met Gultyera, a member of the reference group for the translation of the Bible into Tatar. As she talked about her journey to God she just radiated joy. Here is her story:

Two years to live...

"I had always been really healthy, but after a bad cold I just never recovered properly. I went to one doctor after another for help. The doctors gave me a lot of different medicines, which completely destroyed my immune system. Eventually I was extremely ill, and one doctor said that I had only two years to live. Then I decided to set everything in order at home so that my family would not have it to do after I'd gone. I hired a handyman to repair our flat, and I went through all my belongings and decided who should inherit what. I resigned from my job, and as the time for me to die approached I visited my relatives to see them one last time. Of course, I didn't tell them I was going to die – not even my husband and son knew how ill I was.

Mum gave me a long list with prayers in Arabic

"My last visit was to my elderly parents. My father was a Muslim priest, and so I was a Muslim, but religion had always been just a tradition for me. Now I asked my mother what happened when people died. 'They go either to paradise or to hell,' she replied. I thought: 'Well, if I have to die, then I would really prefer to go to heaven.' So I asked what I had to do to get there. Mum gave me a long list: prayers in Arabic to pray five times a day, regular attendance at the mosque, almsgiving, etc. As soon as I got home I started on the full programme!

My greatest ambition was to be a secretary

"There was one thing I wanted to do while I was still alive, a longing I'd had for many years – to be a secretary. It had always been my dream. A good friend tipped me off about a company that needed a secretary – but they had already interviewed twelve people without finding the right person, so I had no great hopes that they would appoint me, who was totally inexperienced. But I got the job! I began work, and there at the office on the other side of the desk sat a woman who kept the accounts. She was a Baptist. Whenever we discussed faith issues I would begin to argue with her, but she merely brought out her Bible, opened it and pushed it over to my side of the desk and asked me to read. The amazing thing was that I never had anything to say after I had read the Bible passages she indicated. Then my colleague began to invite me to church, and I really wanted to go – but every Sunday morning when it was time to go I was dreadfully ill and could not get out of bed. Yet the weakness disappeared at about midday when the service ended! Finally I forced myself to go, even though I felt ill, and only as I approached the church did the bad feeling go. The same thing happened Sunday after Sunday. Then I realised that it was evil forces that wanted to prevent me from going to the service. In the end I decided to become a Christian.

The more I became a devout Christian the more opposition I met from my husband

"It was then that the problems at home began. The more I became a devout Christian the more opposition I met from my husband. He drank to excess and began to meet other women. Of course, that deeply hurt me, but my love for the Lord was so strong and my experiences with Him were so rich that I was carried through all the difficulties, and I decided to get baptised. When my hus-

band knew, he just said: 'If you do that, you leave.' I got a suitcase and began to put together some things. I intended leaving straightaway – but my husband prevented me. Then I decided I would get up at the dead of night and steal away, as the next day was the Sunday when the baptism was to take place. But as soon as I moved, my husband woke up. What was I to do? I definitely wanted to go to church to be baptised! A couple of hours before the service was due to begin my husband said: 'I'll fetch the car and drive you to church.' I was beside myself with shock! He came and took part in a Christian service for the first time in his life. But it took eight years for my husband to become a Christian!

The Tatar New Testament is sold in the mosque

“For several years now I have been a member of the reference group for the translation of the Bible into Tatar. We are so glad to have the New Testament, which was published four years ago, and we're looking forward to having the whole Bible in several years' time. And can you imagine: now the Tatar New Testament and the Jesus film are sold in our mosque here in town!”

Barbro Lindström



'God bless the Buryat Bible!'

Greetings from Buryatia

Swedish board member Sören Stadell is once again in Buryatia – this time he travelled with a big box of newly printed Children's Bibles in Buryat. He writes:

“How can we express our gratitude! Words aren't enough. We go to God and give our thanks and praise to Him!

“It's impossible to describe the moment when the Children's Bibles were handed over to the Buryat people. Representatives of various churches in Buryatia stood solemnly at the front as each and everyone received a new Bible. Then a ten-year-old boy came to the micro-

phone, was silent for a while, then he prayed and with that the book was dedicated for the children in Buryatia. Other children in beautiful outfits came forward and sang with him, lifting their hands. Then all those present chorused: 'God bless the Buryat Bible!' We all stood and sang praises to Christ our Lord.

“We have also been to Atsagat [the Buryat village where Sören spent two months last year -see December 2004 issue]. It was deeply moving to meet my family again. The librarian there wanted the Children's Bible delivered to the school and to be kept in the school library so that every child should have access to it.”

Project of the month

The Buryat children now have their Bible – the children in Chuvashia are still waiting for theirs. Support the printing of the Chuvash Children's Bible with your gift to this month's project.

New Testament in 15 languages in the CIS by 2005

The New Testament has been published in the following languages:

Language	Year	Population	Religion
Kurmanji-Kurdish	2000	197,000	Yezidi/Muslim
Tatar	2001	7 million	Muslim
Tuvin	2001	250,000	Buddhist/Shamanist
Kalmyk	2002	200,000	Buddhist
Olonets-Karelian*	2003	40,000	Christian
Altai	2003	80,000	Christian/Shamanist
Ossetic	2004	600,000	Christian/Muslim
Karakalpak	2004	570,000	Muslim
Yakut	2005	440,000	Christian/Shamanist

Currently in the Production Department:

Gagauzi	245,000	Christian
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In progress

Avar	740,000	Muslim
Komi-Zyrian*	365,000	Christian
Mari-Low*	700,000	Christian/animist
Mordvin-Erzya*	800,000	Christian
Veps*	3,000	Christian

*These translations are the responsibility of IBT Finland and are funded entirely by Finland.

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.

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IBT also has offices in Russia and Finland.

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