

Translators' News

Institute for Bible Translation

July-September
2001

www.IBTnet.org



"Man cannot live by bread alone"

"Bible translation in the Uzbek language will enrich the Uzbek people spiritually"

The chairman of the State Committee for Religious Affairs in Uzbekistan put it this way: "The Bible is an invaluable fountain of knowledge. To understand the history of man one must study the Scriptures. The Uzbek people will be spiritually enriched by the Bible translation in their mother tongue. Historians, scientists, and people in general will all benefit. May the translators truly be blessed in their enormous task." He expressed these sentiments when Proverbs (published both in Latin and Cyrillic scripts) was presented March 30, 2001 in the capital city of Tashkent.

The first time a Bible portion has ever been published in Uzbekistan

It is truly a milestone for Bible work in Uzbekistan, since this is the first time a Bible portion has ever been published in that country. The presentation was planned by the Bible Society of Uzbekistan, which also organized the printing. Representatives from the Uzbek government, diplomats, religious leaders, and representatives from international cultural and relief organizations were among the 100 or so people gathered for the presentation.

First Things First!

The Bible is good for people! That's what Bible translation is all about. We translate the Bible because it is good for people.

In this newsletter, in fact, we read about a man in Uzbekistan who says: "The Bible is an invaluable fountain of knowledge."

Sometimes we wonder how we can best help people in need. Is it best to give them food and clothes and housing, or is it better to teach them skills? Often we hear people say: "Rather than giving a hungry man a fish to eat, teach him to fish!"

Of course the hungry must be fed. Of course relief in suffering must be offered.

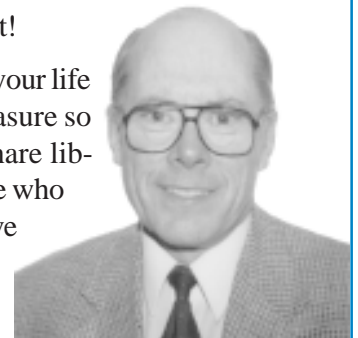
But, if the Bible is an invaluable fountain of knowledge, it is also very critical to give people God's Word in a language they can understand. The Bible brings relief from much heartache and suffering. It brings knowledge. It brings peace and understanding. Man shall not live by bread alone.

The Gospel changes hearts – therefore it changes individuals. As a result, nations are changed.

This month, won't you consider helping to relieve spiritual suffering – to help shed light into a dark world – by giving very generously to Bible translation.

First Things First!

May God bless your life in rich, rich measure so that you may share liberally with those who have yet to receive His Word.



Curt Gustafsson
President of IBT North America



Most Uzbeks are Muslims

Bible translation in the Uzbek language began more than 100 years ago, with the Four Gospels being printed for the first time in Leipzig in 1891. IBT resurrected this task in 1973 and completed the New Testament together with Genesis and Psalms in 1992. Today, the Old Testament is being translated as a partnership effort involving IBT, Wycliffe/SIL, the Bible Society of Uzbekistan and the United Bible Societies.

“We look forward to having the entire Bible in Uzbek in 5-6 years”

“This is an important day in Bible work in Uzbekistan,” said Sergei Mitin, director of the Bible Society of Uzbekistan. “Now we’re looking forward to having the entire Bible completed in the Uzbek language in 5-6 years.”

“Wisdom is highly respected in our country”

Reflecting on the newly published Proverbs, one of the translators says: “We have always had high respect for wisdom in our country. At first we considered publishing Proverbs in poetic format, but decided to avoid rhyme so that no biblical truths from the original text would be miscommunicated.”

“I want to translate in such a way that every Uzbek reader will receive and understand the message”

The translator, who is well versed in the culture and traditions of the Uzbek people states that: “I want to translate in such a way that every Uzbek reader will receive and understand the message. Many of the Bible stories are actually found in old Uzbek manuscripts. Bible prophets are named and manuscripts from the 12th century begin with a story about Noah. Some writings are about Moses and Jesus Christ. The poet Arazutar, in a collection of verse, compares the look from his beloved with what Jesus did: ‘when you gazed on me it was as though the Lord Jesus Christ looked upon me—my soul within me became alive once again’. Yet another Bible character common in old Uzbek manuscripts is Joseph.”

“Many of the Bible stories can be found in ancient Uzbek manuscripts”

“The ancient writers realized the importance of Uzbek literature,” continues the translator. “They translated texts from Tajik and Persian sources to Uzbek. The writer, Narbuzi, who lived in the early thirteen hundreds had a burning desire to know the prophets of his people, so he wrote *The Story About the Prophets* in the language of the ancient Uzbeks. The story about Elijah the Prophet, which is also found in many original Tajik and Persian texts, was translated into ancient Uzbek by the historian Agafi.”

The translator is continuing his research into the relationships between Biblical texts and ancient manuscripts—about 7000 such writings exist at the Institute for Eastern Knowledge in Uzbekistan. His purpose is to write a book documenting that the ancient stories originate in the Bible.

Barbro Lindstrom



Sergei Mitin, the Bible Society of Uzbekistan and Borislav Arapovic, Institute for Bible Translation



Uzbek schoolgirls

“I read from the book every day for a week and it changed my life”

There are many examples of how meaningful the Word of God, the Bible, is in the mother tongue. “I read in the Uzbek version of the Koran that it was a good thing to read the Bible,” relates one man. “After reading the same thing in the Kazak version of the Koran, I finally obtained a copy of the Uzbek New Testament. I read from the book every day for a week and it changed my life.”

“I heard that there was a book for sinners”

A woman tells how she felt convicted of sin during the Muslim month of Ramadan, the time of fasting and prayer. “I didn’t even want to go out, I felt so unclean,” she says. “Then a friend told me about a book for sinners, a book that offered forgiveness. I read from the book and felt how the burdens of my life were removed.”



“Look, we’re being photographed!”

“Is it really true that there is a God who loves everyone?”

An organization that does Bible text cassette recordings, has recently recorded the entire New Testament and three books from the Old Testament in the Uzbek language.

“We attempted to involve the most talented actors in Uzbekistan,” says one of the co-workers of the project. “They had never even heard of the Bible. Many of the actors were afraid to read aloud from the New Testament. But as they continued to prepare for the recording and became familiar with the Bible texts they began to wonder: ‘Is it really true that there is a God who loves everyone’?”

“This is exactly what our people need!”

About 35 actors participated in the recording. “This is what our people need! This is what we all need!” cried the actor who portrayed John the Apostle. Frequent heated discussions about faith and doctrines erupted during this time. We can only hope that the result will be an opportunity for the Uzbek people to hear God’s Word on radio or TV, in spite of the restrictive laws of the land.”



On a street in Samarkand

UZBEKISTAN

Area: The Uzbek Republic is located in Central Asia and borders Afghanistan. Previously one of the 15 republics of the USSR, this country is presently a part of the CIS—Commonwealth of Independent States. Tashkent is its capital. Samarkand and Buchara are other well known cities in Uzbekistan.

People: The Uzbek population is increasing rapidly—present population being 25 million. Uzbeks are also found in Afghanistan and China.

Language: Uzbek is a Turkic language

Religion: Most Uzbeks are Sunni Muslims. There are approximately 5000 Christian Uzbeks.

Bible Translation: The Four Gospels were printed in Uzbek using Arabic script in 1891 and 1913. In 1927 the Uzbek alphabet changed to Latin script and in 1940, to Cyrillic. IBT began a translation work in Uzbek in the Cyrillic script in 1973. The first New Testament, with Genesis and Psalms, was published in 1992. Presently, the Old Testament translation is in progress as a cooperative effort between IBT, the Uzbek Bible Society, Wycliffe/SIL, United Bible Society and local churches. IBT's Children's Bible is also published in Uzbek.



“The Grave of the Prophet Daniel”

According to Uzbek legend, the people carried the remains of the prophet Daniel back to Uzbekistan. The bones were measured before the journey began, and when the entourage arrived in Uzbekistan, the skeleton was 1 inch (2 cm) longer! From this it was determined that the skeleton would grow—so a grave was prepared which is 18 meters long!

Project of the Month

The Uzbek translation of the Old Testament continues. The Uzbek people need the entire Bible! \$8000 is needed this year just to provide the salaries for the 3 translators. There are many other costs as well. Your gifts are always welcome and appreciated!

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 into more than 80 of these languages. We have printed the Bible or portions of it in about 50 languages, including two first whole Bibles, in Moldavian and Tajik, and 12 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.

We sincerely invite you to support Bible translation work.

In North America:

Institute for Bible Translation*

PO Box 216
Alhambra, CA 91802
1-626-281-4740
Fax 1-626-458-0677
E-mail: ibtna@IBTnet.org

In the UK:

Institute for Bible Translation

PO Box 6481
Colchester, CO4 3AF
E-mail: ibtuk@IBTnet.org

Main Office:

Institute for Bible Translation

Box 20100
SE-10460 Stockholm, Sweden Tel.
Tel. +46-8-722-2340
Fax +46-8-722-2345
E-mail: info@IBTnet.org

IBT also has offices in Russia, Finland, Canada and South Africa

*Institute for Bible Translation is a US registered non-profit organization. IRS approved receipts will be issued for income tax purposes, for all contributions to Bible translation, publishing and printing.