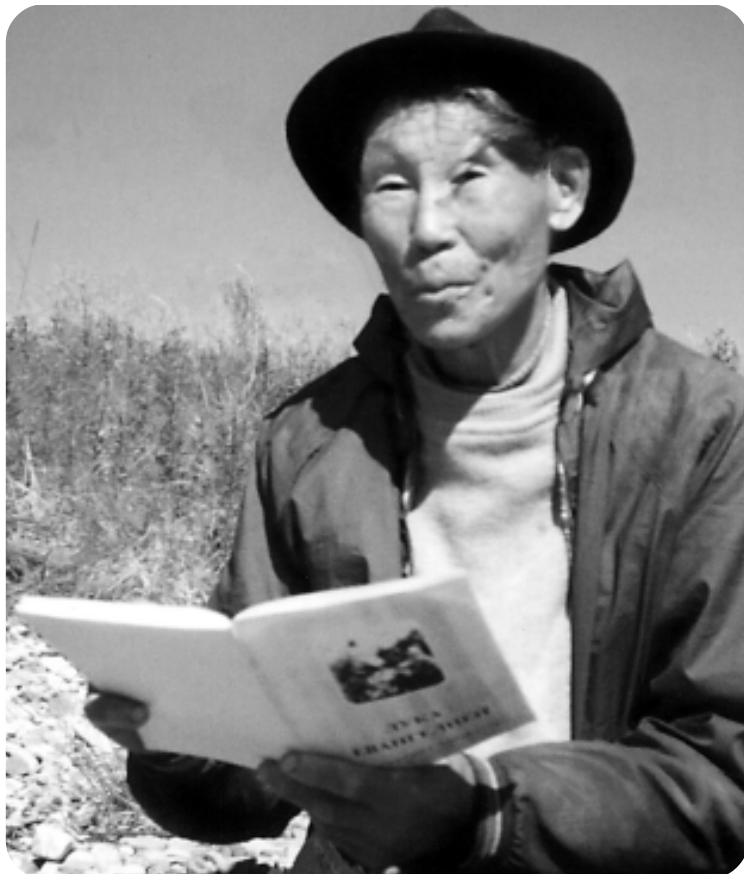


# Translators' News

Institute for Bible Translation

www.IBTnet.org

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2002



*An Even man in Siberia reading the first Gospel portion in his language*

## LIVING BIBLE - LIVING LANGUAGE

*IBT's main goal is to help everyone to hear the Word of God, the Bible, in their mother-tongue, regardless of whether the people group is large or small, regardless of whether the language is "healthy" or dying. Today many countries are implementing immediate measures to preserve remaining languages and to revive those that are close to extinction.*

Languages have been appearing and disappearing during the entire course of human history, so there is nothing incredible in the mere fact of language death. What is frightening is the speed and scale at which they are dying in our days. Many countries today are implementing immediate measures to preserve remaining languages and to revive those that are close to extinction. By translating the Bible into the languages of the CIS, IBT is contributing its mite to this important effort.

## THANK YOU!

Many small gifts gave a brilliant result in February! Your financial contributions are just as important as the careful work done by the translators. Without your prayers and gifts we will not be able to reach the nations with the Word of God.

We are in a hurry – not everyone has heard the good news yet. We need to reach the people before it is too late, regardless of whether they belong to big, strong nations, or small groups, close to extinction. Together we are breaking new ground for the Gospel every day. We are writing history – for eternity. Nothing is so powerful as the Bible in one's mother tongue. IBT's translations are being used in printed books, audiocassettes, videos and films all over Russia and Central Asia.

May I ask for your help? Would you speak to a friend about contributing to IBT's work this month? In return we shall be glad to send our newsletter to your friend. Or share the joy of giving with others! Your church, your family, a group of friends, or your company could take responsibility for a share of the costs of a translation. Get in touch, and we will send you a concrete suggestion for your participation!

Together with you  
at the front line,  
For the peoples of  
the CIS



Stefan Rizell  
International Director

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*Lezgi woman baking bread*

*Through the translation, new words, phrases and concepts appear in the receptor language*

Each new text broadens the horizons of a language, and thus, of human culture, especially if it is a text from the Bible. Many languages do not contain certain words and concepts that are found in the Bible. It is hard to imagine that a given language might not have words for such concepts as “love”, “salvation”, or “Holy Spirit”, but such a lack is actually frequently encountered among the world’s languages. Through the Bible translation, new words, phrases, and concepts appear in the receptor language, and its grammar, style and orthography develop further.

*The Gospel of Luke – the first printed book in Bezhta, Rushani, Wakhi and Yazgulyami!*

In January 2000, IBT printed the Gospel of Luke in Bezhta – a language spoken by about 5,000 Sunni Muslims in Dagestan, Northern Caucasus. They study the Avar language in school. This was the very first printed book in the Bezhta language. The entire print-run of the Gospel was immediately distributed in Bezhta villages. Government officials, administrators and teachers helped to spread the news of the first-ever Bezhta book among the local residents. The local newspaper, published in Russian and Avar, ran an article about this momentous event. The regional government even officially recommended that the Bezhta Gospel of Luke be used as a tool for language study in the school system. “A language, which is written down, is guaranteed a future” says the translator, who is currently working on translating the book of Proverbs.

And at the end of last year, IBT printed portions of the Gospel of Luke in three more languages, which had so far not been written down. The Muslim Rushanis, Wakhis

and Yazgulyamis in the Pamir mountains, bordering on Afghanistan, received their first printed books. Since the people are not in the habit of reading their own language, the translated texts have also been recorded on cassette tapes to be distributed together with the books.

*When I read the Bible in Russian, God always remained for me a Russian God*

Language preservation and revitalisation is, however, not IBT’s main goal. What is most important for us is to help everyone to read the Word of God, the Bible, in their mother-tongue, regardless of whether the people group is large or small, regardless of whether the language is “healthy” or dying. Recently a young Lezgi woman said something we have frequently heard before from representatives of various ethnic groups. “When I read the Bible in Russian, God always remained for me a Russian God”, she said. “He was familiar, but at the same time foreign. But when I heard the Word of God in my own Lezgi language, I suddenly realised that God is truly my own God, that He is my Father who speaks my language. I felt for the first time that He loves me, and that I too love Him.”

*This is why Bible translation is so important! Nothing can touch a person’s heart like a word in her own language.*

*By Marianne Beerle-Moor  
Director of IBT Russia*

**The Bible in the languages of the world**

About 6,000 languages are spoken in the world ...

Out of these

- The whole Bible exists in **392 languages**
- The New Testament in **1 012 languages**
- Gospel portions in **883 languages**

**Total** **2 287 languages**

*UBS 31 December 2001*

## The Bible to the Lezgis

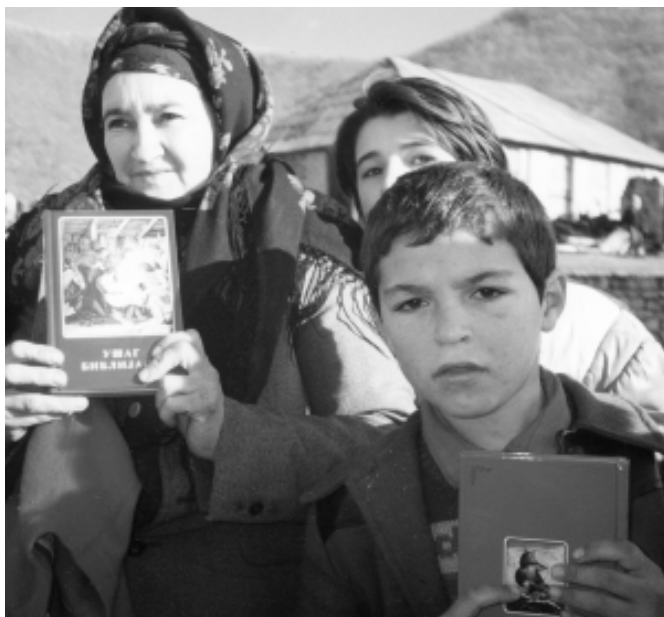
The Lezgis are about 500,000 and live in South-eastern Dagestan and Northern Azerbaijan. They are Sunni Muslims. IBT has been working on Bible translation into Lezgi since the beginning of the 1990s. Also IBT's Children's Bible has been translated into Lezgi and will be printed this year.

*All peoples should be given the chance to get to know the beauty and wisdom of the Bible*

Saida is a journalist, a writer and a teacher. She is herself not a believer, but has for about a year been helping the Lezgi translation team to check the language of the translation. "It is a great pleasure for me to work with biblical texts" she says. "Any translation contributes to language and culture enrichment. And the Bible is a cultural treasure. This book should be translated into every language. When working on the Bible texts I discover a lot for myself. All these stories cleanse my soul. All people should be given the chance to get to know the beauty and wisdom of the Bible. I have read that there is a risk of minority languages disappearing, but Bible translation is helping them to survive. IBT is doing an enormous work in this area. It unites nations through the Bible."

*The lesson was over but none of the children wanted to leave...*

Lidia is a teacher of Russian language and literature and a mother of two small children. The word "war" is very



*The Children's Bible in Lezgi will be printed this year*



*Marianne Beerle-Moor visiting a Lezgi village in Dagestan*

tangible for her, as Dagestan is bordering on Chechnya. Lidia has always tried to sow good seeds into children's hearts because school, for her, is the place where children should be taught the eternal truths.

"Several years ago my husband began translating the New Testament in co-operation with IBT" she says. "I became very interested in the work he was doing. One evening I saw him carefully cutting out some stories from a newspaper. They were pages from a Russian Bible for children. My husband bound those cuttings to look like a little book. I started reading and became fascinated; everything was so interesting to me. Then I brought the little book to school and read the story of Adam and Eve to my students. The lesson was over but none of the children wanted to leave the classroom; they asked me to read more. Then we began to discuss these stories in our literature classes. The children learnt from the Bible that God tells us not to lie, steal or offend one another.

*The director gave official permission for my "Bible minutes"*

Later the exegetical checker from Moscow came to work on the Lezgi translation together with my husband. She gave me a copy of IBT's Children's Bible. After that I began "saving" a few minutes of each lesson to make time for reading these wonderful stories to the children. When the director of our school learnt about this, she gave me official permission for my "Bible minutes". Then the other teachers also decided to read the Bible to their children.

I asked my husband if it was possible to translate the Children's Bible into Lezgi. If the children were touched by these wonderful stories about God's victory over evil

when they heard them in Russian, how much more wouldn't their hearts respond if they were to hear it in their mother tongue! He took the whole matter seriously, when he saw that our own children showed great interest in these Bible stories.

That's how the translation of the Lezgi Children's Bible started. Now the translation work is coming to an end and soon both children and adults will be able to read this wonderful book in their mother tongue. We hope that it will be used in public schools and that God's love will give hope to the Lezgi children!"

*Barbro Lindström*



*The children did not want to leave the classroom...*

### **Project of the month**

This month we want to focus on the NT translation into *Lezgi*. At present this project does not have any direct support. With your gift you are helping the Lezgis to get their first New Testament ever in their own language!

## *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 about 50 languages, including two first whole Bibles, in Moldavian and Tajik, and 14 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.**

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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.