

Institute for Bible Translation



Population: 6.6 million (Soviet census -89)
Today approx. 7 million

Language: Tatar

Language family:

Turkic

Region: Tatarstan, Central Russia

Religion: Sunni Muslim;
Russian Orthodox
Some thousand Evangelicals.

Scriptures: Four Gospels & Psalms (1908/1914)

Four Gospels & Acts (1986, 1995)

Gospel of John (1996, 1997)

Jesus Friend of Children (1997)

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes (1999)

13 Epistles (1999)

Esther, Ruth, Jonah (2000)

New Testament (2001)

The Tatars

The Tatars form the world's northern-most Muslim people group. The Tatar homeland, Tatarstan, straddles the Volga River in Central Russia, where Tatars farm large areas. Oil, timber, textile, and food production is well developed. Large numbers of Tatars are found throughout Russia as well as in Central Asia - Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The capital is Kazan, 700 km south-east of Moscow. Here the Russians conquered the Tatars in 1552, after having been under Mongol-Tatar domination for 300 years. Since perestroika voices have been raised to demand that Tatarstan become an independent state.

Tatar ancestors adopted the Muslim religion as far back as 922 AD and today the majority of Tatars regard themselves as Sunni Muslims. Recently Islam has experienced a renaissance, linked to Tatarstan's aspirations for independence. A strong minority of some 100-200,000 Orthodox Christian Tatars continue their traditional worship. The number of Tatars in Evangelical churches is growing.

The four Gospels and Psalms in Tatar were printed in the early 1900's. IBT's Bible translation into Tatar started in 1974. A new translation of the four Gospels and Acts was printed in 1986 and 1995. The Gospel of John was printed in 1996 and 1997. The booklet "Jesus Friend of Children" was also completed in 1997. In 1999 13 Epistles from the NT were printed, as well as a book with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. A book with Esther, Ruth and Jonah was printed in 2000.

The first Tatar New Testament in Cyrillic script was published in 2001. Translation of the Old Testament is carried out in cooperation with the Bible Societies, other Bible translation organisations and local churches.