

THE BULLETIN

NEWS FROM BIBLICA EUROPE

February 2023

A Bible in their own words

The big mission to translate the Bible
into every language spoken today



Inside:

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- Mark's Gospel for young people
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About Biblica

Biblica, The International Bible Society, exists to bring God's Word to people across the globe in a way they can understand so they are transformed by Christ and inspired to join His mission for the World.

We are Biblica Europe

We are part of the worldwide Biblica family. Biblica Europe's task is to reach people with God's Word throughout Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.

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Dear friends,

Thank you for picking up The Bulletin!

The rate at which the Bible is being translated and made accessible is increasing across the globe – 2023 is an exciting time.

Together with a worldwide alliance of Bible translators, we've nearly completed translation into the top 100 majority languages that were our priority – now we're setting our sights on the native languages of 1,900 people groups who still don't have an accurate, contemporary Bible they can read.

In this Bulletin you can read an update on some of our translation projects that are nearing completion or recently finished, from Farsi to Thai.

I'm excited to give you an update from Ukraine as well, following our Christmas appeal and the ongoing huge demand for Bible resources. We're privileged to take part in what God is doing there at this time – read the incredible story for yourself.

I hope the personal stories shared in this short Bulletin give you just a taste of the amazing testimonies we hear every day as people from every background open the Bible for the first time. What part could you play in this exciting mission?

Thank you for reading and God bless you,

Geof Morin

President/CEO, Biblica

The latest translation progress

Biblica is part of a coalition of Bible translators, working together to make sure there is a translation of the Bible suitable for everyone, everywhere in the world. Here's our latest progress as we start 2023.

Farsi | Gateway translation

Iran contains lots of different people groups with over 60 languages. The majority are related to Farsi (Persian), the official language. That's why we have worked hard to complete a modern, readable translation of the whole Bible in Farsi; not only will this reach millions of people, but it now provides a gateway to translating the scriptures quickly into dozens of everyday languages spoken across Iran.

We're excited to celebrate this milestone! One of the Iranian translators says:

"I'm very happy and excited I have had the privilege of translating God's Word. My dream is to not only have the Bible in Farsi, but that one day I will also translate the Bible for my people.

I asked: God, Lord, could it be possible for my people to come to You? He said, I can do this. The way you are sitting here, your people will one day sit in front of me."

Thai | Thai Common Version

The number of Christians in Thailand is growing each year. They need and want a Bible that uses contemporary, everyday Thai so they can more easily understand and trust the Bible's message.

That's why we've been developing the Thai Common Version. The translators have edited Luke and Acts and will be releasing these to churches first to gather their feedback. In the last few months, the team have been testing their translation of Matthew and 1 Timothy with groups of Thai speakers.

Nala, one of the editors on the Thai Common Version says:

"Choosing the right word for translating helps readers to have better understanding of His words. It's not only a blessing to Thai readers but my life has been blessed through this project as well."

Praying over Farsi
New Testaments





Cushitic | New Testament

In some parts of Africa, it's very risky to be a Christian. In one nation, with no legal protection, the majority meet secretly in underground churches. Our in-country translators are very courageous and determined to complete the first Cushitic version of the New Testament for these people.

Matthew, Mark and John are now in their second draft, and the translators are carrying on through Luke and Acts. They have recently been reviewing their translation of Romans and Corinthians by reading it aloud to test the flow.

Translator Philip explains his passion for the project:

"I am working as a linguist on this project. The Bible is the Word of God; it taught me about love and gives wisdom to all without looking at someone's faults.

"We need a Bible in our language that we can own and be confident to read, that will inspire us. I will be so happy to see our project get to the end, knowing that this Word is going to speak to our people from generation to generation and bring our people to Christ. Pray that we will complement each other as a team, and also ask for the Spirit of God to be among us."

Chinese | A Physician's Testimony: Special edition of the Gospel of Luke

We originally created this special 'medical' edition of Luke's gospel to speak to Italians during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic there – in partnership with a charity called CLC Italy. In 2022, Covid-19 was still dominating life in China, so we recently translated the booklet into Chinese. Here's a story from one man who read it:

"I am a taxi driver in Weifang city. In May I received a booklet called 'A Physician's Testimony' from a group of Christians, but I left it in my cab unread. A couple of months ago, our city applied a semi-lockdown policy and I almost ran out of business. While I had a long wait for passengers, I picked up the booklet. I had been always suspicious of religious materials. After all, the government posts all kinds of warnings about cults. But when I opened the booklet, it was rather interesting stories about Jesus whom I'd heard about before.

As I read more and more, it appeared to me like some sort of ancient fairytale. Since I had no customers, I kept reading. The stories were fascinating, but how does this apply to me today?

With such questions in mind, I went to the Christian church in my city for the first time in my life. I was just curious why many people still believe in this fairytale figure, Jesus. The sermon I heard was "I am the way, the truth and the life", and it rocked my stereotyped understanding about religion and Christianity in particular. The choir was so amazing too - I had never heard such peaceful, hopeful and joyful singing before.

Now whenever I have time, I attend the church service on Sunday. I like to discuss with Christians about faith and spiritual things. It's totally a new world for me. I would like to know more."

*Some translators' names have been changed for security reasons.

Believers in China with copies of Luke's Gospel





iWitness Mark

iWitness Mark is an accessible resource to help young people discover Jesus in Mark's gospel. We developed it in partnership with HOPE Together.

It's available in a magazine-style format with carefully chosen photographs to draw the reader into the story, and also available digitally as a phone app. The app allows you to listen to the text as an audiobook, with a male or female voice to choose from.

Mark is the shortest gospel, written in simple language, action-packed, and quick to listen through. That makes it a great taster of the Bible for younger people who are curious about Jesus or Christianity.

This is the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God...

– Mark 1:1

There is still huge demand for Bible resources in Ukraine, as you'll see in the next few pages, so Biblica and HOPE Together recently produced a Ukrainian-language version of iWitness Mark, using text from our New Ukrainian Translation.

House of Mercy church in Kropyvnytskyi, Ukraine, sent this feedback in January:

"The Gospel of Mark is an optimal format for studying the Bible during the war, because in a state of prolonged stress, a person loses the ability to focus attention, comprehend and read lengthy and theologically complex texts.

"It's great that this book is illustrated - its content is better perceived by young people and teenagers, and it inspires reflection. We are pleased with the iWitness Mark - it's easily understood by both Christians and people who have just begun their acquaintance with the Word of God."

God's Word in the warzone

At Christmas, we asked for your help to deliver copies of the Treasure Hunt Bible to children in the midst of the war in Ukraine.

Our supporters generously funded **over 3,500 copies** of this special children's study Bible in easy-to-understand Ukrainian. Thank you so much if you helped! Olga and her team are helping to give them out – hear more from Olga below...

In December, we also delivered 10,000 more copies of the New Ukrainian Translation New Testament – in total last year, 210,000 copies were eagerly taken up by Ukrainians living in the warzone. The phone app version has now been downloaded by well over a million people, most of them in Ukraine.



Olga's story: bringing God's Word to the children of Ukraine

When I was 13, we were reading the Bible together as a family one evening. The Holy Spirit touched my heart and I committed myself to Christ. Since then I have really loved the Lord, and my dream is to follow and serve him all my life.

I now lead the Children's Ministry of the Ukrainian Baptist Union, equipping the Church to serve children and youth.

The hardest day

My family and I lived in the city of Irpin which was severely attacked early on in the war.

We couldn't believe it when the attack started. We hid together in the basement, waiting for it to end. My oldest daughter was really afraid, and she kept saying to me, "Mum, please let's just leave. Let's leave this place". I think it was God's guidance. We left that day.

Later we saw our own house on the news. The windows had been blown out and the roof blown off. Russian soldiers had set up a base outside our house where they parked their tanks.

Olga





Ukrainian Baptist Union –
Children's Ministry Team

Stay or go?

My friends in Canada invited us to come and stay with them, and it seemed wise to go. On the nine-hour flight, I had a lot of time to think. In some ways I couldn't believe what I was doing because Ukraine is where God called me to serve. But he had also given me children and I knew I had to get them to a safe place.

We were well provided for in Canada, but after a while, I got my family together and explained the burden that I had for my ministry in Ukraine. We decided it was the right thing for me to go back to Ukraine, to help the children and young people there.

So for now I live in two places – Ukraine and Canada, spending time in each.

Exhausted children and their leaders

When I first got back to Ukraine, I found a great spiritual need among the children and young people. So we continued our Sunday schools and camps, and began providing food, clothes and other supplies for the children's families.

One the biggest needs was to encourage our leaders. I organised a retreat, and 120 leaders from every region came. I saw in their eyes that they were really exhausted - physically, emotionally and spiritually. Continuing to serve during the war had drained them. So this retreat gave them a new breath of life. It was a privilege to do.

Hungry for the Word

This period reminds me of the revival that we had when the Soviet Union collapsed, and we had so many people eager and hungry for the Word. That's what is happening right now. In terrible times they have seen Christians serve them practically and with the Word, seen we are trustworthy, so many are now seeking God for themselves.

From Iran to Greece: Arash's journey to faith

"I was born in Tehran, Iran. When I was 22, I left Iran and went to Turkey. I didn't know the language, didn't know anyone and I was on the street. I only knew one person and he took me to a church. I didn't know anything about church. But when I entered I saw smiles and open hugs welcoming me. They became my family and friends and even found me a job.

I couldn't afford to buy a Bible in Turkey. After a while, I moved cities, left that church and my life got upside down again.

I ended up coming to Greece and I was alone again. And I started thinking, remember when you were at church, you had family and they loved you. Isn't it time to go back?

So I started looking for a church again in Greece. Someone introduced me to a Biblica partner in a Greek church... I'm still there today.

There was an American couple there teaching the Bible through English. And because I wanted to learn more from the Bible, I thought I could do that and learn more English too. As I studied, I had so many Bible questions! But my church leader always took the time to answer.



I still have the same Bible I got when I first came to church in Greece. I remember looking at the Bibles there like they were something so precious. Someone saw me and said: here, have three, one for you and two for your friends! I said, I don't have any money. But they told me they were a free gift.

Since then I've thought, what a great ministry, giving the Bible as a gift to people like me who are searching, looking. I've been blessed so much. Imagine, someone from Iran can come all the way to Greece and hear this wonderful message and give his life to Jesus."

Your place in the mission

If you share our passion to bring God's Word to everyone, everywhere, there are lots of ways you can help make it happen!



Keep informed

Each month we share a short story by email about the impact of Biblica's work around the world. We'd love you to be included.

Email **europa@biblica.com**, sign up on our website, or send back the enclosed form, and we'll make sure you receive the latest news.

You can also follow and share our updates on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram – find us **@biblicaeurope**.



Pray

Praying for this work makes you a partner in everything God's doing to reach and speak to people through His Word.

Please pray for our translation teams, and for the Frontline Church as they help people to access and use new Bible materials. Pray that many people every day will be set free and transformed by Jesus Christ as they meet him in the Scriptures.

Visit **www.biblicaeurope.com/praying** to see where we need prayer more widely.

Thank you so much
for joining in...

So all will know.



Give a gift

We can't do anything without funding, so giving a gift is a great way to invest in this mission. Your gift could help us take the Bible to hard-to-reach places – whether that's through Bible translation, digital innovation or resourcing the Frontline Church.

If you'd like to help, please fill in the enclosed form and send it back to us, or give a gift online at **www.biblicaeurope.com/donate**.



Help to break new ground with a regular gift

To really invest in the mission, you can set up a regular gift. Reliable monthly income allows us to plan new innovations and translations. Even just £10 per month would make a big difference.

You can set up a standing order easily through your own internet banking – our account details are:

- Biblica Europe Ministries Trust
- Danske Bank
- Sort code: 95-01-21
- Account no: 80552763.

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for your
support*



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