

THE BULLETIN

NEWS FROM BIBLICA EUROPE

July 2022

The Bible on the frontline

400,000 Ukrainian Bible downloads



Inside:

Three days on the Ukrainian border
When a phone is cheaper than a Bible
God speaking into young lives
Sharing the Queen's faith at the Jubilee
The part you can play



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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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Biblica is the translation sponsor of the New International Version Bible.
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Dear friends,

We at Biblica really appreciate your support and partnership, so we wanted to share a little more with you about what God is doing as his Word reaches more and more people around the world.

Together with our partners, we have a big ambition to make the Bible accessible to everyone, everywhere by 2033. There are four main ways we're working to achieve this:

Bible translation – strategic and modern translations into the languages people speak every day. Our contemporary Ukrainian, Turkish and Farsi versions will be published this year.

Digital innovation – harnessing the power of technology to get God's Word to places that are hard to reach.

Resourcing the Frontline Church – with materials specially prepared for the unreached, unengaged, unchurched, unwanted, and unseen.

Reaching the Rising Generation – making sure there are translations and resources that speak to children and young people.

In just the first half of 2022, God has done more than we ever imagined with the translations and resources we've prepared. The demand for the Scriptures has blown us away. I hope you'll be inspired as you read about it today.

Yours in Christ,

Geof Morin

CEO

People are begging us for Bibles: Three days on the Ukrainian border

Until this year, many people in Ukraine lived their everyday lives speaking and dreaming in Ukrainian, but could only read God's Word in Russian – a language long associated with oppression.

The only available Ukrainian versions were either hundreds of years old and hard to read, or only suitable for the Orthodox church. Evangelical Christians in Ukraine have been pleading for a modern translation of the Bible for many years.

So in 2018, we started work on a new translation into contemporary Ukrainian. We were due to complete the New Testament and Psalms in June.

But then...

February's events brought the need for God's Word in Ukraine's own language to the forefront of our minds, and we managed to push out the electronic version on a phone app a few months early.

It was sobering to see 100,000 downloads in the first two weeks - by people trapped under bombardment in Ukraine, seeking comfort and strength in the scriptures. That figure has continued to climb, especially now amongst people who have escaped to neighbouring countries.

At the start of April, Gary from Biblica travelled to the Ukrainian border to meet Christians helping refugees, and see for himself the huge demand for Ukrainian Bibles that's taken everybody by surprise.

Day 1

On the border between Romania and Ukraine I met Gheorghe. Gheorghe is a huge guy known as 'The Carpathian Bear' – a former cage fighter and ex-prisoner who had his whole life changed by Jesus. He is now setting up a rehabilitation centre ('Freedom House') to stop ex-prisoners reoffending.





**“a lot of people we meet
accept God straight away”**

By the way, this guy was already a Christian by the time he was sent to jail. In two and a half years inside, he ran a Bible study every single day and led 24 other prisoners to Christ. So he really knows the power of the Gospel.

Right now Freedom House is being used as a refugee camp, and a base for supplies. Gheorghe is daring, driving truckloads of food and essentials across the border and into Ukraine’s major cities with his team of volunteers.

When I asked Gheorghe whether people fleeing Ukraine wanted to talk about God he said, “You’d be surprised – a lot of people we meet accept God straight away! We wish this situation had never happened, but many are responding.”

At Freedom House I met another amazing Christian who had left Ukraine – Oxanna. She was helping massively with the distribution of supplies through her 5,000 contacts across Ukraine. “People are looking to God,” she said. “They know that only God can save us. They have seen how Christians are helping them and they want to learn how to speak to God, how to read the Bible. This is a special time to share and a real opportunity to give people Bibles.”

Gheorghe added, “When we drop off the supplies in Ukraine, people are begging us for Bibles as well.”

Day 2

I spent this morning in Romania with Alin from a ministry called Bread of Life. They have a wonderful orphanage that’s home to 60 children in Brosteni, near Ukraine’s south-western border.

This place is also used as a feeding centre, like a food bank, partnering with local churches to distribute food to people who need it.

As the war in Ukraine began, they quickly adapted their mission to get vital food and resources into Ukraine. The kids at the orphanage got involved in making packs of essential supplies for refugees.

At the start of the war, Bread of Life had a warehouse full of food shipped in from Western Europe that would usually keep the ministry going for two years. They gave everything they could to provide for Ukrainians in desperate need – and two years’ worth of food was used up in two weeks.

I was touched by Bread of Life’s generous response to the needs around them. Alin and the team are well set up to store and distribute Ukrainian Bibles to those who want and need them.

Day 3

I travelled to Hungary today, where I met Victoria, a Ukrainian Christian. She moved to the south-west to work with those fleeing the conflict, while her husband Anatoliy – the Deputy Secretary of the Bible Society in Ukraine – stayed behind in Kyiv.

They're an inspiring team, working so hard to coordinate relief efforts in different parts of the country.

I was talking to Victoria, and just as she asked me, "can you get us Bibles?", Anatoliy video called her. There was joy and laughter as they talked to each other, despite the situation.

One of my travelling buddies chipped in to ask Anatoliy about a pastor he knew in another part of Ukraine. Anatoliy told us that this pastor had organised a prayer gathering where 600 people turned up – many for the first time – and they were asking for Bibles.

Anatoliy said his hub had just received 3,000 Bibles, but they needed more. Many more.

Victoria says she cries most days and at times they all feel broken. "But," she said, "when you see people who are crying thank you for the Bible, thank you for bringing me out of the bombs, that's when you know you are in the place where God wants you to be, doing what He wants."

"people are crying, thank you for the Bible!"

THE LATEST ON OUR UKRAINE APPEAL

At Easter, we asked for your help to print the new Ukrainian New Testaments, along with our spiritual resources for children and adults who have experienced trauma, which we've also translated into modern Ukrainian.

You gave £30,000, enough to print 15,000 New Testaments or translate 1,200 more verses of the Old Testament into contemporary Ukrainian.

100,000 copies of the New Testament and Psalms have now been printed and distributed. 65,000 more copies are at the printers. Demand remains high - we'll print more as funds come in.

More than 400,000 people have now downloaded the app to access the online version.

You can view and download the resources at hope4ukraine.net

Reach4Life: starting an adventure of faith

Reach4Life is our unique youth discipleship Bible and app. We developed it specifically for young people (12-25) living in challenging situations around the world – where they are dealing with poverty, discrimination, disease, lack of rights or even imprisonment alongside all the usual trials of being a teenager.

This year we printed Reach4Life in both formal and colloquial Arabic for the first time. There is nothing like this for young people in North Africa and the Middle East, addressing the specific pressures they face.

Our in-country translation staff said how inspired they have been to read the content. They believe it will reach hundreds of thousands of youngsters and change their concept about life with God.

Who knows where the adventure might take you?

"I joined a Bible reading small group in year 10. After four months, the Word of God changed my life, and I committed my life to Christ.

"I trained to become a doctor and moved to Cuba. When I went, I took several copies of Reach4Life with me to start a secret Bible reading group with other young medical staff. I love getting to share about Christ with my colleagues and patients.

"I do not think I would have become who I am today if the Word of God had not touched me and changed me through reading the Bible with other youth."

Reach4Life is part of Biblica's mission to make God's powerful Word accessible to the **Rising Generations** who will shape the future of our world. Find out more at www.biblicaeurope.com/rising-generations



It's a game-changer: God's Word is dropping into pockets in the world's most remote places.



Why are we investing in new technology to allow people to read the Bible on their smartphones? Isn't this just a gimmick? What's wrong with a paper Bible?

If you read the Bible on a phone app like YouVersion, you might do so because it's more convenient than carrying a heavy book around, or it means you don't forget your Bible. Perhaps getting a notification reminds you to read, or you like the interactive studies.

In short, we use Bible apps for our convenience and to get something a little extra.

The picture is very different in other parts of the world. We are investing in digital innovation because there are many countries where:

- A paper Bible costs much more than a basic smartphone. While most people can afford to buy a cheap phone, buying a new book is something that only rich people do.
- A paper Bible is hard to find. This is especially the case in places where the church is tiny or persecuted, or Christians live in isolated rural areas. You might have to travel hundreds of miles to borrow a Bible from a stranger. There's no such obstacle to getting a phone.
- A paper Bible is dangerous to own. Where it's illegal to be a Christian, your house, car or workplace could be searched, with serious repercussions if you are found to own a Bible.

It's for all these people that we are investing in new technology, so that anybody, anywhere can access the Bible for free on the phone already in their pocket.



The Airscape App

Great Bible apps already exist, but an app like YouVersion uses too much memory and data for people in the situations above. One billion people in these countries own a basic smartphone with a limited amount of mobile data – to get the Bible to them we need something different.

Our Airscape app (which you might have heard about at Christmas) is a breakthrough. It uses very little data, and encryption so that readers can't be traced by the authorities.

The app includes audio versions of the Bible in key languages, so that even those who can't read can still hear God's Word to them whenever they like.

We launched Airscape in 2021 and the impact over the last year has been game-changing.

"To see the faces of our people light up as we played the Scriptures for their ears felt like a holy moment," said one house church leader.

"Our people cannot stop sharing the Gospel with friends and family all around the world through this amazing app. Thank you, God!"

God has already used the app to reach far more people than we hoped. It's mindboggling to think about what's going to happen when we add more languages and resources over the next year. Thank you so much for supporting this groundbreaking project.

Airscape: the reach so far...

Launched in 2021: We aimed to reach 50,000 people in 10 countries in the Middle East / North Africa region at first.

After one month: 175,000 people in more than 40 countries had downloaded the app, massively surpassing our expectations.

Now: The app includes modern Bible translations in 30 key languages spoken in hard-to-reach places, including audio versions.

Also included: Reach4Life – our discipleship New Testament for young people aged 12-25.

The next phase: In the next year, we'll add the Essentials Study Bible to the app. That means the Frontline Church will be able to access study notes and commentary, deepening understanding of the scriptures and strengthening churches in places where nothing like this is available.

You can help to fund game-changing innovations like the Airscape app by giving a gift at www.biblicaeurope.com/donate



Our Faithful Queen: Highlighting Elizabeth's faith at the Jubilee



For the Platinum Jubilee, HOPE Together, in partnership with Biblica, published a special book to give away to friends and neighbours.

Our Faithful Queen highlights the role of the Queen's personal faith in her 70 years on the throne. It explains why she sees her role as a lifelong calling rather than just a job.

"I have not chosen this office for myself, He has appointed me to it. Because He leads, I may follow in complete trust."

As a young woman in her 20s facing a huge task, Queen Elizabeth asked the nation to pray for her:

"Pray that God might give me wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making, and that I may faithfully serve Him, and you, all the days of my life."

The book uses quotes from the NIV Bible and readers can scan the QR code to read Luke's Gospel online with YouVersion.

340,000 copies were dispatched to be given out over the Jubilee weekend. We prayed that many people would read, be intrigued by the Queen's story and find themselves exploring the Scriptures for themselves.

You can have a look through Our Faithful Queen online at:

www.theplatinumjubilee.com/gift



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 Europe and the Middle East. 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.

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
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Choose the amount and frequency that suits you.

Please call us on +44 (0)28 9073 5875 to let us know you've done this.

Thank you so much for joining in...

So all will know.

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The Bread of Life Orphanage in
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