

*the*  
Bulletin

News from  
Biblica Europe

February 2024

# If we leave, who will serve?

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Taking risks for the  
Gospel in Ukraine



*Celebrating 215 Years*

*Also inside:*

- 20 years of Reach4Life
- An impossible journey in Iran
- Launching the Oromo Bible
- When Amir rose from the graveyard
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### About Biblica

The mission of Biblica is to provide the Bible in accurate, contemporary translations and formats so that more people around the world will have the opportunity to be transformed by Jesus Christ.

### 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.

### Connect with us

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# Welcome

Dear friends,

## Welcome to the first Biblica Bulletin of 2024.

We've been looking back over the past year, and it's incredible to see what God has done through the hard work of our Bible translators and partners, the courage of Christians in risky situations, and the generosity of supporters like you.

In 2023, your support helped launch five new Bible translations, enabling five more people groups to hear God's Word in their own languages for the first time (read about one of them on p8). We also started 17 more Bible translation projects to bring God's Word to life for unreached communities.

We tracked 283 million personal engagements with Scripture last year — often in countries where it's difficult to access Scripture. That's almost double the target we set for our ministry. God's Word cannot be contained!

And what about 2024? This year we're celebrating 20 years of Reach4Life, our special discipleship Bible for teenagers. It's had a far-reaching impact on young lives all around the world – much more than we ever expected when we first launched it in South Africa. (See p4-5.)

We thank God for the 3 million young people who have now been able to explore the Reach4Life Bible and apply it to their challenging lives – and we know God is going to reach millions more.

So be inspired by these stories of great courage and faith from Christians sharing the Bible in hard places like Ukraine and Iran. Through your prayers and support, you are a critical part of this mission too. Thank you.

Yours in Christ,

*Geof Morin*

President/CEO, Biblica

# Celebrating 20 years of Reach4Life!

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Watch this short video  
celebrating the impact of 20  
years of Reach4Life:



## Two decades. 40 countries. Millions of changed lives.

Join us in celebrating 20 years of Biblica's flagship program for young people. In January 2004, Reach4Life launched in South Africa as a Bible-based response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Thanks to your continued support, today the Reach4Life Bible is published in 40 languages and impacts more than 3 million youth facing all sorts of challenges in 40 countries around the world.

*"I work with groups from high school and college, and I see what they face – family issues, faith issues, social media addiction, sex. We barely discuss these topics in the church – the leaders have been shy to talk about them. Reach4Life tackles the real issues I see in my youth groups. It's going to be a breakthrough."*

**Emad, Egypt**

## A life-changing relationship with Jesus

Reach4Life combines the New Testament with lessons and stories that guide young people towards faith in Christ, belief in themselves, and the skills needed to overcome challenges and temptations. It tackles issues that young people really want to talk about, including sex, relationships, alcohol, drugs, money and identity.

Over the last twenty years, 3 million children, teens and young adults have been impacted by God's Word, often choosing to give back by leading Bible studies for their peers. Nonhlanhla is a South African girl in Year 10. She says:

*"I'm a student leader and I trained 12 Christian friends at school to lead their own Bible study groups. Our peers are quitting drugs, smoking, bad friends, and bad behaviours through reading and talking about the youth Bible. Many kids in our school have given their lives to Christ and we've helped them find churches near their homes."*



## A God who truly speaks their language

Reach4Life is all about young people coming together to learn how to make healthy life choices with the Bible as their guiding light. In today's world, young people need guidance more than ever, so we're not stopping at 20 years.

In 2024, we'll make the Reach4Life youth Bible available in Nepali, Khmer, Libyan Arabic, Sudanese Arabic and Sumi. We will also offer further youth work training and reach new groups of teens through TV, radio and the Reach4Life app.

## A moment of celebration

Join us in giving thanks to the Lord for the 20-year legacy of Reach4Life. Let's continue our work by reaching the millions of young people still waiting to experience God's Word and the love of Jesus.

## Thanks for your support at Christmas

Thank you to everyone who gave selflessly to our Christmas appeal: Open the Bible to Generation Z. You gave enough to provide over 1,700 teens around the world with a Reach4Life youth Bible in their own language.

1,700  
BIBLES

*"My dad just passed away, but I am not afraid. I have Jesus as my Lord and will continue to put food on the table for me and my siblings. Reach4Life builds young lives and gives us direction and courage in tough seasons. I praise God for this program and my Reach4Life Bible."*

**Asiphile, South Africa**

# Bibles on the bus

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## An impossible journey in Iran

Amir is an Iranian Christian with a huge heart to share the love and life of Jesus with the brokenhearted.

"In Turkey in 2005, my wife and I started to make a TV program called 'healing broken hearts', broadcast on Heart4Iran's channel. We started receiving a lot of phone calls from people in Iran. Drug addicts, prostitutes, lost and rejected people – we pray with them and send them a Bible."

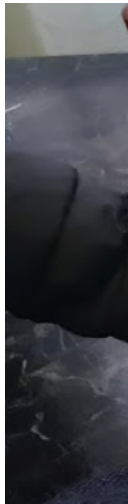
What Amir's team do is risky. It's illegal in Iran for a Muslim to leave Islam and profess a new faith – like Amir. It's also illegal to print or distribute the Bible in Farsi, the national language.

And yet, in the last year, Amir's team has sent about 48,000 Farsi Bibles to people asking for them in Iran. How does he do it?

"Usually, people make contact and they arrange to receive a Bible from someone in our network. It's safer not to actually meet, so sometimes they share a location and leave the Bible under a seat or in a flowerbed for the person to find."



Precious Farsi Bibles



## Could you speak up, dear?

"There's one lady in her 70s doing an amazing job in Iran," says Amir. "She kept asking me to send her lots of copies of the New Testament, and I wanted to know how she was going to distribute them. I couldn't believe her story.

"Every day she takes them in a basket and gets on the bus. She finds a young lady and says, 'My daughter, I cannot see very well - can you read this book to me?' and passes her the Bible. The young lady is shy and starts to read very quietly, but the old lady says, 'I can't hear very well dear, please could you read louder?'. She's not lying, she really can't see or hear very well - but she's using her disability to share the Gospel.

"The young lady starts to read louder, apologising to the others on the bus, but they say, 'Don't be sorry, this is wonderful, what is this book?' And this old lady says, 'it's the Bible, do you want one?' And she hands them out to anybody who say yes. This really made me smile."

## Tired of religion, seeking love

Amir says that the recent Woman Life Freedom protests that swept Iran (after women were arrested and killed for not wearing correct Islamic dress) shows the mood towards religion amongst many Iranians right now.

"People are tired of religion because the Islamic government has used the name of God to destroy people's lives," he says. "But people are searching for the true, loving God. When we say 'God is love', they really want to know. Sometimes I even start off saying 'love is God', because when they hear the word 'God' they stop listening and put up a wall.

"But God's enormous love in Jesus transformed my life - and the life of thousands more Iranians I have spoken to. I want all my people to receive this love. We're praying we can send at least 1 million Bibles to Iran in next few years."

You can read Amir's personal story of faith on p10. Biblica translated the whole Bible into contemporary Farsi and provides these copies thanks to gifts from people like you. Now Amir's team has the joy of watching them transform life after life in Iran. You can give to more work like this at

[biblicaeurope.com/donate](https://biblicaeurope.com/donate)



# Translation news

## The Oromo Bible

A few months ago in Ethiopia, over 500 people attended the joyous launch of the new Oromo Bible.

The church in Ethiopia is growing at 9% per year — even faster in the Orominya region where Oromo is spoken. With an outdated Bible frustrating young people and new believers alike, the church was crying out for a Bible that all people could clearly understand in their hearts and apply to their lives.

After 20 years of planning and hard work, the contemporary Oromo Bible is finally in people's hands.

Rev. Titus, one Oromo pastor, told us why he loves the new translation: "Any believer can easily read it and understand the message to apply it in their day-to-day life."

Amanuel was one of the translators on this huge project.

*"My kids and my wife are not good English speakers. They do not understand the contemporary English Bibles as well," he explains. "And then there is what we call heart language. Everybody wants to hear the message from God in their mother tongue!"*

Amanuel says that outside of the Church, some Muslim neighbours have become deeply interested in the Oromo Bible translation project.

*"They believe that they have to learn Arabic in order to truly read God's Word and communicate with Him, so they struggle. They are amazed to hear about a God who speaks their language."*

Thank you for supporting Biblica's translation work. Because of people like you, a new generation of Ethiopians can read and proclaim with faith, "God speaks my language!"





# Tomorrow, you could be dead

## Taking risks for the Gospel in Ukraine

When you face death, you start to change your priorities.

That's what I experienced when I saw huge rockets explode about 1km away from our house in Ukraine. (I even felt the shockwave.)

My thoughts started racing: We could be next. What is my life for? What are my goals? At that moment, I changed my priorities: To follow Jesus, who experienced even worse than this. To disciple someone. To be part of someone's life change. These things are worth the sacrifice.

We have seven different teams working here. They bring food, preach the Gospel, and give out Ukrainian Bibles. And people are listening. We encourage them to pray and receive Jesus.

**I know this is a really crazy number, but over 70,000 people have prayed to receive Jesus.**

Over 1 million people have now downloaded the Contemporary Ukrainian New Testament to their phones. **Please pray for all the refugees and those inside Ukraine who are reading it today.**



**Tanya and Valerii**  
Steiger International Ministries

We're not only handing out paper Bibles. We also have MP3 players loaded with Biblica's contemporary Ukrainian translation of the New Testament and Psalms. We give these to soldiers as well as to civilians in bomb shelters. Especially in those places, the hunger for God's Word is huge — because tomorrow, you could be dead.

One soldier wrote to me and said: "I was an atheist before. And now, seeing all these miracles, watching what is happening, and listening to the Bible, I am not an atheist anymore."

Rockets are still flying in our city every night. But our decision is the same. We are here in Ukraine. We're not trying to escape all this. God is protecting us.

We feel it's the right time for us to stay — not run. If we leave, who will serve?

**Valerii, Biblica Ministry Partner with Steiger Ukraine**

# I rose up from the grave – literally!

Get more stories in your inbox with our regular email news. Send back the form or sign up online at [biblicaeurope.com](http://biblicaeurope.com) - scroll down to 'join our newsletter'.

## How Amir found faith

I had a really difficult time as a young person. My dad was a practicing Muslim but he was also an alcoholic, with all the issues that brings. When I got to 16 years old, I ran away.

I didn't have anywhere to go. I climbed to the top of a mountain. Up there was an old cemetery, and I slept there for five years, on top of a grave.

During that time, I was talking with God. This is not usual way Muslim people pray, but I talked with God through the moon and stars in the night, and in the morning through the rising sun.

I was studying music while living in the cemetery. One of my music friends was a Christian and he invited me to church, saying there was a concert on. I went, and immediately felt something very strong - something I never had experienced. After the concert, I asked my friend, "what was that?" He said, "it was the presence of God."

I kept going back. One day, I was in church praying in my own way, and I was asking, "God, I want to know the truth because I can see your strong presence here, but I've never had that kind of experience with you."

And I saw a vision. The roof of the church was gone, and a huge, powerful light was coming in. And I looked up and saw Jesus was coming to me. And he's smiling to me and his hand... he wanted to catch me. And I just jumped up and said, "Jesus, you're my Lord!" Until then, I hadn't believed it. But that day, I became a Christian.

I went back to my mother's house - I explained Jesus to my family and they all became Christians. Even my father gave his heart to Jesus in the end, just one month before he died.

The love I received from the Heavenly Father was much, much, a billion times more than people receive from even the best father. Now one of my life goals is sending Bibles to Iran - I want all my people to receive this love.

**Amir, Biblica Ministry Partner**



# 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!

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR JOINING IN...

**SO ALL WILL KNOW.**



## Keep informed

Each month we share a short story by email about the lifechanging impact God's Word is having around the world. We'd love you to be included.

Email [europe@biblica.com](mailto:europe@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](https://www.instagram.com/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 our partners helping 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](http://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 will help us translate and take the Bible to people in hard-to-reach places.

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](http://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, translations and much-needed resources. Even just £15 per month would make a big difference to our progress.

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. 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.



# There is a church in Zambia where everybody shares this one old Bible.

Will your church share at Easter? Visit:

[biblicaeurope.com/easter](https://biblicaeurope.com/easter)



*Celebrating 215 Years*

If you'd like more copies of The Bulletin for your church or group,  
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