

FRONTLINES

Slavic Gospel Association

-
- BIBLE EXHIBITIONS
IN POLAND
 - PROGRESS WITH
CENTRAL ASIAN BIBLES
 - GOD'S WORD FOR
ALL NATIONS
-

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD?



'The pen is mightier than the sword!'

This precise wording familiar to us today goes back to the early

part of the 19th century, and is attributed to an English playwright, Edward Bulwer-Lytton. However, the sentiment echoed down the centuries long before that. One ancient Assyrian thinker, Ahiqar, said something very similar in the 7th century BC; *'The word is mightier than the sword'*. Later, in the 5th century BC, a Greek playwright Euripides put it this way: *'The tongue is mightier than the blade'*.

The conviction that the written word has more power than physical force or violence is acknowledged by many, but none more so than Christian believers whose faith in and submission to the Bible as God's Word, **is the bedrock of their daily living and service for their Master**. It is not surprising at all that Christian missionaries to unreached tribes and peoples always have near the top of their agenda, the provision of the Word of God in the native tongue, and the production of literature for evangelism and instruction which is solidly faithful to the truths revealed by God in His Word.

From SGA(UK)'s earliest years of ministry to believers living in Communist oppressed countries behind the Iron Curtain, **mission personnel saw the vital need to provide copies of the**



Word of God, and suitable Christian literature to those who were spiritually *'starved'*. There is a profound sadness about the usual challenge of border guards to SGA teachers crossing into Eastern Europe asking: *'Have you any guns, pornography, or Bibles?'* How tragic, that holy Scripture should be lumped with such evidences of corruption and evil, but how revealing this is also!

With all their political, ideological, and military muscle, **the Communist authorities feared the influence and the power of the Word of God!** The barrier they attempted to erect in order to curtail or, if possible, excise the teaching of Scripture is eloquent testimony to this. If the words of men on a page can wield such powerful influence on human minds, how infinitely more does the Word of God signal the defeat and destruction of every enemy and every barrier to the Gospel.

It is this conviction which undergirds the invaluable literature ministry of SGA. **From the earliest days of ministry,**

the Mission was intent on supplying Bibles and vital publications and teaching aids, to strengthen and equip believers in their service of Christ and their proclamation of the Gospel. New barriers have replaced the old *'Iron Curtain'* and God's people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia struggle against spiritual ignorance, religious persecution, secularism and apathy as they endeavour to live for Christ and bring others to Him for salvation.



The need for SGA's literature ministry has never been greater and this issue of Frontlines gives some insight into its continuing breadth and effectiveness in Eastern Europe, and its considerable impact upon evangelical life and witness in the countries of Central Asia and beyond through Bible translation, production and distribution.

'The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.' Hebrews 4:12

GOD'S WORD FOR ALL NATIONS



Macedonia

We rejoice that God's Word is now more widely available than in any other time in human history. Yet, for many, owning a Bible may sometimes be financially "out of reach". In recent years the demand for Bibles in the Macedonian language has increased, for which we praise God.



Ivan Grozdanov, SGA's partner within that country, has been involved with the writing and translating of Christian literature for many years. He recently launched a new project which SGA (UK) has been pleased to support, whereby Bibles are sold at half the normal cost over the Christmas and Easter periods. Over 60 were sold during Christmas 2023 and a similar quantity during Easter 2024.

Alongside this, Ivan has been working on a revision of the New Testament to further enhance the accuracy and clarity in contemporary Macedonian language. The first edition was published over 25 years ago **and to date 15,000 copies have been sold**. The Gideon organisation printed and distributed a further 200,000. It is the most widely used NT in North Macedonia. SGA (UK) has agreed to sponsor the update, with the intention of the new revised edition being available within 3 years. We praise God for His help thus far **and trust that many Macedonian people will come to know Jesus Christ through His Word**.

Ukraine

In the past two years of war God has provided opportunity to deliver not only humanitarian aid to Ukraine, but also the Word of God. SGA's partners in mission record that in March 2022 there were only two pallets of Bibles left in their warehouse, the people of Ukraine needed the living Word, and God answered this need.



A special joy was provision made to be able to **print 20,000 sets of the Word of God for Families** (20,000 Bibles and 20,000 Bible Story Books for Children and Families).

Nadya's family lives in the village of Ragovka. The grandparents help to look after the children. The family is not rich and Nadya cannot work, as the children are small and often sick. Already they have seen much grief. When hostilities began the village was occupied by Russian soldiers who did not allow people to leave their homes. When troops were searching homes the family hid in a cellar, thus saving their lives. After the village was liberated, they began to attend Sunday services, conducted by a team from the Kiev local church. The family was thrilled to be given adult and children's Bibles. **They had never had a Bible of their own before** and wanted to read about the God who had kept them safe from harm.

Thank you so much for your partnership in providing living hope for families in Ukraine by bringing them the Word of God, the message of the Gospel – the only message that brings the truth and eternal peace



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MAKING GOD'S WORD CENTRAL IN CENTRAL ASIA

'And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly'

ACTS 6:7



What you believe, what you truly believe, shapes what you do.

For Slavic Gospel Association, it is the belief that God's word is both authoritative and powerful that has motivated their ongoing support of the efforts to bring the Bible to the people of Central Asia. As Acts 6:7 makes plain, **it is by the Spirit-empowered proclamation of God's word that the church of Jesus Christ grows.**

In Romans 10:13, Paul speaks of how 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved', adding that, in order to believe in the one upon whom they call, they first need somebody to go to them and preach. Something similar could be said about the need for new Bible translations – for **how will God's word be understood if it is not available in the native language of the one who seeks to read it?**

That is why, in association with our partners in mission, **SGA has been funding a much-needed translation of the Bible into the Kazakh language.** This long and complex task, which has involved multiple revisions, has taken longer than was anticipated, but it is now finally approaching completion. So, next year, alongside the Tajik, Uzbek and Russian language versions which are

AS THE WORD OF GOD CONTINUES TO INCREASE, SO THE NUMBER OF DISCIPLES IS MULTIPLYING

also being distributed, it is hoped that this officially recognised high-quality translation of the complete Kazakh Bible will finally become available too.

The project will continue – proving that God can and does do far more than we can ever ask or imagine. **Initial plans to produce 100,000 Kazakh Bibles were expected to ultimately reach a million people,** Translation of the Bible into Turkmen and Karakalpak is now underway, with a Uighurian version also set to commence soon.

That is not all. **An audio version of the Children's Kazakh Bible has been produced** and is now regularly listened to by thousands and also a popular bilingual print version published in both Kazakh and Russian. Furthermore, **a Children's Bible is planned in the Pamir language too.**

It is one thing to produce Bibles, but quite another to distribute them. **Even so, since 2017 a quarter of a million Bibles,** including more than 50,000 editions of the new and already published Kazakh New Testament, **have been personally distributed by churches and individuals to those living in the predominantly Muslim countries of Central Asia.**

As the Word of God continues to increase, **so the number of disciples is multiplying greatly.**

Take 13-year-old Ruslan and his little sister Kim who live in abject poverty in Tajikistan. Ruslan never misses a meeting at the local Christian Hope Centre and always pays close attention



to the Scripture he hears being read there. Now he has a Bible and can read it for himself – and to his sister too.

In Tajikistan **Timur was recently released from prison and wants to leave his former way of life behind.** Having previously heard a little about Jesus, he now attends a House of Prayer where he has not only been reminded of the Gospel but has received a pocket-sized New Testament, one that he cherishes and promises he will read.

Then there is Suni, who was feeling that life must surely be about more than mere existence. Soon after asking God to help her understand life better, she was visited by three Christians who shared with her from the Scriptures so that, in time, she accepted Christ into her life. Not only she but her mother and sister have since come to faith as well, and her children now read the Scriptures in a language they too can understand.

'We should not, therefore, be ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes' (Romans 1:16) – to the people of Central Asia just as much as for those much closer to home.

Please join us in the continuing work of making the Word of God available in Central Asia.



Names have been changed to protect identities.



SGA NATIONAL CONFERENCES



RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE NOV 1-3

- Bill Bygroves,
- Mihai Chidesa (ROM),
- Gerhard Friesen (Asia)
- Kateryna Nikonorova (UKR)

Milton Hill House, Abingdon



NORTHERN ENGLAND NOV 9

Afternoon Event
Union Baptist Church,
Chester



NORTHERN IRELAND NOV 9

10.30am – 4.00pm
Day Conference
Gracehall, Lurgan

To book, please contact 01788 220699, email office@sga.org.uk or visit www.sga.org.uk

TELLING THE OLD, OLD STORY.



In 2017 Tomas Chylka in Ruptawa, Poland, wrote “The two-week long Bible exhibition began the summer period. It was wonderful to see over 1750 people interested in the origins of the Bible, its contents and message. Adults, teenagers and children alike came to see the exhibition; teachers brought their students during lesson times. We estimate that nearly 30% of the visitors were under 25 years of age”.

This was the commencement of regular Bible exhibitions, following the celebration of 500 years since the Reformation. The theme of the exhibition is ‘3,500 Years of the Bible’ – beginning with stone tablets, manuscripts and scrolls through to modern editions. The exhibition moves from one site to another with original translations of writing from the 16th century, e.g.: Hebrew and Greek Bible, Vulgate, Wycliffe Bible, Tyndale Bible, King James Bible, Luther Bible, Zwingli Bible, Puritan Bible and many others, also in Polish and written in Cyrillic. There is also a copy of the Gutenberg press and a personal reprint of the Bible by Johann Sebastian Bach. The writing and forms of recording the Word of God have inevitably changed over time, and

attention is drawn to this because the Bible contributed to the development of the English, German and Polish languages. The whole story tells how God protected His Word through periods of turbulent history. The exhibition concludes with a short evangelistic message. During 2023, hundreds of free Bibles were distributed encouraging people to read, pray and seek God. During the 2-week exhibition over 3,000 people visited, exceeding all expectations.

Project70 pastor, Sylvester Torbiczuk also held a Bible exhibition in Zamość, Poland, which was visited by churches, several school groups, and the general public. It tells the story of the creation of the greatest masterpiece of all time, the

Bible, and includes many exhibits of the Bible itself, of various ages, conditions and sizes. Special attention is paid to the Author of the Bible, who is God, and visitors can find out how controversial the Bible is to this day and how many people gave their lives for it.

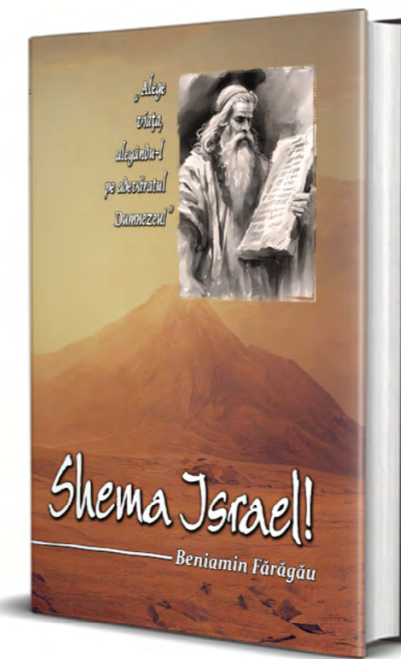
The “Scroll of Isaiah” is a copy of the original Scroll, and thanks to this visitors can see how the Bible was written on papyri.

On the opening day of the exhibition, only a few people came, which was difficult for Sylvester because there was so little interest in the exhibition. However, within 6 days the exhibition was visited by several hundred people, and everyone who asked received a copy of the Bible and Christian literature. Later, a director of a public library asked for the exhibition to come to their town 30 kilometres away from Zamość, where there is no evangelical witness. Therefore, from mid-September to mid-October 2024, the history of the Bible will be presented to the people there.

DURING THE 2-WEEK EXHIBITION OVER 300,000 PEOPLE VISITED

SWEETER THAN HONEY

SGA (UK) has had a long and blessed partnership with Ben Faragau in Cluj, Romania. Ben remains committed to writing and publishing for as long as the Lord allows him sufficient sight to do so. Besides preaching and leading at Conferences, he has been working on several commentaries – Ecclesiastes, Deuteronomy, 1 & 2 Peter, 1 & 2 Timothy, and Isaiah. Another book “In the Footsteps of Abraham’s faith” has also been published.



WE OFTEN GIVE AWAY BOOKS JUST TO BE ABLE TO BRING GOD’S MESSAGE CLOSER TO ALL PEOPLE.

BEN WRITES: “The fact that I see more and more young people hungry for the Word of God is of great encouragement to me. In our Monday night Bible study, we have online hundreds of people from the country and from abroad. We finished Matthew and Deuteronomy, and we are studying 1&2 Samuel. The lockdowns opened a large online ministry. We are encouraged that with your help we could publish and reprint more commentaries. We are thankful to God, for the lifelong friendship with our SGA friends and for their help’.

We praise God for Ben’s faithful ministry, and pray for him and his wife, Nora as they serve the Lord together.



Zivko Jorgacevic is supported by SGA in the technical preparation of Christian literature within the First Baptist Church



in Belgrade, Serbia. Currently two books are planned – a translation from the English Bible commentary called “The Message of the Sermon on the Mount” by John Stott and Nehemiah. Dane Vidovic is also supported by SGA in his translation work in Serbia, where he has produced recent titles: *Sweeter than Honey: (Preaching the Old Testament)* and *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth (hermeneutics)* which are in editing phases.

There are two Bible schools in Serbia, and they require theological titles suitable for students’ needs. Most titles are translations from English. When the church commenced publishing, the intention was to produce useful and popular books that would sell to a wider population of unbelieving people in Serbia. It was a great idea because at

that time there were no other Christian publishers there. Unfortunately, after over thirty years of work they have not been able to become completely independent and self-financing, and rely on the support of Christian friends such as SGA (UK).

ZIVKO WRITES: ‘Our limitations as a publisher are great – we live and work in a country where the Serbian Orthodox Church is dominant, and in such an environment people are less interested in reading titles that do not come from the Serbian Orthodox Church. For many years our publishing has been considered sectarian. Regardless of that, our books still reach a certain number of unbelieving people. We often give away books just to be able to bring God’s message closer to all people’.

SGA (UK) remains committed to the translating and publishing of books and commentaries, providing invaluable tools for pastors and Gospel workers, as well as introducing people to the truths of God’s Word.

GOD CALLING

“2LO MARCONI HOUSE, LONDON CALLING”



So began, in 1922, the first BBC radio news bulletin.

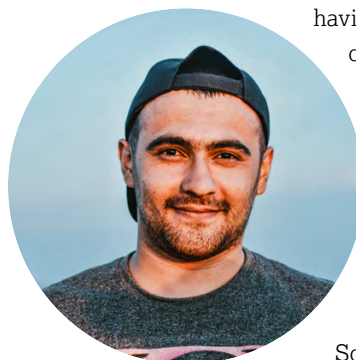
Over a hundred years later news reports continue to be transmitted all around the world, though sadly today many seem only to contain bad news.

Things are different however in Tajikistan where, **instead of the British Broadcasting Corporation it is Slavic Gospel Association, in partnership with Trans World Radio, that is filling the airways.** The news which is being shared is nothing but good - for it is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that is being shed abroad.

Taking the Gospel to the very ends of the earth is, you could say, part of the SGA World Service!

It is as a result of SGA's *'Sending Little*

Missionaries' initiative, which raised funds to provide not only radios, but also SD cards pre-programmed with Gospel material, that TWR have been able to distribute the necessary equipment to many who would otherwise be unable to hear the programmes they produce. **Praise God this ministry is bearing fruit.**



Take, for example, the 26-year-old man who accepted Jesus Christ into his life as a result of a friend witnessing to him, and the radio programmes he heard that help him know Jesus better. Or the young woman who, physically and emotionally abused by the uncle with whom she lived, married at the age of 18 a man twenty years older who treated her even more cruelly. Having received one of the radios, and hearing the

programme called *'Women of Hope'*, she learned **that God loved her and had sent Jesus to earth to die for her.** Today, having received the good news of the Gospel, she now knows that she is a precious daughter of the King. Not only that, but she wants to share what she has learnt of her loving Heavenly Father with other women too.

So then, rather than London, **it's God who is calling and His call is being heard.**

'How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? Romans 10:14

TO THE VERY ENDS OF THE EARTH



There are those who take Jesus' words to the disciples just before his ascension seriously. Michael Zarovnyaev is one such person, desiring to take the good news of the Gospel to the very ends of the earth.

Michael lives in Yakutsk, **a port city on the Lena River in Far Eastern Russia.** It is a mere 11,300 miles from SGA's head office in Rugby! On February 8th this year Michael travelled, as part of a small group of believers, to the region of Khangalassky where he hoped to deliver both bags of food, **and the bread of life, to some of the most remotely inhabited places on earth.**

Most remote of all is the village of Isit, found 186 miles from Ulakhan-An. Ask your phone for directions and Google maps will tell you that it cannot find a way there, most likely as the only route is a winter ice road that forms when the Lena river freezes over, allowing vehicles to drive on it.

Despite the freezing conditions, Michael and his companions received a very warm welcome. **The word of God, proclaimed in both the Russian and Yakut language,** was as eagerly received as the sacks of rice, buckwheat and sugar left with folk they visited.

As well as delivering good news, Michael was the recipient of good news too. News that a Yakut man whom he had visited two years previously was now seeking after God, news of numerous others who responded with joy to the offer of hearing the word of God, and news of those in the area who were already Bible-believing Christians.

The trip was hugely encouraging with many people so open to the Gospel that further trips are planned. **Please pray both for those willing to take the good news of Jesus to the very ends of the earth,** and the men, women and children who live there.

'All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you' Psalm 22:27