

A New Testament for peace



Mother and child of the Hungarian-speaking minority in Southern Ukraine (photo: MRSZ).

The Hungarian Bible Society recently launched a bilingual Ukrainian-Hungarian New Testament which will promote peace in a difficult context – tensions between Hungary and Ukraine due to new Ukrainian legislation against the use of the Hungarian language in Ukraine. Yet parts of Ukraine are actually Hungarian-speaking.

“We pray that God will use these Scriptures to show that Christians of any nationality can live in peace and harmony, and, together, praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 15:5-6),” writes Ottó Pecsuk, General Secretary of the Hungarian Bible Society.

Local fundraising

The project started at the end of 2015 when the Hungarian Bible Society decided to raise funds locally in order to publish this New Testament, mainly aimed at the Hungarian minority in Ukraine. The two-year process came to fruition on 16th October when the New Testament was launched.

Although not planned, it was perfect timing. Indeed, only a few weeks before, on 5th September, the Ukrainian parliament had approved a bill to limit the use of foreign languages in Ukraine. The new legislation was denounced by minorities in Ukraine and nearby countries, including Hungary.

On 16th October, Imre D. Szebik, Chairman of the Board, and Ottó Pecsuk, General Secretary of the Hungarian Bible Society, gave 1,300 copies of the new peace-promoting publication to Sándor Zán Fábrián, Bishop of the Sub-Carpathian Reformed Church District in Berehove, Ukraine. Berehove is located in the Hungarian-speaking part of Southern Ukraine.

In total, 3,000 copies were printed. Apart from the 1,300 copies that were given in Berehove, some 1,300 copies will go to the Ukrainian Bible Society for their own distribution channels. The remaining 400 copies will be distributed in Hungary.

A symbol

“The new publication symbolises how close Ukrainian and Hungarian people can get in Christ, despite all the actual tensions generated by political or economic interests,” explained Anatoliy Raychynets, Communications Director at the Ukrainian Bible Society.

For him, the two Bible Societies started to repay an old debt when they published a bilingual New Testament for the disadvantaged Hungarian minority living in the Sub-Carpathian region of Ukraine. He pointed out that it has always been the responsibility of Bible Societies to support the mission of the church and, if a new possibility emerges to co-operate in the future, they should seize every opportunity to do so.

László Tóth, a Sub-Carpathian high school director, said that the students will be very glad to have access to the Ukrainian-Hungarian New Testament, because it is one of the very few bilingual books available for them, and can serve language learning purposes as well.



The bilingual Ukrainian-Hungarian New Testament

Pure nard on Jesus' feet



An Hungarian speaking church gathers for worship in Berehove, Southern Ukraine (photo: Hungarian BS).

In John 11, Mary poured pure nard on Jesus' feet... In his preaching, Károly Fekete, Bishop of the twin Church District of Tiszántúl (the Eastern region of Hungary), emphasised that all the people in this biblical story served with what they had. He compared this to the efforts of all those who co-operated with and served one another in order for the bilingual publication to be published and to reach the Hungarians living in Sub-Carpathia: the Ukrainian and the Hungarian Bible Societies provided the New Testament texts, the Korean Bible Society the typesetting and the printing, and the supporters of the Hungarian Bible Society their donations.

600 MegaVoice players

Attila Hunyadia, a dean of the Reformed Church, expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian Bible Society for the 108 Audio Bibles, which were handed over on the same day at the initiative of the Reformed Church Charity Service.

The MegaVoice players containing the Hungarian Audio Bible will share God's Word with the blind and partially sighted in Sub-Carpathian congregations and nursing homes. In the Year of the Reformation in Hungary, approximately 600 MegaVoice players have already been distributed to those in need.



Distribution of MegaVoice players in Hungary in the Year of the Reformation.