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Progress and challenges with our translation of the Old Testament

Dear friends,

A recent visit to Armenia (6-12 July), allowed me to assess the challenges met by of our team of translators of the Old Testament from Hebrew to modern Eastern Armenian on a daily basis. I could also clearly see the progress made thanks to their hard and coordinated work. Our team has been slightly augmented in number; it has definitely grown in competence and cohesion. They are currently working on the book of Isaiah (about a third is already completed). Job and Ezekiel should then follow. In the meantime, a first and necessary revision of the New Testament translation here and there has already taken place. The same will be done soon with the Psalms.

Let me explain summarily some of the challenges involved in this Bible translation project, for the sake of understanding better what it implies. Challenges do not concern only the most adequate choice of words or expressions to render the original Hebrew in the target language as faithfully and clearly as possible. It also concerns the number and extent of explanatory footnotes on the meaning of specific words : namely which ones should be included and which ones should be left out for practical purposes. Somehow we need to bring this in harmony with what we have done with the New Testament & Psalms in the volume that was published in 2022. We are now thinking of producing a kind of “companion” to the Bible in digital form that would contain a concordance, more extended explanatory notes, introductions and references.

We already need to reckon with the final number of pages when the complete Bible will be printed, and the bulk of such a volume. To assess this properly, we will need to take into account the size of printed characters : as is the case with our New Testament & Psalms, they should be large enough to allow people with a poor sight (especially the elderly) to read the text without having to struggle. The grade of paper, the number of pages will be some of the determining factors for the costs involved when we will reach the final phase of production. Needless to say, an adequate budget for printing the Bible in several thousands of copies needs to be secured ahead of time.

Our estimated date of completion for this huge project is now 2028, a date corresponding to the 100th anniversary of Rev Aaron Kayayan’s birth and the 20th anniversary of his passing. Rev Aaron was the initiator of the translation of the New Testament around 2005. The very day he was buried, members of the Christians for Armenia committee met at his home to look together how his ministry should be pursued. It will require intense work from our solidly cemented team to meet this deadline, but we pray – and we invite you to pray with us – that by the Grace of God, we will be able to keep it.





Meeting with pastors and representatives of various organizations

It was good to have various meetings with several Armenian Evangelical pastors, one of them representing a large group of Armenians living in the Federation of Russia : they are largely supportive of our ministry, having printed separately for their own needs several thousand copies of the Gospel of John taken from our NT translation. Having distributed almost all of them, they are now considering initiating a second, even larger, printout.

The meeting with the current director of the Armenian Bible Society went also very well. Being a priest of the centuries-old Armenian Apostolic Church, he happens to be a former student in Biblical studies of our newly coopted translator in our team, himself a former director of the Armenian Bible Society.

Presentation of the Armenian version of In spirit and in truth

On Friday morning 11 July the official presentation of an extended version of my short devotional in French published in 2022 took place. Originally made of 30 short texts produced as podcasts for radio stations or social media, the Armenian version comprises 143 such texts. About one hundred people attended the ceremony that was hosted at the educational Center Endanik (the headquarters of our ministry in Gyumri, the second largest city in Armenia). It was followed by various meetings with pastors and representatives of mission organizations, allowing us to have a blessed fellowship together and develop useful networking for future interaction.

On a more personal note, during this visit I had the joy of being accompanied by my daughter Juliette who discovered thus the land and culture of some of her ancestors, and also took a keen interest in the activities of Christians for Armenia. On Monday 7 July, my Armenian friends made sure to celebrate my 65th birthday with a delicious cake and some very special gifts...

Please continue praying for our ministry in Armenia. Pray for our translators and their daily work, also that the Lord will keep providing the means and resources needed for our various projects, to His glory alone.

Warmly in Christ,

Rev Eric Kayayan

On behalf of the committee of Christians for Armenia

"It was good to have various meetings with several Armenian Evangelical pastors."



With members of our translators' team we meet at the Armenian Bible Society in Erevan



"In spirit and in truth" was officially presented at the Endanik Center in Gyumri

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