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“It shaped the fate of a nation for centuries to come.”

Celebrating the creation of the Armenian alphabet

Dear friends,

Every year on October 12, Armenia celebrates the anniversary of the translation of the Bible into the Armenian language 16 centuries ago (405-430 AD) under the leadership of a learned cleric, Mesrop Mashtots, surrounded by a team of competent translators. A special alphabet, designed to match the sounds of the Armenian language, was designed by Mesrop to make this written translation possible. The literary, cultural and religious life of Armenia would take a whole new course, giving way, among others, to a famous school of translators and historians. During the next centuries, they translated into the new written language a number of antique texts that have come to us only via their work. The influence of the Greek and Syriac languages on the Armenian nation would hence decrease and give way to indigenous literary productions.

The influence of this translation of the Bible made from copies of the Bible that were available to Mesrop and his collaborators at the time (the Greek LXX for the Old Testament and Syriac manuscripts for the NT), cannot be overestimated. It shaped the fate of a nation for centuries to come, anchoring it in Christian roots that - at least religiously and culturally - would resist countless invasions through the centuries (Persians, Arabs, Mongols, Turks...).

A living heritage

1600 years later, *Christians for Armenia's* efforts to produce a faithful translation of the Bible into contemporary Eastern Armenian (spoken not just in the Republic of Armenia, but in neighboring Georgia, also by countless Armenians living in the Russian Federation), represents in its own way a continuation of the work of Mesrop Mashtots. The Bible is the living Word of a living God (1 Peter 1:23), not a museum artefact destined to be exhibited in dusty cabinets, merely for the sake of intellectually curious visitors. As we witness with great sadness the systematic destruction of century old Armenian buildings (Medieval churches in particular) in the now Azerbaijani controlled Nagorno-Karabagh region, we realize that leaving a heritage that cannot be destroyed by human hands is the only lasting response to savagery and brutality. In our previous newsletter we mentioned the separate printing of the Gospel of John taken from our New Testament and





Psalms, by an Armenian pastor living in Moscow : To date, 3000 copies have been printed and are being distributed in 12 large cities such as Moscow, St Petersburg, Krasnodar, Astrakhan. A few days ago, our representative on the field visited the Southern regions of neighboring Georgia during an educational visit, taking along 30 teachers and teenagers of the Christian educational Center *Endanik*. They were able to distribute examples of our already printed New Testament & Psalms to locals, among others to members of the traditional Armenian clergy.

“ The Bible is the living Word of a living God.”

Planning ahead the schedule of our translation

A fruitful visit by Rev. Peter Adam - CFA's vice-chairman - to Armenia in August this year, allowed to clarify with our team the schedule planned for the Old Testament books still to be translated, as well as certain practical rules. Apart from the Pentateuch (already printed in a limited edition for the sake of comments by external readers), most of the historical books have been completed, except for Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. In 2025-2026 the focus will be on the prophetic books : Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 “minor” prophets (Daniel being left for later). In 2027, our translators will concentrate their effort on Wisdom literature. We already know that the book of Job will require much time and attention due to its own internal challenges. We therefore do not expect to complete the translation of the Old Testament before 2028, if we want to give proper care to each passage. The editing phases require an extended concertation between our team members to ensure the best rendition in contemporary Eastern Armenian.

All these issues, and others, were discussed at length during CFA's latest annual committee meeting that took place on Tuesday October 1 in the new boardroom of Mid-America Reformed Seminary (Dyer, IN). We are always grateful for their readiness to host our annual meetings.

Please pray that our sustained efforts to remain on track with this Bible translation, while other activities of our ministry are still proceeding, will be blessed by the Lord. May we not allow ourselves to be hindered or led astray from the goal He has set before us, for the sake of His Name and His Kingdom.



A member of the traditional Armenian clergy in neighboring Georgia receives copies of the New Testaments & Psalms

Warmly in Christ,

Rev Eric Kayayan

On behalf of the committee of Christians for Armenia

Please send your donations to the following address :

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P.O. Box 8208 Kentwood, MI 49508

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