

**LATEST NEWS # 344, March 2, 2006**

**The following news concerns Russia.**

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## Kreshen believers encouraged to 'read and live by the Bible'

TATARSTAN, RUSSIA — Hundreds of Kreshen Christians flocked to the Church of Tikhvin Icon of the Holy Virgin in Kazan at the end of December for a very special event. Here in the religious and cultural centre for the region's Kreshens (people of Turkic origin who profess Christianity), they celebrated, some shedding tears of joy, the launch of the New Testament in their own language.



In his speech to the congregation, Bible Society in Russia Executive Director Anatoly Rudenko remarked that it is 140 years since the first liturgy in Kreshen, a dialect of Tatar, was celebrated.

Some parts of the Bible – including the Gospels, Acts and Psalms – were translated and published over subsequent decades, but this activity came to a halt with the Revolution of 1917. It was not until 2000 that the next books – the Letters from James, Peter, John and Jude – were launched (see *World Report* 359/12 and 363/25).

“The seed of God’s Word has been planted today to produce a tall tree of spiritual life and revival of Kreshen national culture,” said Mr Rudenko.

Archbishop Anastasii highlighted the many generations of activity by the Kazan diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church. “For 450 years we have been fulfilling the Great Commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ in preaching the Gospel in all languages of our multinational republic,” he said. He reminded the congregation of the need for personal commitment to making God’s Word known: “‘The harvest is large but there are few workers to gather it in’ (Matthew 9:37, GNB).”

The tremendous task of translating the New Testament into Kreshen was a joint project uniting the Bible Society’s St Petersburg branch with Russian Orthodox Church leaders, local writers, scientists and editors. The project, in which a revised version of the 19<sup>th</sup> century translations by Nikolai Ilminskii was combined with contemporary work, was supervised by Archpriest Pavel Pavlov, while consultancy support was supplied by the United Bible

Societies. In the early stages of the work, some help with checking the text was received from the Institute for Bible Translation in Moscow.

Now that the full New Testament has finally been placed in the hands of Kreshen speakers, the desire of all those who dedicated themselves to this work is that the Kreshens will be able to apply the Scriptures to their everyday lives.

“We wish that the Kreshens will use the Scriptures not only for liturgical purposes, but practically in various aspects of their everyday life, such as personal devotions, family matters and doing business,” said Mr Rudenko.” (438 words) (RUSSIA.02.03.06)

*Photo (Bible Society in Russia):*

*RUS06DJ-43: Archpriest Pavel Pavlov distributing copies of the Kreshen New Testament following its launch in Kazan on December 23, 2005.*

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