



# Institute for Bible Translation Russia/CIS

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## Newsletter April 2009

Just now, as this letter is being written, one of the Central Asian teams is gathered in Moscow for a consultant checking session on some Old Testament books. Here one of the translators tells about her involvement in Bible translation:

"I live in Central Asia, in a land steeped in Muslim traditions and customs. I never dreamed that I would one day be involved in Bible translation, but God Himself deemed it fit to give me this work.

"Eight years ago I met the exegetical advisor of the translation project. He came to the editorial office where I was working and presented us with a copy of IBT's *The Birth of Jesus Christ in 80 Languages of the CIS*. I was very interested to read the translation of Luke 2:1-20 in my native language - this was the first time that I had ever read the Bible passage about the birth of Jesus Christ. I liked the translation very much; it was clear and straightforward.



"When it was time to do comprehension testing of Luke's Gospel I was invited to take part in this work by editing the translated text. Later my role in the project shifted so that I became a translator myself. It has been such a joy for me to work on thirteen of the Old Testament books.

"Translating the Holy Scriptures is definitely an extraordinary task. It is not a simple job because the Bible is at the same time both sacred Scripture and a monument of world literature. So many genres (historical narrative, poetry, exhortation, etc.) are woven together in the books of the Bible, so there are always difficulties that arise in translating the text. The Russian language, which serves as my source\* language for translating the Biblical text, is very different from my mother tongue and we must always keep in mind that the resultant translation ought to sound as natural as possible and not be just a literal translation of the Russian text.

"I believe that Bible translation is a sacred task, so I do not try to conceal my involvement in the project from colleagues at my workplace. Of course, I sometimes hear reproaches from them, especially from one colleague, who once asked me why I should want to get involved in such a thing. Later he asked me, "You aren't thinking of betraying your faith, are you?" I explained to him that IBT is a scholarly organization and that my translation work is serving to expand my knowledge. He doesn't actively badger me about the issue anymore, but sometimes when I ask him how he would translate a certain word he refuses to tell me, realizing that I need it for my translation work.

"Our people definitely need the Bible in their native language. Everyone should have access to the sacred texts. Even when studying the Koran, one needs to have an understanding of the foundation on which it is based, the Bible."

\*) Although the translator may be using a Russian translation as source text, the exegetical advisor and translation consultant check her translation against the original languages, which is Hebrew in the case of the OT.

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