

# NEWSLETTER

Q2NL23

## WHAT'S INSIDE?

- + 560,000 Bibles for Kids
- + 2022 Faith in Action
- + Croatian Public Schools
- + Ukraine Aid Reports
- + Bibles in Kazakhstan
- + Russian Children's Bibles





# BIBLES FOR KIDS

This Spring EEM launched our “Bibles for Kids” matching fund campaign. The Bibles for Kids campaign aims to unite Christians from various global cultures with a unified purpose: to deliver Bibles to children in their heart languages. Specifically for 2023, EEM envisions significant gifting of teen Bibles, aligning with an observed growth, spiritual need, and hunger for God’s Word among that age group.

“Every person deserves to understand the Word of God,” shared Bob Burckle, President of EEM. “Distributing Bibles to these teens not only in their heart languages—but also in a format that is geared more toward their age group when it comes to focus, vernacular and notes—will allow for a more palatable and transformative understanding of Scripture. Our goal is to get a Bible into their hands and then into their hearts and minds.”



Photo from  
public school  
in Lanivtsi,  
Ukraine

EEM’s mission is to share God’s Word with the people of Eastern Europe and beyond, seeking to educate and inspire God’s servants in this work. The ministry publishes, prints, and distributes Bibles and Bible-based materials in 30+ countries and 20+ languages through

a vast network of partner churches and organizations. This year’s Bibles for Kids matching fund campaign specifically urges Christians around the world to foster the faith of children and teens in Eastern Europe through prayerful and financial partnership so that 560,000 Bibles will be supplied to 560,000 kids in 2023. Donations will be matched to double the impact of gifts, meaning that a \$5 donation would normally cover one Bible, but with the Bibles for Kids matching gift, it will now purchase two Bibles.

“We need believers to join us in our bold campaign as we spread the Gospel to the younger generations of Eastern Europe,” encourages Dirk Smith, Vice President of EEM. “Together, we are the hands and feet of Jesus, offering the Source of Life to others. The small sacrifices these faithful believers can make in order to provide these children and teens with Bibles will change the world.”

Through the Bibles for Kids matching fund campaign, there’s a unique opportunity for united Christians to grow an entire generation of young believers by simply forgoing certain customary life luxuries. From these simple sacrifices of personal comfort, many Bibles will be gifted—and lives will be changed.

We invite you to support this initiative as it runs through June 30, 2023. Those who accept the challenge are encouraged to use the hashtag #BiblesforKids to share this profound Kingdom-building opportunity with others. To learn more about Bibles for Kids and make a donation, visit [eem.org/BFK](http://eem.org/BFK).



SCAN  
TO DONATE  
[EEM.ORG/BFK](http://EEM.ORG/BFK)

# NEARLY TWO MILLION

Hand in hand with your generosity, EEM has steadfastly worked for more than 60 years to supply free Bibles to Eastern Europe and the surrounding nations. In 2022, EEM distributed 1,966,043 Bibles and Bible-based materials to 35 countries and in 26 languages, up from 1,529,668 Bibles distributed in 2021. Placed cover-to-cover on a bookshelf, these books would stretch over 15 miles.

Despite the war, lingering COVID-19 issues, rising costs, and ongoing supply chain problems, EEM's 2022 distribution increased by 28.5%. In Ukraine alone, Bible and Bible-based material distribution went up 40%, even amidst war with Russia. Additionally, EEM provided funds for food, warm clothing, shelter, medicine, and urgent medical care for thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees in other Eastern European nations.

"We are so grateful to our donors, who have made this amazing growth possible. We praise God and give Him the glory for providing the resources, the manpower, and the open doors for sharing His Word throughout Eastern Europe and beyond," said EEM President Bob Burckle. "We continue to pray for peace in Ukraine and are doing all we can to assist them in this time of dire need when so many are turning to the hope found in God's Word to endure the unendurable."

EEM continues the mission to give access to the Word of God in the native languages of the nations of Eastern Europe and beyond by distributing Bibles and Bible-based materials to individuals, churches, public schools, orphanages, youth camps, hospitals, prisons, and rehabilitation institutions. EEM works with national leaders in Ukraine, Romania, Croatia, North Macedonia, and other countries to provide Bibles both in public schools and directly to students.

"We are seeing a growing awakening to the Spirit of God throughout Eastern Europe and



beyond, especially in those regions where for more than a generation they now have access to God's Word in their heart language," said EEM Vice President Dirk Smith. "The children who have received these Bibles are tomorrow's leaders, and we look forward to seeing what God will continue to do in this region, bringing people to Him and bringing them together in Christian unity."

## PODCAST SEASON 2

Season 2 of our 55:11 Podcast is out! We are pleased to announce that we have also added video streaming to our content, allowing you to watch each new episode on YouTube. We have an amazing lineup of guests from Europe in season 2 you won't want to miss at [eem.org/5511podcast](https://eem.org/5511podcast).

The podcast can be streamed on Spotify, Apple, Google, and on any other podcast platforms. We invite you to share these stories and interviews with others interested in hearing about what God is doing in Eastern Europe and beyond. We are grateful for your partnership and look forward to sharing future episodes with you!



SCAN  
TO STREAM  
[EEM.ORG/5511PODCAST](https://eem.org/5511podcast)

# WHY EVERYONE NEEDS A BIBLE IN THEIR HEART LANGUAGE

By Bob Burckle, EEM President

There is something powerful about language, both the spoken and the written word. It is our primary tool for communicating and expressing our thoughts, needs and ideas.



More importantly, it bonds us together as human beings and allows us to connect with God.

Language, in essence, is the foundation of understanding and knowledge. And because the Bible is key to understanding God's power and eternal truth found in Jesus Christ, it is vitally necessary that every person be able to receive and read it in their native (or heart) language.

The vision statement of Eastern European Mission (EEM) is "The Bible. We Want Everyone to Get It." There is a double meaning to this phrase in the English language. We want people to get a Bible in their hands, but our goal is Scripture engagement.

Once someone physically gets a Bible in their hands, we want them to read it and get it in their mind, and through the Spirit, into their heart. In the earliest days of EEM, our team realized that the Bible must be in the heart language of an individual so they can understand God's message to them.

The Bible is our greatest resource to share and proclaim God's saving grace and everlasting love to those around us. For this reason, there are many Bible translation ministries around the world working to provide the Scriptures in the 7,378 known languages. While much has been accomplished (the full Bible now exists in 717 languages, with the New Testament available in more than 1,500), there is still much to do.

Through the Every Tribe, Every Nation (ETEN) collective impact alliance, multiple Bible translators, and resource partners are working together to see all people gain access to God's Word in a language they can clearly understand by 2033. Together, the partnering organizations have created a shared repository for digital and audio texts, adopted a common framework for the task of Bible translation, and are developing a comprehensive ecosystem of tools and information. EEM and other Bible printers depend upon these



translations to take God's Word to people throughout the world to end Bible poverty.

Our work wouldn't be possible without the efforts of these valiant translators. We at Eastern European Mission are grateful every day that we are able to deliver God's Word to more than 30 nations throughout the region of Central and Eastern Europe and beyond in more than 25 different languages. In addition to Slavic translations such as Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, etc., we also share Bibles in Farsi, Turkish, Arabic, and some of the Romani dialects. Having these specific languages available makes it possible for people in these nations and ethnic groups to truly "get it," as our tagline says.

Translations have opened the door for people in this geographic region to intimately know God and His heart. When the beauty of the gospel is translated into one's own language, it can be transformative and life-altering. Those who experience the Scriptures in their native tongue are given the opportunity to study and absorb biblical truths on a level that penetrates the heart.

This is partly what made the day of Pentecost so powerful and effective: "Each one heard them speaking in his own language" (Acts 2:6, RSV). They heard the Gospel of Jesus in their "own language." There is comfort and security deeply embedded within that statement. If you've ever traveled abroad and been in settings where English is not being spoken, there is nothing more comforting than finding someone who speaks English.

Have you ever seen someone who is deaf encounter someone who can speak sign language? Their eyes light up and a smile immediately engulfs their countenance.

We want this for the multitude of nations who still need to hear the gospel in their own language, so we are more committed than ever to finishing the task. It is essential that we continue our efforts in bringing the Scriptures to different cultures and tongues so that men,

women, and children across the world can truly understand the marvelous mystery of the Bible and begin storing God's Word in their own hearts.

In Matthew 28, Jesus called us to make disciples. We believe that providing someone with God's Word is the first step in making disciples. Isaiah 55:11 tells us, "My word ... will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (NIV). But that word must be able to be understood in order to accomplish that disciple-making purpose, so our work continues until everyone has had a chance to hear the good news and respond.



# CROATIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS & BIBLES



Last year, nearly 80,000 books were delivered to many public schools in Croatia as God continued to open the door to distribute Children and Teen Bibles in the nation. In the Croatian public school system, there is an optional Bible class that parents can choose for their children. Over 90% of Croatian children in the public school system are attending this optional class.

One public school in Northern Croatia shared how one of their 2nd grade Bible teachers is preparing students for the Easter holiday. In the weeks leading up to Easter, this 2nd grade teacher has challenged her students to read and share their favorite stories from the Bible during the celebration. This challenge is part of continued encouragement through assignments and discussions for students to be in their Bibles all year. When asked why the teacher approached her Bible class this way, she shared, "...reading God's Word is the best way for them to grow in knowledge about God and His Grace."

We're grateful to hear that these children are reading their Bibles and growing in their knowledge of God. The teacher's decision

to introduce them to the Bible is truly the best way to teach them about God's grace and goodness, and life found in Christ. Your donations make it possible to equip passionate teachers. Praise the Lord for this wonderful testimony of what God is doing in Croatian public schools!

## CHRISTIAN ETHICS CLASSES CONTINUE IN RIVNE, UKRAINE

Ruslana Kovalchuk, as part of EEM Ministry Partner Hope to People, is spending her time teaching classes on Christian ethics for grades 5th and 6th in the city of Rivne at a local Ukrainian school. Unfortunately, sirens and air-strikes often prevent the lesson from being conducted as planned. On and off as threats arise, Christian ethics lessons have to be conducted in bomb shelters designated for the students. Ruslana is one of many volunteers and teachers who remain passionate about continuing Biblical education courses for students in the middle of a war. Ruslana talks and prays with her students daily.

Like Ruslana, more volunteers from Hope to People continue to visit children deprived of parental care in shelters like the one found in the village of Oleksandria. Volunteers prepare Bible lessons for several children in an effort to support orphaned children and their spiritual needs. Volunteers spend time teaching topics like "Anger and Aggressiveness" based on the example of Cain and Abel in order to speak to the issues children may be dealing with from war trauma.

Hope to People wrote to EEM saying, "The children were happy, so they asked us to come to them again. Thank you very much for your constant prayer and financial support for this work. May the Lord God bless you and keep you, protect you from all evil, and enrich you as you continue in good deeds!"





Photo from  
Ministry Partner  
Bible Mission in  
Almaty, KZ

## THANK YOU FROM KAZAKHSTAN

The administrative staff of the Bible Society of Kazakhstan thanks you for supporting the spread of the Word of God in Kazakhstan. The Bibles and Bible-based materials that we have been able to provide continue to bless thousands and allow the distribution of books among different church gatherings and Christian unions in different cities across Kazakhstan and remote areas by those who are doing evangelism work.

These Bibles and books have been gratefully received by orphanages, churches, preachers, and Sunday school teachers. Your generosity continues to sow hope into the hearts of women, men, and children in Kazakhstan.

## RUSSIAN BIBLES

Hundreds of orphaned children in Russia received their first Bible this year. EEM Ministry Partner Natalie in St. Petersburg helped to organize Bible delivery across churches, and she sent the following to our team, "We thank you for the books! Over 50 volunteers from various churches across St. Petersburg, Russia, worked as a team and conducted special events for children and teenagers in 12 separate orphanages, some of which were for children with special needs. May God bless you abundantly!"

EEM can't support these volunteers and the spiritual development of these children for the heart of a nation without you.

# UKRAINE AID PARTNER REPORTS

## Report from a Church in Odesa, Ukraine

Thank you so much for your help with our delivery. You are our superheroes! Soon we will distribute medications to the elderly neighbors.

Near the village called Nikolskoye in the Kherson region of Ukraine, we found 27 people who hid together to survive. Through acquaintances, they asked our church to visit them. No other volunteers have gone to them. We were able to bring them medicine and needed products. When we were collecting information and the needs of the people, many did not even believe that we would succeed in getting help. One recipient wrote to us saying,

“We want to thank you again for visiting us yesterday with help. Today we took the packages to the neighborhood, all the people were very grateful. They were so happy about the medicine because after the bridge was removed, the pharmacy in the nearest village was not accessible.”

Residents of Lvovo are always happy to see us. They say we are also the only ones who visit them regularly and bring them what they really need - medicines, candles, matches, soap, warm clothes, and drinking water. There is water available in the Dnieper River on the edge of the village, but across the river are Russian soldiers. Sometimes it is possible to take advantage of the good mood of the soldiers when snipers are threatening civilians by shooting near them. When they do get water, people boil water for a long time because the consequences of the war have left the corpses of people and animals to be thrown into the river. There is no snow this year, and rain is not common right now. Normal drinking water is very important in this region. We are able to leave all the humanitarian aid with these people because of our important partnership with you. This is invaluable support.

## Report from Light to the World in Ukraine

People are surviving only because of humanitarian aid that organizations like EEM bring and distribute. Three hundred aid kits and 100 sets of thermal clothing were recently delivered to Kovsharivka, Ukraine. EEM ministry partners who distributed this aid were met by frightened, emotionally exhausted people. Many children were still hiding in basements from the dangers of war.

## Report from Next Generation in Ukraine

Two-thousand five hundred people recently received life-saving aid with help from EEM's Ukraine Aid Campaign. You have provided food, generators, warm blankets, diapers, medicine, Bibles, and more that are given to thousands of children and adults, disabled and elderly. The people were so grateful for the help that they could not hold back their tears. Since they are located in a place where enemy snipers and heavy equipment are a hundred meters away, people have not received any help since the beginning of the war.



Photo from  
Ministry Partner  
Next Generation  
in Ukraine



## Update from Warsaw, Poland

In February we received an exciting report from Warsaw, Poland, where a group of refugees from the Zaporizhzhia Church of Christ have relocated from Ukraine. Their inspiring story of overcoming adversity through faith as a community brings hope to all who hear it. This newly settled group of believers is actively involved in their new community, both through aid distribution and by sharing their faith. EEM would not be able to support this community without your generosity with free Bibles and humanitarian aid.

The report read, "We are excited to share the news of a joyful event in Warsaw, Poland! Two sisters, Natasha and Nina, put on Christ in baptism! They come from Mariupol, Ukraine, a city that has been severely affected by the war, and are now resettled in Warsaw, Poland."

After the women were baptized, Natasha shared, "During the shelling in Mariupol we sat in the basement and prayed. And God saved us and brought us out of Mariupol, and now God saved us for eternal life with Him."

The report continued, "Natasha and Nina's family has had to overcome many challenges, including being trapped in their basement for months experiencing constant shelling and bombing, and burying their neighbors in their own backyard. Despite these hardships, Natasha and Nina have found comfort in God through their rescue and through this community of believers in Warsaw."

Natasha and Nina are two of many who now attend Bible study and worship services, and are actively involved in aid distribution and other community activities. Both of these women serve as a reminder of the resilience and strength that comes from placing hope and trust in God.

## Report from a Church in Berislav, Ukraine

I saw with my own eyes all the horror that the Russian troops left behind. There were lots of burned and shot cars on the side of the road that may have once had people in them. There are ghost towns, completely destroyed. Signs everywhere that seemed to never end reading, "CAUTION! MINED!"

I was moved by the people. Sad, depressed, hungry and crippled by war. It is difficult to watch when in the morning near the five-story building in which I once lived, people take buckets of feces to the street, bring a bucket of water from the hospital (the only place where you can get it), light a fire and start preparing food one by one. They are not afraid of constant explosions, rockets flying overhead, crushed houses nearby, and broken windows. Children who once had fun playing soccer on the playground, running and having fun, now sit in basements.

With tears in my eyes, I handed out my first food kits. People who couldn't buy the most basic, necessary things for a long time, cried from happiness and couldn't believe their eyes. One woman ran after me and asked me many times if it was really for her.

I have transported more than 27 tons of humanitarian aid (food kits, hygiene products, medicines) and traveled over 14,000 miles. The city, which is constantly under fire, is on the verge of a humanitarian disaster. Due to the lack of gas supply, people are freezing in their homes. Thanks to donors, we were able to purchase and transport 950 warm blankets. I have never seen people cry so much from joy, from the realization that they have not been forgotten.

Thank you very much for your support and help. We really appreciate everything you have done for us during the entire time of our cooperation and continue to do in the future. Your help is an incredible example of solidarity, openness to the needs of others, understanding and support.

# FAITH IN ACTION OR FAITH IN ACTION?

By Bob Burckle, EEM President

Many of us have forgotten the Great Commission if we ever knew it. Re-read Matthew 28:19. The word “go” is an action verb. It’s our assignment to go into our sphere of influence and make an impact for the Gospel, not just through prayer but in living our faith and boldly sharing it with others. Our mission field may be our neighbors, our community or the world, but we each have at least one.

To use a football analogy, we need to get off the bench and get in the game. Physically, we cannot stay fit if we don’t move. The same is true if we hope to stay



Photo from  
Ministry Partner  
Hope in Action  
in Ukraine

spiritually fit; we must exercise our faith. Evangelism should be a natural outflow of healthy faith, bubbling forth from within us as we share the hope and certainty of our salvation through the risen Christ.

We have the very keys to life everlasting in the palms of our hands within the living Word of God — the Bible — which is what inspires my work at EEM. I strive every day to get the Bible into as many hands — and hearts — as possible.

Each of us, as Christians, also has the knowledge of salvation written upon our hearts plus a command from Jesus to share it with others. So whether our “day job” provides us the opportunity to share with others or not, it is in our daily life outside of work that I believe most of us allow fear or apathy to paralyze us into an inactive faith.

I suspect this is the primary reason why believers don’t evangelize more. Whether we struggle with fear of man due to a perceived need for acceptance, approval, honor or recognition — this fear is ultimately rooted in a fear of







rejection, criticism or humiliation in some capacity. When we experience these things — whether it has been in the evangelistic sense or from within past social experiences — we tend to second-guess our decision-making, becoming timid rather than audacious, experiencing low self-confidence, allowing our self-worth to be governed by others, ultimately shrinking our faith activity — or becoming inactive in faith altogether.

What it comes down to is this: do we love others more than ourselves? We might believe we're being "sensitive" to the beliefs of others by not sharing our testimonies. Instead, we must ask ourselves this: Is fear of offending others rooted in a fear that their opinions of us will ultimately be lowered?

If we truly love someone, wouldn't we rather them be temporarily offended and have the opportunity to hear the Gospel on this side of eternity? Or would we rather avoid temporary discomfort altogether, potentially allowing them to spend eternity in hell?

We have an immense calling on this side of heaven. Our purpose is not to have great careers, striving to each achieve the "American dream." No, we are called to more. Some might read this, thinking, "Yes, but I want all these things; I can still achieve my material goals, believe in God, go to church and have salvation in Christ." Sure, this might be true.

But what about others? What about those who don't know Jesus yet? Are we really willing to live comfortable lives in our own little bubbles, maintaining decent careers and family lives, all at the cost of denying others the opportunity for salvation? Are we willing to forgo our purpose by not intentionally making time to share the Gospel?

There are, indeed — no matter our unique locations, ages, livelihoods or circumstances — countless opportunities each and every day, everywhere we go, to share the Gospel. This is evident. Whether we are boldly sharing our testimonies with our local baristas, discussing the Gospel with our bosses or training up our children every day in the Word of God and in prayer — every encounter in our lives is an opportunity for ministry.

The Lord wants to use each of us. He wants to ignite our divinely-created passions, skill sets and opportunities to inspire life in others, gifting them with lasting salvation, freedom and joy from the truth of the Gospel. This requires us to be in-action, Spirit-filled people devoid of fear and apathy.

It is only when we look at every single soul with the eyes of Jesus that we begin to see the weight of our true calling in the Great Commission. Sharing the Gospel should not just be a piece of our lives — it should be the point of our lives.



# EEM

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The Bible. We Want Everyone To Get It.®

# Bibles for kids

2023 MATCHING CAMPAIGN

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