

# The Bible Among the Croatian People

Translating, printing and distributing the Bible in the context of proclaiming the Gospel

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**Summary** *Unfolding translations, editions and distributing of the Bible are underway in the context of evangelization in Croatia. The spiritual atmosphere in which the translations originated and the recognized spiritual movements from which the influences for translation sprang and whose members mainly spread individual editions of the New Testament and the whole Bible are analyzed within the framework of this paper.*

## Introduction

Throughout history, translation and distribution of the Bible have gone hand in hand with the spreading of the Christian faith. Jesus told his disciples, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Mt 28:18-20)<sup>1</sup> Jesus’ commission to take the gospel to all nations and the coming and receiving of the power of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Ac 1:5-8; 2:1-12) made the translation of the Scriptures foundational for the Christian identity. With the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Galilean disciples, they spoke in numerous languages about the magnificent works of God. On that day, Jews and devout people from all nations under heaven were residing in Jerusalem. The disciples proclaimed the gospel to them in each of their mother tongues. It isn’t that the disciples merely spoke, but their hearers heard and understood the message. On

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<sup>1</sup> Quotes from the Bible in the English translation of this article are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, Copyright 1973,1978,1984 by the International Bible Society.

that day, about 3,000 people were added to the church (Ac 2:41). The listeners heard the Good News and then praised God in their languages.

From that time on, the translation of the Bible, the written Word of God, has throughout history been connected with missionary work and has often intensified awakenings and revivals of faith and spiritual renewal in Christian movements. The reasons for translating the Bible in native tongues are many and varied. The first and most significant reason is for the evangelizing, proclaiming, spreading and founding of the faith. A second reason is for the spiritual renewal and liturgical needs of the church. Among other reasons could be the proclamation and defense of denominational teaching and the financial gain and personal intellectual challenge of the translator.

Evangelism is the spreading, proclaiming and preaching of the gospel (the Good News), the message of salvation by faith in the representative death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth (Ro 4:24-25; 10:9-10), the Savior of humanity, who must be accepted by the hearer and then followed up with repentance or a change in the way one thinks and acts in accordance with the Scriptures, an admittance of sin and a conversion and surrender of ones life to God.

At the mention of the Bible, often the question is asked, "Which Bible; Catholic or Protestant?" The Bible is neither Catholic nor Protestant. It is the revealed Word of God, which in some editions the apocryphal or deuterocanonical books are added. The Christian canon<sup>2</sup> of the Scriptures contains 66 books: the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament.

The basis of the Christian canon of the Old Testament is the canon of the Hebrew Bible, established, most likely, in the fourth century or in the second century BC at the latest, which was confirmed by the Jews of Palestine during the first century.<sup>3</sup> The canon of the Hebrew Bible traditionally has 24 books divided into three groups. Those are: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. The Christian canon of the Old Testament is identical to the canon of the Hebrew Bible, but the number of books differs because in the Christian canon, the *Book of Samuel*, the *Book of Chronicles* and *Ezra-Nehemiah* are all divided into two books and the individual books of the Minor Prophets, which in the canon of the Hebrew Bible are all under the title of *The Twelve*, are also divided into individual books. In the Christian canon of the Old Testament, the order of the books is different from the canon of the Hebrew Bible because the subject grouping of the books was ac-

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<sup>2</sup> The word canon (Greek, *kanōn*, the rule, norm, measure) in Christendom refers to the standard to which something is compared to see if it is inspired by God or among the collection of books which passed this test and which the early church recognized as a "measure of the faith."

<sup>3</sup> The Rabbinical Council in Jamnia, near Haifa disputed in AD 90 about the right of some books to remain in the canon of the Hebrew Bible. The dispute in the council didn't address as much the acceptance of some list of books into the canon, rather, their right to remain there (McDowell).

cepted instead of the official order (McDowell, 26). The canon of the Hebrew Bible was accepted as the fixed canon of the Old Testament with 39 books by all the Christian churches: Catholic, Protestant, churches of the Reformation tradition and Orthodox.<sup>4</sup> Over the centuries, the Catholic Church has added to this canon, and officially at the Council of Trent (1546) confirmed apocryphal books (known in the Catholic Church as the extra canonical books or deuterocanonical books) as well as the apocryphal works from the Book of Esther and the Book of the prophet Daniel.<sup>5</sup> The Dominican, Sixtus of Siena (+1569) introduced a division to the proto-canonical or *primary canonical* books, which all Christian churches considered as canonical and inspired by God, and *deuterocanonical* which some churches added because of various historical reasons and “which were not always and in every place in the canon” (Tomić, 1986, 149). Some Orthodox churches, along with a group of apocryphal or extra canonical books, which were accepted by the Catholic Church, accepted several other additional apocryphal books.<sup>6</sup> The New Testament canon was completed at the end of the fourth century and

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<sup>4</sup> Reformers in the 16<sup>th</sup> century announced the canon of the Hebrew Bible and threw out the apocryphal or other canonical books. The Westminster Confession states, “The books with the joint title called apocryphal books which were not inspired by God’s Spirit, are not an integral part of the canonical form of the Scriptures (the Bible) and so they have no particular importance in God’s Church, neither are they approved for any other use or ministry, along with any other human writings.”

<sup>5</sup> The Council of Trent (1546) recognized the Apocrypha as deuterocanonical or extra-canonical books, especially First and Second Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh because they didn’t possess deuterocanonical status. The Apocryphal books of the Old Testament are *1 Esdras*, *2 Esdras*, *Tobit*, *Judith*, Additions to the *Book of Esther*, the *Wisdom of Solomon*, or the *Book of Wisdom*, *Ecclesiasticus* (this book is known as the *Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach* or the *Book of Sirach*), *Baruch*, *Letter of Jeremiah*, the *Prayer of Azariah*, the *Song of Three Youths (Children)*, (Additions to the *Book of Daniel*), *Susana*, the *Prayer of Manasseh*, *1 Maccabees* and *2 Maccabees*. The Jews did not accept the canonical status of these books and so they were never included in the canon of the Hebrew Bible. However, the LXX manuscripts (Septuagint) includes them as an addition to the canon of the Old Testament. The first Latin Bibles, translated during the second century AD based on the LXX, included the Apocrypha. The Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible, because of the difference between *libri ecclesiastici* and *libri canonici* awarded the Apocrypha a different status. Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate, threw out the apocryphal books as a part of the canon, but under pressure translated some of them (*Tobit* and *Judith*), and after his death the apocryphal books were included in the Vulgate from old Latin translations (*Vetus Latina*).

At the fourth session, April 8, 1546, the Council of Trent drew up the *Decree on the Publication and use of the Holy Scriptures*, from which is conveyed the first section, “The Holy Synod, seeing that it would be very useful to the Church of God, if among all of the Latin versions of the holy books, which are being spread around, to mark those which need to be held as authentic, determine and make known in public lectures, discussions, sermons and display as authentic this old edition of the Vulgate, which has over the ages of long term use in the Church been approved, and let no one under any kind of pretense dare to or attempt to exclude it” (Tomić, 1986, 267).

<sup>6</sup> For example, the Greek Orthodox Church and Russian Orthodox Church consider canonical *1 Esdras*, *2 Esdras* and the *Third Book of Maccabees*.

contains 27 books.

Until the first printed book<sup>7</sup> the Bible was translated into 33 world languages. It is a new age in the sphere of culture and faith marked on one side by the appearance of the printing press and on the other side by the reformation of Christianity. On both sides, the Bible was placed in the forefront and has become the most demanded and most available book of all time. By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the entire Bible was printed in 11 languages, and in the 12<sup>th</sup> language, ancient Aramaic, only the New Testament. During the Reformation, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which inspired the translation of the Bible in national languages, printings of translations were made in 26 more languages, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in 13 more languages, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in an additional 16 languages. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the entire Bible was printed in 54 languages and partially in 67 languages. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Bible was translated in its entirety or in part in 523 languages, and by the end of 2006, in 2426 languages.<sup>8</sup> During 2006, Bible texts were translated in 23 languages and the entire Bible was translated in 429 languages by the end of 2006, and the New Testament in 1145 languages. According to these figures, the Bible is the most translated book in the world and of all times.

Croatians were pagans when, in the seventh century, they migrated to their present homeland. In the process of being baptized and accepting Christianity, they included themselves in the civilization processes of the time and accepted the western Catholic unity in ceremony, language and spirituality. Along side Christian ceremonies, the Latin language in liturgy and folk piety, they held on to numerous pagan customs. The first portions of the Bible, most likely *The Lord's Prayer*, was translated from Latin into Croatian by priests according to their knowledge and need (Bratulić, 1999).<sup>9</sup> Croatians, along with the Latin Bible (Vulgate) accepted the Cyril and Methodias translation of the Bible (completed circa 882) written in Glagolitic.<sup>10</sup>

Already in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Bible texts were translated into Croatian and published for liturgical needs of the Church in lectionaries or part of the gospels.

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<sup>7</sup> Gutenberg's Bible was printed in Mainz 1452-1455.

<sup>8</sup> Compared to UBS Scripture Language Report 2006. (<http://www.biblesociety.org/index2.htm>; February 17, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Even though individual texts of the Bible were translated into the Croatian language, they were not widely distributed or known among believing folk and the priesthood. This is evident in a letter from Vice-Roy Peter Erdödy (1557-1567), and sent to Ivan Ungnad, leader of the Croatian Protestant Bible Society in Urach, in which he thanks him for sending him books and adds that he shared them with his poor and simple priests so that from them, they at least could learn *The Lord's Prayer* (Georgijević, 1969, 35).

<sup>10</sup> Glagolitic and Slavic public worship was widespread among the Croats, especially in Istra, the Kvarner islands and in the places under the political protectorate of Byzantium.

Among them were the well known Zadar, Bernardin and Ranjin lectionaries. Croats are one of the first people groups in the world who received a printed translation of the New Testament in their own language (1562-1563) and among the last in Europe to get the printed text of the entire Bible in their own language in 1831 (Arapović, 2002, 44). According to the statistical figures of the Bible Societies Library in Cambridge and the Library of the American Bible Society in New York, the first printed Bible in the Croatian language was published in 1562. That is the first part of the New Testament in Glagolitic printed in the print shop of the Croatian Protestant Bible Society in Urach. The year of the first printed entire New Testament in Croatian is recorded as 1563, when the second part of the New Testament was published in the Bible Society. Katančić's translation of the Bible, printed in 1831, is recorded as the first printed translation of the entire Bible in the Croatian language (Arapović, *Proroczi*, 45).

According to these statistics, out of around 6800 of today's living languages, Croatian is the 33<sup>rd</sup> chronological language of 2261 languages which, by the end of 2000, had translated and printed at least one book of the Bible, 23<sup>rd</sup> of 987 languages which have a New Testament in print, and together with one Indian language shares 52<sup>nd</sup> place and 53<sup>rd</sup> place out of 383 languages which, by the end of 2000, had published an entire Bible (Arapović, *Proroczi*, 45).

Inspiration for translating, printing and distributing the Bible among the Croatian people came from various sides but the most significant came out of Christian spiritual movements: the Croatian Protestant Movement, the Pietist and Puritan Movement, the Catholic Bible Movement and the spiritual movement after Vatican II and the Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement. This work is concerned with the first printing of the New Testament and the first printing of the entire Bible as well as the printing of translations which, in the flow of history, had a significant effect on evangelization among the Croatian people and translations intended for evangelization among the churches of the Reformation tradition. Since this work is focused on printed translations for the purpose of evangelization, an analysis of liturgical, academic and other types of printed translations of the New Testament and the entire Bible have been excluded. For easy referencing, an attachment has been provided listing all the printed translations from the first printing of the New Testament in 1562-1563 through the last printed translation in 2006.

### **The Bible Society in Urach and the first edition printing of the New Testament among the Croats**

The Bible Society in Urach (1555-1566) at Tübingen was founded for the purpose of translating, printing and distributing the Bible and other Reformation works in the

Croatian language. The reformers endeavored to spread the influence of the Reformation, proclaim the gospel through the written word and change the spiritual condition among the historically Croatian lands and beyond. The Bible Society planned to publish the entire Bible, the early church fathers and other dogmatic and educational literature. The Croatian reformers believed that the Bible and other educational books would be read not only in Croatia, but also in Dalmatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and all the way to Istanbul. A part of their vision was to evangelize south-east Europe. In the midst of that endeavor the question arose over which language would be used in translation and which alphabet the books would be printed in. Croats in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in private use and in printed books, used three alphabets: Glagolitic, Latin and Cyrillic. The alphabets in Croatian lands were divided up regionally: Glagolitic in the northwest, Cyrillic in the extreme southeast, while the Latin alphabet covered the other regions. The Latin alphabet slowly became more influential, even in the regions where the Glagolitic and Cyrillic alphabets were in use. Understandably, it's no wonder that Croatian Protestant publications were first printed in Glagolitic and Cyrillic and then later on only in the Latin alphabet.

The Croatian Bible Society in Urach in their vision and in their achievement is predecessor of the Bible societies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and can, in regard to vision and team work, be honestly compared to similar projects: the Zagreb Bible (1968) and the contemporary joint translation of the Bible in the organization of the Croatian Bible Society.

It is worthy of mention that the process of realizing the vision of the Bible Society was a shared effort: visionary bishop P. P. Vergerius the younger, baron Ivan Ungnad (Hans Ungnad), Vice-Roy Petar Erdödy and Promož Trubar: translators Stipan Konzul, Antun Dalmatin, Juraj Cvečić, Juraj Juričić, Leonard Merčerić, Grgur Vlahović, Matija Šivčić: numerous proofreaders and linguistic experts from Istra and Metlika: distributors of the editions Ambroz Fröhlich in Vienna, Fabijan Kirchberger and Matija Klombner in Ljubljana, Advisor to the King and captain Franjo Barbo in Rijeka, Nikola Pichler in Beljak, Vice-Roy Petar Erdödy in Zagreb and in his estates, greater Varaždin district-prefect Krsto Ungnad in Varaždin and preacher Grgur Vlahović in Metlika; political supporters the Duke Kristof of Württemberg, Croatian Vice-Roy Erdödy, Varaždin district-prefect Krsto Ungnad and count Nikola Zrinski of Siget (Jambrek).

They didn't succeed in printing the entire Bible in Croatian, but only the New Testament and the book of Prophets from the Old Testament. The books of Moses (the Pentateuch) and the book of Psalms were translated, and perhaps the other books of the Old Testament, but they were not printed because the Bible Society, with the sudden death of Ivan Ungnad (1564), ceased its activities. What happened to the manuscripts of the translations is not known to us.

The activities of the Croatian Protestant Bible Society are significant not only for reasons of faith, but for linguistic and wider cultural reasons as well. Croa-



tian Protestant translators and writers laid the conceptual foundation for a single language that unites the whole of Croatian lands. Active members of the Bible Society became gradually more aware of the wide circulation of the language and of the choice of languages for the Croatian edition. While the translations were in the Glagolitic alphabet in the early beginnings (1560), printings in Cyrillic began several months later but not in the Latin alphabet until 1563. After experiencing acceptance and readability of individual editions, Croatian Protestants ceased to print the Cyrillic edition in 1563 and readied themselves to suggest the Latin alphabet as a common and unifying script for all of their future editions.

Croatian Protestant writers accepted the linguistic conception of their fore-runners, over and above the supporters of Glagolitic and built their linguistic conception on that. The linguistic conceptions and some proven solutions of the Croatian Protestants of that time were taken over by writers of the Counter-Reformation Bartol Kašić and Franjo Glavinić.

Along with the translation, printing and distribution of the Bible, Croatian Protestants concentrated on the work of accepting and understanding the Bible. On that account, they printed primers or alphabet books for increasing literacy of the masses and postilla and catechism books for biblical education of believers. The publishing of printed works was, for that day and age and set of circumstances, very great (an average of 1500 copies), and the distribution grid, although small, was well organized.

### **From the first edition of the New Testament (1562-63) to the first edition of the entire Bible (1831)**

From the first edition of the New Testament (1563) to the publication of the entire Bible translated by Matija Petar Katančić (1831) some 268 years passed without a published translation of a single book of the Bible in Croatian. Namely, in the Catholic Church, after the prohibition of spreading the Bible in spoken languages in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, accompanied by the explanation that the Scriptures in a native tongue without an explanation accomplished “more evil than good,” no more new translations of the Scriptures were published. In the document *Ten Rules Concerning the Question of Forbidden Books* produced by the council fathers chosen at the Council of Trent (25<sup>th</sup> session) and confirmed by Pope Pius IV,<sup>11</sup> books of the reformers were altogether prohibited, and reading a transla-

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<sup>11</sup> The council fathers at the 25<sup>th</sup> session launched a commission that had to determine books for the *Index of Forbidden Books*. This commission assembled rules for determining books, which were translated and published as *Rules on Prohibited Books: Ten rules concerning Prohibited Books drawn up by the Fathers chosen by The Council of Trent and approved by Pope Pius* in the Modern History Sourcebook.

tion of a book of the Old Testament could by the discretion of the bishop be allowed only to studied and pious people. Such translations could be used only for clarification of the Vulgate to understand the Scriptures, but not as an orthodox text. Translations of the New Testament that were made by the reformers in national languages were forbidden because from their careful reading, the council fathers concluded, usually came great danger and very little use or gain.<sup>12</sup> It was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Katančić's and Škarić's translation of the Bible and Utješinović's translation of the Psalter (Psalms) were published.

Even though a translation of the Bible by Bartol Kašić, a Jesuit priest, (1575-1650) was completed in 1636, it was not printed until 1999. Kašić began to translate the New Testament independantly in 1622 during the revision of the Dubrovnik lectionary. The Roman congregation for spreading the faith, (Propaganda) gave him a mandate in 1625 to officially translate the entire Bible into the Croatian language from the approved Latin Vulgate. Propaganda, as the secretary of Propaganda, Ingoli emphasized in his speech, ordered the Bible translation for three reasons:<sup>13</sup>

1. To do away with the grave mistakes which the priests of the areas of Illyricum were making where the mass was in Latin, and the holy gospels were interpreted without preparation and in these situations such grave heresies were spoken that the archbishop of Dubrovnik was forced to forbid those priests to interpret the reading of the gospels to the people.
2. To do away with the Bibles in the Croatian language which were printed by Luther and Melanchton ...
3. (...) the mass was already served in the same Croatian language by the permission of Pope Ivan VIII and along with that it was not appropriate to give

<sup>12</sup> "Translations of the books of the Old Testament may, in the judgment of the bishop, be permitted to learned and pious men only, provided such translations are used only as elucidations of the Vulgate Edition for the understanding of the Holy Scriptures and not as the sound text. Translations of the New Testament made by authors of the first class of this list shall be permitted to no one, since great danger and little usefulness usually results to readers from their perusal" (Rules, III).

<sup>13</sup> The original text and translation in Croatian were published by Vladimir Horvat (1999, 257). The text reads: AP-SOCCG v. 392 (1632) 27v, 20rv [27v] DISCORSO DEL SECRETARIO INGOLI CIRCA L STAMPAR IL TESTAMENTO NUOVO IN LINGUA ILLYRICA. [20r] DEL TESTAMENTO NUOVO IN LINGUA ILLYRICA SE SI DEVI STAMPARE.

La Sac. Cong. di prop. fide gia' alcun ann sono dicussi(e?) questo articolo, e finalmente per 3 ragioni prencipali lo riselve affirmitivamente:

Primo: Per levar gl' errori gravi, che fanno li sacerdoti di quelle provintie dell' Illyrico, (d)ove s' offitia con Missali latini, li quali esplicando ex tempore li Santi Vangeli dicono sproposite le heresie cosi gravi, che l' Arcivescovo di Ragusi fu' sforzato di prohibere a sacerdoti questi explicare li popoli...

20: Per levar le Biblie stampate in lingua Illyrica da Luthero e dal Melanchtone...

[20v] 30: ...si dice la messa nella medesima lingua Illyrica per la concesione di Giovanni 8. papa e pero' non disconveneva di darli anche il Testameno Nuovo in tale lingua.



them the New Testament in such a language as well.

From these reasons it was obvious that the Catholic church was dealing with two key problems. First, the priesthood of that time in the archbishopry of Dubrovnik, as well as in other areas, was not well enough educated in theology, even to the point that when they translated the Latin readings into the Croatian language, they made such grave mistakes that the archbishop of Dubrovnik pronounced them heresy and forbade some of the priests to preach or to interpret from the biblical texts. Second, fear of any influence of the Croatian Protestant translation of the New Testament which was published by the Bible Society in Urach was markedly present even in the south, in the bishopric of Dubrovnik. Naturally, the secretary of Propaganda, Ingoli didn't have access to the complete information about the publications of the Croatian Protestants, but just considered it fact enough that a translation of the Bible in Croatian existed, a Protestant Bible that is, printed by the efforts of Martin Luther and Philipp Melancthon. Even though the translations of the Croatian Protestants<sup>14</sup> were known in historically Croatian lands and to the Propaganda in Rome, to Jesuit Vladimir Horvat, either they weren't known or were just passed over as a notable Protestant accomplishment by emphasizing Bartol Kašić as the first Croatian translator of the Bible.<sup>15</sup>

### **The first edition printing of the entire Bible (1831)**

The first entire Croatian Bible, translated by Franciscan Matija Petar Katančić, was printed and published in Buda (Budapest) in 1831.<sup>16</sup> The Bible was printed in six books (four books of the Old Testament and two of the New Testament) in a two language parallel version: Latin and Croatian in two columns on every page. The text was a translation of the Latin Vulgate by Sixtus V, with accompanying interpretations by Ignacius Weitenauer. Katančić translated the Holy Scriptures in the language "of the Slavic-Illyric pronunciation of Bosnian," that is in Bosnian Ikavian which, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was in some ways the literary language of the order of the Franciscans not only in Bosnia but also in Slavonia and in other areas stretching from the Adriatic sea to Buda (Budapest) (Majdandžić).

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<sup>14</sup> Translators who took part in the translation of the Bible during the 16<sup>th</sup> Century were Stipan Konzul, Antun Dalmatin, Juraj Cvečić, Juraj Juričić, Leonard Merčerić, Grgur Vlahović and Matija Šivčić.

<sup>15</sup> Horvat affirmed this in the introduction of the article, "The year of Bartol Kašić and four centuries of Croatian philology. The Croatian Bible by Bartol Kašić: from the order of the Propaganda (1625), and the banning by the holy office (1634) until the first edition printing (1999)" (Horvat, 1999)

<sup>16</sup> The printing was completely finished in early July 1832 but was printed in books in 1831 (Majdandžić, 1996).

Katančić translated the Bible for several reasons, most likely as a support for circles within the church and society which were attempting to free the Catholic Church from Baroque Catholicism and bring in spiritual renewal and as a result of this renewal they expected, “that the Church would be able to succeed in beating back clandestine Protestantism in Austrian lands” (Hoško). It was during this time that the unstoppable influence of Protestant Bible societies was spreading in Europe, especially the British and Foreign Bible Society that popularized and printed the Bible even among Catholics. For that reason, it is no surprise that “reformed Catholicism accepted an endeavor into their program from the Jansenist Deposit and the Muratorium teaching to standardize reading of the Bible, translating Bible texts and requested that biblical passages be read in the national language during mass,” (Hoško).

Katančić’s translation of the Bible, printed in six books in a Latin and Croatian text, wasn’t intended for the evangelization of the people. There was no need for it because Protestants who would have used the Bible in evangelization were no longer present after the Counter Reformation in the regions stretching from the Adriatic Sea to Buda, and the Catholic Church showed no significant interest in evangelizing their traditional believers. With that, Majdandžić concludes, “When looking at the big picture, the response to Katančić’s translation was not as one would have expected it to be for a first printing of the entire Croatian translation. Without doubting the education and ability of the great Katančić, some circumstances seem to have influenced the translation to make it less popular.”

### **The British and Foreign Bible Society and the Vuk-Daničić translation of the Bible**

Under the influence of the missionary zeal of the Pietist Movement<sup>17</sup> and the focus on the Bible, a powerful Bible movement was launched among European

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<sup>17</sup> The Pietistic Movement (lat. *pietas*, devoutness), conceived in the German Lutheran church during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, stressed personal faith and practical Christianity, especially the proclamation of the gospel to those who did not know of it. The father of pietism was considered to be Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), who, as a pastor of a Lutheran church in Frankfurt am Mainz, organized meetings of devotion (*collegia pietatis*) at which Christian laity regularly gathered for common prayer, discussions about sermons from the previous week, reading the Bible and talks about applying the Word of God to everyday life. Devotional gatherings became a characteristic of the Pietistic Movement and participants in the gatherings were called Pietists. In the work *Pia Desideria* (1675; *Devout Requirements for God-Pleasing Reform of the Evangelical Churches*) it pointed out the sources of spiritual decay of Protestant Germany and gave reason for the reform: 1) so that the Holy Scriptures will be in greater private and public use, 2) so that the laity, as believers, take on more priestly duties, 3) so to pass on the importance of producing the practical fruit of a living faith, 4) so that in the training of the clergy and priesthood that devotion and study be accentuated over argument, 5) to preach with the goal of the spiritual up building of the believers.

Protestant churches during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In 1710, Baron Karl Hildebrandt von Canstein established a Bible society in Hale, Germany, called “*Von Cansteinische Bibelanstalt*” which from 1710 to 1804 printed and distributed around three million Bibles in German, Polish and Czech at a very low cost (Kuzmič, 1983, 29). Soon afterwards, numerous Bible societies were founded in Europe and North America<sup>18</sup> which as volunteer organizations of believers from various Christian denominations spurred cooperation in translating and revising entire Bibles and individual Bible books without notes and commentary as well as printing, distributing and encouraging Bible study. Their goal was the printing and sale of Bibles at low prices and the distribution and popularization of the Good Book in cities and towns so that every person would be able to purchase and read it.

The activities of the British and Foreign Bible Society on Croatian soil is connected with the Slovenian slavacist, Jernej Kopitar, and the translation of the Bible into Serbian. In a memorandum sent November 26, 1815, to the British and Foreign Bible Society, Kopitar lobbied for the translation of the Bible in the Southern Slavic languages: Serbian Cyrillic script, Serbian Latin script and Croatian (Kuzmič, 1983, 56). Even though the British and Foreign Bible Society didn't immediately accept Kopitar's idea, the entire Bible, Vuk's translation of the New Testament and Daničić's translation of the Old Testament, was printed in 1868 in Serbian Cyrillic script and Serbian Latin script. In Croatia, Daničić's translation of the *Pentateuch*, and then the entire Bible, provoked from one side a positive literary turnaround,<sup>19</sup> and from the other side is considered unsuitable because of

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<sup>18</sup> Among the first Bible societies were the denominationally founded organizations in England as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (1698) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (1701) which included the distribution of the Holy Scriptures for missionary purposes. Under the influence of the Evangelical awakening of faith in England and missionary William Carrey in London, the Baptist Missionary Society was founded in 1795 and then the London Missionary Society in 1795, the Church Missionary Society in 1795 and the London Religious Tract Society in 1799. These missionary societies helped to establish in 1804 the most significant Bible society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, with the goal of spurring the founding of Bible societies in other countries: the Berlin Bible Society (1805), The Irish Bible Society (1806), The Finish Bible Society (1812), The Russian Bible Society (1813), The Danish Bible Society (1814), The Dutch Bible Society (1814), The Swedish Bible Society (1815), The Norwegian Bible Society (1816), and The American Bible Society (1816) (Wash; Kuzmič, 1983, 30).

<sup>19</sup> *Bosiljak* [ Basil ], a Zagreb paper for youth, in June 15, 1866, wrote the following about the Daničić translation of the *Pentateuch*: “The book is very tastefully and even wonderfully published in Cyrillic and Latin script; and the language, is besides being Vuk's work and found very little in our books, of national pith and marrow, full of pithiness and clarity, just like the spirit of our people is clear and pithy. We still recommend it, especially to our youth and our readership, to uphold, polish and awaken this kind of classic standards.” Philologist Franjo Iveković in Zagreb's *Katolički list* [*Catholic Paper*] (No.13, 1867) rated Daničić's translation of the *Pentateuch* very highly: *In keeping with Mr. Daničić's text of the Hebrew, he kept to the main rule for translators, by which a translation has only*

the Serbian language. Franjo Iveković in *Katolički list* (the Catholic Paper) (XVIII (1867), No. 13; XIX (1868), No. 49) praises the translation but very clearly points out the rules of the Catholic Church about translating and reading the Holy Scriptures, which must be from the Vulgate and should be accompanied with notes approved by the church authorities. Just as the Vuk-Daničić translation of the Bible is neither taken from the Vulgate nor approved by the Catholic Church, Catholics are not allowed to use it or recommend it to anyone.

In 1851, the British and Foreign Bible Society bought back the Serbian translation of the New Testament by Vuk Karadžić, and upon that made an agreement with Đuro Daničić for the translation of the Old Testament. From 1863, the Bible society considered the idea of a Bible translation in the Croatian language. In that endeavor, in 1877, the croaticized version of the Vuk-Daničić translation of the New Testament and Psalms came out of the editorial offices of Bogoslav Šulek,<sup>20</sup> and the entire Vuk-Daničić translation of the Bible was croaticized and published in 1895 by Milan Rešetar.<sup>21</sup> Šulek thoroughly croaticized the translation, he exchanged the new Greek pronunciation for Latin, words in the Serbian literary language were exchanged for Croatian and he etymologized the rules for grammar. Rešetar didn't go to the same extent to croaticize the Vuk-Daničić translation of the Holy Scriptures. Without touching the language of the Scriptures, he changed mainly biblical names and liturgical terminology (Rebić, 2006). This Bible has been printed to this day in numerous reprints.

The Catholic Church had more problems with the Croaticized Vuk-Daničić translation. First, the translation was not made from the Vulgate, that is, it didn't include the Apocrypha or extra canonical books, and it didn't have the necessary additional notes for Catholics. Second, the Bible was printed in Serbian using the Latin script. Third, the greatest problem was that the British and Foreign Bible

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*this, no more and no less, say only what is in the original, and again, don't work against the spirit of the language into which you are translating. Many translators, wanting to be faithful, sinned against the language they were serving. Such are, without exception, all Croatian translators of the Holy Scriptures even to Mr. Daničić. In his translation, only the words are Croatian, but the language is Hellenistic or Hebrew-Hasidic. Against such insult and violence the Croatian language has a right to protest. With that, do as you like, when you take the Daničić translation, where it is pure Croatian, without any Hebrewisms, one can forget that they are reading a translation! Mr. Daničić has shown here how beautiful and possible it is to translate and yet not sin against your own language. Mr. Daničić, as Vuk's most worthy and faithful student, does not need to prove how wonderful his language is: he is recognized out of the entire Croatian and Serbian people as the one best acquainted with our language. This is the source of so much contention in the Catholic and Orthodox churches over Daničić's translation of the Holy Scriptures.*

<sup>20</sup> B. Šulek, *Novi zavjet Gospodina našega Isusa Krista ... i Psalmi Davidovi ...* [The New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ...and the Psalms of David] Vienna, 1877.

<sup>21</sup> M. Rešetar, *Pregledano izdanje Svetoga pisma* [Revised Edition of the Holy Scriptures] translated by Vuk Karadžić and Đuro Daničić, Budapest, 1895.

Society, which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was exclusively Protestant, printed and distributed the Bible. The task of spreading the Bible was founded on Protestant Christian principles and the missionary zeal of the Evangelical Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which emphasized and nurtured personal experience in the believer's life with God, leaning completely on the Bible as the only trustworthy and inerrant Word of God and limitless source of spiritual life and stressed evangelism.<sup>22</sup> Even though the British and Foreign Bible Society was limited to distributing Bibles, the workers for the Society themselves were perceived as missionaries and many of them considered themselves missionaries (Kuzmič, 1983).

From 1870, the British and Foreign Bible Society supported the door-to-door sales of the Holy Scriptures in Slavonia. Salesmen went door to door offering the Bible or individual Bible books for purchase and, in their conversations with people, proclaimed the gospel. Edward Millard, founder of a branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Vienna, organized door-to-door sales of the Holy Scriptures in Austro-Hungary to the point that he founded depots in larger cities which served as local centers for distribution of the Scriptures and in the regions of the Balkan the most responsible and deserving depots were in Belgrade, Budapest and Trieste. The Belgrade depot distributed Scriptures in Serbia, Slavonia and in a small part of Hungary. Some door-to-door salesmen from the Pest depot worked in Slavonia. Door-to-door salesmen from the Trieste depot worked in Istra and those in Dalmatia came from the depot in Skadar. Salesmen from the Graz and Vienna depots covered central Croatia. Salesmen sold Bibles in stores, inns, in prisons and in schools (P. Kuzmič, 1983, 199), and often they went through cities and villages offering the Scriptures door-to-door.

Bible salesmen often came from Baptist and Methodist churches, which were

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<sup>22</sup> In the encyclopedia *Ubi Primum* Pope Leo XII points out that Bible societies have spread over the whole world and writes: "Throwing out the tradition of the holy fathers and breaking the well-know decree of the Council of Trent with all means possible they attempt to translate the Bible, or rather mistranslate it, into the living languages of every nation. There is great reason to fear (as has already happened in some of their commentaries and from other points of view have wrongly interpreted Christ's gospel) that they will create a human gospel, or even worse, a demonic gospel" (UP17). "On the foundation of our apostolic mission we encourage you to use all means possible to protect your flock from deadly pastures. Do everything possible to see that the faithful strictly keep the rules of our congregation for the Index. Convince them that allowing the Holy Bible to be translated into national languages on the basis of human want of caution has caused more harm than good" (UP 19).

Croatian Catholic Biblicist Adalbert Rebić emphasizes: "The two Croatinized versions of the Daničić-Vuk translation of the Holy Scriptures did not experience any kind of success in Croatia because of their specimens and because of the Bible Society from London which printed and spread them in our country. Those translations were used primarily by Protestants and members of various Christian sects in Croatia. The Catholic Church in Croatia decidedly stood clear of all Bible versions which defenders of the London Bible Society distributed" (Rebić, 2006, 116).

very evangelistic. Door-to-door Bible salesmen from these churches, along with distributing the Scriptures, considered it their task to preach the gospel and help people establish a living relationship with God as well as build up people in their faith and knowledge of the Scriptures. For this they organized Sunday schools for Christian teaching and prayer meetings.

The Vienna branch of the Bible Society was very successful in distributing Bibles. For example, Edward Millard, by his retirement in January 1887, had distributed 4,758,262 copies of the Bible or some portion of it in the languages of the people who lived in Austro-Hungary. From Millard's reports from 1876, we see that in just one year in Dalmatia, Croatia and Slovenia, door-to-door salesmen sold more than 6,000 copies of the Scriptures (Kuzmič, 1983, 208-211).

Along with the door-to-door salesmen, who were workers for the society, the British and Foreign Bible Society distributed the Bible by way of "correspondents," informal representatives on the field who were not in the service of the Society, but received some provision from the Bibles they sold. Some Baptist evangelists worked after WWI as "correspondents" or as they liked to be called, door-to-door salesmen. "Correspondents" or salesmen went from village to village, house to house and offered people the opportunity to purchase the Scriptures.<sup>23</sup> Baptist Bible salesmen, passing through cities and villages, often came across open homes and even more often, bitter resistance.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> An example of the work of the evangelists can be seen from a report by Đuro Vezmar, "It's the desire of my heart to inform you of the great joy which I've had the last few days of February, when I went out with the Scriptures and witnessed about our precious Savior, Jesus Christ. Many, with joyful hearts embraced God's Word and listened to testimonies about the Lord, which made me especially happy. Others however didn't know anything about God's Word and when I mentioned the Scriptures to them, they just wondered and asked me what kind of a book was that, called the Holy Scriptures. Then, when I mentioned the Lord and explained the significance of the Scriptures, many bought them with joy wanting to know more about the Lord and hear more from us. It's no wonder that many Christians have fallen into the kind of life that people who don't know the Lord live — they abuse the Lord and his holy grace" (GE, 5/1930,76).

<sup>24</sup> Đuro Grujić, a Bible salesman from Daruvar, vividly portrayed this: "Praise and glory to the Almighty God, who rescued me from the darkness of sin, filled my spirit with heavenly joy, and that as a Bible salesman, I could go out with and sow God's Word among a misled people who do not know the Lord. This is easy to see among this people, especially when we offer God's Word and talk about it.

When I traveled through one village offering the Scriptures, I saw a man who was harvesting hay, as he removed his cap and bowed to pray to God as he passed a church because the evening bells were ringing. I thought this must be a religious man since he removes his cap and prays to God, so I rushed up to him and offered him a copy of the Scriptures. When he looked at the Bible, he handed it back to me and said, "This isn't for Roman Catholics, because it isn't sanctioned by the bishop and our priests forbid us to read those Bibles which aren't sanctioned." — "So, you just hold solely to that which the Church says, wouldn't it be better to hold only to what Jesus says?" I said to him. "Well, in our church we hold only to what the Lord commands," the man bragged. Just as we came to the foot of a hill, there he began to show the real fruit of the Christianity mentioned by this man. He



## The Ivan Evandelist Šarić's translation of the Bible

After the first edition of the entire Bible by Petar Katančić, Ivan Matija Škarić's and Ivan Evandelist Šarić's translation of the Bible was printed in Croatia. Ivan Matija Škarić of Postire, translated the Bible in the Zadar dialect of Croatian and with the support of Emperor Franz Josef I, printed it in Vienna (1858-1861) with the title *Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments from Latin made clear in the mother tongue and explained by Ivan Matija Škarich*. The translation was printed in 70 volumes that later were combined in eight volumes of the Old Testament and four volumes of the New Testament. Škarić's translation in the Zadar dialect of Croatian was not received especially well — just as Kašić's translation in the Dubrovnik dialect of Croatian (1636), Vrhovec's in the Kajkavian dialect (1810-1830) and Katančić's translation in the Slavonian dialect (1831) — and neither did they enjoy regular use in Catholic churches.

From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century the Catholic Church attempted to awaken interest in the Bible and Josip Stadler, Valentin Čebušnik, Petar Vlašić, Franjo Zagoda, Emil Orozović and Antun Sović attempted to translate and print individual parts of the Bible.<sup>25</sup>

*Sveto pismo Staroga i Novoga Zavjeta* [The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament] translated by the Archbishop of Bosnia Ivan Ev. Šarić, was published in Sarajevo in 1941-42.<sup>26</sup> Because of Šarić's political activity during WWII and wartime political and church circumstances of this period, this translation didn't have the opportunity to fully come to life in Croatian public life. By the end of WWII, Archbishop Šarić fled to Madrid as a refugee where he lived from 1948 until his death in 1960. There, along with his coworkers, he produced a new version of a translation of the Bible for Croatians living abroad, which was printed in 1960 in one volume. Tadej Vojnović claims that Šarić's translation of the Bible in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century filled a gap of Bibles among the Croatian people and adds

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began to beat his horse and along with that to curse and reproach the Lord God. Then I said to him, "Friend, if you were keeping the commandments of Christ, you wouldn't profane the Lord God in such a way!" He turned towards me, full of rage, and said, "You need to get out of my sight before you feel this same whip across your head." It wouldn't have been unusual for him to strike me, because if he could strike the Lord with such profanities, it would have been easy for him to strike me. But, praise God that I find honest souls that gladly purchase the Scriptures and seriously read them. There have been cases when someone would say, "If you have those Bibles that the priests tell us not to read, then we will buy them." And many purchased the Scriptures only because the priests had forbidden them to read them (Grujić, 1928, 90).

<sup>25</sup> Information about the editions can be seen in the article under the title *A Chronological Overview of Complete and Partial Translations of the Bible Published in the Croatian*.

<sup>26</sup> *Sveto Pismo Staroga i Novoga Zavjeta* [Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament] *From the original texts translated with notes edited by Dr. Ivan Evandelist Šarić ...*, Sarajevo, Academy Regina Apostolorum, 1941-42.

why it was not generally accepted, “Priests used it for the most part but it was also found in our homes. However, there was a lack of wide spread biblical education, a correct approach to the Bible or even a need for the Bible” (Vojnović, 1991, 209).

A need for the Bible was a deciding factor in the lack of reception of Šarić’s translation from the side of the Catholics and acceptance from the side of Protestants. Up until the renewal of the Church after Vatican II (1962-1965) the Catholic Church hadn’t so much influenced it’s believers to read the Scriptures and that alone was cause for no great need for the Bible. However, the Protestant churches, and especially missionary organizations, stressed evangelization among all those who did not know God. Since the Bible is the Word and a proclamation of God’s intentions for mankind, it becomes the central means of proclaiming the gospel. On this basis, the acceptance of the pocket edition of Šarić’s translation of the New Testament printed in Salzburg in the 1960<sup>s</sup> is not unusual.<sup>27</sup>

Touched by the need for free distribution of the Bible, Canadian George Đuro Martinjak (1931-) and his mission organization Croatian-Bosnian Bible Outreach Ministry published their own revision of Šarić’s translation of the Scriptures in 1998. The Bible was published without the Apocryphal books in two editions (1998 and 1999)<sup>28</sup> and was partially accepted and distributed among churches of the Reformation tradition in Croatia, especially in Charismatic congregations.<sup>29</sup> In January 2007, the first revised edition of Šarić’s translation of the Bible was published by the Croatian Bible Society in Zagreb and several leading Catholic publishing houses. Some 8,000 copies of the Bible were printed with the deuterocanonical books for believers in Catholic churches and 3,000 copies were printed without the deuterocanonical books for believers in churches from the Reformation tradition. In just two months, the whole printing was distributed and the Croatian Bible Society is correcting some mistakes and preparing a second edition of the First Revised Edition of Šarić’s translation of the Bible.

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<sup>27</sup> For additional information on the editions and revisions of Šarić’s translation of the Bible see the extensive article by Ruben Knežević *On the Revisions of Šarić’s Bible Translations*.

<sup>28</sup> The first edition in 1998 came out in Čakovec, published by the Croatian-Bosnian Bible Outreach Ministry. The second edition, printed in 1999 in Čakovec, was by the Brethren Church and friends from the West.

<sup>29</sup> Martinjak published Šarić’s translation without copyright and after the reaction of the Archbishop-ordinate of Sarajevo in 1999, the revised edition was removed from distribution in Croatia.

## The Zagreb Bible (1968)

The Zagreb Bible is the most widely accepted and most widely distributed edition of the Bible among the Croatian people. It is the first Bible to have been printed in Zagreb<sup>30</sup> and is a continuation of the translation tradition of the Katančić translation of the Bible from 1831, Škarić's Ikavian translation from 1858 and Šarić's translation from 1942. It was printed at the right moment, the biblical *kairos*, when four important motivational factors came together.

First, in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, a lack of Bibles among the Croatian people could be felt, which neither the Vuk-Daničić Scriptures nor the Šarić Bible could fill. Ivo Košutić, director of the printing company Stvarnost, in an interview with *Vjesnik u srijedu*<sup>31</sup> given in 1967, explains why they decided to revise and print the Bible, "In publishing the Bible, we wanted to fill the wide gap that has developed between Vuk-Daničić's and Šarić's Bibles up through today, and for that we had two reasons. Neither of those Bibles was able to realize what we want to achieve with this edition, and that is to receive a quality Bible of national recognition. The second reason is that in our national market, we haven't had a Bible for a long time already and we've seen an increasing tendency towards imported Bibles from abroad — Daničić's, which was printed in London and Šarić's, printed in Madrid — and from that alone there existed an absolute probability that sooner or later someone or anyone would publish a Bible in who knows what kind of edition. For us, as publishers, that was indication enough that we should gladly take on that enormous task ourselves with the maximum pretension instead of waiting for an edition that might be of a significantly more modest quality."

Second, under the influence of the Protestant Bible Movement, the Bible Movement became stronger in the Catholic Church, which stressed reading and studying the Bible and translating it into living languages. A special boost was given to translating the Bible into living languages in the encyclical (letter) *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943). Vatican II, in the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* (November 18, 1965) concerning translating the Bible States, "Widely open accessibility to the Holy Scriptures needs to be available to Christ's faithful" (DV, 22). "And since God's Word must at all times be accessible, the Church must be motherly engaged in taking care that appropriate and correct translations in different languages are prepared, solely from original manuscripts of the Holy Books" DV, 25).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Before, Bibles in the Croatian language were printed in Urach, Venice, Budapest, Vienna, and in Sarajevo.

<sup>31</sup> The conversation with the director of Stvarnost, Ivo Košutić, and Bible editor, Jerko Fućak, was facilitated by Sead Saračević. It was published under the title "The Bible and Politics" in *Vjesnik u srijeda* (Zagreb, 1.XI.1967., page 7).

<sup>32</sup> In Rome, on May 16, 1969, the World Catholic Federation for the Bible Apostolate was founded

Third, in the time between 1961 and 1971 increases a consciousness among Croatian spiritualists and intellectuals about saving the Croatian language as the official language of the Republic of Croatia, and printing the Bible in the Croatian language (1968) became a source of immeasurable support in the battle for the Croatian language.

Fourth, for the Zagreb Bible decisively, the Zagreb-based publishing company *Stvarnost* was in an especially difficult financial situation and their only recourse was printing Bibles.<sup>33</sup> With that, the director of *Stvarnost*, Ivo Košutić correctly estimated the political climate and decided for printing Bibles. Writer Jure Kaštelan and biblical theologian Bonaventura Duda were taken on as the main editors and under their leadership, their writer colleagues Branko Brusar, Olinko Delorko, Filbert Gass, Zlatko Gorjan, Marko Grčić, Stjepan Hosu, Tomislav Ladan, Nikola Milićević, Zvonimir Mrkonjić, Ante Sekulić and biblical theologians Jerko Fućak, Ivan Golub, Ante Kresina, Janko Oberški, Adalbert Rebić, Ljudevit Rupčić and Celestin Tomić labored over the text.

The Zagreb Bible is composed of stylized translations of the Pentateuch by Silvije Grubišić, the Psalms by Filibert Gass, the Song of Songs by Nikola Milićević and other translations of the Old Testament by Antun Sović and the New Testament by Ljudevit Rupčić. The linguistic style portion of the work was completed with respect to the renowned French translation *La Bible de Jérusalem*.

The Zagreb Bible was prepared in a very short amount of time<sup>34</sup> and because of that, in spite of the efforts of writer coworkers and theologians and the excellent work of Josip Tabak in language-editing and stylization, a series of mistakes remained in the text which, even after 40 years, still have not been removed. Tabak pointed this out in 2005 in an interview in *Vjesnik*, "All of the biblical texts passed through my hands. What bothered me the most were the short deadlines. Everyone was in a hurry: the publishers because of money, the priests because of the Word of God, and to me, as one who loves the words of the Croatian language, there was never enough time given. We all did our best, but because of the terrible rush, many mistakes remained in the text. Some of them are fatal and even to this day they haven't been corrected. Today's publisher just republishes the old edition with all of its old mistakes. So, our Bible remains for our successors as something like Aseman's gospel. Interestingly enough, the Bible was best translated by the

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which from 1990 was called the Catholic Bible Federation. The Federation "promotes translation, publication and spreading the Bible at Catholic and ecumenical levels so that everyone who believe in Christ can come by the Holy Scriptures with ease and that everyone, especially the oppressed and neglected, can find a way to the biblical message which liberates and gives hope" (Cifrak, 2005, 5).

<sup>33</sup> Košutić was willing to print any text of the Bible. He leaned on the support of the Catholic Church, but was ready to print even Vuk-Daničić's translation of the Bible if he didn't find a better solution (Knezović, 109).

<sup>34</sup> The work on the text lasted from May 1, 1967 to May 10, 1968.

communists, Kaštelan, Marko Grčić and Nikola Miličević (Tabak, 2005).”

In spite of the fact that the preparation was done in such a short time and with numerous linguistic and biblical-theological inadequacies, the Zagreb Bible was met with positive criticism by the expert public<sup>35</sup> and extraordinary acceptance by Catholic believers and churches of the Reformation tradition. The Bible came out without the traditional printed *imprimatur* of the Catholic Church because of the very sensitive political situation, but all of the bishopric *Vjesnici* put out additional announcements from their orders that the Bible came out with the approval of the Church.<sup>36</sup> Since 1974, the Zagreb Bible has been published by *Kršćanska sadašnjost* in Zagreb, who purchased the copyright from *Stvarnost*. In the last 32 years, the Zagreb Bible, published by *Kršćanska sadašnjost* has experienced numerous independent editions and several editions with copublishers. According to Adalbert Rebić, director of *Kršćanska sadašnjost*, some 5,000 copies of the Bible are sold annually,<sup>37</sup> and according to records in catalog of the National and University Library in Zagreb, in the last 10 years, from 1997-2006, some 80,000 Bibles<sup>38</sup> have been printed of which 12,000 copies were printed without the apocryphal books for the market of churches from the Reformation tradition.<sup>39</sup>

The Zagreb Bible was wonderfully accepted among the churches of the Reformation tradition and in several years took the place of the Vuk-Daničić Bible, which was, up to that time, the most widely distributed translation of the Scriptures for purposes of evangelization on Croatian soil. At the request of Borislav Arapović, a long-term coworker, the editor and writer of the Pentecostal publish-

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<sup>35</sup> Repercussions in print media and scholarly journals were catalogued and published by Jerko Fučak in the magazine *Služba riječi* [Ministry of the Word] under the title “Imperfect and Aorist in the Croatian Translation of the New Testament,” and a partial list was prepared by Katica Knezović (1998b).

<sup>36</sup> *Službeni vjesnik nadbiskupije zagrebačke* [The Official Newsletter of the Zagreb Archbishopric] (No.VII., page 108) concerning the *imprimatur* states: “With this the brotherhood of priests make known the Bible, published by *Stvarnosti* has the *Imprimatur*, which was assigned by the Zagreb Order. This announcement is given for the purpose of silencing every confusion, because the *Imprimatur* isn’t printed in the Bible. Zagreb, October 14, 1968.”

<sup>37</sup> Rebić brought up this figure in a conversation with Mirjana Dugandžija which was published in *Globus* under the title, “Ustaška Biblija podijelila Crkvu” [The Ustasha Bible Divides the Church], (Dugandžija).

<sup>38</sup> According to available figures in the National University Library, publications are recorded from the following editions: 1997 (5,000 copies + 5,000 without the apocrypha), 1999 (5,000 copies without the apocrypha), 2000 (10,000 copies), 2001 (15,000 copies), 2002 (15,000 copies), 2003 (13,000 copies), 2006 (3,000 + 7,000 + 2,000 copies without the apocrypha).

<sup>39</sup> According to these figures, churches of the Reformation tradition, over the last 10 years, purchased about 15 percent of the Zagreb Bibles that were printed. For the Jerusalem Bible, of which 40,000 copies were printed, there are no records showing how many purchases were made by believers from churches of the Reformation tradition.

ing house *Put Života* in Zagreb, and at that time director of East Bible Institute in Sweden, *Kršćanska sadašnjost* allowed a printing of the Zagreb Bible in Sweden (1977) as the EvangeliiPress AB edition, published in 20,000 copies (Arapović, 1999, 25). The text of the Swedish edition was printed with the deuterocanonical (apocryphal) books with several technical changes. That Bible had been intended for believers from churches of the Reformation tradition, it is visible from a note under the titles of each apocryphal book: "These books are not included in the Hebrew and Protestant editions of the Bible." Apocryphal portions of the books of the Bible were printed in cursive along with the annotation: "Texts printed in cursive are not included in the Hebrew and Protestant editions of the Bible." The Swedish edition was sold at a very low price and became very popular abroad and in Croatia so the whole lot was distributed very quickly. Even after repeated requests, *Kršćanska sadašnjost* refused to allow permission for another printing of the Bible in Sweden, so believers of churches from the Reformation tradition purchased the Bible published by *Kršćanska sadašnjost* and used it in evangelism. Both the spiritual and numerical growth of believers of the Reformation tradition caused a strong demand for an edition of the Bible without the apocryphal books. In cooperation with the Croatian (ecumenical) Bible Society, *Kršćanska sadašnjost* printed 5,000 copies of the Bible without the deuterocanonical (apocryphal) books for the first time in 1997, which was quickly called the Protestant Bible. In cooperation with the Union of Baptist Churches in Croatia, another 5,000 copies of the same edition was printed in 1999 and another 2,000 copies in 2006.

Churches of the Reformation tradition were met with numerous problems in using the Zagreb Bible in evangelism. First, because of the belief that the apocryphal books don't belong in the Christian canon of the Bible, it became very problematic to distribute the Bible when the apocryphal books were included. In the beginning, that problem was temporarily solved with the 1977 Swedish edition and at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the printing of the Bible without the apocryphal books in 1997, 1999 and in 2006. Second, among the churches of the Reformation tradition, evangelistic literature was traditionally given away at no cost or sold at very low prices, so for many, the price of the Zagreb Bible was too high. As the Zagreb Bible was prepared so that it would create substantial financial means for the company *Stvarnost* and save it from falling apart, in the same way, it brought in significant financial gain for *Kršćanska sadašnjost*, which, with exceptions, continued to maintain the high price of the Bible. Churches of the Reformation tradition continued to solve the problem of the high price of the Bible by utilizing donations from abroad and their own subsidies to lessen the printing expenses of copublishing with *Kršćanska sadašnjost* and, especially, initiating and investing in new translations of the Old and New Testament. At the initiative of those dissatisfied (Catholic and Protestant) with the quality of the



text, the binding and the high price of the Bible, the Croatian Bible Society corrected and printed Šarić's translation of the Bible in 2006 and offered it to readers at an affordable price in a quality format (hard bound, soft leather cover, with and without an index).<sup>40</sup> Third, in spite of repeatedly pointing out the inaccuracies and disunity in the text of the Zagreb Bible, the publisher, even after some 40 years has not attempted to correct them.<sup>41</sup> Fourth, the binding of the Bible has not justified its high price. Namely, the cover would be so damaged after only several months of intensive use that it would need to be rebound.

### **New Testaments in print in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

The first edition of the Franjo Zagoda translation of the New Testament with commentary was printed in Zagreb in 1925 and the second edition in 1938-39, and up until 1959 several editions were printed. After Vatican II (1962-1965) an interest in the Scriptures was rekindled in the Catholic church. Ljudevit Rupčić translated the New Testament and published it in Sarajevo in 1967, which was included in the Zagreb Bible in 1968. The New Testament was published in several revised editions and from the sixth edition (2000) the Psalms were added. Rupčić's translation is wonderfully accepted in the Catholic Church, Protestant churches and churches of the Reformation tradition who used it to a great extent in evangelization. Over 100,000 copies have been printed and along with Duda-Fučak's translation, it is the most popular and most widely distributed translation of the New Testament among Croatians.

The first edition of the Bonaventura Duda and Jerko Fučak translation of

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<sup>40</sup> Just how much significance was granted the first edition of the corrected Šarić translation of the Bible is visible from the list of co-publishers, all the established Catholic publishing houses. Along with the Croatian Bible Society, co-publishers include: Archbishopric of Bosnia (Sarajevo), Glas Koncila (Zagreb), Verbum (Split), HKD Sv. Jeronima (Zagreb), Teovizija (Zagreb), Naša ognjišta (Tomislavgrad).

<sup>41</sup> Grubišić in *Predgovor iseljeničkom izdanju* of the Bible emphasizes that the Croatian public warmly accepted and joyfully greeted the publication of the entire Bible in Zagreb, but does not miss mentioning that the criticism noticed in the translation particular unevenness in quality (Grubišić, *Hrvatska Biblija*, sv. 1). Tadej Vojnović also points out: "The Zagreb Bible today, after 20 years, still satisfies, even though it has its inadequacies. The work on a biblical concordance alone brought many of those inadequacies to light. Before anything else, a unity needs to be given to names and geographical terms and there are more than 12,000 of them. Another type of problem is in the uneven translation of Old Testament "technical terms" such as the names given to sacrifices, holidays, and the like. A third type of problem is connected with the language. If what prof. J. Tabak said is correct, that the Bible is written in the language of a particular people, then it is clear and logical that a translation of the Bible needs to be adjusted every 10 to 20 years according to the new realizations of the literary language and according to the results of modern exegesis" (Vojnović, 1991, 210).

the New Testament was published in 1973 by *Kršćanska sadašnjost* in Zagreb. In 1962, Bonaventura Duda published a harmony of the four gospels under the name *Evandjelje: Život i nauka Isusa Krista Spasitelja svijeta riječima četvorice evanđelista* with the Croatian literary Society Cyril and Methodias in Zagreb [The Gospels, The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ the Savior of the World in the Words of the Four Evangelists]. Afterwards, he prepared a New Testament reading for a *Lekcionar* (Book of lection) of revised Roman liturgy with Jerko Fućak. They continued with the newly launched translation until they completed the New Testament. When it came out in print in 1973, the public eagerly accepted their translation of the New Testament. The translation is excellent and is the only one in Croatian-speaking lands to be used equally for liturgical, academic and evangelistic purposes. Up until 2003, the New Testament was printed in 18 editions,<sup>42</sup> the ninth revised edition is included in the Jerusalem Bible and the tenth edition is with the addition of the Psalms from the Zagreb Bible. On the basis of known figures from the three last editions, it can be estimated that 200,000-250,000 copies of this New Testament have been printed in the 30 years between 1973 and 2003. Churches of the Reformation tradition distributed it through evangelism for years, and it was printed in very large quantities for evangelistic purposes for The Gideons International, an international organization whose Croatian coworkers distributed the New Testament at no cost among schools, hotels and other institutions.

### **Translations in churches of the Reformation Tradition**

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Evangelical Movement grew stronger among the churches of the Reformation tradition in Croatia. Numerous Croatian, American and European denominations and para church missionary organizations began evangelistic works on Croatian soil<sup>43</sup> and several Bible societies were formed.<sup>44</sup> Existing local churches grew numerically and around 80 new local churches of differing evangelical character and type were established.

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<sup>42</sup> In the National and University Library in Zagreb references of the publication of only the last three editions are recorded: the 16<sup>th</sup> edition published in 2001 in 14,000 copies (5,000 + 5,000 + 2,000 + 2,000), the 17<sup>th</sup> edition published in 2002 in 20,000 copies (7,000 + 10,000 + 3,000), the 18<sup>th</sup> edition published in 2003 in 3,000 copies.

<sup>43</sup> Campus Crusade for Christ [Udruga Nada i Život], Youth for Christ [Mladi za Krista], International Fellowship of Evangelical Students [Studentski evanđeoski pokret], Gideons International [Gideoniti], Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International [Zajedništvo poslovnih ljudi cjelovitog evanđelja], etc.

<sup>44</sup> At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Croatian Bible Society, the International Bible Society, the Bible Society at the International Center for Life, the Bible Society in the Republic of Croatia and the company Croatian Bible Publisher.

The Evangelical Movement (Greek, *euangelion*, gospel, good news) is a movement proclaiming the gospel, the good news that Christ died for the sins of mankind, was buried and then was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, through which redemption was made for a sinful mankind. The gospel is “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Ro 1:16). The response to this joyous news of salvation is a person’s conversion to God and faith in God. For people to be able to respond to the gospel, it is necessary to distribute, proclaim and preach it continuously anew in every generation. In the beginnings of the evangelistic wave during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, denominations and believers from churches of the Reformation tradition in Croatia distributed primarily Šarić’s, Rupčić’s and Duda-Fučak’s translations of the New Testament and the Zagreb Bible. As the need arose to print more Bibles and New Testaments which would be given away or sold at a low price for the purpose of evangelism, so arose the need for different types of translations of the Scriptures. The response to this demand was given by the Evangelical parachurch organizations established for the purpose of spreading and popularizing the Scriptures and evangelization. They initiated and organized translation and distribution of the Bible. So, from 1982 through 2006, one translation of the entire Bible and seven translations of the New Testament emerged from among churches of the Reformation tradition in Croatia.<sup>45</sup>

### **1. Knjiga o Kristu. Novi zavjet živim riječima (1982).**

#### **The Book about Christ, The New Testament in Living Words (1982)**

The Baptist publishing house *Duhovna stvarnost* in Zagreb, published in 1982 *Novi zavjet živim riječima – Knjiga o Kristu* [The Book about Christ, The New Testament in Living Words], a free (dynamic) paraphrase translation from an English model with insight from existing Croatian translations. The translators, Branko Lovrec, Mirjana Lovrec and Željko Grujić translated the New Testament from the English translation *The Living Bible*<sup>46</sup> in which the guiding principle “a thought

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<sup>45</sup> Ruben Knežević published two articles about Protestant translations of the Bible: *Hrvatska protestantska biblijsko-prevodilačka baština* [The Croatian Protestant Bible Translation Tradition] (Adventistički pregled,) and *Hrvatski protestantski biblijski prijevodi* (Croatian Protestant Bible Translations) (Biblija danas, 04/2005). Adalbert Rebić in an overview of Bible translations in the Croatian language published in the catalogue of the exhibition *Knjige Riječi: Tanah, Biblija, Kuran u Hrvatskoj* [Books of the Word: The Tanak, The Bible and Koran in Croatia] (2006-2007) from eight Bible translations from churches of the Reformation tradition mentions only *Novi zavjet živim riječima. Knjiga o Kristu* (1982).

<sup>46</sup> The translation *The Living Bible* was prepared and was first published in 1962 in the United States by Kenneth Taylor. The translation was revised by a team and published under the title *New Living Translation* (1996) and is known as the Taylor Bible.

for a thought” was utilized in translation with modern, colloquial and easy-to-understand words from everyday language. *Knjiga o Kristu* was published in three editions and in numerous portions. During the 1980s *Knjiga o Kristu* was very popular among churches of the Reformation tradition and was mainly used as evangelistic literature. Its biggest asset was its understandability and low price, however, its poor quality printing, format and binding were a drawback. Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, publishing copyright was handed over from *Duhovna stvarnost* to the International Bible Society which prepared a revised edition, which for now is available only as an on-line edition<sup>47</sup> (Knežević).

## **2. Novi zavjet. Zagrebačko izdanje (1989). New Testament, Zagreb edition (1989)**

The New Testament was translated and published in 1989 by Branko Djaković, a long-time translator for the Brethren Church of Christ in Zagreb. In the introduction of the first edition is written, “With the Zagreb edition’ an effort has been made to satisfy the various needs of readers of the Bible and to pass on God’s Word again in Croatia-Serbian, so that the reader who is not able to read the New Testament in the original manuscript, written in Greek, could find food for his heart and his mind in God’s Word.” (Djaković) This New Testament was printed in four editions: the first edition in 1989, a second in 1993 with the Psalms in addition, a third edition in 1994 and a fourth together with the Old Testament in 2000.

The translation was prepared in the tradition of the Brethren movement<sup>48</sup> and for use in Brethren Churches of Christ in the former Yugoslavia. The translation is literal, word-for-word, leaning heavily on the Darby’s translation of the Bible and dispensational theology thought,<sup>49</sup> expresses specific theological emphasis of

<sup>47</sup> <[www.bibleserver.com/index.php](http://www.bibleserver.com/index.php)>

<sup>48</sup> The Brethren movement spread in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Great Britain (Plymouth Brethren), and soon took hold in the continental part of Europe, Russia and America. At the end of WWI missionaries of the Brethren Movement came to Yugoslavia and established a Brethren congregation in Novi Sad, and after that in other areas of Vojvodina. In the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the movement spread to Croatia, where it established several communities, among which the most significant was the Brethren Church of Christ in Zagreb.

<sup>49</sup> Dispensation or *age of salvation* is a paraphrase translation of the Greek word *oikonomia*, which in the Vulgate is translated in Latin as *dispensatio*, and literally means housekeeping, stewardship, managing or arrangement (program). By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dispensationalism was popularized by John Nelson Darby and the *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909) and dispensational teaching had reached millions of people. Interpretations of dispensation or ages of salvation are varied, but the basic assumption is that God engages man according to a plan divided up into different ages or dispensations, which are characterized by particular opportunities and responsibilities. The *Scofield Reference Bible* defines “dispensation” as a period of time during which a person is tempted in regard to obedience to the specifically revealed will of God. The exact number of ages or dispensa-

the Brethren Church of Christ and so is characterized by a specific language, style and grammar. The translation is partially accepted among Brethren Churches of Christ in Croatia, and in other churches of the Reformation tradition it has remained merely observed, in spite of the efforts of the well known German publisher and distributor *Gute Botshaft Verlaga* (GBV)<sup>50</sup> who tried to popularize it.

### **3. Dvojezični englesko-hrvatski Novi zavjet, Psalmi i Mudre izreke (1993). English-Croatian Parallel New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs (1993)**

George Đuro Martinjak produced and printed the *Dvojezični englesko-hrvatski Novi zavjet, Psalmi i Mudre izreke* [English-Croatian Parallel New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs] in Canada in 1993. The edition was published and distributed by Martinjak's organization, the Croatian-Bosnian Bible Outreach Ministry (Langley B.C., Canada) primarily among immigrants from the territory of former Yugoslavia in Canada and in the United States. The editions were distributed in small amounts even among some churches of the Reformation tradition in Croatia, but it didn't gain significant attention in churches.

### **4. Novi zavjet po Prihvaćenom tekstu (1998). The New Testament according to the Accepted Text (1998)**

The Baptist publishing house *Riječi iskrene* in Pušćine printed Ivan Vrtarić's translation, *Novi zavjet po Prihvaćenom tekstu* [The New Testament according to the Received Text] in 1998. A second revised and reworked edition was printed in 2005 by the *Association of Christians* from Rijeka and *Živa Riječ* from Krasica in a soft and hard cover. The choice of the *Received Text* or the *Textus Receptus* from which the translation was prepared, determined and earmarked this translation. This translation is accepted and distributed by smaller groups of believers from churches of the Reformation tradition who, under the influence of western conservative theological thought, consider the first model of the English *Authorized Version*, known as the *King James Version* (KJV), to be the traditional text of the orthodox Christian.

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tions differs from author to author. Most consider there to be seven. 1) the age of innocence 2) the age of conscience 3) the age of human rule 4) the age of promise 5) the age of the Law 6) the age of grace 7) the age of the thousand year kingdom (Jambrek, 2003,165)

<sup>50</sup> *Gute Botschaft Verlag* (GBV) is a well-known German publisher and distributor of editions of the German Brethren Movement. In Croatia it cooperates with the Association for Spreading Religious Literature [Udrugom za širenje vjerske literature] from Rijeka. Among churches of the Reformation tradition they are known for printing and distributing Christian calendars, daily readings and other Christian literature with theological undertones of the tradition of the Brethren Movement.

## **5. Sveto pismo Staroga i Novoga zavjeta (2000).**

### **The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (2000)**

The first and, until now, only Protestant translation of the entire Old Testament was prepared by Branko Djaković. His translation of the entire Bible was published in 2000. The fourth edition of the New Testament was printed along with the first edition of the Old Testament. The translation of the Old Testament, like the translation of the New Testament is literal and word-for-word. The translator, in the introductory remarks, in hopes that the untrained reader would find his translation simple and understandable, gives a reason for the literal translation: "Surely there are some places that could be dressed in a more beautiful Croatian language, but we were determined to show, as faithfully as possible, the meaning of the original text considering that our ultimate goal, because we are aware of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, as a proclamation of God's unlimited wisdom and an expression of his gracious character in Christ Jesus. And since no one is able to capture the entire range of this revelation, it would be easy to lose the true meaning in a free translation, so we consider it more useful that the Word of the original text be expressed as if in a mirror." (Djaković, 2000) The translation is accompanied in some places by the translators commentary and explanation, and in the New Testament cross references to similar biblical texts are located under the titles.

The Bible edition was printed by the German publisher and distributor, *Gute Botshaft Verlaga* (GBV). The appearance of the Bible is very simple. Its 1240 pages are printed on Bible paper in a 11x17 cm format with a soft bound, plastic coated cover.

## **6. Novi zavjet (2001).**

### **New Testament (2001)**

Ruben Knežević's translation of the Novi zavjet [New Testament] was published by the Bible Society at the International Center for Life [Biblijsko društvo pri Međunarodnom centru za život] in Rijeka in 2001. The text is translated and revised from the 27<sup>th</sup> critical text edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, which is considered the standard pattern for translations which are produced by the United Bible Societies. The biblical-theological revision of the translation was done by Peter Kuzmič, Davorin Peterlin and Tadej Vojnović, linguistic and stylistic proof reading by Đurđica Garvanović-Porobija and Krunoslav Pranjić, and biblical language revision by Nela Horak-Williams. With the team revision of Knežević's translation, in which linguistic and biblical experts from several church traditions and Protestant denominations were included, prerequisites were put in place so that this translation of the New Testament could be accepted as a standard translation in Protestant churches and churches of the Reformation tradition. Even though the translation project was conceived in the Baptist



church, the choice of the editing and translation team<sup>51</sup> was to endeavor to produce a translation acceptable to other denominations, which, to a great degree, they succeeded in doing.

The translation of the text is of high quality and the style leans on the original Greek text, which makes it somewhat archaic because of the effort to preserve, as much as possible, the Greek grammatical structure. In spite of that, the text reads smoothly and is clear and understandable to a broad range of readers. This standard translation of the New Testament meets the demands necessary to be a study Bible as well as being useful for evangelism.

The New Testament is printed on very fine Bible paper in a 10x16 cm format with a gold embossed leather cover. The only criticism that can be levelled is against the publisher who could have put more effort into advertising and distributing this valuable edition.<sup>52</sup>

## **7. Novi zavjet. Suvremeni prijevod (2003). New Testament, Contemporary Translation (2003)**

Under the influence of the Restoration Movement,<sup>53</sup> the *Novi Zavjet: Suvremeni prijevod, ogleđno izdanje* [New testament, Contemporary Translation (Preliminary Edition)] was published in 2003 in a joint effort by the World Bible Translation Center in Fort Worth, Texas (USA)<sup>54</sup> and the Institute for Biblical Studies (from 2006 called the Biblical Institute) in Zagreb. The team-produced translation, under the leadership of Mladen Jovanović, pulpit minister for the Church

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<sup>51</sup> Editors were Ruben Knežević from the Baptist church and Peter Kuzmič from the Evangelical Pentecostal church, and Željko Mraz from the Baptist church was editor-in-chief. Other team members were Giorgio Grlj from the Baptist church, Tomislav Jonke from Bethany Church of Christ and Dragutin Matak from the Adventist church.

<sup>52</sup> This criticism is based on a comparison of distribution of other editions in churches of the Reformation tradition. Editions of less quality translations of more modest formats and print quality were published in greater quantities and editions. Unfortunately, a comparison of the publishers cannot be made as those figures are not accessible to the public.

<sup>53</sup> The Restoration Movement began in Great Britain at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It gradually spread to the Untited States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the influence of Barton Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott. From this movement sprang three groups of congregations the most numerous of which are the Churches of Christ. The Churches of Christ are a community or brotherhood of churches without a central governing body or organizational structure. Every local church is autonomous in everything. They are linked only by a common heritage and the belief that the Bible is the basis on which and by which God-fearing people can create spiritual unity (Jambrek, 2003, 167).

<sup>54</sup> The World Bible Translation Center was established in 1973 for the purpose of translating and distributing easy-to-understand translations of the Scriptures in the world's most-spoken languages. In 1978, the Center produced the *New Testament, A New Easy-to-Read Version* (ERV), printed by *Baker Book House*, an American publishing house. The entire ERV Bible was published in 1987.

of Christ in Zagreb, is intended for those who desire a more exact and complete message of the original Greek text of the New Testament in a format that is simple and easy-to-read and understand. The model of this translation is the American *Easy-to-Read Version* of the Bible which stresses the communication aspect of translation. The translation was produced within the framework of the dynamic equivalency principle, using an everyday, spoken form of the Croatian language “which the daily papers use and which we average people use when we convey information to one another without making ‘too big a noise in the communication canal.’” (Jovanović, 2006, 7)

The first edition of the New Testament in contemporary Croatian was published in 2006, three years after the Preliminary Edition in 14,500 copies by the World Bible Translation Center and the Bible Society in the Republic of Croatia. The New Testament was printed in a pocket format with a binding and look suitable for the day and a younger generation of readers. The contemporary translation of the New Testament was intended for evangelistic purposes and for readers who wish to read the biblical text with the same ease as they read the daily newspaper.

## **8. Novi zavjet i Psalmi (2006).**

### **New Testament and Psalms (2006)**

A Croatian Bible publisher from Varaždin published the *Novi zavjet i Psalmi* [New Testament and Psalms] in 2006. The translator of the text is not noted but the producer of the text is Hrvoje Emil Šredl, a member of the Pentecostal Church of Christ in Varaždin. The book is printed on fine Bible paper in a 10.5x16 cm. format with a leather cover. The words of Jesus in the Gospels are printed in red and the remainder of the text is printed in black. The translation is most accepted in the Pentecostal Church of Christ in Croatia, and as regards the production quality, it could be accepted in other churches of the Reformation tradition. To date, neither an expert analysis nor a formal judgment of the text has been published. No announcement of the text was made in either the religious or secular press.

In the last 30 years, from 1977, when the Zagreb Bible was printed in Sweden to meet the needs of the churches of the Reformation tradition, to 2007, when the first revised edition of Šarić's translation of the Bible without the deuterocanonical books was published, churches of the Reformation tradition distributed some 40,000 copies of the entire Bible.<sup>55</sup> Taking into account that the total number of

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<sup>55</sup> Figures of the exact number of Bibles distributed don't exist, but according to the following figures, one can estimate an approximate number. Some 20,000 copies of *Stvarnost's* Bible or the Zagreb Bible were printed in Sweden for churches of the Reformation tradition with an annotation in every apocryphal book that it is not included in the Hebrew or Protestant canon of the Bible. Three editions of the Zagreb Bible were printed without the deuterocanonical books: 1997 (5,000 copies),

believers in churches of the Reformation tradition is still under 10,000 people, it is obvious that the majority of Bibles were used for evangelistic purposes. Taking into account that, in the last 10 years, at least 94,000 copies of the Bible have been printed,<sup>56</sup> and of that some 18,000 were printed without the deuterocanonical books for churches of the Reformation tradition which, in addition to that, distributed at least 2,000 Bibles with the deuterocanonical books, one can observe that the Catholic church with 3,897,421 believers distributed about 74,000 Bibles, and Protestant churches and churches of the Reformation tradition with less than 10,000 believers distributed about 20,000 copies.<sup>57</sup>

## Conclusion

Initiatives for translation, printing and distribution of the Bible mainly sprang from spiritual movements: the Croatian Protestant Movement (16<sup>th</sup> century), the Protestant and Catholic Bible Movement (19<sup>th</sup> century), the spiritual movement after Vatican II (20<sup>th</sup> century) and the Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement (at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century).

The first printed New Testament among the Croatian people, translated by Stipan Konzul and Antun Dalmatin, was published in 1562-63 in Glagolitic and Croatian Cyrillic in the Bible School in Urach at Tübingen. The translation was intended for the evangelization of the people of Southeast Europe, from Slovenia to Turkey. The translation is a result of team work among visionaries, translators, linguists, proofreaders and preachers. With their translations, among which were

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1999 (5,000 copies) and 2006 (2,000 copies). Two editions of Šarić's translation of the Bible without the deuterocanonical books were produced by Georg Đuro Martinjak in 1998 and 1999, most likely less than 2,000 copies were printed. Some 1,000 copies of the Zagreb Edition of Branko Djaković's translation of the Bible were printed and 3,000 copies of the First Revised Edition of Šarić's translation of the Bible, without the deuterocanonical books, were published by the Croatian Bible Society in Zagreb.

<sup>56</sup> From 1997 to 2006, some 80,000 copies of the Zagreb Bible, 11,000 of the revised edition of Šarić's translation of the Bible, around 2,000 copies of Đuro Martinjak's edition of Šarić's translation and about 1,000 copies of the Zagreb edition of Branko Djaković's translation of the Bible were printed. Figures for the Zagreb Bible were collected from catalog of National and University Library in Zagreb, figures for the first revised edition of Šarić's translation of the Bible were received from the Croatian Bible Society. Figures for Šarić's translation of the Bible edited by Đure Martinjaka and figures for the Zagreb edition of Branko Djaković's translation of the Bible are merely an estimation by the author of the text as they were not published anywhere.

<sup>57</sup> According to the population figures registered in 2001 (in which it was not required to declare one's religious preference) Croatia has a population of 4,437,460 people, 87.83% of which are declared to be Catholics, 4.42% Orthodox believers and 1.28% Muslims. Believers of the churches of the Reformation tradition number roughly 10,000 which makes them about 0.23% of the total population.

a translation of the New Testament and most likely the entire Old Testament, Croatian Protestants laid the conceptual foundation of a single language which unified the entirety of Croatian lands. In contrast to later translators, who translated into Ilirik or Croatio-Serbian, Protestant translators, in all of their editions, claimed that they translated their texts in Croatian.

The first printing of Katančić's translation of the entire Bible in 1831, though culturally noteworthy, didn't have a significant evangelistic influence on Croatian lands. The initiative to organize translation and support distribution of the Bible in living national languages came in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the appearance of Bible societies. In Croatian lands, the British and Foreign Bible Society, in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, first attempted to distribute Vuk-Daničić's Serbian translation of the Bible, and then at the end of the century Croatianized that translation and intensively and successfully distributed it until the printing of the Zagreb Bible in 1968.

The Zagreb Bible, produced by a team of translators, theologians and writers was heartily received by the Catholic Church and churches of the Reformation tradition alike. This Bible remains the most accepted and most widely distributed translation of the Bible among the Croatian people, which unfortunately, after 40 years, remains without a single revision and is losing its freshness and linguistic expression.

Of New Testaments for evangelistic purposes, Ljudevit Rupčić's translation is significant and Duda and Fućak's translation is exceptional and the most widely used translation for liturgical, academic and evangelistic purposes. In the last 10 years, churches of the Reformation tradition have published one entire translation of the Bible as well as six translations of the New Testament and one translation of the New Testament with Psalms.

Translation, printing and distribution of the Bible is a significant measure of the spirituality of Christianity and the movement of the Holy Spirit in the Church. With that, each new translation of the Bible and every new publication of an existing translation contributes the spreading of God's Word and the salvation of those who read it and by it accept God's invitation and love. For the culture at large, this is a measure of the dynamic development and creativity of the language, which is especially important for a small language, like Croatian, which is in eminent danger of dying out.

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### **Biblija u Hrvata**

U radu su razmatrani prijevodi, izdanja i širenje Biblije u kontekstu evangelizacije u Hrvatskoj. Analizirano je duhovno ozračje u kojem su prijevodi nastajali te su naznačeni duhovni pokreti iz kojih su proizašli poticaji za prevođenje i čiji su pripadnici uvelike širili pojedina izdanja Novoga zavjeta i cijele Biblije.