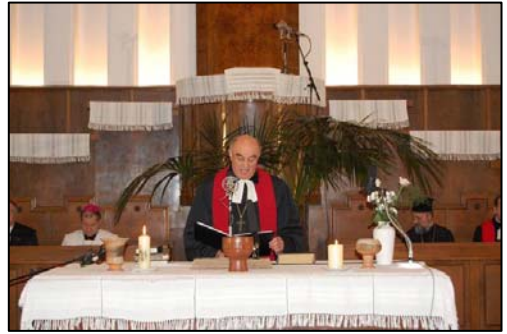


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The Bible at the heart of religious and secular life in Hungary

HUNGARY — ‘God will bless everyone who pays attention to the message of this book.’ The Hungarian Bible Society chose this verse from Revelation as the motto for a project which it describes as “the largest and most significant we have ever undertaken.” Taking its inspiration from a similar event in French- and German-speaking Europe in 2003 and linking with the Roman Catholic Church as its main partner, the Society has declared 2008 as the Year of the Bible. Through initiatives ranging from lectures to concerts and exhibitions, the Bible message is being brought into the heart of both religious and secular life.



Beginning with an opening ceremony during the Ecumenical Week of Prayer in January and continuing with events to be held throughout the year on both a local and national level, Hungary’s Year of the Bible is designed to help people of all backgrounds to rediscover the Bible message at a time when Bible reading generally is decreasing. What makes this project particularly significant is the way in which it relies on close collaboration between the Catholic Church and the Protestant and Orthodox denominations represented by the Bible Society. Indeed, the main elements of the Year of the Bible will be funded on a 50-50 basis by the Catholic Church and the Bible Society.



“We expect to develop stronger links with the Catholic Church hierarchy through this project and to increase contacts between the Bible Society and individual Church leaders and members,” says the Bible Society.

As well as distributing special Year of the Bible materials to various groups, the Bible Society and its partners will stage a Bible symposium, a concert of organ and choral music and a five-month Bible exhibition at the National Library which is expected to attract 20,000 visitors. Churches will also be encouraged to arrange smaller events locally. An accompanying media campaign will aim to bring the Bible to the attention of almost 1 million people, or 10 per cent of the population.

Despite its modest size, the Bible Society has a big vision for the Year of the Bible. “Our aim with this initiative is for people to be inspired to read, talk and think about the Bible and to live according to its teaching,” it proclaims. “We hope that the Year of the Bible will have a lasting positive effect on our ministry and that it will open up new terrain for effective Bible work in Hungary.”

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