

Report of Words of Hope

Words of Hope believes that all people in all places should have access to God's Word. With Words of Hope, people are connected daily to the truths of Scripture so that they can grow in faith and share it worldwide.

Words of Hope works to share the good news in all ways possible in order to provide access to Scripture in heart languages, remote locations, and a variety of media types. Where poverty, geography, or persecution hinder the spread of the gospel, Words of Hope partners with indigenous Christian leaders to equip them to more effectively minister in their own language and context, among their own people.

Words of Hope's regions of ministry include Albania, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Niger, North America, South Sudan, Turkey, and Uganda. Each ministry field requires its own unique media outreach approach. Depending on the variety of resources and challenges in a given region, an assortment of radio programs, text messages, social media, print materials, and satellite television are all used to proclaim the gospel.

Some notable highlights from Words of Hope's ministry in the past year include the launch of a distance-learning course in Farsi in partnership with Western Theological Seminary; the retirement of Words of Hope's Turkish ministry director, Haluk Bilgen; and a devotional writing workshop for Albanians that will equip the ministry there to produce original Albanian devotional content from start to finish.

For many years, Christian audio programming has been available inside the country of Iran. More recently, our discipleship efforts there have expanded to include online worship services and in-person training conferences. Iranian converts are nurtured in their faith to the point where they can lead secret house churches inside Iran and disciple more new converts themselves.

Words of Hope worked together with Western Theological Seminary last year to develop an advanced distance-learning course in the Farsi language that would better equip Iranian believers interested in ministry and evangelism. A theology course taught by Western's Dr. Han-luen Kantzer Komline is now available in Farsi alongside a translation of the book *Practicing Christian Doctrine* by Beth Felker Jones.

Originally, the plan was to have the seminary course materials available for the Persian students online, but due to the ongoing protests in Iran, government scrutiny of private internet browsing has increased significantly. Instead, hard copies of translated books and audio and video materials have been smuggled into the country for use. On March 1, 2023, the first 14 Persian students began their systematic theology course. The course will conclude in August, and assessments of the students will be carried out by Words of Hope staff.

Another area of direct partnership with the Reformed Church in America has been in ministry in the country of Turkey. Haluk Bilgen has served for many years as both a missionary with RCA Global Mission and as Words of Hope's ministry director in the region. This year, Haluk is officially retiring from these roles. As he and his wife, Wendy, enter a new era of life and ministry, we are grateful for the many ways that the Lord has worked in and through them to bring the hope of the gospel to the people of Turkey.

Exciting new developments are underway for Words of Hope's ministry efforts in Albania. Albania has a long history with Christianity, dating back to the biblical account of Paul hearing a man from Macedonia calling for his help in a dream. Today, however, in a land of three million people, evangelical Christians make up less than 1 percent of the population. The majority of Albanians are either nominally Orthodox or Muslim.

Words of Hope Albania first pioneered the effort to translate the North American daily devotional for use in Albania. The team puts these translated devotionals on an app and uses them to make daily radio program content. Now, Words of Hope has held a first ever three-day-long devotional writing workshop to raise up indigenous Albanian writers. This workshop has equipped over two dozen Albanian Christian leaders to write original Albanian devotionals that will speak directly into their own unique cultural context. Please pray that this equipping will help the far-outnumbered believers that we come alongside in Albania to share their faith broadly and effectively.

Words of Hope is deeply grateful for the support of RCA churches that continues to sustain this outreach ministry. We celebrate this generosity, knowing that these dollars are allowing people to be introduced to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Thank you for sharing hope worldwide as we work together to proclaim the good news in all ways possible.