

**LATEST NEWS # 522, June 23, 2008**

**The following news concerns Hungary.**

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## Bibles distributed to MPs in Hungary

**HUNGARY** — In a ceremony which attracted a great deal of media attention, 150 Members of Hungary's Parliament were presented with Bibles by Church leaders of different denominations. The distribution, which took place on June 9 – the last day of the Hungarian Parliament's spring session – was organised by the Hungarian Bible Society as part of its *Year of the Bible* campaign (see Latest News # 507).

Katalin Szili, Chairperson of the Hungarian Parliament, welcomed the distribution and expressed her support for the Society's year-long campaign to bring the Bible message to the forefront of national life.

"The Bible is a great spiritual support in the globalised world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: it not only reminds us of our identity but also offers us values that we must take seriously," she told the gathering. She also expressed her optimism that the Bible distribution could be a sign of good things to come, "characterised by joint effort and co-operation."



This theme of unity was also underlined by MP the Rev Zoltán Balog, Chairman of the Committee on Human Rights, Minorities, Civil and Religious Affairs, who pointed out that the 150 MPs who had requested Bibles came from a variety of political parties.

"The message of the Bible is for all of us: we all need to be born again," he said. "God's mercy is freely given and this Bible distribution reminds us of his grace."

The Bibles were handed to MPs by Cardinal Péter Erdő of the Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Gusztáv Bölcseki of the Reformed Church of Hungary and Lutheran Bishop János Ittész.

Cardinal Erdő reminded the MPs about the enormous influence of the Bible on Hungary's history, language and culture. Bishop Bölcseki showed the gathering two Bibles – one owned by his father and the other by his father-in-law – and gave a very personal message about how the Bible's message impacts individuals and, through them, their families and communities.



“The real meaning of the *Year of the Bible* is when somebody picks up a Bible, reads it and by so doing truly realises that he or she is part of a wider community of people,” he said. He urged the MPs to take heed of the verse in Revelations which says, ‘Happy is the one who reads this book.’

Bishop Ittzés added that he, too, hoped that the MPs would use the Bibles every day as “spiritual food” and that the Bible’s message would become a “living reality” for them.

“Yes, happy is the one who reads this book, yet, happier is the one who also understands and applies it,” he said.

*This report refers to project 77814.*

*Photos (Hungarian Bible Society):*

*HUN08DJ-6: Lutheran Bishop János Ittzés (right) hands a Bible to one of the 150 members of the Hungarian Parliament who requested one. The distribution, which took place on June 9, was part of the Hungarian Bible Society's Year of the Bible campaign.*

*HUN08DJ-4: “The Bible is a great spiritual support in the globalised world of the 21st Century,” said Katalin Szili (right), Chairperson of the Hungarian Parliament, during a Bible distribution to MPs by Church leaders and the Hungarian Bible Society. The distribution was part of the Bible Society's Year of the Bible campaign.*

*HUN08DJ-5: Some of the 150 MPs who received Bibles from Church leaders from a variety of denominations during a Bible distribution organised by the Hungarian Bible Society as part of its Year of the Bible campaign.*



**For further information please contact [comms@ubs-wsc.org](mailto:comms@ubs-wsc.org)**

