**ONE BIBLE** by David Diestelkamp

It’s the mid 1990’s. Rick Liggin and I (with our families) are living and preaching in the newly freed and newly formed Slovak Republic in Eastern Europe. Communism had banned the production and sale of Bibles; therefore they are a hot commodity in the context of the new found freedoms. With the help of many of you, hundreds and hundreds of Slovak language Bibles are given away. It is a blessing to put God’s word into the hands of tearful recipients who dreamed their whole lives of having a Bible. However, most of those Bibles are never seen by us again.

We fight off discouragement with the words of Isaiah 55:11: “so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

Fast forward about 25 years to 2019. A man named Akos sends me a Facebook message, which I reluctantly open, suspecting it is spam. He introduces himself and says he is looking for the David and Rick with whom he studied the Bible in Slovakia in the mid-nineties. When I acknowledge that it was us, he says, “I’m very happy to find you…” and tells this story:

I was approximately a 25-year-old Jehovah’s Witness. We met several times to discuss the Bible. Now I have to say in many ways you were right. At this time I’m not an active JW.”

I’m fascinated that he remembers us. Then he tells me something extraordinary that happened sometime around 2003:

You gave me a Bible and there was your name stamped in the front. I had it in my bag, which was stolen at the end of the 1990’s. It also contained my address and many notes. Many years later, one day, I got a letter from a guy from Germany. He wrote: “Only this book (your Bible) is what saved my life. I was a gambler. Now I am a believer. Thank you Mr. Akos and Mr. Dave and Mr. Rick.”

We plant. We water. God gives the increase (1 Co 3:6). I don’t have more details of this story and don’t need them. God’s word in the world can and will do what we cannot – save the souls of men and women, many of whom we will likely never meet in this life. Give someone the Word. You don’t know where it will end up, but God assures us, “…it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose…” (Is 55:11).

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