



Translating the Bible into Ukrainian

# The Popchenko Family

*"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17*

Dear Praying Friends and Family in Christ Jesus,

November/December 2007 Prayer Letter

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Popchenko Family! May the Lord renew your strength for His service in this coming year. We trust that this holiday season has proven to be a fruitful time of ministry for each one of you.

The past two months have been full of different events in our family. Most of you have probably heard the sad news of our brother-in law's passing, Brian Higgins, in mid-December. Brian was a missionary in Kyiv for nine years and in L'viv for six years. He passed away unexpectedly from 'cardiomyopathy'. His death came as quite a shock, since he had always been in good health. I spent a week in L'viv helping make arrangements for the local memorial service and for shipment of the body to the states. Tanya and the four children are currently in America with Brian's father. We want to express our sincere thanks to all of you who upheld Tanya and the rest of the family in prayer and also for the financial help toward the funeral expenses.

By the grace of God I finished the final draft of the book of Philippians. Now I will give copies of the text to other people for evaluation and input. Ephesians is the book I will be working on next. Bible translation work has recently been involving more than just Philippians. With the lack of a good Ukrainian Bible, I have to translate all of the verses for my preaching and Bible teaching. Also, I translated the verses for some Christian calendars, as well as for an evangelistic booklet. From time to time, I agree to take on projects like these because I understand that it will still be a long time before the whole Bible is published. This way, we can at least have portions of scripture available to influence people's lives as well as keep them informed of translation progress. Besides, these verses will have to be translated sooner or later anyway. The total number of verses translated over the last two months, besides Philippians, is 267, which is more than 2 1/2 times the number of verses in the book of Philippians. We received some rather unusual feedback: The printer of these calendars was told by one of his customers, "I heard that Popchenko has translated the New Testament. Do you know if the whole Bible is ready yet? Because I would really like to get a copy." It sure will be great when we can fulfil requests such as this.

I have had a variety of preaching and teaching opportunities lately. The child-training Bible studies have been going well, with people requesting audio recordings of missed sessions. This fall, a couple of instances revealed the fact that worldly music is an issue for some of the members of our church. In my discussion with Pastor Stahursky it became evident that this subject has never been addressed, so with his blessing I started preaching a series of messages on music. In November, I was invited by a Ukrainian church planter to preach at their "Bible Day" evangelistic service. Brother Roman is ministering in a village of the Zhytomyr region about 75 miles from Kyiv. His ministry is specifically aimed at children, since there is a children's home for minors with infantile

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cerebral paralysis, as well as for orphans and those with mental illnesses. We were honored to be allowed to serve with such a dedicated Christian worker.

As I worked on my thesis, it soon became evident that the amount of work is much greater than it first appeared. Rather than rush and produce a low-quality job, I decided to take some more time to properly research and prepare the material. The thesis will deal with the idioms of the Old Testament and the results of my research will directly benefit my translation of the Bible. Therefore, I do not begrudge the time spent on this study. So my work time will continue to be divided between writing the thesis and translating the Bible. On a related note, some news that we heard recently caused us to thank God again for His wonderful provision. For those who may remember, back in 2004 it was originally thought that I would have to study for four years in Moscow. But then I found out that I could apply for a "second higher-learning" program, which is only three years long. At that time, we of course thought that it was a blessing to not have to spend as much time and money on my education in Moscow, but it was not until recently that we learned another very important reason for a 3-year term. With the change in Russian visa laws, effective as of 2008, holders of 'regular' visas may stay in the country only 180 days out of a year and only 90 days at a time. In effect, it means 3 months in Russia, 3 months out. Even though I (Yura) did not need a visa to live in Russia, Wendy did, and this law would have made it impossible for her to live in Moscow this year if I had had to study for a fourth year. God's timing worked out perfect for us but please pray for those missionaries in Russia who will be affected by this new law.

Family update:

Boys - We have been treating the boys' stomach problems for the past several weeks without any real results. At our most recent visit to the doctor, the gastroenterologist suggested that we look for another doctor since she obviously did not know what else to recommend in the way of treatment. After the holiday season is past, we will try to get a referral to a different doctor.

Yura - After having a root canal last March in Moscow, my tooth kept bothering me, causing sinus infections. In November I finally went to a dentist in Kyiv and learned that my gum had been damaged during the root canal and I would need minor surgery to save the tooth. The recovery time was long and uncomfortable, but that is past and all seems well with the tooth.

Car Fund - In November I finished driver's training and got my first driver's license. Wendy got her international license, so now all we need is something to drive. Since public transportation in our area is undeveloped and there is nothing that we can take to get to church, a car has become a real need for our family. So, if the Lord leads anyone to help with this need, we would really appreciate it. Another important reason for a car is that fact that our family is growing.

Wendy and #3 - We are happy to announce that we are expecting our third child. Please pray for Wendy and the baby. Morning sickness is making life rather uncomfortable for Wendy, but so far it is not as bad as it was with her last pregnancy. We are especially praying for this child's health, considering the different health issues our boys inherited.

Thank you for all of your prayers and support this past year. May God bless and keep you as you labor with us for His glory.

Your fellow-servants for Jesus' sake,  
Yura, Wendy, Sashko and Yurko Popchenko