



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,

July/August 2007 Prayer Letter

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Greetings to all from the Popchenkos in... UKRAINE! Yes, by God's help, we are back in Ukraine and settled in to our new apartment. The Lord has blessed us with a comfortable place to live, for not much more than what we were paying in Moscow. Our rental contract is only for a year; however our landlord has indicated that he plans to rent out this apartment long-term. Another plus is that we are not far from our church in Kyiv. The last Sunday of August was our first Sunday back there and I had the privilege of preaching on "The Beatitudes in the Psalms".

Backing up slightly... God blessed us with a safe move, a good moving company, no rock music in the truck and a non-smoking driver! (What an answer to prayer!) Actually, there were two drivers, Anatoly, owner of the moving company, and Sergey. The Lord gave me a unique opportunity to witness and I would like to share some of the details. First of all, before we headed out, I asked the men if they minded if I prayed for the trip. They quickly agreed, saying that they always pray before a trip themselves. After what I thought was a pretty typical prayer of asking God's protection and blessing on our trip, Anatoly said with great feeling, "That was beautiful".

A few hours into our journey, the men asked me about my studies and we got on the subject of the Bible. Anatoly mentioned that he really wants to read the Bible, but complained that he never has time. He asked where he should start reading and I suggested the gospels, and gave him a review of the entire New Testament. Having presented the Gospel, I went on to explain the 'last day' events, but when we got to the part about punishment in hell, the conversation kind of died. The drivers started talking between themselves and I put on some ear phones to listen to a preaching message. A few minutes into the sermon, Sergey asked, "Hey, what are you listening to?", so I gave him an ear phone to listen. After just a minute of listening, he gave it back to me. "Well," I thought to myself, "what do you expect? An unsaved guy to be interested in a sermon geared towards Christians?" But he said, "Hey! Do you have the Bible in MP3 format? I could listen to it while I'm on these long trips." To my affirmative response, Anatoly chimed in with, "Hey! I want it, too!" We agreed that when I get unpacked, I will make copies for them.

After we crossed the border, the subject came to judgment. Anatoly did not understand how God could send him to hell "just because I don't believe. In fact, I barely know enough about Him to believe." I told him that God reveals Himself to mankind in two main ways: written revelation through the Bible and general revelation through nature and conscious. Anatoly asked how I can prove that the Bible is God's Word and was not 'made up' by the apostles. (He thought that the whole Bible was written by the apostles to convert people to their faith.) I told him about fulfilled prophecies and the continuity of the Bible, despite being written over more than 1,500 years, by around 40 authors. This seemed to be convincing to him. Then we moved on to the general revelation argument

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which he tried to oppose, presenting evolution in the place of creation. Nothing seemed to convince him until I pointed out the incredible number and diversity of species in nature. "Why would evolution produce such a variety? Why wouldn't several of the strongest survive and the rest die? The only explanation to this fact is the creativity of their Creator." The men kept asking question after a question but after literally hours of talking my jaw and tongue hurt so bad that I just could not talk anymore. I had to apologize for not being able to tell them more about God! It was the first time in my life that people wanted me to tell them more about God and I was physically not able to. I promised to give them copies of some creation videos after we unpack so they can get more answers to their questions. Please pray for those men that they would come to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This year the church in Bakumivka celebrated her 120th anniversary. This is the church in the village where my uncle is the pastor and where Wendy served for a while before we were married. 120 years is a long time for any local church but especially for a church in the former Soviet Union. It was a blessing for us to be at this special service and hear how God led this body of believers through the years of persecution. We were also able to visit our numerous relatives. One of my cousins, who is the pastor of a Baptist church, approached me and asked when the entire New Testament is going to be ready. He said that at least fifty people, to whom he gave my translation of the Gospel of John, keep asking him for the entire New Testament. He said himself that as soon as it is ready he will switch to it from the Russian Bible. He preaches in Ukrainian but reads from the Russian version for lack of a good Ukrainian Bible. It was an encouragement for me to hear that and it gave me extra motivation to translate the rest of the New Testament. Speaking of which, I am set up for translating and have begun on the book of Philippians. Please pray for God's wisdom and protection upon us, remembering that Satan hates the word of God.

Thank you all for your faithful prayers and giving. May the Lord of the harvest reward you for your support of this ministry.

Your Servants for Jesus' sake,
Yura, Wendy, Sashko and Yurko Popchenko