



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 Friends and Family in Christ Jesus,

March/April 2007 Prayer Letter

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Greetings from Moscow in Jesus' name! We hope this letter finds you well and faithfully serving the Lord in whatever part of the vineyard He has placed you.

In April, I had to appear before a board of professors to demonstrate my knowledge of Hebrew by taking the state examination. I was assigned two passages of the most difficult form of Biblical Hebrew: poetry. By the grace of God, I was able to pass the exam with the top mark of '5'. What a relief to have that behind me! My other classes will continue through the end of May, and in June, I will take exams in the remaining subjects: Comparative Semitics, Syriac, Medieval Literature, Biblical Aramaic and Semitic Inscriptions. Some of these finals will be especially tough, so please pray for me to do well.

It is such a blessing that I will be able to finish this five-year course in only three years. After exams, all that will be left is my thesis, which needs to be submitted by the end of the calendar year. So, Lord willing, we will move back to Ukraine this summer and I will resume translation work as soon as we get settled, writing my thesis on the side. Later in the year, I will return to Moscow to present it and receive my diploma.

It is not too soon to start praying about our move this summer. Friends in Kyiv tell us that the price of rent has more than doubled since we left in 2004, which ends up being even more than we are paying now in Moscow! The current political turmoil in Ukraine is not helping matters. Yet, God is on the throne and we are confident that He will continue to provide for us as we move back to Ukraine. Also, please be in prayer about the details of moving: renting a reliable moving truck (i.e. one where the wheels will not come off while zooming down the highway... see July/September 2004 prayer letter), safety and health while traveling, getting through customs (i.e. no bribe pressures... the custom officials are SO corrupt!), etc. Also, since I will be riding with the truck driver for about 24 hours, finding a non-smoker would be a huge blessing.

In the end of April, I had the opportunity to attend a missions' conference in Moscow held by a group of Russian Independent Baptist churches. These churches support national missionaries in Uzbekistan. Two of them were with us and it was a blessing to hear their reports. One represented the work among the Uzbeks and the other among the Kara-kalpaks (Kara-kalpak is a republic within Uzbekistan which has its own government and language). I was amazed at the zeal and courage of the native believers to carry the gospel to their people in the face of such persecution. Uzbekistan is a Muslim nation and proselytism is prosecuted by the government. During a break at the conference, I asked the missionaries about the condition and availability of the Bible in their languages. The Kara-kalpaks have a newly published New Testament which the missionary said is a very good

Continued on back...

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translation. The Uzbeks have the New Testament and some portions of the Old Testament in their language, but the translation is of poor quality. As far as the availability of the scriptures is concerned, the brothers told us that last year the Uzbek government outlawed importing Christian literature and made smuggling virtually impossible. Pray for scriptures and other Christian literature to be somehow gotten into Uzbekistan and the rest of the Bible to be translated into Uzbek and Karakalpak. Also, pray for the safety and steadfastness of these believers, as they face imprisonment for their faith: just this month, several of them are facing trial.

On this same subject, please consider these sobering facts. The 2006 report of the United Bible Societies states that out of the 6,912 languages of the world, only 429 have the complete Bible translated, 1,144 have the New Testament and 853 have Bible portions, leaving several thousand language groups without a single line of scripture in their native tongue. Add to this the fact that many of the existing translations are in need of revision due to poor quality and/or corrupt textual bases and the need is overwhelming! "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already unto harvest." John 4:35b.

In Christ Jesus,  
Yura, Wendy, Sashko and Yurko Popchenko