



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,

January/February 2008 Prayer Letter

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Greetings in our precious Savior's Name from the Popchenko Family! By the grace of God, another step in translation has been taken: the first draft of Ephesians is ready. I was also able to meet with one of the people who assist me in the evaluation of my translation of Philippians. The evaluation by others was pushed back by two factors: first, it took me about three more weeks to finish my linguistic commentary on Philippians, in which I explain and back up my translation choices; second, the main person who works with me in evaluation had a fire at his house and could not meet with me until a few weeks later than planned, due to his necessary home repairs. I would like to take a moment to say a few words about this commentary. It addresses three types of issues that are related to translation: textual issues, differences in understanding the Greek text and differences in choosing Ukrainian words. Let me illustrate each point. Probably one of the most significant textual variations between the Textus Receptus and the critical text in Philippians is found in Philippians 2:30. Here all Ukrainian versions say that Epaphroditus was "risking his life" instead of "not regarding his life". Although 'risk' and 'not regard' (or 'disregard') are close in meaning, they still have a different association connected to their use. We feel that it is important to resolve even these small details as faithfully as possible. In my commentary, I explain the groundlessness and subjective nature of the critical reading, as well as its grammatical problems. As an example of the second type of issue, in Phil. 4:11, all existing Ukrainian versions translate Paul's words as follows: "I have learned to be content with what I have" instead of "for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content". As hard as one may try, this translation can not be deduced from the Greek text, even though it is mentioned in Thayer's Greek-English lexicon. As for the third type of issue, in Phil. 2:30, all Ukrainian versions translate the last clause in such a way as to make Epaphroditus add to the the Phillipians' lack of service toward Paul. This translation is absurd because in it Epaphroditus actually makes this lack even greater. These are only a few examples of the translation problems I deal with on an everyday basis.

For years I have been praying for God to give me helpers in my work. So far, I have three people who assist me by reading my translation and offering their criticism and suggestions. They are my former classmate, a preacher and my former professor of Ukrainian. The first two of them are Christians and the last is not. My classmate has the same education in Greek and Ukrainian as I do, but she is not strong in theology since she just got saved a few years ago. This, she feels, hinders her from being more involved in the work. However, her assistance has been very helpful since she is the only assistant that knows Greek. I have already discussed Philippians with her and received good input. Another assistant is a preacher who is my cousin. He is the one that recently had a fire in his house. The fact that my former Ukrainian professor is not a Christian does not disqualify her as my assistant, but rather benefits in a special way. Her unfamiliarity with the Scripture allows her to read it afresh; while for those of us who already know what it contains, it is sometimes not easy to read

Continued on back...

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objectively. We ask you to pray for these people as they assist me and for my former professor to come to the saving knowledge of Christ through this work. We have yet another important prayer request. Even though I am thankful for these assistants to help me with proofreading the translation, we are praying for at least one more person who would help with the actual translating. So far I have not come across a person who knows Biblical languages, is knowledgeable of linguistics and translation techniques, knows his Bible, is a native speaker of Ukrainian and desires to translate the Bible. I ask you to join me in prayer for God to raise up another such person.

In the past I have done some work for Chick Publications, translating tracts, proofreading, etc. and we have printed here in Ukraine for them a few times. I just got word from our printer in Kyiv that 30,000 more tracts are printed and will be ready for pick up soon. We praise the Lord for the small part He has let us have in distributing the gospel in our corner of the world. Please pray for God to use these little booklets as they get into the hands of seeking men and women.

My sister Tanya Higgins and the children are back in Ukraine for a few months to take care of emptying their rented apartment and dealing with various business matters regarding Brian's estate. Although they all miss him very much, Tanya and the kids are doing well and God continues to comfort and provide for them.

Many thanks to all who have been praying for Wendy: her morning sickness is subsiding and all of her blood work and other tests came back looking very good. Wendy had her first ultrasound a few weeks ago and it showed ONE healthy, active baby... not TWO, like Sashko was hoping for! Please continue to keep Wendy and the baby in prayer throughout this pregnancy. Sashko and Yurko are excited about having another playmate. Speaking of the boys, their stomach problems seem to have quieted down, which is a relief since we have not yet been able to get referred to another gastroenterologist. Thank you for your continued prayers for Sashko and Yurko's stomach and orthopedic issues.

May the Lord of the harvest bless you for your part in our ministry and may He open up wide doors of opportunity for you to serve Him in your corner of the vineyard.

Sincerely Yours in the Lord Jesus,
Yura, Wendy, Sashko and Yurko