



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 2008 Prayer Letter

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Greetings from Ukraine! Opportunities for ministry continue to expand. I have recently started leading the weekly youth/young adult Bible study. Right now we are going through a series on the Biblical perspective of Christians' outward appearance. As you can imagine, this topic was chosen to address the issue of immodesty among our young people. After the first few meetings, I had more than one person tell me that they had never heard such a clear Biblical presentation of this subject. All they had been given was a list of "do's and don'ts" without scriptural backing. In addition to the Biblical view of dress, we are going to study the philosophies behind the worldly tendencies in dressing; plus, look into the history of fashion trends. This, I believe, will help the young people to realize that most modern clothing styles are in sharp contrast to Biblical standards of modest apparel.

In our young families' Bible study group, we are finishing up our course on child training. Also, in my Sunday morning preaching, I have finished the series on music. I may not have as many friends in this church as I did previously, but at least now they know the truth. Now, I am approaching a long-awaited moment in my life - finally being able to preach using my translation. I am planning to preach through the newly-translated book of Philippians. We are excited about what God has allowed us to accomplish for His glory. May the preaching of His word bring forth much fruit in the life of believers.

Speaking of translation, in March, I was able to meet with my former Ukrainian professor to discuss Philippians. Further, the final draft of the book of Ephesians is coming along well and I trust to finish it shortly. My study of this book in the process of its translation has been enlightening to me. I would like to share one in particular point: in Ephesians 2:14, the "middle wall of partition" is mentioned and I have wondered in the past what that wall was. Typically, the explanation is that it is a reference to the wall that separated the court of the Gentiles and the court of the Jews in the Temple. However, if "hath broken down the middle wall of partition"(v. 14) is paralleled with "having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments" (v. 15), then it is clear that the "middle wall of partition" is the law itself. This understanding is confirmed by the notion among Jews of those times that the law was a fence around Israel (in Greek, it literally says "middle wall of the fence"). In a Jewish source, I found, "Our lawgiver ... fenced us about with impenetrable banisters and with walls of iron to the end that we should mingle in no way with any of the other nations, remaining pure in body and in spirit". So, the law that made a sharp distinction between the Jews and Gentiles and caused enmity between them was abolished by Christ in order to create His Church, consisting of both the Jews and Gentiles.

The past two months have been a whirlwind of exercise-swimming classes, massages, and various doctor visits for the boys. This hectic schedule was made somewhat easier by the blessing of a car

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which the Lord provided for us recently. All glory to His Name! In our on-going search for doctors who could give us some answers to Sashko and Yurko's health problems, we were finally able to get them into the top children's clinic of Ukraine for consultations with the gastroenterologist and allergist. We are now in the process of getting the necessary tests done for these doctors to review and give us their diagnosis and recommended treatment. Also, as you may recall, over a year ago in Moscow we were referred by our orthopedic specialist to a geneticist. The orthopedist was concerned about the boys' slow progress and felt that the underlying cause may be genetic. At the geneticist's in Moscow, all four of us were examined and the boys were diagnosed with Ehlers-Danlos' Syndrome: a group of genetic disorders caused by a defect in collagen, the main protein of connective tissue. This syndrome weakens connective tissue, causing (among other things) unstable, flexible joints, with a tendency to dislocate, weak ligaments, and overall physical weakness. It was suggested that we get a second opinion, so this week we took Sashko and Yurko to a leading geneticist in Kyiv who specializes in this syndrome. To our disappointment, the diagnosis was confirmed; but to our relief, the doctor said that the condition is treatable. Also, it is helpful to finally know the root cause of the boys' orthopedic problems and be able to treat it, not just the symptoms. The doctor said that from her experience, 4 to 5 years of treatment gives good results and we are praying that this will be the case with our children as well. In May, the boys will have special genetic tests done that will enable the doctor to pinpoint the severity of the syndrome and lay out a plan of treatment. Please earnestly pray for the doctors to have wisdom.

The recession of the United States economy has affected many countries, including Ukraine. The dollar-to-Ukrainian hryvna exchange rate has significantly gone down, while national inflation continues at a high rate. Thus, we are faced with double inflation, which over the past few months has raised our food budget alone by about \$100 a month. A gallon of premium gas costs \$5.05, and this is not the only item in Ukraine that is more expensive than in America. Also, our landlord has already forewarned us that he will be raising our rent at the end of our rental agreement. He could not yet say how much he would raise it, not knowing what the rental market will be like in four months; but, judging from the current price of an apartment like our's, we should expect a \$100-200 increase in our monthly rent. Please pray with us that the Lord would provide our needs, especially in view of the additional financial burden of the boys' costly medical treatment.

Wendy is doing well and, from all that the tests have shown, the baby is developing normally. Whoever he or she is, this baby can certainly kick up a storm! Thank you for continuing to pray for both Wendy and Baby Popchenko over the next several months.

We are excitedly awaiting the arrival of our parents from America who are coming for a visit the first of May. It has been two years since we have seen them and we are looking forward to some special family time.

Thank you all for your faithful prayers and financial support. We pray for you and ask that God would bless you for your participation in this ministry.

Your Fellow-laborers for Jesus' sake,
Yura, Wendy, Sashko and Yurko Popchenko