



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,

September/October 2008 Prayer Letter

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Greetings to all from Ukraine! The translation is making steady headway. By the grace of God, I was able to do the first draft of I Samuel and the second draft of chapters one and two. This book (along with II Samuel) is one of the most fascinating sections of the Bible. Stories like "The Call of Samuel", "David and Goliath", and "Saul and David" capture the hearts of even small children. Many of us from Christian homes grew up with figures like Samuel, Hannah, David and Jonathan held up as our examples. Needless to say, I take great pleasure in translating this book. Two main, interrelated themes (outlined in the Song of Hannah, I Sam. 2:1-10), run throughout the book: the Lord's holy sovereignty and the reversal of human fortunes. As for the latter, such reversals occurred in the lives of Hannah, Samuel, Saul and David. Barren Hannah gave birth to one of the greatest judges in Israel, while her rival, a mother of many children, "waxed feeble". Samuel was a little boy when he went to Eli's place, while Eli's sons were already "junior" priests. And yet the house of Eli fell while Samuel rose to become the nation's leader. Saul's family was not from an important clan, but he was chosen to be the first king of ancient Israel. David was the youngest in the family but was chosen rather than his seven older brothers to be anointed. As the king's son-in-law, David was inferior in rank to Jonathan, the crown prince, but Jonathan acknowledged that it was he who was inferior to David. The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and rested on David. The kingdom was "torn" from Saul and given to David. It is a great comfort to know that our sovereign God is the One who can reverse human fortunes: He "killeth, and maketh alive", "bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up", "maketh poor, and maketh rich", "bringeth low, and lifteth up" (I Sam. 2:6-7).

I was also able to discuss the book of Ruth with all three people that help me and spend days on evaluating their input, making necessary adjustments. Thus, the book of Ruth is ready, for which I give praise to the Lord! This almost coincides with the end of our Sunday night Bible studies on Ruth, as we will finish teaching through this touching book in a couple of weeks. The interest of the people has been so great, that Sunday night attendance, which was very poor previously, has doubled in the past two months. Our pastor is excited and has already asked me to teach through the book of Ephesians, which I am planning to do, Lord willing. Let me share with you a few thoughts from Ruth. The main theme of the book is God's sovereign power over and care for the believer in everyday life, specifically in three fundamental areas of life: daily provision, marriage and child-birth. This power and care is shown in times of apostasy and difficulty in the life of God's people. Nothing is more relevant today. As the world's economy is unsettled and we are troubled about what tomorrow may bring, we are reminded that it is the Lord who visits His people and gives them bread (Ruth 1:6) just as He did it in the times of the Judges. Those who feel like their lives are empty because of the lack of a spouse and children (Ruth 1:21) can be encouraged to know that the Lord is the One who can fill their lives, just as He did for Naomi and Ruth.

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I would like to thank all of you who continue to pray and give for the translation of the Bible into Ukrainian. Please keep praying for wisdom and health as I have some health issues that recently started bothering me again. I also ask you to pray for the salvation of my former Ukrainian professor who voluntarily helps me in evaluating my translation. Not long ago, I found out that she goes to church once in a while, which testifies of her interest in God. Pray that God's word will do its work in her heart, as she reads, bringing her to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In our last letter I mentioned a team of five young men delivering 1,998 gospels of John to homes in the town of Skole. Sergiy, one of them, passed along an encouraging testimony. His mother works in a government building and she saw a copy of the gospel of John propped up against a computer monitor. Since the gospels were only distributed to homes, this meant that the person was so interested in reading God's word that he or she brought the gospel to work to read it in their spare time. Keep praying for the salvation of souls in Skole.

Sashko had to have minor surgery in October. Praise the Lord, all went well and he is doing fine. Thanks to all of you who prayed for him. Also, it is time for Sashko and Yurko to be reevaluated by the geneticist, so we submitted the necessary lab work for them last week. Lord willing, we will be visiting the doctor within the next week or two. We also need to get back to the gastroenterologist and allergist for reevaluation, but have been unable to get their tests done yet. We will post the results of these visits on our blog www.bibleua.com

Andriy is doing well, sleeping through the night and growing like the proverbial weed. We would, however, ask you to pray for two things: one, he has had an ingrown toenail since birth that started to get infected. The doctor was concerned that the nail may need to be surgically removed but it seems to be responding well to topical treatment. Also, his intestinal flora is out of balance, resulting in dysbacteriosis. Andriy does not show any outward discomfort from either of these problems, but of course we want to take care of them before they worsen. Thank you for praying for our children's various health issues.

May God strengthen and encourage each of you as you have strengthened and encouraged us with your faithful prayers and support.

Your fellow-servants in the harvest field,
Yura, Wendy, Sashko, Yurko and Andriy Popchenko