



Translating the Bible into Ukrainian

The Popchenko Family

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17

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Dear Friends and Family in Christ Jesus,

November/December 2008 Prayer Letter

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Popchenko Family! May the season in which even unbelievers think about our Savior's birth be a time of peace and joy in your life and the lives of those you love.

The end of the year 2008 was marked in our home by the completion of the first draft of 1 Samuel. While many events in the life of David can be an example for us, one phrase from 1 Samuel 30:6 stands out for its appeal, *"but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God"*. In that particular instance, David had lost everything he had – his wife, children and all of his property. On top of that, his own troops wanted to stone him and he had no one to turn to. In that situation he turned to God and this is where he found encouragement. An interesting part of this verse is that David seems to have a conversation within himself in which he encourages himself. This is not the only place where he speaks to his own soul. In Psalm 42:5 he cries out, *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance."* In times of hardship we do not have to wait for others to encourage us; we can encourage ourselves in the Lord.

I have had a variety of preaching and teaching opportunities lately. Besides finishing up the Bible study on the book of Ruth and preaching in the regular services, I was asked to speak to the boys at a youth meeting in December. At this meeting the problem areas of modern youth were addressed such as drug and alcohol abuse and premarital relationships, with an emphasis on purity. Wendy was invited to speak to the girls. She gave, what was to the girls, a shocking personal testimony about how neither she nor I ever dated anyone. They could hardly believe that this is possible today. Later our pastor received good reports from both the youth and their parents and decided to have these meetings on a regular basis. Praise God for the opportunity to have an impact on young people's lives.

For this Christmas I was asked to direct our church's orchestra. So, I dusted off my violin, wrote the parts for various instruments and practices began. In addition to directing the orchestra, I was called upon to lead the adult choir. Our church people seemed to really enjoy the extra music this year. Sashko and Yurko participated in the children's Christmas program by reciting their poems and singing songs with their Sunday school class.

The geneticist tests came back and we were encouraged to see some minor improvements in Sashko and Yurko's conditions. As the doctor told us in the beginning, the treatment will be a several-year process so we are moving on to another three-month course of supplements. We took Andriy with

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us and were thrilled that the doctor could not find any visible symptoms of Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome. We submitted his tests and trust that they will confirm the doctor's examination. However, there is an area of concern with Andriy's bacteria imbalance. Tests showed that he has pathogenic bacteria, resulting in, among other things, an itchy scalp condition. We will be going back to the gastroenterologist to get her recommendations for treatment. Sashko and Yurko's stool samples did not show the desired improvement of their bacteria imbalance nor of Sashko's pancreatitis, so we are doing another two-month treatment for them. Thank you for faithfully praying for our children's health.

It has been a full year with our parents' visit in the spring, Andriy's birth this summer, God supplying us a car and His provision in allowing us to stay in our apartment, plus a host of other blessings and trials, each one teaching its own lesson. We praise the Lord for all He has done in our lives this past year.

Thank you for your faithful prayers and support.

Your fellow-servants for Jesus' sake,
Yura, Wendy, Sashko, Yurko and Andriy Popchenko