



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,

April/May 2009 Prayer letter

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Greetings in our Lord's precious Name from Florida! What a whirlwind of travel these past several weeks have been! For the past two months we have had opportunities to speak not only in American and Ukrainian churches but also in Slavic churches, which are Russian speaking churches that consist of Ukrainians, Russians and other nationalities.

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In early April I had the privilege of meeting with the leaders of the Fellowship of Ukrainian Baptist Churches of America. They were very interested in my project and invited me to present it at a Ukrainian pastor's conference in Florida later in the month. Even though I already had speaking plans in Massachusetts and New Hampshire at that time, I was able to squeeze in two days of the conference between my other meetings. There I had an opportunity to speak two times about my work. It was encouraging to see the enthusiastic response as people learned of the translation project. At the conference I met several new pastors for the first time and was able to schedule some meetings in Ukrainian churches. The leaders of the Fellowship also invited me to their annual conference in September in Cleveland, Ohio, where I will be allowed to present my translation work to an even larger audience.

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On Easter weekend, I preached in three Ukrainian churches near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. One of the unique things about visiting Ukrainian churches is that every single time I go to one, I either meet old friends or family from Ukraine, or relatives of my friends or family. In one church in Pennsylvania a man got up to give his testimony and I could hardly believe my eyes: it was my second cousin. He used to live in Ukraine pretty far from Kyiv and we did not stay in touch so I had no idea he immigrated. What a surprise it was to see him there! At the Ukrainian pastors' conference in Florida, I met my old friend whom I had not seen for about 15 years. He is now the pastor of the Ukrainian church in Cleveland, Ohio, which will host the annual conference in September. I also met the parents of my old friend whom I have not seen for over 20 years. I could go on and on. In most of these cases, the meetings were a total surprise. What a wonderful family we have in Christ!

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While in Pennsylvania, we used the opportunity to visit some historic places in Philadelphia, such as the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. It was an educational experience on the beginnings of the American nation for the boys. The following week I had an opportunity to preach in American churches in Walpole, New Hampshire; Norwood, Massachusetts; and Raymond, New Hampshire, as well as attend the Ukrainian pastor's conference in-between. In Walpole, we met a Christian doctor who offered to order supplements for our boys at his cost, which is almost ten times cheaper than what we paid for them in Ukraine. On top of that, it is a much better quality brand than the one we bought in Ukraine. We saw our good Lord's provision in this as He chose not to give us more money for the supplements but rather to significantly reduce their cost.

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The first half of May was spent in the beautiful mountains of Vermont with our dear friends. I had the privilege of preaching several times in their home where believers gathered, not only on the subject of Ukrainian Bible translation but also on the subject of persecution in the former Soviet Union and textual issues and Bible versions. Our boys had a great time playing with their Christian peers. In spite of the fact that I got sick during our time in Vermont, we had a good time of relaxation. The first weekend of May, I had an opportunity to preach in Ukrainian and Slavic churches in Manchester, New Hampshire, and in an American church in Nashua, New Hampshire. In Manchester, we were able to get together with my good friend from the church back in Kyiv where I grew up. Our time in Vermont ended with me preaching in an American church in Fair Haven, Vermont.

We headed on to New York, where I preached in Hamlin. While in New York, we went with our friends and a missionary family that we met there to see one of the most majestic of God's creations – Niagara Falls. After New York, we went to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and the following Sunday I preached in one American and two Slavic churches. In Harrisburg, we stayed with a dear Ukrainian family whom I knew from a church in Kyiv. Besides speaking in the church this family attends, I was invited by my friend to both the youth Bible study and the young families' Bible study. The subject of Bible translation inevitably led to the subject of textual issues and Bible versions and I had a great opportunity to explain these matters to the young people.

The following Sunday I presented my work in two Slavic churches in Charlotte, North Carolina. At one of the churches in this city, I met a Ukrainian radio preacher who has been in this ministry for over thirty years. He invited us over and we had a wonderful evening together, talking about ministering to our people. What a surprise it was for me to discover that this was one of the preachers I had listened to on the radio as a boy during Soviet times. His faithfulness and persistence in serving the Lord was a great encouragement and example to me.

The last Sunday of May we were in two Slavic churches in Atlanta, Georgia. Then in early June, we came to Jacksonville, Florida, where we were happy to see my aunt, uncle and my two cousins with their families. We had not seen them for quite a few years, so it was a good time of family reunion. In Jacksonville I also had the opportunity to present my ministry in two Slavic churches.

Praise the Lord, the family's health has been better these past two months. Even though I got sick once, it was not for as long or as bad as the previous time. So far we have not been in any accidents and the car runs well. We did have to have some minor repairs done to the car, but our good Ukrainian friend fixed it for us for free. God had mercy on us and the things that had to be repaired were discovered before our long trips, not on the road. The same brother fixed Sashko's orthodontic appliance for free, otherwise we would have to wait for it to be repaired until we got back to Ukraine. With such an extensive speaking and traveling schedule, plus trying to arrange more meetings, I have not been able to do any work on Bible translation. I wish I could finally settle in one place for a while and start translating the gospel of Mark – something I have been missing these past two months. On a positive note, Sashko and Yurko have been able to get some school work done, which is a praise.

Our prayer requests remain for the most part the same:

1. Health for the whole family.
2. Safety in our travels, car reliability, etc.
3. God's leading in scheduling meetings.
4. Bible translation on the road.
5. Sashko and Yurko's school work.

Thank you for your faithful prayers and support. We are looking forward to seeing many of you soon!

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