



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,

June/July 2009 Prayer letter

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Greetings in our Lord's precious Name from California! After being on the road for over four months, we finally got to our parents' place in California and have enjoyed staying at the same place. It has been a blessing to finally unload our minivan and settle down – at least for several weeks. Needless to say, our parents were thrilled to see our youngest son for the first time and have enjoyed having their grandchildren around for so long.

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The week following the first Sunday of June was the busiest week on this furlough so far. That week I had an opportunity to preach six times in five churches, all of which were Ukrainian or Slavic. I must admit that it was pretty exhausting, so I am not sure I want to do this again! On Sunday, June 7th, I had the privilege of preaching three times in North Port, Florida: twice in a Ukrainian Baptist church and once in a Slavic Baptist church. The pastor of the Ukrainian church was the one I met at a Ukrainian pastor's conference back in April. The next day I celebrated my 36th birthday with an old friend from Ukraine. I have known him for 23 years but have not seen him for 21 years. I had lost contact with him and had no idea that he immigrated. What a wonderful reunion/birthday party it was! I was especially encouraged to learn that he is very active in his church as the youth leader. Later in the week, I preached in three other Slavic churches, both in North Port and Saint Petersburg. The meeting in Saint Petersburg was a special blessing since I saw many of the people I used to go to church with back in Kyiv when I was a teenager.

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The next Sunday I had an opportunity to preach in Slavic and American Baptist churches in Hollywood and Plantation, Florida, respectively. The story of me getting acquainted with the pastor of the Slavic church is incredible both in its importance and in God's leading. He heard about my work from his relative in a Slavic church in New Hampshire where I spoke back in May and wanted to get in touch with me. This interest was sparked by the fact that years ago he, along with a few other men, tried to revise the current Ukrainian version. This pastor has a degree in Ukrainian; however, none of those men knew Biblical languages, so they could only correct the poor language of the version, not the translational errors. That project was apparently not meant to see its completion, due to that fact that the Ukrainian businessman who financed it went bankrupt as a result of 9/11. Anyway, when I called the pastor to say that we were planning to be in Florida, he asked me to come meet him. **That meeting turned out to be one of the biggest blessings of this trip so far: the pastor agreed to join me in my work!** At last our prayers for more helpers in this work are beginning to be answered. The most interesting part of all this is that I was originally planning to speak only at a Ukrainian church in New Hampshire, not at a Slavic church, because someone told me that the Slavic church would not be interested in a Ukrainian project. At first, I made the mistake of listening to those people, but since God wanted me to go there so that the relative of that pastor in Florida would hear me speak, He used a problem with my car to get me there. At that time I needed a car mechanic to take a look at my car and I was told that the pastor of the Slavic church is a mechanic. I called him trying to get an appointment and among other things told him about my work. I also mentioned that someone suggested not trying to present the work in his church. The pastor assured me that it was totally untrue about their church not being interested in Ukrainian projects and said that he wanted me to come to his church. Truly, the ways of God are past finding out!

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On June 17th we celebrated Yurko's 5th birthday by going to a park and having wonderful shish-kebabs with my (Yura's) cousin in Jacksonville, where we stayed. The next day I spoke at a Slavic Baptist church in Palm

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Coast, Florida. On Sunday the 21st we spent the entire day with the Bible Baptist Church of Deland that has supported us for years but never met me (Yura). It was a blessing to finally meet the pastor and the folks who so faithfully prayed and gave towards the translation of the Ukrainian Bible. Before leaving Florida, we stopped in Pensacola to see Wendy's friend that she met on her first mission trip to Ukraine in 1997. It was a great reunion after 12 years of not seeing her.

The last week of June was spent in Mississippi, where we had three meetings in American churches: Corinth Baptist Church in Lucedale, College Heights Baptist Church in Poplarville and Red Creek Baptist Church in Wiggins. We were blessed by the BEAMS (which stands for 'Bible Education and Missionary service') that provided a place for us to stay that entire week and arranged those meetings for us. **As a Bible printing ministry, they were interested in our work and assured us that they would print the Ukrainian Bible as soon as it is ready.** Speaking of printing Ukrainian Bibles, people often ask me who will print the Bible when it is ready. Let me assure you that printing the Bible is the least problem. The real problem is to get it translated. There are many fundamental Baptist Bible-printing ministries out there but there are few Bible translation projects that are carried out by fundamental Baptists. Bible translation is far more difficult, challenging, time consuming and fund-demanding than printing. We need to pray for more fundamental Bible translators because the need is great: out of about 7,000 known languages over 3,000 do not have a single line of scripture in them.

On our way to California, we stopped in Texas and spent Wednesday, July 1st, with the Fairpark Baptist church that has supported us for years but never met us. This is the home church of Joshua Steele, my good friend and missionary to Ukraine, whom I first met on his first mission trip to Ukraine in 1997. What a great time we had at that church! The next day we got on the road again to go to the west coast. We celebrated the 4th of July by going to Mexico to visit a missionary friend of ours and his church there which recently took us on for support. Our youngest son Andriy had his own way of celebrating the holiday: he proved to be a true American by cutting his 4th tooth on the 4th of July. On July 8th we finally got to our parents' home in California. That same day Wendy's brother and his wife came from southern Asia where they serve as missionaries. We have not seen them for over five years so we had a great family reunion. On top of that, all of us were able to get away and spend a few days up in the beautiful mountains by a lake. It was a much-needed rest! My brother-in-law and I had great time discussing some Bible translation challenges that we encounter in our work.

On Sunday July 12th, we visited a Ukrainian Baptist Church and Faith Baptist Tabernacle in Sacramento and N. Highlands respectively. People at the Ukrainian church were very excited to hear about the project. The following Sunday we gave a report to our sponsoring church in Marysville. It was a blessing to see many familiar faces, as well as meet new people. On July 22nd, I flew to Chicago where I had the privilege of attending the Dean Burgon Society's annual meeting. There I had an opportunity to speak for a few minutes about the ministry. Also, I was able to spend a few days with Bro. Stephen Zeinner of Bearing Precious Seed Global and discuss various issues of Bible translation work. On Sunday July 26th, we enjoyed being with a long-time supporting church – Lighthouse Baptist Church in Auburn and in the evening we presented the ministry at the Foothill Bible Church in Lincoln. On Wednesday July 29th, we presented the ministry at First Baptist Church in Yuba City.

Our prayer requests remain for the most part the same but we have one new important request:

1. Extension of stay for Yura. I applied for two more months of stay in the US and am awaiting the response.
2. Health for the whole family.
3. Safety in our travels, car reliability, etc.
4. God's leading in scheduling meetings.
5. Bible translation on the road.
6. Sashko and Yurko's school work.

Thank you for your faithful prayers and support.

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