



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,

August/September 2009 Prayer letter

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Greetings in Jesus' Name from Virginia! The past two months have been full of events, most of which are very important and exciting. To start with, my extension-of-stay in the US was approved, so we can stay until the end of November as we had originally planned! Second, **another person has joined me in my translation work!** Anya, my former classmate, has been helping me in checking my translation against the Greek text for quite a while now and at one time I even asked her to do some translation work. She politely declined, pleading her lack of experience in Bible translation. Several weeks ago, I approached her again and asked her why she thinks God would have her to have all this education (she is writing her Ph. D dissertation in Greek now) if her knowledge could not be used for the kingdom of God. Anya did not have an answer to that question. I invited her again to join me and asked her if she thinks this invitation could be the answer to that question. After thinking and praying she said she was willing to try! I have started putting my philosophy and principles of translation into writing for her so we can ensure uniformity of translation quality and style. I, of course, will be overseeing her work and will have the final say in any translation choices. Praise God for this answer to prayer: now we will have two people working on the New Testament!

In our April/May 2009 prayer letter I mentioned that the Fellowship of Ukrainian Baptist Churches of America invited me to their annual congress in September to present my work before the Fellowship. Due to the delayed repair of our car after the accident (see below), I did not make it to the meeting. However, the congress had included the matter in their agenda and considered it even in my absence. As a result, the congress approved my translation and the Baptist Fellowships both in America and in Ukraine are completely behind it. Thus, **our translation project has now been promoted up to the national level!** This is a very important victory. You see, Bible translation work is a very time-, money- and effort-consuming work. First, it takes several years for a Bible translator to get prepared for the translation work. Second, it takes time to gather together a team of translators and consultants. Third, it takes 15-20 years for the translation work itself. Then it takes a lot of money and effort to get the translation published. Most of us would think this is the end of the work, but that is not so: the translation has to be widely accepted by the native speakers, otherwise, many years of work and hundreds of thousand dollars would have been spent with little result. Unfortunately, this sometimes happens with Bible translations. It looks like the Lord has spared us from this scenario. We are blessed to see the majority of Ukrainian Baptists around the world accepting this translation in its early stage and looking forward to it. The Fellowship also joined American churches in financing this project, as well as supplied six consultants: three from Ukraine and three from America. So, my team has now grown to ten people, not including myself. We are excited to see God's favorable hand in all this and praise the Lord for all He has done! Please continue to pray for the translation of the Bible into Ukrainian.

Last month **I had the privilege of leading my two oldest boys to the Lord.** I was returning from a missions' conference in Milford, Ohio, and got a call on my cell phone. It was Sashko wanting to know if I would be home soon. Wendy explained to me that he wanted to get saved but he did not want to wait for me to come home if it was going to be much longer. Since I was only 15 minutes away, I told Sashko to wait for me. At home I learned that Wendy had read them the story of Brother Andrew, particularly how he got saved. She went on to tell Yurko that he did not need to wait on Sashko to get saved. (Sashko had said on a few occasions that he did not want to get saved yet). All of a sudden Sashko piped up, "I want to now!" Wendy questioned him a bit and then put him off, to see if he was really serious or if it was just a whim.

Continued on back...

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Sashko kept after her, saying he wanted to repent and trust Jesus. Convinced he was sincere, she let him call me. When I got home both boys were eager and ready to pray. I talked with them for several minutes making sure they understood the gospel. We knelt and I asked them to pray in their own words. In simple children's language they asked God to forgive them of their sins and save their souls. Glory to God!

On the way back from Washington **we had a car accident** due to a tire blow-out. Praise God, no one was injured and no other cars were involved! We were towed to the nearest shop where they fixed the car enough for us to be able to drive home (spending over \$1000). Unfortunately the car still pulled to the right and it needed body work. We found a local mechanic and filed a claim with the insurance company. However, the entire experience of fixing our car was simply horrible and humiliating. The mechanic first appeared very nice and helpful until he got the job. Knowing this is not my car and the owner lives in another state, he took advantage of me, treating me very rudely (at one point he even swore and made rude gestures at me) and doing a bad job. The main concern was that the suspension was not completely fixed: the car still pulled a little to the right. The only way to fix it would have been to go back to the body shop but we simply did not have time for that. Since we were pushed up to the very last minute with our schedule, we were forced to load the van as fast as we could and hit the road. Obviously, this is what the mechanic counted on. So, we paid our \$1000 deductible (and then some) and still do not have the car completely fixed...

By the time you receive our next prayer letter, we will already be in Ukraine. We thought it would be a good time to give you a **report of how our support has been going so far**. By the end of September, we have had 55 meetings in churches that have never supported us. Only six of them took us on for support, one of which committed for only a year, plus one supporting church raised support for a year. At the same time we lost 150 dollars of monthly support. Our goal on this trip was modest, due to the present economic situation: we just hoped to raise enough support to be able to meet our basic personal needs. By God's grace we were able to achieve this goal by August. However, our ministry has grown for the past few months and it now requires more support. We now have one more translator joining the work plus several more people on our team. The biggest ministry need is for me to be able to rent an office. So far, I have been doing translation work from my home for lack of money. With our family growing, it is difficult to work peacefully at home anymore. As our support increases, I will need to have an office where I can work undisturbed. We still have several meetings before we leave for Ukraine in November. Please pray that by the end of our stay we will have enough support to cover our ministry needs.

For the sake of space, here is just a basic list of churches where we were able to present our ministry in the past two months. California: Faith Baptist Church of Yuba City, Charity Baptist Church of Colusa, First Slavic Baptist Church of Sacramento, First Baptist Church of Mariposa, Catheys Valley First Baptist Church; Washington: Faith Baptist Church of Tacoma, Faith Baptist Church of Ashford; Indiana: First Baptist Church of Hammond, Suburban Baptist Church of Indianapolis; Ravenswood Baptist Church of Chicago, Illinois, Crossroads Baptist Church of Ashland, Kentucky, Central Baptist Church of Woodbridge, Virginia.

We would ask you to continue to pray for our health and safety in our travels, car reliability, etc. as we finish our time in America. However, our main prayer requests are concerned with our returning to Ukraine and getting back to routine there.

1. Safety in flying to Ukraine and getting through customs without any trouble.
2. Buying a car: a decent, reliable used car in Ukraine range from \$8,000 to \$10,000. Any help toward our car fund would be greatly appreciated.
3. Finding a place to live. We would like to find a house outside Kyiv. Since the house-renting market is practically undeveloped, humanly-speaking the chances are slim. This is why for years we have thought of buying a house outside Kyiv but we could not afford it. Pray for us to be able to find a house to rent for now and to be able to buy one down the road.
4. Finding an office for translation work.

Thank you for your faithful prayers and support.

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