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# SWISS NEWS

Newsletter № 87

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## *Dear Friends*

It is not always easy to write a newsletter, even for someone used to compile texts. The changes in our life and our ministry lead automatically to less “interesting material” to write about.

### **Crisis**

This June I celebrated “half a century”. Many say that the midlife crisis begins around 40. If that is the case, then I should be about done with it. However, at times it seems to me that the crisis is still ongoing.



Although there have been questions before, now especially since the return to Switzerland I struggle even more. Most of all it is the question about the meaning of life, which is gnawing. What do I live for? What is the purpose of my life? On top of that, there are several more questions, which arise in the midst of everyday life. To which church do I belong? To be honest, I don't feel at home in the current church, although everybody is nice. I feel superfluous there and don't see, how I can contribute in a meaningful way. On top of that, we don't have any small group and that means I very much miss some personal fellowship.

Recently I applied for a job with “Floorball for All”, a very valuable ministry, which I have supported while still in Ukraine. To me this was something like a last attempt to get back into full-time ministry. I didn't get the job. Therefore I consider this chapter closed for the time being, at least so far as it concerns an active search from my side.

### **Projects in Ukraine**

The recording of the video children's Bible in Russian sign language is now finished. The last chapters undergo the final video engineering work and will then be made available on YouTube to the deaf community. With that, a yearlong project is being completed. Looking back, I can say that this was probably the best project I have been part of over the years. The material will be a blessing for a huge number of

people for many years to come. Until now, the videos on YouTube have been accessed over 40000 times.

Occasionally I am helping the Dubovik family with a financial contribution (from selling second-hand furniture) towards one of the camps they are organising. However, that is something I can do on the side.

That means, of all the ministry projects, there is now only the translation of sermons and blog entries from Greg Boyd left, plus an occasional book. This is the kind of work, which offers little interesting material for a newsletter. It happens in the background, requires perseverance and patience, and it is not always easy, to push forward week after week. There is still plenty of very valuable material, which in its kind is especially rare in Russian language.

### **Health and work**

Physically I am doing much better. The last physiotherapy finally showed some good results and my shoulder is almost back to normal. The finger joints are still not ideal, but pain and stiffness are at a much lower level now. It was possible to change my working hours at the furniture store, so that I am now working four half days, which spreads the load more evenly throughout the week. That means, that I can still continue to work there for a while.



Besides that, I am also taking care of the reservations for the Airbnb-hotel in Aeschirried. I now have an assistant, which allows me at least a break of one week per month from the 24/7 job. The planned sale of the property did not work out and for the time being we continue as before. The foundation still hopes to find a buyer. Since we are now doing quite well economically, some of us have even been thinking of founding their own company and buying the place. However, a few more investors would be needed for that.

The two jobs combined take up more than 50% of my time, which happens to fit with our declining support for the

missions work. For that reason, I have reduced my mission's salary already last year. This year we will be forced to reduce even more. Thanks to all of you who still stand faithfully with us.

Thanks to two infusions of iron, Tetyana started to feel much better. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July she had to go to hospital for an operation. She had to get her uterus removed, because of a growing cyst. Everything went very well and she is recovering nicely. She still has to take things slowly, but is improving rapidly.

### From "full-timer" to "regular guy"

We are somewhere in the middle of this change. The time I use for translations has gone down to about 40% and will probably become even less. The main reason is the reduced financial support. We are willing to accept this as it is. In an ideal world we would get to the point, where I work only about 20% in the translations and don't need any support for that. (Which depends on the full recovery of Tetyana and her ability to earn a salary.)

To share God's love, it is not necessary to be in full-time ministry. If we live with open eyes and ears, then we can almost daily find opportunities to share His love in one way or another.

Recently I was able to ensure, that all the rooms in our hotel have a Gideon's Bible. And near the entrance we have free Gideon's New Testaments in Chinese, Arabic and Korean available. To do more would not be permissible, but this much we can do.

Together with Dan we keep on participating in Snooker tournaments from time to time. Occasionally I am helping to organise a tournament for the youth. While coming to watch us play, Tetyana got to know the wife of a colleague. She is also from Ukraine and the two of them had already some deep conversations.

In the midst of the normal work routine, there are opportunities to say a kind word to a colleague or a customer. And it isn't always necessary to speak. Just by doing a good job we can bring joy to our customers, be it when delivering furniture, or when cleaning hotel rooms. We can always share something about God's kingdom.



Everyone with kids knows that they can be a very special task and challenge. Sometimes you enjoy it, and sometimes there are phases that are more difficult. We are very thankful for our two kids. Even though they wrestle with themselves from time to time, they bring us much joy. Of course we want to see them grow and become mature personalities, capable to walk their own way and have Jesus as the solid anchor.

Both have just now started their professional education. Darja got a contract in a flower shop at the train station in Thun, where she will learn to become a florist. Dan is just a few hundred meters away from there, learning to become a logistician at the Swiss Postal Service.

Thank you for praying for them.

Here one more reason why you should visit us: Alpine meadow just above Frutigen, full of daffodils.



Many thanks for all your support!!! Greetings,

*Erich & Tetyana with Darja & Dan*

### Prayer requests

#### Give thanks for

- the completion of the children's video Bible
- the effective physiotherapy and the new working hours
- the improved health of Tetyana

#### Pray for

- God's work through the children's Bible in sign language
- the translation of more sermons and articles
- the healing process of Tetyana after the operation
- a good start into their professional education for our kids
- the guests visiting our Mountain Lodge
- the professional education of our kids
- vision in the midst of questions and personal crisis

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