

April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Hello,

I hope all of you had as wonderful Easter as we did. Instead of saying Happy Easter like in America, We say "Christ is Risen" and then the other person says "Indeed He's Risen".. That is one tradition here that we like. Everyone says it, if they are saved or not. The sad part is that some say it but they don't understand what they are saying. Please pray for us as we learn the language so that we will be able to reach the Russian people for Jesus.

Talking about the Language, Thank you all for your prayers in this endeavor. Through your prayers the Lord has given me a new zeal. Every now and then it gets really discouraging, but your prayers hold me up. I just can't explain to you enough how much they mean to me. Thank you very much. I feel I am going through a time of true learning these past couple of weeks. Praise the Lord!

Several people have written to me asking me about the Easter traditions here so I thought I would share those with you. On Thursday before Easter is cleaning day. You clean your house, take a shower, etc. Then that evening they go to the Russian Orthodox Church and light a candle and bring the candle back home with them. If they get it home still lit, they believe they will be blessed. Friday and Saturday they spend baking bread (a special kind) and boiling (brown) eggs and making the eggs pretty. Some just color them, some make designs on them. Then they take their food (anything they want) to the Orthodox Church so that the priest can bless it. On Saturday night they go to the Orthodox Church for an all night service. They all stand the whole time except for the Babushka's (grandmother's) they bring a chair with them to sit on. On Sunday they start their day will eating the blessed food, and they eat the eggs all through the day whenever they want one. The greeting that I explained to you earlier, is said only on Sunday, Easter Day. I hope I was clear enough where you understand completely. If not feel free to write me and ask me.

Yesterday, Monday we did not have Russian class and I had given the boys off of school on Friday and Monday so we took the day for a family day out. I fixed up a big picnic lunch and we were off to Red Cave. Around that area we found a wonderful spot to camp in the future. The Lord knew we enjoy camping, so he gave us another LBL (Land Between the Lakes). Ok it's not as nice as LBL, but we did find a beautiful spot in the mountains. After our picnic Tony watched Caleb and Anna while he got a fire started. And I took Marc and Joshua for a big climb up the side of the mountain. We reached the top where we saw the most beautiful sight. Other mountains all around us, we could see so far. It was Beautiful. Then afterward we climbed back down. Tony took Marc on a bike ride while Joshua, Caleb and Anna played around the area, and I kept the fire going. It was such a pretty day. We really enjoyed our time together.

Today we all start back to school. The kids have a four more weeks left. They are getting really excited. They are doing very well. Tony told them if they get all A's on their report cards, he will give them 100 grievna. That is about 20 dollars. Joshua almost got it last time. He had only gotten one B. Marc has gotten A's and B's also. So they are both trying their hardest to reach that goal.

Well, I better get going. Take care. And miss you all.

Dawn Hess

