

Dear Fellow Believers in Christ,

*2008. Happy New Year!!* New beginnings, new challenges, new stages of growth, new memories, new goals. As we begin this new year, we reflect on the old and remember all the blessings of the Lord, the times of growth, and the hardships. We give thanks for God's provision in our lives – blessing us with friends, finances, and a grocery store right around the corner! We learn to give thanks also for times of trials – for those difficult moments when we wonder how we will make ends meet, how we may be able to connect with difficult students, and how we will deal with those days of little light.

Towards the beginning of winter when the clouds seem to permanently settle in with a gray drabness, one of my students jokingly asked me to make the sun shine. I quickly disappeared from the room only to return with a cutout poster in the shape of a smiling sun (brought specifically from the States for this purpose). The kids laughed as I said, "Here's your sun! Now we shall always have sunshine in this room!" Weeks later, the sun remains taped to my window reminding us that complaining about the gray weather won't do any good. We learn to rejoice and be glad in the day that the Lord has made.

This day, this week, this year, this challenge – the Lord has made, and we shall rejoice in it. Even if we don't have a dryer, and our washing machine takes 2 hours to do a load of laundry barely consisting of one set of sheets and the pillow cases! Thank God, I don't have to wash by hand. Even if we buy about two hundred dollars worth of groceries at the megamarket (cheaper, yet a good distance away) and have to tote them home because we have no car, thank God, there is a good selection and we have money to buy food. Even though the Russian government keeps changing visa laws affecting foreigners, thank God, we are here now and we have faith that He will continue to move on our behalf.

In our previous letter, we shared briefly about some of these legal concerns. Currently, anyone with a religious, cultural exchange, or business visa (and not a work permit) is no longer allowed to be in Russia for more than 90 days out of 180. This means that one could be in Russia for 3 months and then must leave for 3 months before reentering again. We as teachers are not affected by this because we have work permits, but what good are teachers if we don't have students?? Many missionaries are scrambling to find alternatives to this new challenge. Obtaining a work permit is not easy and neither is applying for and being granted Russian residency. Since most families had their visas before this law went into effect, we have encountered relatively few problems so far, but several missionary families are moving out of Russia within the next few weeks due to the new regulations. Mostly, next year will be affected.

Moreover, Hinkson Christian Academy is currently in the middle of another legal battle of renewing its educational license. This license, which must be renewed every three years, enables HCA to operate in Russia and to process other legal documents. Without this license, HCA would not legally exist, nor would it be able to issue Letters of Invitation which are necessary to legally hire teachers. Several weeks ago, Hinkson submitted the paperwork to renew the educational license and was denied. Since then, the administration has been working hard to redo the paperwork in order to meet the legal requirements and will be resubmitting documentation within the next few weeks.

Please pray for the granting of the much needed educational license as well as for the visa situation that many of our students' families are facing. Pray for favor. Pray for the law to be changed. Pray for missionaries to have creative and efficient ideas for circumnavigating this dilemma. Pray for peace and guidance.

Armada is also affected by these changes. Shane is continuing to meet with different lawyers as well as other Christian and business leaders whose knowledge and wisdom can help him navigate through the volatile Russian legal system in an effort to establish a lasting legal presence here for Armada. Please pray for Shane's discernment amidst these decisions as well as for divine appointments.

***Never lose sight of God's will, but rather  
"Be confident that he who began a good  
work in you will complete it until the  
day of Jesus Christ's return."***

In the midst of these hardships, we find our strength in Christ. We may not know the answers, but we have reassurance that our Lord goes before us to prepare the way.

As His way led us back to Moscow this January, we were met rather abruptly with a startling increase of prices. According to a recent article in the *Moscow Times*, "inflation shot up by nearly twelve percent . . . and is expected to remain high with no immediate relief in sight." Nevertheless, we remain faithful to the One who has called us here. Thank you for your support and encouragement. Our current financial situation has begun to climb back up out of the precarious situation we found ourselves in several months ago. We appreciate your continued faithful financial gifts. Thank you to those who gave so generously in response to our last letter. We believe that God will continue to meet all our needs despite the increase in prices.

May God continue to richly bless you during this new year!

***Shane & Katie Lehman***

Visit our blog: [shanekatie.blogspot.com](http://shanekatie.blogspot.com)

Email us: [lehmansinrussia@hotmail.com](mailto:lehmansinrussia@hotmail.com)

***NEW Phone Number!!***

***(717) 779-1510***

If you would like to call us in Russia, simply call this local York, Pennsylvania phone number, and you will reach us in Moscow.

Isn't technology amazing!?!

***If you would like to support us in this ministry,  
please send your tax-deductible gifts to:***

***Abundant Life Center***

***Attn: Lehmans***

***3930 Farm Drive***

***York, PA 17402***

**\*\*Remember: For Tax purposes, please make the checks out to *Abundant Life Center* and place *Russia Missions* in the memo!**