

Pr. Rudi and Kirsten Blümcke  
St Petersburg, Russia  
Christmas 2004  
E-mail: rektor@novosaratovka.org

Dear Friends!

We wish you a glad celebration  
with snow and starry nights -  
And instead of the plastic tree a genuine  
with red apples in the branches.

We wish you a glad celebration  
and no complaints,  
we wish the angel from the landing  
to you down on the ground connection!

We wish you a glad celebration!  
And the child does not trouble with poems!  
Rather sees, how to make  
The old controversy smooth!

We wish you a glad celebration,  
which ray of light over the crib straw,  
and that in your views gladly  
Christmas splendor can be still reflected!



Elli Michler

With these desires we greet you all to the Christmas time, in whatever situation we are always straight, Christmas are the celebration of the GLAD message and that this fills out our heart and brings light into our darkness, we wish to everyone.

You haven't heard anything more from us for a very long time, and so we want to continue further. One year ago we sat on packed suitcases and crates and after an agitated parting from our congregation, then shortly after Christmas we moved from Krasnojarsk to St. Petersburg. The moving ran without problems, which we regard as genuine gift, and Ikea had just opened here, so that we could furnish ourselves beautifully. We live somewhat outside of the city in a small village, in a large new multi-family house, directly beside that seminary building. In our house 3 colleagues of Rudi still live, partly with their families and in the other half are more office and further use areas of the seminary. Our dwelling is very beautiful and that we live here in nature and directly at the river Newa, it pleases us much. Beginning of the yearly went then the new everyday life loosely. For the children that meant, in the new school, a Russian private school with German emphasis to attend. Samuel and I take them daily with the car and fetch them in the afternoon again, which takes more up depending upon traffic times, times less time. The a life went with Jonathan (11) and Anna Maria (9) quite well, only to Jonathan had some trouble to find his place in his class. This process is also not yet completed, particularly

both now since the summer visit still another second German class. This class is led by a very good and engaged teacher from Germany, who instructs at the same time 10 children of the class levels 1-6. Our children have the subjects German, general subjects, history, geography and art/music. They continue to study all other subjects in their old classes. We hope that Joni and Ria are thus prepared better for the school in Germany. In addition the remote school is thus omitted, which for us everything is a relief. By our spatial distance of the school and the pupils come from the whole city, it happens only very rarely that the children can play also outside of the school times with their school fellows. Also otherwise there are no children at their ages here in the vicinity, so these important contacts are missing to them, so far anyhow. It is good that they have each other, whereby we state in addition, that with increasing age the interests go apart and quarrels increase in frequency and intensity, particularly since they divide a room with one another. With Samuel (nearly 2) it is different. He has a room for himself, (although he is dearest with his big brothers and sisters), has 2 small friends at his age, who live in the neighborhood, and enjoys much care. He is an uncomplicated crafty little fellow, who learns much (unfortunately not always only good things) from his brothers and sisters and makes much joy for us all.

Now however of the children again back for the beginning of the yearly. When the school began for us, it began in earnest also for Rudi. In the first days still the former rector of the seminary was there, who instructed Rudi into the multilayered structures and it became clear very fast that there is a complicated system of work here, with very many different fields. In addition, Rudi was grateful for the many helpful colleagues and coworkers, but felt that the final responsibility is with him. In February he was then inaugurated officially with a solemn service, and our house with the new living and work spaces was also inaugurated at the same time. Shortly thereafter Rudi traveled briefly to America, in order to introduce himself there to the partners, who support our seminary. I think that the rest of his work Rudi will later describe. We as a family often had to do without him, because of all the work, which results with so a new start, but we are grateful that he took time for us again and again in the few free minutes despite exhaustion.

Thus it came also that we were separate the first 6 weeks in summer holidays, since the children and I already drove to Germany, while Rudi still remained until the trimester end in Petersburg. We spent the first 2 weeks with my parents. They had visited us in April in Petersburg and there was much joy that we were together again so quickly. Particularly at Samuel one could see, how he trusts them and so I had many possibilities to settle my things or simply to rest. I can repeat it in each case, our parents, our whole large family on both sides are a giant-large gift and an indescribable support for us, many, thank yous, it is unique and to us soooo dear and valuable all!!!!!!! We spent the further time in Hermannsburg, where we could see Rudi's family more frequently and spent much time with friends (a visit with our Grandpa in Flintbek with Aunt Marga, was particularly beautiful). Also thank you to everyone, and particularly you Elli, you our good Fairy are irreplaceable!!!!

When Rudi was then finally with us again, we drove soon for 3 weeks to Korsika. It was to be again-applied very beautifully there, to meet many new acquaintances and intensify old. The weather was as always fantastic, we could leave body, soul and spirit dangling. After this vacation Rudi and I still had the possibility to drive 2 days into South Germany by motorcycle, that was wonderful. Also the last days in Harber with Rudi's family we enjoyed totally. I had not

been so spoiled for a long time, even at my birthday!!!! Finally it became high time to return to Petersburg since on 1.9. the school began again and we wanted to settle down a little. That could be done however amazingly fast and I was surprised to determine, how much we already feel at home here.

Here I would like to add still briefly, how I am personally with and to the change from Krasnojarsk to Petersburg. I am well here. I enjoy it that we do not live any more in the city and so have a cosy, new dwelling. And I notice, how important now it is to be wholly there for the family. First of all Samuel naturally still needs me much, particularly since here I have nobody who watches out regularly for him. Secondly I am kept quite busy by the daily driving, homework, household, visiting. And thirdly I try to relieve and keep some work off Rudi's back, even if I sometimes grumble that he works so much. For the moment I notice that I would have no more time and energy for additional tasks, although I was invited. On the one hand that is OK for me for the moment. On the other hand I miss the intensity of religious work, which I enjoyed in such a way during my active time in the congregation. Yes, I miss our congregation in Krasnojarsk, which was like a large family and also still is. In the local St. Petersburg congregation I still feel somewhat strange. With the seminary community, with family and on my walks with Samuel, with the common lunch or after the daily evening devotion, I have many opportunities for contact. With all I notice however a certain distance on my part, I bring in myself here not fully, partly for the family reasons, partly however perhaps also, specified above, because our time here seems so limited?! In any case I am interested and also serene, even in view of the uncertain situation in our church, over which Rudi will surely still write, what God still intends with us, and live further in the increasing conviction that nothing better could happen to me than meeting this God and to make my life dependent on Him completely. In this sense I greet you completely cordially all, your **Kirsten!**

-----

We are in the exam week, but I want to add at least some lines, in order to then bring this letter on the way still before the great celebration For me it is exciting to be read, how Kirsten summarizes our year in a few sentences. I can only agree, I feel our dwelling - even if she is in the same building as my office - as my place of refuge. This way I can flee, if the strains become too large, and lie with Samuel on the soil and play cars, or chess with Joni. And if it is only the common breakfast in the morning, before we immerse everything, everyone in its way into the turmoil, I enjoy it.

Yes, I had imagined it differently, when I was asked to lead this seminary. I imagined above all meetings with students, lectures, lecturer meetings and common religious life. There are these things, which make working here really exciting and let me be here gladly. The situation of our church is at present everything but courage-making. Outwardly we try to buoy up the picture but within the church there are still hardly functioning communication structures or arrangements, on which one could rely. I do not want to represent the situation of this church in this circular now, that would probably only pour oil on different fires, and that is not my intention. I have not experienced such a muddled situation however in my life still, as this. The seminary suffers much from it. The students do not have good prospects of employment in the church, and if they get one will usually not be appropriately mentored in their first years.

A picture came into my head in the last weeks when thinking, which represents the situation of

the seminary rather well. I had a trading vessel before my imagination in the middle of the 19th century, from a colonial power, to sail to a far country trade and buy goods. The ship is part of a royal fleet. During the arduous passage it comes home to a disaster. The king is fallen, that military has revolted. People are killed and the population of the country are in riot. In consequence of these events the colonial empire breaks apart. The messages arrive only slowly on the ship, if it continues in exotic ports, in order to take up fresh water and provisions. It is not clear, who took over the government, only is clear it that the royal fleet does not exist as such any longer. The ship floats now on strange oceans without order and home port. Also the financial sources are now in question. It is unclear, how they will be received in the former colony, but caution is advisable. There are great sailors on board. Also the dealers understand their handicraft. The captain is forced to gather his officers together and decide, what they are to do. In the negotiations the large uncertainty becomes clear, but also undreamt-of possibilities open themselves. They need a new client. Are they to contact the government of another country and then sail under another flag? Or first consider and find new sponsors for the time being in such a way, in order to be waiting, until the situation clarified itself at home. The suggestion of piracy is wiped rather fast off the table, then the world trade hangs on the nail. But then messages come from commercial circles from the homeland that the world trade may be given up in no case. For the future of the country it is of fundamental importance, even if it is rather difficult politically at present. But with investments these circles are naturally now careful, the main mast would have to be exchanged and the pay of the sailors already was not raised for a whole year.

I break off here, although I notice that I could continue this history still for pages. My captain patent I have not yet earned myself this year. And naturally there arise also again and again doubts, whether that was the correct step to come Petersburg and begin this service here. Then it is important to me that we got many confirmations on the way here and possibly who must transfer evenly in this situation responsibility for the theological training to Russia. Everyone who grapples and helps there is welcome.

And so I am grateful for our team of lecturers and coworkers at the seminary, who did not leave the ship so far yet, and have always endeavored to look again for goals for the seminary.

Cordial thanks for all prayer, thought, funds and good desires, rarely we used them in such a way like now. Over Christmas and New Year we will submerge ourselves in the family and will mutually enjoy ourselves. Perhaps the ELKRAS is also born in this time somewhat new.

Your **Rudi!**