

# McDougle Family News

## January 2009

### *Hello Friends and Family*

We are sorry this is coming out to you so late and not in the typical style of our newsletters. We have been without internet or much free time for several weeks now, but hope to be getting back into routine soon. We just had so much going on recently that we wanted to send out our news even though it is very late, for which we apologize! Thank you so much for your prayers, patience and love!

### **Snow**

It finally snowed! A few days before Christmas, we had our first snow. It was much welcomed. In our opinions, if it is going to be cold, it might as well snow! The bright, white, new snow is such a vivid contrast to the drabness of the old, gray, buildings and streets and the bareness of the leafless trees. Since then, we have steadily received more snow, which is always fun. I am estimating that we have about 6 or 7 inches of snow on the ground now. The only downside is the car has to be cleaned off and heated up to melt the ice on days it snows. But tractors keep the main roads free from all the snow, and driving isn't too bad. In fact, we have two sets of tires for our car: one summer and one winter. It is common for the garage where you buy the tires or where your car gets maintenance to keep the off season tires for you; when the new season comes around, you just take your car in and they change your tires.

### **Hospital**

One priority when we moved was to get things figured out for Max's arrival. The first thing we discovered was that in Ukraine, you have a pre-natal doctor at a clinic and a separate doctor and hospital for delivery. We found a great pre-natal doctor through my interpreter, Ira; everything is done quite different than in the States, but most pre-natal check-ups, including ultrasounds and blood work, all get done, just in different ways. Now that I am approaching the time of delivery, we have started looking into various hospitals. We had

one in mind that had the reputation in Kharkov for being the best. However, my pre-natal doctor (whom we like very much) recommended another hospital. She

said it has the same level of equipment available, but the doctors at this smaller hospital don't have big heads, but are more kind and will work with you more. She also said the other hospital is remodeled nicer, but the smaller hospital is still clean and warm. When we went to check out this smaller hospital, we were very pleased. We were able to meet with the director and head doctor; they showed us around the hospital and answered all our questions. They even said the head doctor, who speaks English, could be my doctor, so I won't have to have a translator. She even gave me her home phone number and cell phone number so I could call at any time. We had an ultrasound done there, they looked over all my paperwork, and we were able to register that day. The hospitals are government run, making it very cheap to register and deliver there; however, it is always common to "tip" the director and doctors, because doctors in Ukraine make very low salaries. In addition, because we are Americans and they aren't obligated to accept us in their hospitals, we are



expected to “tip” extra. We knew this going in, so it wasn’t a problem when the question of cost came up. However, the director surprised us and told us that instead of the registration fee, the delivery fee and the “tip,” we could just buy a couch or a table for a waiting room in their new wing they are having built! So, we will be able to tell Max when he is older that he cost a couch to deliver! Thank you all so much for your prayers about all our medical needs for Max. We know that God went ahead of us in all ways and paved the way smoothly for everything to work out well. We are excited about his arrival, which we are expecting sometime around February 9<sup>th</sup>!

### **People**

We have been blessed by all the acquaintances we have met in Kharkov so far. Our first American contacts was the **Woffard family** here doing mission work with the Baptist movement. Before we moved here, they gave us advice on what to bring and what we could find; since moving, they have helped us with information on how to get “set up”, provided us numbers for language teachers and translators, given us advice on the driving situation here, and more! Another contact we have had is **Valery**; he is a graduate of Bear Valley Bible School and is actually from Kazakhstan, but works here in Ukraine with summer camps and year-round follow-up. He has also been a tremendous help with his unlimited contacts! In fact, he set us up with **Vitali and Galina**. Galina is a real-estate



agent, and was able to help us in our apartment search. Her husband works as a car mechanic, and they are the couple we purchased our car from! Because of his car maintenance background, our car is in excellent condition, inside

and out- as well as under the hood! They have both

become friends of ours, and we have had them into our homes many times since coming. Other contacts include **Andrew**, a friend of Valery; **Andrei**, our old landlord’s son who is very nice and wants to help us out and talk with us when he can; **Igor**, our new landlord’s son who speaks English and has been helpful in getting things arranged for our apartment; **Vladimir and Yelena**, our language teachers; **Yelena**, a young woman I met on the street who invited me for coffee and wanted to help me out since I didn’t know Russian very well; **Katya**, the girl who works at a grocery store near our old apartment; and **all our new neighbors**. We are praying for these people who are in need of the saving gospel of Christ. Please join us in prayer that God gives us wisdom how to minister to them in these beginning times when we don’t speak Russian well!

### **A New Car**

Our recent, big purchase has been a car! We have walked, trotted and plodded around Moscow and Ukraine for the past 11 months. Now, however, we can also drive! It is amazing how God just dumped this car in our laps, even before we had started to look for one! A friend of a friend needed to sell his car fast so he could pay on other things; so the price was right. In addition, the previous owner was a mechanic, meaning the car is in great shape on the inside and out- and under the hood. It is a 2005, Honda Civic. Canaan loves it too! Every time we go somewhere, he asks if we are going in the “new silver car.” He gets excited to sit in his own car seat, he requests listening to music every time we get in, and at times he will prod the driver, saying “Daddy, go faster!” The driving here is on the same side of the road, but there are a few rules that are different. Little by little we are learning those, along with how to get around. (We miss the nice grid layout of Lubbock roads!) It has also been an extra blessing for Lucy, being able to ride around as we get the apartment in order during her last few months of pregnancy. In addition, it makes us feel “normal” in a funny sense, after having been without a car for so long. (PICTURE: Canaan also likes the Car shopping baskets at some of the big grocery stores here in Kharkov!)

## ***Happy New Year and Merry Christmas***

“Happy New Year and Merry Christmas” is what the billboards and writings in the store fronts read here in Kharkov. At first I thought it was funny that they said it backward from us, but then I realized they say it in that order for a reason! Here in Ukraine, they celebrate Christmas according to the old Orthodox calendar, which puts it on January 7<sup>th</sup>, after New Year! With new Year coming before Christmas, it is in the correct order for those living here! New Year is actually celebrated more than any other holiday; when the Soviet Union existed, they outlawed any religious holiday and only allowed government holidays. The only holiday not government centered was New Years. For this reason, New Years became the biggest and most celebrated holiday.

## ***Our New Apartment***

We have been so blessed with all the places in which we have lived since moving from the States. Our apartment in Moscow was very nice and comfortable, needing nothing beyond a few extra things such as sheets, dishes and some kitchen equipment. When we moved to Ukraine in October, our temporary apartment was also set up very nice and was very clean and cozy. There were a few things that were different (like our dorm-size refrigerator), but we were able to live comfortably there for two months while we searched for a more permanent place. In addition, when we had to move out of that apartment, we were able to move into Olivia and David’s temporary apartment for several weeks until our new apartment we found became vacant. On January 30<sup>th</sup>, we got the keys for our new, permanent place. We have a year lease signed with the owners and are excited about being “settled” finally!

Our new apartment is on the second floor, which is wonderful since there aren’t many elevators here. It is also a great size: two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and bath. In fact, it looks even bigger because we have really high ceilings (maybe 15 ft). The fridge and stove are old, but are in good working order, and the landlords bought a washing machine for the apartment when they found out we would want one. In addition, we have been able to purchase beds and will soon buy a couch. We knew the wallpapering was not in good shape, some of it peeling off the walls and some of it just worn out and ugly. But the rent was lower than expected, so we have had plans to redo most of the rooms.

However, there are a few things we weren’t expecting that are different. The first thing we noticed

was that the apartment was a bit chilly; normally that is fine because we can buy electric heaters to warm it up a bit more. But, our breaker box doesn’t support any type of new appliance that requires a lot of wattage. The breaker box only has a six amp fuse, meaning we blow it whenever we try to run our heaters on high, the washing machine, or other appliances that have high wattage output. Our heaters we bought did come with a low setting, and we are able to run one at a time on a low setting if we only have a few lights turned on in the house and nothing else. So, the apartment is warmer now. In addition, our landlords have been very obliging and have offered to have an electrician come in and look at the breaker box, possibly to install a newer one, so we can use more of our appliances! Another shock was our hot water heater is quite old. We have to turn on the water in the bathroom and light the water heater every time we want hot water anywhere in the house. Because it is quite old, we have to constantly adjust the temperature to keep it warm, instead of scalding or frigid! So, I think we will be looking into *kalonkas*, new hot water heaters, soon! There are a few smaller things that we hadn’t thought of as well. The phone was wired directly into the phone and into the wall, in a strange way that we have never encountered before. Dougle, however, has read a bit online and it seems that he will be able to re-wire us something more modern so that we can have a new phone and internet. We also have the “old” electrical outlets. Not only are normal outlets different here in Eastern Europe, but they apparently have old ones that are smaller than the bigger ones used now. Many of our electrical appliances (lights, heaters, coffee pots, etc,) require adapters, which we have temporarily put on all the plugs. The newer replacements aren’t very expensive, so we think we will be able to replace them easily! Lastly, our bathroom sink is not set up for hot water, you can’t flush toilet paper in the toilet (if you expect it to go down!), paint is peeling off all the doors, molding and radiators, and some tiles in the bathroom and kitchen randomly fall off if you bump them too hard. **However, most of these challenges we have faced are being overcome little by little, and will be fixed in time. It was just a bit of a shock in the beginning to be confronted with so many unforeseen obstacles! We thank all of you who have provided us with our support and one-time support that we have been able to buy what we need to set up comfortably in our new apartment. It will take a bit of time, working slowly on little things, but we feel so blessed to have a permanent place to call home now!**