

I wanted to let you know that our Alpha Retreat was great! There were 14 of us total: 6 girls, 5 from New Generation & 3 from Paradigma church. The retreat started with God answering our prayers to get us on a bus out of town headed toward the dacha. The last time we went, it was a Sunday afternoon and we had not trouble getting on the bus. Evidently, Fridays are the busiest days and people reserve tickets in advance. We did not reserve tickets and others waiting for the bus told us it could be 10 p.m. before we could catch a bus. God worked it out for the driver to allow us to stand/sit in the aisle of the bus and we were all able to get on. We arrived that evening around 9:30 or 10. We fixed dinner and then had a time of singing and getting to know each other. Then, we gave everyone time to hang out a play games before going to bed. A few of us went to bed 'early' (that means any time between 1 a.m. and 3 a.m.) while most of the kids and a few of the college age kids stayed up until 5. Kyle was hoping everyone would sleep until noon, but everyone was up and at breakfast by a little after 10 a.m. We had a time of praise and worship following breakfast. Then we played a fun game outside. The weather was beautiful. It was pretty warm – 80s and the sun was shining. There were lots of mosquitoes, but we just put on bug spray and stayed outside anyway. The kids loved the game we played. We spent time during lunch getting to know one of the girls who came on the retreat. Each meal we ate with a different person so we could get to know several of them better before the weekend was over. After lunch we gave everyone free time to play sports, games, hang out, etc. Some played badminton, others read, played guitar, played games, and eventually, there was a water fight to cool off those outside. It was a fun afternoon. Before dinner, we had a question and answer time where they could ask any spiritual question they had and we answered it for them. They asked some good questions and I think they got a lot out of the discussion. It was one of the things they said they enjoyed the most about the weekend. After dinner, we had more music time and then Denis (he's a seminary student) shared a short message with them about spiritual growth and what it means to be a Christian. The remainder of the evening was spent playing board games and talking. Everyone made it to bed before 3. ☺ (Welcome to Russian lifestyle...stay up late...sleep late...good thing I'm a night owl!...) Sunday morning we had another praise and worship time followed by their last chance to play games and have fun together. Then we had lunch, packed our things and cleaned house. We hiked back out to the road with all our stuff and flagged a bus to take us back to Moscow. God again answered our prayers because we didn't wait more that 5-10 minutes before a bus stopped that had room for us and all our stuff. We were in a traffic jam on the way home so the one hour bus ride was more like two hours with no air conditioning and the temperature being 90. The good part is that everyone got so spend more time together that way! I think I finally arrived home about 8:30 Sunday evening.

We're going to have club meetings on Thursdays throughout the summer. We plan to cover one chapter of John each week. Thursday will be our first meeting, so please pray that we have a bunch of kids who will attend. We're going to have a time of Bible study, games and refreshments. It should be fun, but many kids will not be around during the summer. We moved the night to Thursday because many who will still be in town will head out of town to family dachas on Fridays. We hope to have more attend with the day being Thursday. Denis is giving the Bible study this week and Craig and I are in charge of the game and refreshments. Next week, Caleb will be giving the Bible study and Steve will help with the game and refreshments. The following week, Steve will give the Bible study and the plan it to play capture the flag since it is Flag Day in America. ☺ I think I will cover at least two chapters in John before we finish up at the end of August. I'll put the schedule in my calendar on the website so you can check it periodically.

Steve Holland is here from Florida helping us out until the summer camp is over. Then he will fly home. He's hoping to get into Boyce College in Louisville. He wants work in full time ministry – either as a missionary or pastor. He started a Bible study for our college age helpers (18 and older). When he leaves, I will take over the leadership of the Bible study so that it can continue. Our goal is to help our leaders continue to grow spiritually and provide training to help them take on more responsibility with the ministry. I feel that is something that is really needed here and those are the people I can communicate with most effectively. Most of them speak enough English that the entire Bible study doesn't have to be translated. Please pray for this study and that the student leaders will be motivated to come each week.

I'll be leaving for Institute of Biblical Studies on Saturday. I'll be in St. Petersburg until the 13th of June and don't know how much access I will have to e-mail while I'm gone. I'll be taking at class on the

Pentateuch. Then we have a National Conference for staff here in Russia. I look forward to the learning and fellowship with other missionaries. I'm also looking forward to the cooler weather!!! Hallelujah! It will only be in the 70s there. It has been in the upper 80s and 90s for over a week now! That's pretty tough when there is no air conditioning. I'm so thankful for our first floor apartment where the temperature stays between 65 and 75 most of the time. ☺

I need to finish preparing for my Russian lesson. I will write again after I return from St. Petersburg.

In Christ,
Kerri