

[*Translation of a letter from Lena Sokolova, a new Russian United Methodist Pastor who just graduated from Seminary in May of 2004. She was sent on her first assignment to the Far East by the Sea of Japan and close to the border with China. Some of you may remember her from her visit with the Russian Choir in 2003. Lena gave the sermon on Father's Day June 15 that year. Now she is having a tough time.* In this letter, she is for the first time admitting that she is having a hard time and asking for help. In the past when she wrote to me or talked by phone to me, she only said that there were problems, but things were moving along.]

Dear Peter,

How are you? My life is in turmoil. Many problems, but I have faith that with God's help, they will be solved. We are continuing to work with children from disadvantaged families. We continue to feed them regardless of our problems. Yurii [*the former pastor*] has not returned the documents [concerning the church property] and is trying to acquire for himself. The apartment where we carry on the children's activities. He wants to become the pastor again and leave Methodism and drive me from this apartment. I ask you and your friends to pray for this situation.

As for the other church [*Lena is pastor of two congregations*], the person who must sign some necessary documents so that we can officially and legally own the apartment insists on some conditions: we must begin to make repairs. Besides this, we need money to pay for heating. We are in a very difficult situation. If anyone is able to give us even some small financial help, we would be eternally grateful. Here we are also planning to conduct social and spiritual work with teenagers and young people. We do not want to loose the building. I am continuing to travel to the Jewish Autonomous Oblast [*Region*] to conduct Bible studies at the Social-Rehabilitation Center [*a type of halfway house*].

Peter, here is my home address

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Russia, 680007, city of Khabarovsk
Ulitsa Pionerskaya dom 50 kv.110
Sokolova Elena

And the bank account of the church is

Blagoslovenie Church
Acct 40703840608010008895
In ZAO Regiobank in the city of Khabarovsk